

Citizen engagement in social innovation – a case study report



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TEPSIE

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1. Introduction

Public and civic engagement activities are widely seen as critical in building trust in public institutions, social capital and social cohesion in local communities, greater legitimacy in public decision making processes and more effective use of resources, as well as community and individual empowerment. These assumed benefits are so widely believed that government and civil society activities are often seen as illegitimate if they do not include some form of citizen engagement.

As we have argued in an accompanying paper on the role and value of citizen engagement,¹ it is important to have realistic expectations about what citizen engagement can achieve. The bold claims made by advocates of engagement and participation are not always borne out by the facts. Evidence for the benefits of citizen engagement activities is relatively mixed, and the value of engagement and participation tends to be contingent on the form and practice of that activity, the context in which it is performed, and the supporting structures around it. The research suggests that there are a number of risks and challenges: notably of co-option by elite groups; self-exclusion by the most marginal, most vulnerable or least affluent members of the community; a lack of legitimacy attached to decisions emerging from engagement processes that do not represent the local community; and risks of disengagement and disillusionment where engagement activities are poorly practiced. Where participation does lead to positive outcomes these are not necessarily the outcomes that policymakers, funders and practitioners are expecting to achieve.²

However, despite these important reasons for caution, there is a strong argument that engagement plays an essential role in social innovation. First, citizens have specific knowledge of the challenges they face that no one else can claim; engagement processes therefore enable a better understanding of problems that an innovation might address. Second, citizens can be the source of innovative ideas; engagement processes can uncover or tap into these ideas. Third, engaging citizens enables contributions from varied and sometimes unexpected sources, which introduces divergent thinking; these diverse perspectives add particular value when we are trying to solve tough problems. Fourth, where citizens have been involved in the design, development and implementation of a social innovation or in a decision making process relating to that innovation, the innovation is more likely to be seen as legitimate than if it had been developed without such a process. Fifth, many of the challenges that social innovations aim to tackle, such as obesity or climate change, absolutely require the participation, co-operation and 'buy-in' of citizens because they depend on fundamental changes to behaviour and attitudes.

One of the challenges of talking about social innovation and citizen engagement and the relationship between these is that they are both quasi-concepts: they are grounded in 'a vagueness' that makes the concepts "adaptable to various situations, flexible enough to follow the

¹ A Davies & J Simon, 'The value and role of citizen engagement in social innovation', a deliverable of the project: "The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe" (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research, 2013 and Davies, A, Simon, J, Patrick, R and Norman, W, 'Mapping citizen engagement in the process of social innovation'. A deliverable of the project: "The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe" (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research, 2012

² A Rocha Menocal & B Sharma, Joint Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Synthesis Report, London: Department for International Development, 2009 p v

meanderings and necessities of political action from day to day.”³ In the box below we explain what we mean by both social innovation and citizen engagement. Because these terms operate at a level of abstraction, we need to make them more concrete and more tangible. Our aim in this paper is to illustrate, and therefore clarify, what citizen engagement might look like in the context of social innovation through a series of case studies. These case studies explore the many ways in which more diverse voices and actors can be brought into the process of developing and then sustaining new solutions to social challenges. Each case study focuses on a specific method of engagement. In the words of John Cohen and Norman Uptoff, we aim to provide “clarity through specificity”.⁴

The set of case studies we present here does not enable us to provide a simple toolkit of how to use citizen engagement for social innovation, or even to develop many generalisations about the practice of citizen engagement. What stands out most clearly is the diversity of types of activity, actors and goals that our case studies cover. But this in itself suggests a useful finding for both researchers and policymakers: it may be more fruitful and instructive to examine specific and different forms of citizen engagement (for example, co-design or participatory budgeting) rather than to group these diverse activities together under the banner of ‘citizen engagement in social innovation’. This is hardly surprising: to argue that ‘citizen engagement in social innovation’ has particular benefits, outcomes or challenges is to treat an abstraction as something concrete and tangible. If we do want to ascertain the benefits, we need to look at specific instances and types of activity.

Defining our terms

Social innovation

Social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society’s capacity to act.⁵ Examples include microfinance, fair trade, new models of eldercare, preventative interventions in health and criminal justice, holistic early years’ care, co-production and online platforms which enable sharing, mass collaboration and peer-to-peer learning.

Citizen engagement

Citizen engagement and public participation refer to a broad range of activities which involve people in the structures and institutions of democracy or in activities which are related to civil society – such as community groups, non-profits and informal associations.

We can identify three defining features of engagement or participation.

³ P Bernard, ‘Social cohesion: A dialectical critique of a quasi-concept’, in *Lien social et Politiques*, n° 41, 1999, p. 47-59. Paul Bernard described social cohesion as a ‘quasi-concept’ but his description is equally valid for both social innovation and citizen engagement.

⁴ J M Cohen and N T Uphoff, ‘Participation's place in rural development: Seeking clarity through specificity’, *World Development*, 1980, vol. 8:3, pp. 213-235

⁵ The Young Foundation, *Social Innovation Overview*, A deliverable of the project: “The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe” (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research, 2012

- Engagement activities are voluntary – participation can be incentivised, but it cannot be coerced.
- Engagement requires some form of action on the part of citizens – participants are not simply passive recipients.
- Participation and engagement activities are usually directed towards a common purpose or goal. This means that they are often strongly connected to a social mission.⁶

Citizen engagement in social innovation

Citizen engagement in social innovation refers to the many ways in which more diverse actors can be brought into the process of developing and then sustaining new solutions to social challenges – essentially how citizens can be involved in developing social innovations and in social projects which are innovative.

While the term ‘citizen’ can suggest a particular focus on the way states engage people, we use ‘citizen engagement’ to refer to the ways that all organisations from across sectors draw people into social innovation activities.⁷ That is, we use the term ‘citizen’ because we think it is preferable to ‘user’, ‘client’ and ‘customer’ (which implies a particular kind of relationship) and ‘people’ and ‘public’ which are too vague and potentially imply action by groups of people rather than individuals.

⁶ We have used ‘engagement’ interchangeably with ‘participation’ and continue to do so throughout this paper.

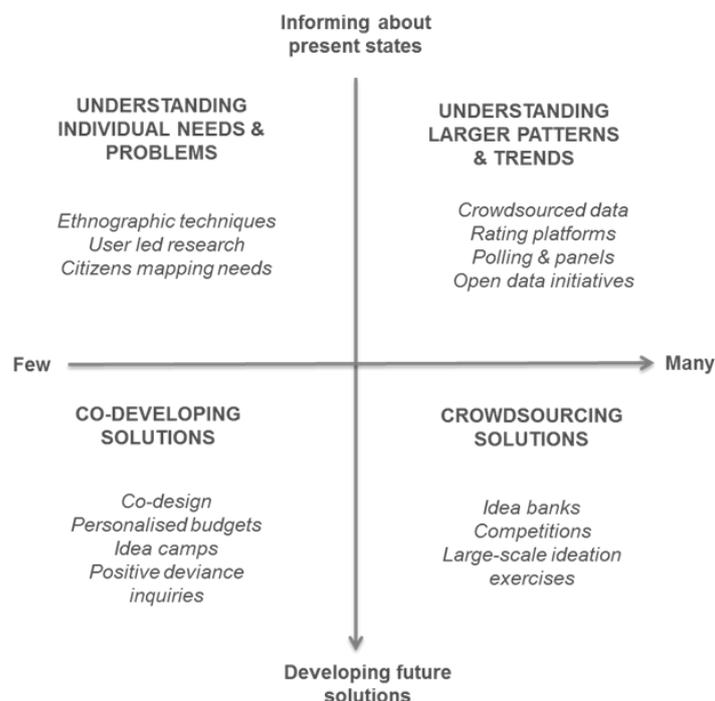
⁷ Using and adapting the definition from the Oslo Manual, we define social innovation activities as all scientific, technological, organisational, financial and commercial or other steps which actually, or are intended to, lead to the implementation of social innovations. Some innovation activities are themselves innovative; others are not novel activities but are necessary for the implementation of social innovations. Social innovation activities also include R&D that is not directly related to the development of a specific social innovation.

2. Framework and case studies

2.1 Developing a typology for citizen engagement in social innovation

In order to select and structure our case studies, we needed to develop a framework for how we think about citizen engagement in social innovation. In an earlier TEPsIE paper on ‘mapping citizen engagement in the process of social innovation’ we proposed the following typology.⁸

Figure 1 – A typology for mapping citizen engagement in the social innovation process



The typology focused on two axes. ‘Informing about present states’ refers to all the ways that citizens can provide information about their current experiences, which provides essential input throughout the development of a social innovation. ‘Developing future solutions’ refers to all kinds of engagement activity whereby citizens can contribute and shape new ideas. These might be ideas that provide the seed for a new innovation, or ideas for how to improve an existing service or model. And the distinction between many and few citizens enables us to identify the scale at which different engagement activities operate. Taken together, these axes produce four quadrants that we used to categorise different forms of engagement in the process of social innovation: understanding individual needs and problems; understanding larger patterns and trends; crowdsourcing solutions; and co-developing solutions.

⁸ A Davies, J Simon, R Patrick, R and W Norman, 2012) ‘Mapping citizen engagement in the process of social innovation’. A deliverable of the project: “The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe” (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research

This typology provides a useful device for clarifying some of the links between social innovation and engagement practices. Specifically it helps us understand how citizens can take part in the innovation process by providing essential information and co-developing ideas. However, the focus of this typology on how engagement relates to the *process* of developing solutions means that it does not adequately capture citizen engagement in terms of the production, implementation and delivery of these solutions. Engaging citizens in the ‘production’ of innovative solutions is in many cases a critical dimension, particularly when these solutions involve the citizens’ own activities (for example in the self management of chronic disease, or social care, or new models of education). There is a strong relationship between identifying problems, developing solutions and implementing those solutions. The typology also misses another important aspect of citizen engagement in social innovation – namely the ways in which citizens influence the decisions taken by governments, businesses and civil society organisations, through for example, campaigning, advocacy, signing petitions, boycotting goods and ethical purchasing. Moreover, in many instances, forms of engagement involve citizens taking or making decisions – either about local priorities (through citizen panels), about the use of resources (such as participatory budgeting), through governance structures (as governors of schools for example) and about the delivery of services (through co-production). This is also lost in the typology for mapping citizen engagement in the process of social innovation.

Given some of the limitations of this approach, we propose a new approach to categorising types of engagement in social innovation activities. We decide to focus our categorisation on describing the key function of different types of engagement activity. We have outlined three main functions of engagement in social innovation, as shown in the table below.

Figure 2 – Functions of engagement in social innovation

Function of engagement	Examples
Providing information and resources	Consultations, user led research, volunteering in social innovation project, crowdsourcing data, giving donations
Problem solving	Competitions, co-design processes, social innovation camps
Taking and influencing decisions	Campaigning, ethical purchasing, co-operative governance models, participatory budgeting, participatory planning

None of these functions relate to a particular stage of the social innovation process (ideation, prototyping, sustaining and scaling) although some might be more relevant to some stages than others. Providing information and resources will be particularly relevant at the ideation stages, for example. And taking decisions in the form of participation in governance structures will be important for sustaining an innovation project. However, many methods which fall under a single category can be used at every stage of the innovation process. For example, involving citizens in user-led research could be relevant at the earliest stages, when innovators need to frame a problem, at the prototyping phase to assess how well a programme or project has been received, or at the scaling phase when it is important to understand the extent of a problem in new locations. As such, we have decided to focus on the function of the method, rather than where it could be used in the process of social innovation.

2.1.1 Providing information and resources

One key function of citizen engagement is for citizens to provide information about their needs, preferences, ideas and opinions. This information is critical at every stage of the innovation process – from the earliest stage of identifying needs and potential solutions to the later stages of evaluation. At every stage, feedback loops are essential in refining and improving the solutions being developed.

Much of this information can be gathered using traditional forms of qualitative and quantitative research. However, as a result of web 2.0 technologies, there are now a multitude of platforms which enable people to provide information directly about their own needs, preferences, locations, and experiences. With more traditional forms of research, relationships and flows of information tend to be uni-directional; information flows from those being engaged to those orchestrating the engagement and the process is structured and owned by those orchestrating the engagement activities. New technologies are providing new opportunities for citizens to share information in new ways. These tend to be more democratic, less hierarchical and more decentralised.

This category also includes the provision of resources such as time and money and therefore also includes participation in the form of volunteering and donations. These activities are often essential in sustaining social innovation projects.

Examples of methods for providing information and resources include:

- Taking part in qualitative research
- Mapping exercises
- User led research
- Community/participatory mapping and research processes
- Crowdsourcing
- Calls for ideas
- Idea banks
- Volunteering
- Donating time or money

2.1.2 Problem solving

There is also a range of activities which engage citizens with the aim of solving collective problems. Engaging citizens can introduce divergent thinking which is often crucial to problem solving. Diversity of perspectives and knowledge can yield novel and unexpected solutions to complex problems. Also, there are some challenges which cannot be solved without the co-operation, involvement and support of those involved. This is the case, for example, where solutions to particular challenges involve citizens' own activities and behaviours (for example, self management of chronic disease, lifestyle choices around diet and exercise, or consumption choices such as recycling or reducing energy use). These are situations where things can not be done *for* or *to* people but need to be done *with* and *by* them. These activities usually involve more iterative, collaborative relationships between those being engaged and those providing the participatory spaces. People tend to have more influence and power to make and shape decisions. Similarly, flows of information tend to go both ways; with both providers and participants of such activities providing information as part of a deliberative, iterative, process.

Examples of problem solving methods include:

- Competitions and challenge prizes
- Co-design processes
- Positive deviance methods
- Social innovation camps
- Deliberative exercises
- Participatory workshops (Participatory Learning and Action)

2.1.3 Taking and influencing decisions

A third function of citizen engagement in social innovation concerns decision making: citizens can influence the decisions taken by government, business or civil society and they can be involved in decision making processes themselves. There are many ways in which citizens can influence decision making: examples include taking part in a campaign (for example signing a petition, or taking part in a demonstration), lobbying for change around an issue or supporting a cause through consumer behaviour, for example by purchasing fair trade goods. In many cases, these sorts of activities are closely linked to social movements.

There are also a range of activities where citizens are formally involved in decision making processes. This kind of activity usually goes beyond deliberation by giving citizens significant influence or power over decision making processes. In these kinds of activities, citizens tend to have direct involvement in, control or influence over decision making processes and/or the implementation of those decisions. These can be one-off events (such as signing a petition or voting on the allocation of grants) or they can involve on-going forms of interaction (such as formal governance roles within co-operatives or local schools).

Examples for taking and influencing decisions include:

- Campaigning
- Boycotting unethical goods
- Ethical purchasing
- Formal governance roles
- Co-operative models of governance
- Participatory budgeting
- Participatory planning
- Citizen juries
- Citizen panels
- Grant allocations through public voting

2.2 Introducing our case studies

We chose our case studies to illustrate each of these three key functions of citizen engagement within social innovation: providing information and resources, problem solving and taking and influencing decisions. For each of these functions we have developed two case studies. These cases are focused on a specific method of citizen engagement, but they are illustrated by specific examples, either particular projects or instances where the method or approach has been applied,

usually in a specific geographic context. We have limited this paper to exploring six methods because we wanted the opportunity to look at these methods in greater depth than is often the case in snapshot case studies of citizen engagement.

As with the other papers in this series⁹, our specific lens is social innovation; we are not focused on citizen engagement per se, but rather, the ways in which people can be engaged in generating and sustaining social innovations. Some of the examples we showcase might be considered social innovations in their own right (for example, Ushahidi, Family by Family, co-operative schools). Others are not themselves social innovations but are methods of engagement which could (at least in principle) be used to develop or sustain social innovations. And some of the methods which have a longer standing tradition but are nevertheless important in developing new ideas or gathering insights into the needs of citizens. We argue that all the methods we have chosen to highlight here can be used in the development or sustaining of social innovations. However, it is important to stress that the relationship between employing one of these methods and social innovation is highly contingent. Citizen engagement is not the same thing as innovation and none of these methods when applied will automatically lead to or generate new social innovations. For example, not all co-design processes or crowdsourcing projects will generate new solutions to social challenges.

We chose these six methods based on our desk research, exploratory conversations with relevant experts and in consultation with partners in the TEPsIE consortium. Our criteria for selection was to choose methods that:

- are being used extensively or are growing in use
- involve innovative approaches
- would illustrate the broad spectrum of types of activity that are relevant
- would include both online and offline forms of activity

These methods we chose are briefly described below.

2.2.1 Providing information and resources: user led research and crowdsourcing

User led research

User led research describes research processes which are actively directed and managed by service users or, using our terminology, citizens. It has its roots in dissatisfaction with traditional research approaches which are seen to be disempowering for research subjects. In user led research, citizens are involved not just as the subjects of research, but they help to shape the research questions and agenda themselves. Practices vary but user led research can involve citizens at all stages of the research process – from design and data collection to analysis and dissemination. This approach to research not only generates new insights – it also helps to develop the skills of user-researchers.

Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing describes a broad range of activities but broadly, it takes place when the public (as opposed to experts) provides information. Recent years have seen a proliferation of online

⁹ A Davies & J Simon, 'The value and role of citizen engagement in social innovation', A deliverable of the project: "The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe" (TEPSIE), European Commission – 7th Framework Programme, Brussels: European Commission, DG Research, 2013

platforms that provide a simple, low-cost way for large groups of citizens to contribute data about their experiences. These platforms have been used to document a huge range of social and environmental issues. In the civic sphere, FixMyStreet¹⁰ invites users to report potholes, broken street lights and other issues they observe in their neighbourhood. The German platform Wheelmap¹¹ asks citizens to contribute data on the wheelchair accessibility of public locations such as cafes and restaurants in their city.

2.2.2 Problem solving: competitions and co-design

Competitions

Competitions and prizes have long been used to incentivise innovations in the fields of science and technology - from food preservation and navigation in the 18th century to space travel and genetic sequencing in the 20th. Over the past decade foundations and philanthropists have sought to use prizes and competitions to advance innovation in the social field. One example is the collaboration between the Rockefeller Foundation, GlobalGiving and open innovation broker InnoCentive who joined forces in 2010 to launch a competition to find solutions to tackle water related problems in developing countries.¹² Usually, competitions to source new ideas and solutions require citizens to submit a more worked out proposal and often include a commitment from decision makers that a number of winning submissions will receive funding and other support to actually implement the idea.

Co-design

Co-design is a term used in many different contexts, but is usefully defined by Deborah Szebeko and Lauren Tan as “a creative approach that supports and facilitates the democratic involvement of people in addressing social challenges”.¹³ The first stage is diagnosis: co-design processes usually employ ethnographic research methods in order to understand what needs look like – for example, focused observations, mapping user journeys and other forms of visualisation which are used to help participants to identify key issues and develop ideas in response to them. Participants then come together with service providers and others to develop solutions. These workshops require specialist facilitation techniques and therefore co-design is frequently led by an intermediary agency that works with citizens and public sector authorities.

2.2.3 Taking and influencing decisions: participatory budgeting and co-operative governance

Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting directly involves citizens in making decisions about how public money should be spent. Usually, this means involving citizens in identifying spending priorities, making and then voting on proposals about how to spend the budget, and then involving citizens in overseeing and evaluating how the money was spent. The practice emerged in the 1980s in Porto Alegre, Brazil and has since been adopted in many cities and regions around the world, albeit in

¹⁰ <http://www.fixmystreet.com/> Viewed on 3rd April 2013

¹¹ <http://wheelmap.org/en> Viewed on 3rd April 2013

¹² <http://www.innocentive.com/innocentive-globalgiving-and-rockefeller-foundation-advance-open-innovation-solutions-world%E2%80%99s-water> Viewed on 14 August, 2012

¹³ L Tan and D Szebeko, 'Co-designing for dementia: The Alzheimer 100 project', *Australasian Medical Journal*, vol.1:12, 2009, pp. 185-198

very different forms.¹⁴ There have been notable experiments in the UK and Germany which are the subject of our case study.

Co-operative governance

One of the distinctive features of co-operative organisations is their emphasis on democratic governance. Governance refers to the way an organisation distributes power, rights and responsibilities. In co-operatives, members participate in decision making according to the principle of ‘one member, one vote’. Of course there is a continuum of democratic involvement in co-operatives. At one end of the scale, in small cooperatives it might be feasible for all significant decisions to be made by all members. At the other, in a very large retail co-operative member participation might amount to little more than voting at annual general meetings. However, with more than 120 million co-operative members across Europe, this represents a significant source and type of citizen engagement.

Once we had our list of six methods, we used a combination of desk research and interviews to develop a long list of specific cases to illustrate each method. Our final selections sought to ensure a good geographical spread but we were most concerned with selecting the strongest examples of the method in question. In this report, we include examples from Kenya, Rwanda, Brazil, Australia, South Korea, Germany, the UK and the US. The full list of examples is in the table below.

Figure 3 – Methods of citizen engagement in social innovation

Function	Methods	Case studies
Providing information and resources	User led research	Girl Hub, Rwanda Groundswell, UK
	Crowdsourcing	Ushahidi, Kenya I Paid a Bribe, India
Problem solving	Co-design	Flip Yourself, UK Family by Family, Australia
	Competitions	Big Green Challenge, UK Suwon Social Invention Competition, South Korea
Taking and influencing decisions	Participatory budgeting	Tower Hamlets, UK Berlin-Lichtenberg, Germany
	Co-operative governance	Student voice in co-operatives schools, UK Teacher ownership in co-operative schools, Spain

2.3 Methodology

¹⁴ Community Pride Initiative and Oxfam, *Breathing life into democracy: The power of participatory budgeting*, London, 2005

We undertook extensive desk research around each method in order to understand how and why it has emerged. We then researched specific instances of each method in telephone or face to face interviews, using a semi-structured interview guide. All interviews were recorded for analysis and to enable us to use direct quotations where appropriate. The full list of interviewees can be found on page one of this report.

Our methods involve very different types of activity, but we have used a consistent structure to present our findings related to each case study example. In each case we examined the following issues:

- What is the project – Brief description of what the engagement activity involves
- Origins – Where the activity or project came from, any important context and background information
- Key resources – What were the key resources needed to make the activity work?
- Value – How do interviewees describe the value that the approach brings?
- Challenges – What are some of the main difficulties related to trying to implement this activity?
- Outcomes – what has the activity led to and what impact has it had?

PART 1 – PROVIDING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

3. Peer-led research

3.1 What is peer-led research?

The terms 'peer led', 'user led' and 'user controlled' research are often used interchangeably to describe research processes which are directed and conducted by citizens. Traditionally, in research focusing on issues such as homelessness or mental illness, the people experiencing a problem are the objects of the research. In contrast, peer- or user-led research adopts a 'bottom up' approach where those who are members of the target group play an active role in studying their peers. These researchers are treated as experts within their field of experience. Such research highlights the value of experiential knowledge – what people know from 'lived' experience. This has been described by Alison Faulkner and Phil Thomas as 'expertise by experience' in contrast to 'expertise by profession'.¹⁵

As Michael Turner and Peter Beresford highlight, user-led research has links with 'participatory', 'action' and 'empowerment' research, which all involve a close relationship between researcher and the researched.¹⁶ Lisa Baxter, Lisa Thorne and Annie Mitchell define participatory research as "research in which power is shared so that it is carried out 'with' and 'by' lay people rather than 'on' them."¹⁷ However, peer and user led research is distinct from 'participatory' research that simply involves peers or users in data collection; where the term 'led' is used this suggests that citizens are active in all stages of the research process from framing questions to research design to data collection and analysis.

User- and peer-led research provides one way of capturing the direct experience citizens have of particular needs or situations. In some cases, these first hand accounts can be challenging to uncover through more traditional forms of research. Marginalised groups, who might be inaccessible to those using conventional research methods, can be reached by people that they trust. Moreover, if people have participated in a research process, they are more likely to help ensure that its findings are used.

In recent years, user-led research has become more widespread and gained greater acceptance, especially in health and social care in the UK, where service user involvement is recognised as both a right and a way of delivering better outcomes.¹⁸ One recent example of a user led research project is the work of the Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) in exploring the experiences of single parents on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), the main unemployment benefit in the UK. Between 2009 and 2012, SPAN conducted a three-year study in collaboration with academics at the University of the West of England and funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Single parent peer researchers undertook the fieldwork and were interviewed by two academics from the University of the West of England about their experience of conducting research. This approach developed the parents' skills and confidence and enabled detailed exploration of the journeys of other parents currently on JSA.

¹⁵ A Faulkner & P Thomas, 'User-led research and evidence based medicine', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 180:13.

¹⁶ M Turner and P Beresford, *User Controlled Research: its meaning and potential*, Involve, 2005

¹⁷ L Baxter, L Thorne, and A Mitchell, *Small Voices, Big Noises*. Lay involvement in health research: lessons from other fields, Eastleigh, Involve, 2001

¹⁸ B Happell & C Roper, 'Consumer participation in mental health research: articulating a model to guide practice', *Australian Psychiatry*, vol. 15:3, 2007, pp.237-241

In some cases, for instance in the context of mental health service provision, there have been examples of resistance to this approach to research. The involvement of users in research as partners, rather than as subjects, significantly alters power dynamics. Brenda Happell and Cath Roper argue that professionals may feel threatened by the change in power that user led research poses.¹⁹

In this chapter we have selected two case studies which illustrate some of the ways that peer-led research is currently being practiced across different contexts.

CASE STUDIES

3.2 Girl Hub, Rwanda



3.2.1 Origins

Girl Hub is a strategic collaboration between the Nike Foundation and the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), working to scale the 'girl effect.' The girl effect is about enabling the unique potential of adolescent girls to end poverty for themselves, their families and their communities. It aims to make girls visible and expand their social and economic environment by equipping them with specific and relevant resources.

In 2010, Girl Hub commissioned Restless Development, a youth-led development agency in partnership with a research organisation, to carry out a research project to better understand Rwandan girls' experiences, perceptions and realities. The intention was to use this to develop initiatives to catalyse the "girl effect." The peer-led approach was designed to enable girls to talk

¹⁹ B Happell & C Roper, 'Consumer participation in mental health research: articulating a model to guide practice', *Australian Psychiatry*, 15(3), 2007, p.237-241.

about the issues that were important to them. Alongside the fieldwork, a documentary film about the research process was made by Grain Media.

Who participated and how?

Local project partners recruited 30 researchers (aged 16-18 years) across three research locations. These locations were chosen to cover a range of urban and rural communities: Kigali (the capital city), Gitarama, (a regional town in Southern province), and Bugesera (a rural district in the Eastern Province). The interviewees also included a mix of 'in school' and 'out of school' girls, girls with diverse socio-demographic backgrounds and those with personal experiences of a number of issues including rape, domestic violence, early co-habitation/marriage and early pregnancy.²⁰

The selected girls were involved in decision-making about research topics, participants, and tailoring the methods to make them locally appropriate. The research process was conducted in three stages: training, supported fieldwork and analysis.

The training stage ensured that girls had the capability and confidence to lead and design the research process. Five one-day training programmes were held in each location. The aims of the training were to: build confidence and self-esteem, build relationships, involve girls in decisions about the research process, develop research skills including techniques for interviews and recording data.

Each researcher carried out six interviews: two with young girls aged 12-15 years; two with girls the same age (16-18); and two with adults (one male and one female).²¹ The researchers were mentored during the fieldwork by female research assistants through regular meetings and one-to-one support. At mentoring meetings feedback was gathered about interview experiences and group problem-solving activities were organised to address challenges faced. This encouraged an iterative approach to the research and initiated the analysis process.

The researchers were involved in data analysis to ensure their perspectives were included in making sense of the information they had gathered. This involved reporting back in detail on their findings and interpreting them, drawing on their own experiences as girls in Rwanda. Data generated on each research topic was organised by age group. Group discussions were used to explore points of contention and areas of particular interest. Following this, the researchers created key messages for each topic, based on the most important findings. At the end of the process, the researchers evaluated their experience of doing the research.

3.2.2 Key resources

The role of local partner organisations in each location was essential to the viability of the project. The organisations recruited included Voluntary Services Overseas Rwanda (VSO Rwanda), Help Life Rwanda, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and Right to Play Rwanda. These partners facilitated access to communities, made introductions to key stakeholders, provided logistical support with training venues, and acted as a referral point for the researchers. Restless

²⁰ Restless Development and Bell and Payne Consulting, 'State of Girls in Rwanda', January 2011. Available online at <http://www.restlessdevelopment.org/file/girlhub-01062011-pdf>

²¹ 178 interviews were conducted in total.

Development also allocated two of their staff from their country offices in Zimbabwe and South Africa who had been involved in peer-led research projects previously to act as research assistants, supporting the girls throughout the process.

Ruth Edmonds from the research organisation Bell & Payne Consulting emphasises the importance of ensuring the right infrastructure was in place to deal with any issues that came up for the girls as they did the research. Because of the nature of the issues they were researching, the girls were often taken into confidence about sensitive issues such as pregnancy, and it was essential that had access to proper advice channels so that they knew what to do and how to respond.

Ben Gallagher, Director on Insights from the Nike Foundation, adds that time was also a major resource. "It was necessary to carve out the time needed to train and work with peer researchers. It also took time to build up relationships with trusted local community leaders, after the girl participants were selected" he comments. As Ruth Edmonds notes, to identify all the relevant actors you need to "start with the girls, and work outwards to identify who makes sense for them to work with".²²

3.2.3 Value of peer-led research

Girl Hub wanted to better understand what girls think, feel and believe to develop interventions that are effective and meaningful to the girls themselves. Gallagher explains that the peer research approach enabled them to generate a greater depth of understanding, because they were able to access the girls' experiences more directly. He comments, "All of our work is insight driven, and we start with speaking to girls themselves to understand her needs. It is important for young people to speak to their peers, so they can more easily understand each other, taking away any barriers that might come with other individuals trying to talk to teenage girls."²³ Edmonds explains that having the girls lead the process enabled the research to access the girls' own relationships and to build on their established networks of trust. However, she also stresses that the depth of understanding that was achieved through this research process was rooted in the ethnographic approach that they adopted, not just the peer-led aspect.

Another major source of value of a peer-led approach is the way that it offers the potential to build lasting relationships with a group of people an organisation may want to work with in the future. Combining this with the ethnographic approach (which as Edmonds says "is all about building relationships") can be really valuable.

The peer-led research approach also brought with it a number of benefits for the participants themselves which were captured in the participatory evaluations conducted at the end of the process. Edmonds notes that it's important that skills gained are aligned to the girls' lives, commenting "it's not enough to say – 'you're going to learn a bunch of research techniques' because the girls might have really limited opportunities to put these into practice again".²⁴ Instead it's important to think about value that will be really useful to them which is centred on building relationships and new networks. She explains that the girls were able to develop confidence to talk to people they might not have been able to approach before. She also highlights that the research process provided a forum for the girls to talk about issues related to sexual health and relationships and the training workshops that they ran often became a place girls could talk about their problems.

²² Interview with Ruth Edmonds, May 21, 2013

²³ Interview with Ben Gallagher, May 10 2013

²⁴ Interview with Ruth Edmonds, May 21 2013

3.2.4 Challenges

Ben Gallagher acknowledges that while the peer-led approach is really exciting, it does pose some challenges. In the Girl Hub project, the key considerations were around girl safeguarding. It was very important to ensure the safety of the girls participating in the research. It is imperative to all Girl Hub projects that the girls participate only after explicit consent is granted. Gallagher also notes that there were particular risks considering the kind of content the girls were discussing. The project leaders needed to think about how they could limit any risks, for example if girls were discussing a sensitive issue with a community elder and there was potential for misinterpretation. These considerations meant that although the project was interested in girls between 13 and 18, the sample of peer researchers tended to be on the older side.

There are also issues related to being able to access peer researchers who offer a fresh perspective. One of the difficulties in being reliant on partner agencies to find participants is that the girls the agencies put forward are likely to already be participants in their programmes, which means they may have been involved in research projects many times before. Although it was not a concern for the Girl Hub work more generally, Gallagher notes that there is a risk that local agencies will try to leverage their own agendas and messages through the participants that they select.

Edmonds also highlights that although working with peer researchers can get you closer to people's lives and real issues, there is still an issue around representation. As she explains, "you might still miss the really 'hard to reach' groups with peer research because you tend to get people who are articulate and really want to be intellectually challenged and involved in their communities".²⁵ In fact, it might be those who do not want to get involved who could offer really valuable insights.

3.2.5 Outcomes

The research gave Girl Hub Rwanda an understanding of Rwandan girls' relationship to the concept of self-worth. Girl Hub Rwanda is now a catalyst organization that aims to enable Rwanda's one million adolescent girls to fulfil their potential. Programmes include the 12+—a mentorship and safe space programme that will reach all 12 year old girls in the country within five years; and Ni Nyampinga—a magazine and radio show for girls, by girls.

3.3 Groundswell, UK²⁶

²⁵ Interview with Ruth Edmonds, May 21 2013

²⁶ Many thanks to Simone Hellenen for speaking to us about Groundswell's work.



Homeless Peoples Commission in action at Groundswell – image courtesy of Groundswell

3.3.1 What is Groundswell?

Groundswell is a charity that helps homeless people take more control of their lives and have a greater influence on the way services are designed and delivered.²⁷ The charity runs a range of peer-led research projects with the majority of work delivered by people with personal experience of homelessness and social exclusion. Groundswell's research includes the 'Escape Plan' which identified the critical success factors that have enabled people to successfully move on from homelessness, and the 'Homeless People's Commission' which brought people with experience of rough sleeping together with policy makers.²⁸ Groundswell's philosophy is that "the only way to successfully tackle homelessness is by utilising the knowledge and expertise of people affected by these issues".²⁹ Lived experience of homelessness and service provision brings with it a unique insight. The aim of this approach is to create more effective services while helping people to regain their independence.

Figure 4 – Groundswell principles

Groundswell's core beliefs:

Homeless people are not the problem – they must be part of the solution
 Homeless people hold the key to solutions in their experience and knowledge
 Homeless people have a right to information to make choices about their own lives

Groundswell's key aims:

²⁷ <http://www.groundswell.org.uk/>. Sourced on 26th March 2013

²⁸ <http://www.groundswell.org.uk/the-escape-plan.html>. A short film which was made about the Homeless People's Commission can be seen here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp7fzhRnJOI>). Sourced on 26th March 2013

²⁹ <http://www.groundswell.org.uk/> Sourced on 26th March 2013.

Enable homeless people to set up and run their own projects
 Increase homeless people's influence in policy and decision making
 Increase homeless people's meaningful involvement in the services they use

3.3.2 Origins

Groundswell started as a campaigning project inside a larger homelessness agency, the National Homeless Alliance, in the mid-1990s. Its peer research work began in 2002. Following the 2002 Homelessness Act, there was a duty on local authorities to involve people who had experienced homelessness in developing strategies to respond to it. Groundswell has since worked with many local authorities in England to involve homeless people in their Local Authority's Homelessness Strategies. Simone Hellenen, Director of Development at Groundswell comments that the organisation has evolved from what she describes as a 'shouty' organisation focused only on the message that homeless people need a voice, to one which now works with all stakeholders to try to bring about effective strategies to tackle homelessness.³⁰

The Escape Plan seeks to answer the question, "how do you actually move on from homelessness?" After making it through the initial stages of funding bids, two workshops were held, one with a group of researchers who had moved on from homelessness and one with a group of research subjects who had also moved on from homelessness, to further flesh out the methodology, and begin defining key terms such as what constitutes 'moving on'. The work was funded by the Trust for London and the Ashden Trust. The researchers helped to identify a list of seven critical factors that were important for being able to move on from homelessness, such as being involved in group activities such as training or volunteering, and being supported by social networks of friends and family.

Who participated and how?

The research was conducted by two peer researchers under the guidance of Mike Seal, Head of Youth and Community work and Principal Lecturer at Newman University College, Birmingham. The researchers were employed on a part-time basis for nine months. Both had significant personal experience of homelessness. The research methods used during the project were developed with them over a five day training programme. Techniques for interviewing the participants were piloted by conducting test interviews with the peer researchers and five others. As part of the project, the researchers also gained a Foundation Certificate in Qualitative Research from the Association of Qualitative Researchers.

Research participants were recruited through two Big Issue advertisements, a Radio 4 interview, homelessness services, and other Groundswell networks. From the applicants, 25 people were selected who had been homeless and had moved on (Escapees). In addition, interviews were held with up to two people (significant others) connected to each Escapee to corroborate, verify and offer a different perspective on their accounts. This multi-dimensional approach was used to gain as full a picture as possible. Following the interviews a series of three focus groups were held to review the findings, one with Escapees, one with Significant Others, and one mixed group. The researchers then delivered 10 workshops to over 200 homeless people in London at a range of hostels and day centres. Two workshops were also run for professionals working in the homelessness sector at the Homeless Link Annual Conference.

³⁰ Interview with Simone Hellenen, December 2012

3.3.3 Key resources

Simone highlighted the role that good facilitation plays in peer-led research. Facilitators need to explain complexity in simple terms, while keeping everyone well informed by being explicit about aims and believing in people's potential and ability to do research. As much as possible, researchers are paid for their time and expenses (which often need to be paid in advance). They are also offered other forms of support to help them deal with the aspects of their lives that make it difficult for them to participate.

3.3.4 Value of peer-led research approach

One type of value of using peer-led research relates to the quality of interactions that characterise the research. Because the question guides and focus group outlines are tested with people who have experienced homelessness, the peer researchers are able to have conversations with homeless individuals "on a level that they recognise". For participants, it is also very empowering to be able to recognise that the researcher they are interacting with has had a similar experience. This gives them a sense that they could also be "on the other side" and eliminates any sense of "them and us".³¹

Another key value of peer led research is the nature of the solutions that can come out of this way of doing research. Simone comments, "I think we're very stuck in a way of thinking about how we go about helping people. It's not possible for people who haven't had experience to come up with anything new and worth trying without the input of people who are currently experiencing that phenomena."³² In her view, involvement of homeless people is not an added benefit to a research process, but rather the only way the issue can be properly understood and effective solutions can be developed.

Clients who have worked with Groundswell also note how the research approach gives them much greater insight into issues they want to understand. For example, Groundswell worked on a three year research project for Women Like Us on issues for working mothers. Women Like Us commented that the research "gave us a wider perspective on the questions we were trying to ask than just academic research" and "in the peer research process, women open up to each other far more than they do perhaps to an academic researcher. It gave us a much deeper sense of some of the issues we were trying to understand".³³

3.3.5 Challenges

Simone explained that Groundswell's funding is project based and it does not have the throughput of work to sustain a full time team of peer researchers. This can be problematic as many of the people Groundswell works with have been unemployed for a long time and freelance work does not usually provide enough income for participants to move off benefits.

Peer led research can be emotionally difficult for participants because it requires them to investigate something they have experienced themselves. This needs to be addressed with sensitivity and support. As part of the Escape Plan project, the researchers attended a training

³¹ Interview with Simone Hellenen, December 2012

³² Interview with Simone Hellenen, December 2012

³³ Feedback to Groundswell from Women Like Us; email communication with Simone Hellenen, May 29 2013

programme which teaches skills in self-reflection using techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy. This was designed to better equip the researchers to cope with the issues raised by revisiting their own experiences of homelessness.

Perceptions of the risks associated with peer led research can also present barriers. Simone noted that service providers can be sceptical and nervous about involving service users in research. To address this issue, Groundswell uses a steering group model to get everyone together and on board at the beginning of a project and to oversee the whole process. This group is made up of a mixture of service users, frontline staff and senior managers.

3.3.6 Outcomes

St Mungo's, one of the UK's largest homeless charities, has embedded the Escape Plan into its core work. It uses the concepts of the Escape Plan, adapted and developed through various training modules, to promote both recovery and emotional resilience. Rather than using the language of psychology or psychoanalysis, it uses non-technical language which is easy to understand. Groundswell has also used findings from the research to work with the umbrella organisation Homeless Link to develop a training program for staff in the sector.

Recommendations emerging from Groundswell's work with London boroughs to inform their homelessness strategy have also been impactful. For example, the London Borough of Croydon has implemented a number of the recommendations that came out of the peer led research work, such as setting up a rent deposit scheme and a mentoring programme for homeless individuals in the borough.³⁴

3.4 Peer-led research: issues to consider

3.4.1 A tool for empowerment

The positive outcomes of peer-led research are not only the content of specific research findings, but also the longer term impacts on the individuals involved. Simone Hellereen at Groundswell highlighted that it can be inspiring and encouraging for those involved as subjects in the research to recognise that peer researchers have had the same experiences. Sometimes, it can be a catalyst to further change. For example, some of the women involved in a participatory research project conducted with Women Like Us are now meeting independently to start a peer network and a peer support development tool. Simone explains: "That's really what we wanted to see, that being involved in a participatory research project with us is what enables people to go off and start things themselves."³⁵ Similarly, Edmonds explains that in many of the youth-led research projects she has designed and run, evaluations have shown that young people find the experience of being a peer researcher very valuable. In a recent youth-led peer research project looking at poverty and inequality in Shetland in the UK, the young people reported that the experience of conducting interviews and presenting their findings and running group sessions had boosted their confidence

³⁴ Feedback to Groundswell from London Borough of Croydon; email communication with Simone Hellereen, May 29 2013

³⁵ Interview with Simone Hellereen, December 2012

and provided them with opportunities to build relationships by facilitating conversations with adults and other young people.³⁶

3.4.2 Peer research requires a high level of commitment

One of the reasons peer-led research can be particularly challenging is the level of responsibility that it places on the agency or institution that initiates the process. Ideally when doing this kind of work, there should be a plan in place for how to support the peer researchers once the project has come to an end. But often that requires a level of commitment to a group of people that the agency might not be ready to make (for example, peer research might be the very first stage of deciding whether and how to work in an area). Given that working with peer researchers “tends to create expectations of action, even if you don’t mean to”, it might be a less appropriate tool for those agencies who are not yet ready to commit to an area or community for the medium to long term.³⁷ As explored in the case studies above, the time required to train up peer researchers and to ensure the right supports are in place for them means that it is only likely to make sense as an approach where there are significant resources.

3.4.3 What are the limits of peer research?

If research is genuinely going to be led by users or peers, then they must be involved in every stage including planning. This is indicated by Faulkner and Nicholls’ definition, “user-led research means that service users get the opportunity to ask the questions as well as to design and carry out the research”.³⁸ A research project where the questions and agenda has already been set and the role of users or peers is to execute the research cannot be said to be led by them – it might be more accurately described as peer or user ‘centred’ research. Giving users or peers this level of control will require the commissioning group to be genuinely open about how they want to proceed and what they want to focus on. In the case of the Nike Foundation work, Bell & Payne advised Nike that rather than begin with a list of topics they wanted to research (for example teenage pregnancy, sex and relationships) they should leave it to the girls to define the list of research areas. This will require a degree of flexibility and willingness on the part of research commissioners to adapt the scope of research following input from users or peers.

It can also be challenging for research to be genuinely user or peer led at the back end – at the analysis stage. Although projects often find ways to involve users/peers in analysing findings – for example, creating core themes or key messages coming out of research work, on its own this might not provide detailed enough analysis. Edmonds highlights that even where she has worked with peers/users on analysis, typically she needs to apply a level of extra analysis on top of what participants have developed. This emphasises that skills associated with high quality research work cannot be easily learnt in a very short period of time and most projects will require some research expertise alongside the work of peers or users.

³⁶ Bell & Payne Consulting ‘A youth-led participatory investigation into poverty, social exclusion and inequality in Shetland’, Final Report, 6th December 2011

³⁷ Interview with Ruth Edmonds, May 21 2013

³⁸ A Faulkner & V Nicholls, *The DIY Guide to Survivor Research: Everything you always wanted to know about survivor-led research but were afraid to ask*, London, The Mental Health Foundation, 2002

4. Crowdsourcing

4.1 What is crowdsourcing?

Crowdsourcing is the umbrella term for a broad range of relatively diverse activities. The term was first coined by Jeff Howe who defined crowdsourcing as “the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call. This can take the form of peer production (when the job is performed collaboratively), but is also often undertaken by sole individuals.”³⁹ It is based on the premise that we’re more intelligent together than alone - a notion popularised by James Surowiecki in his book *The Wisdom of Crowds*.⁴⁰

Crowdsourcing takes place when the public (as opposed to experts) provide information. The key features of this new model of production and problem solving are that it is open, online and distributed. In this sense, crowdsourcing is related to the concepts of co-creation,⁴¹ open innovation⁴² and user innovation.⁴³ Both open innovation and user innovation involve opening up the innovation process to users and consumers. This might involve crowdsourcing - namely mining the crowd for information and solutions. However, user innovation and open innovation differ from crowdsourcing in that they focus on the innovation process whereas crowdsourcing does not necessarily involve innovation. Unlike crowdsourcing, co-creation and user innovation tend to focus on ‘key consumers’ or ‘lead users’ rather than the crowd per se.

A number of authors have tried to classify or categorise different forms of crowdsourcing. Daren Brabham, for example, identifies four forms of crowdsourcing: knowledge discovery and management (e.g. Peer-to-Patent Community Patent Review); broadcast search (e.g. InnoCentive); peer-vetted creative production (e.g. Threadless), and distributed human intelligence tasking (e.g. Amazon's Mechanical Turk).⁴⁴ Similarly, Howe draws a distinction between: crowd wisdom (similar to broadcast search above), crowd creation (similar to peer-vetted creative production), crowd voting (such as Threadless); and crowd funding (for example Kick Starter).⁴⁵

Another typology, put forward by Eric Schenk and Claude Guittard, distinguishes between integrative and selective crowdsourcing. For the former, “the goal is to pool vast amounts of complementary information from a large number of users” such as Open Street Map or Ushahidi (see below). Here, the individual pieces of data have very little value. However, when brought together, these pieces of information can be very powerful indeed: they can provide accurate, real time information about critical situations, highlight patterns of social need, raise awareness of ongoing and pressing social challenges and lead to the development of new solutions. For selective crowdsourcing, “the goal is to identify and select input from competing users.” This may, for example, take the form of a competition such as Nesta’s Green Challenge or those published

³⁹ J Howe, quoted in E Schenk and C Guittard, ‘Towards a characterisation of crowdsourcing practices, *Journal of Innovation Economics*, 2011/1, no.7. pp. 93-107

⁴⁰ J Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, New York, Doubleday, 2004

⁴¹ CK Prahalad & V Ramaswamy, ‘Co-Creation Experiences: The next practice in value creation’. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18 (3) 5-14. Wiley Periodicals, 2004

⁴² H Chesbrough, ‘Open Innovation’, Boston, MA, HBS Press, 2003.

⁴³ E Von Hippel, ‘Democratising Innovation’, Cambridge, MA/London, MIT Press, 2005

⁴⁴ D Brabham, ‘Crowdsourcing: A model for leveraging online communities’ in A Delwiche and J. J. Henderson (eds.), *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*, New York, Routledge, 2013

⁴⁵ J Howe, *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business*. Crown Publishing, New York, 2009

through the InnoCentive platform. (We will discuss competitions later in this paper.) Here, however, we are interested in integrative crowdsourcing and in particular, the ways in which the collective intelligence of the crowd can be harnessed, and brought together, to tackle pressing social challenges.

Is crowdsourcing a form of participation?

Traditionally, and especially as it is meant in the corporate world, crowdsourcing involves ‘sourcing’ information from users and consumers. This suggests a particular form of engagement; corporate organisations provide the platform, direct the form of engagement and ultimately decide what to do with consumers’ inputs. The information received may or may not be made available to others.

In the social field, crowdsourcing tends to be more open and less directed. Usually, the platform is provided by an organisation, group or network of individuals, citizens provide information voluntarily and this information is then free and available for anyone else to use and build upon. This form of crowdsourcing is often enabled by open source software and embodies its principles.⁴⁶ In some cases, organisations or networks simply provide the technological infrastructure which citizens can then use to build their own platforms. This is the case, for example, with Ushahidi which provides free and open source platforms for live collaborative multi-media mapping. Given that this form of crowdsourcing tends to be led by citizens rather than organisations, and is more horizontal than hierarchical, it could be argued that this is not a form of citizen engagement, but rather a form of citizen action and therefore beyond the scope of our current enquiry. However, these activities rely on large numbers of individual citizens providing information. As such we believe that this is a form of engagement.

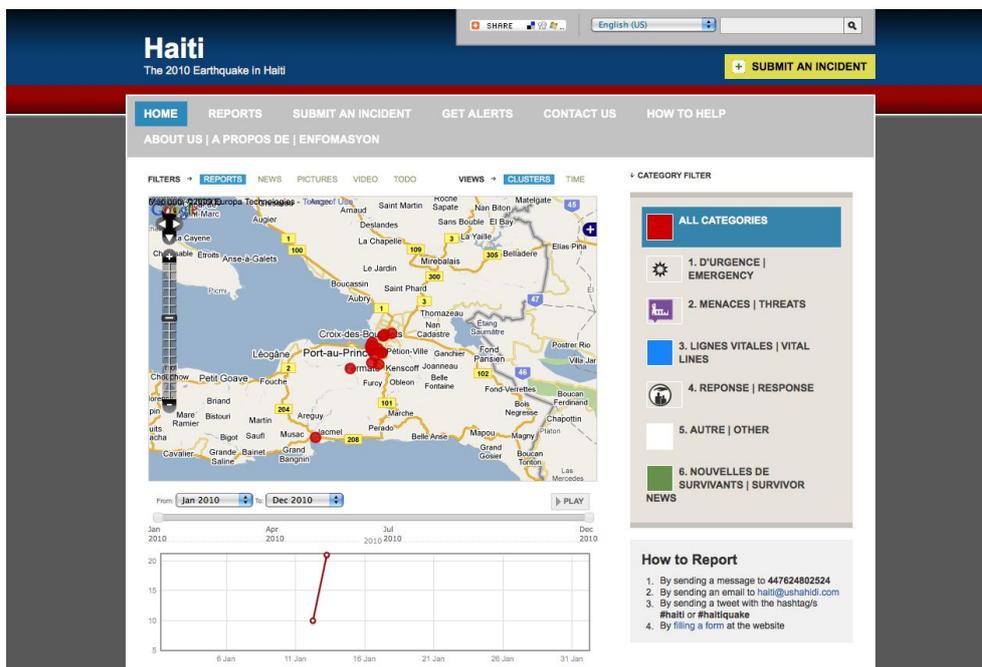
The kind of information that citizens provide through crowdsourcing tends to be specific to the individual, geographically specific, non-expert, and is often delivered in real or near to real time. When this information is collected, combined and aggregated it can provide invaluable insights. Already, there are crowdsourcing platforms which hope to cure diseases (Cure Together and Cancer Commons), campaign against corruption (I paid a bribe), raise awareness and combat social exclusion (Wheelmap) and provide data about emerging crises in real time to support the work of humanitarian and disaster relief agencies (Ushahidi). Some of the information collected through these platforms can lead to the development of social innovations; others are examples of social innovation themselves. In this chapter we focus on the method of crowdsourcing to explore some of the benefits of sourcing information in this way and the challenges of doing so.

CASE STUDIES

4.2 Ushahidi, Kenya⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Software that is ‘open source’ is owned by no-one (and therefore free to distribute), can be amended by anyone (as long as they have basic programming skills) and can be used by everyone.

⁴⁷ This case study is based on desk research and in particular the paper by Ory Okolloh charting the early development of Ushahidi and an interview with Patrick Meier, co-founder of Crisis Mappers Network.



The Ushahidi platform being used in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake 2010, Image courtesy of Ushahidi.com

4.2.1 What is Ushahidi?

Ushahidi, which means ‘testimony’ in Swahili, is a free and open source platform for live collaborative multi-media mapping. It was set up in Kenya by a group of citizen journalists during the post election violence of 2008 to map incidents of violence across the country. According to founder Ory Okolloh, “the idea behind the website was to harness the benefits of crowdsourcing information (using a large group of people to report on a story) and facilitate the sharing of information in an environment where rumours and uncertainty were dominant.”⁴⁸ It has now been deployed in numerous crisis settings, most notably Haiti, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Afghanistan.

Ushahidi now provides three main products: the Ushahidi platform (a tool for crowdsourcing information from multiple channels – e.g. SMS, email, social media tools etc.); Swift River (an open source platform for filtering and making sense of the information collected); and Crowdmap (the hosted version of the Ushahidi platform). These platforms are being used to map and make sense of many different kinds of events, incidents and activities across the globe. Recent deployments – or maps – include crowdsourcing women’s tech organisations in Africa, health food restaurants in Korea as well as Design Week NYC. We are particularly interested in the way the Ushahidi platform can be used as a tool to collect information from the ‘crowd’ and visualise data to support the work of humanitarian and disaster relief organisations.

⁴⁸ O Okolloh, ‘Ushahidi, or ‘testimony’: Web 2.0 tools for crowdsourcing crisis information’ in *Participatory Learning and Action*, Change at hand: Web 2.0 for development, no. 59, 2009

4.2.2 Origins

Immediately after the election in 2007, the Kenyan Government imposed a ban on live media, fearing further violence on ethnic lines. In the media vacuum that followed, Ory Okolloh thought “how useful it would be to have a dedicated website where people could anonymously report about incidents of violence online or via mobile phone text messages (SMS) – and if this information could be mapped so that people could visualise what was going on.”⁴⁹

The first Ushahidi site was built by roughly 15-20 developers, using open source software and it was launched without any funding: “There was no funding for the website at the time – everything was done by volunteers, from donating server space, writing the code, donating the short code for SMS calls and helping gather the initial data to helping spread the word.”⁵⁰ On launching, the site attracted more than 250 people and by the time the violence had calmed down, more than 45,000 Kenyans had used the platform to share information. It was an extraordinary success. As Randy Newcomb, President and CEO of Humanity United explained, “In Kenya, Ushahidi demonstrated the power of geographically mapping real-time citizen reports and crisis-related information to help civilians avoid conflict.”

The founders believed that Ushahidi could be useful beyond Kenya’s borders, especially in crisis situations: “Our view was that Ushahidi could in the future help local and international NGOs working in crisis situations: from early conflict warning to tracking a crisis situation as it evolves and facilitating response.”⁵¹ The initial platform was re-built with funding from Humanity United – and the platform is now “a tool that any person or organisation can use to set up their own way to collect and visualise information.”⁵²

Who participates and how?

Participants (or rather, those who contribute information to the Ushahidi deployments) are people on the ground – witnessing incidents and providing information about the crisis they are experiencing as it unfolds. This reporting is done through text messages, emails and social media tools (such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and others).

How does it work? One example is the Ushahidi-Haiti project set up within hours of the earthquake on 12th January 2010. Soon after the earthquake, “organizations were able to borrow a short message service (SMS) short code phone number (Mission 4636) to send free SMS texts. News of this free emergency number was spread through local and national radio stations.”⁵³ People were then able to submit reports via text messages. According to the independent evaluation of the Ushahidi-Haiti project, between 40,000 and 60,000 reports were processed through UHP/Mission 4636 and over 3,500 events were mapped in Haiti. Almost 80% of these events were mapped in the first month following the earthquake.⁵⁴

It should also be noted that anonymity is often essential for people to be able to contribute to the various deployments. Ushahidi do not track demographic or other information about the people

⁴⁹ Ibid., p 65

⁵⁰ Ibid., p 66

⁵¹ Ibid., p 67

⁵² Ibid., p 67

⁵³ H Gao, G Barbier, R Goolsby, "Harnessing the Crowdsourcing Power of Social Media for Disaster Relief, 2011

⁵⁴ N Morrow, N Mock, A Papendieck, N Kocmich, Independent Evaluation of the Haiti Project, DISI – Development Information Systems International, 2011

that contribute to the various deployments. There are therefore inherent challenges with finding out exactly who participates.

4.2.3 Key resources

Ushahidi relies on volunteers to crowdsource the information which is used to populate the maps and volunteers to contribute to and develop the Ushahidi platform. To use the platform, participants need an internet connection to send images, tweets or emails or a mobile phone connection to send text messages. In the past, the need for connectivity may have excluded many people from participating, but given the recent uptake of mobile phones and 3G in developing countries, this is now less of a barrier. Based on the early experiences of Ushahidi in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the following need to be in place for successful deployments: good internet connectivity, a point person or organisation on the ground, an active and connected blogging community to raise local awareness and translation services or local language versions of maps.⁵⁵

4.2.4 Value of crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing is integral to the Ushahidi project and in this context provides a number of benefits. First, the more information that people contribute the better will be the overall understanding of the situation. As Okolloh argues, "Information in a crisis is a patchwork of sources. You can only hope to build up a full picture by having as many sources as possible."⁵⁶

Second, using web 2.0 technologies, this information is released in near real-time. As Okolloh explains, "The Ushahidi website was not intended to be wholly accurate and certainly there was no intention to achieve the standards e.g. of a mainstream newspaper or a human rights reporting organisation – *the main focus was the immediate need to get information out* [emphasis added]."⁵⁷ This is highly relevant in crisis situations where real time information can help disaster response and humanitarian organisations to target aid and other interventions more effectively and more quickly.

Making this kind of information available also helps the local community to identify urgent issues and respond quickly. Patrick Meier, co-founder of the Crisis Mappers Network and former Director of Crisis Mapping at Ushahidi, argues that crisis mapping can empower local communities to take more effective action, "citizens and local communities are by definition the first responders. So there is huge value in rallying local communities and citizens to share information on how they've been impacted, what their priorities are and doing so in near real time by social media or other new digital technology."⁵⁸

4.2.5 Challenges

Even though crowdsourcing enables a vast amount of information to be collected in near real time – which is vital in crisis situations – crowdsourcing in this context is not unproblematic. As

⁵⁵ Ibid., p 67

⁵⁶ Ibid., p 65

⁵⁷ Ibid., p 65

⁵⁸ Interview with Patrick Meier, 4th March 2013

technologies improve and new ones are developed, more and more information can be collected. The volume of data presents a series of challenges. Patrick Meier notes that Hurricane Sandy in 2012 generated 20 million tweets and half a million Instagram pictures in the space of several days. He suggests that this represents “a volume and velocity of information that emergency responders and disaster response organisations are completely unprepared to deal with – how do you make sense of that information? How do you find that proverbial needle in the haystack when that haystack is millions of puzzle pieces that you have to make sense of in a relatively short period of time?”⁵⁹

Another challenge of crowdsourcing is information verification. How do you ensure the quality and accuracy of the data? Specific challenges to overcome are false reporting and incorrect geo-tagging. This issue becomes ever more pressing as the amount of data generated increases – as Big Crisis Data is generated. As Meier points out, “So, you’ve found the relevant needle but how do you know it’s correct and can you make decisions based on this information?”⁶⁰

A third challenge is encouraging participation. This issue has been raised by a number of critics, most notably Dead Ushahidi, a website which tracks Ushahidi platforms which have experienced little or no use.⁶¹ However, as others have pointed out, the fact that there are maps which are not well populated does not mean that the entire Ushahidi endeavour is not successful - it simply points to the importance of an effective engagement strategy for eliciting contributions.⁶² This is echoed by Okolloh who explains that “we do realise that it is a tool and not a solution. Our goal is to create the best tool possible to help make sense of emerging situations and to develop web and mobile tools that can help with visualisation and decision-making on where and how to deploy aid and other forms of assistance.”⁶³

Obstacles to overcome include a lack of connectivity but there are equally challenging issues around cultural contexts, attitudes and behaviours. When the Ushahidi platform was deployed in DRC, for example, there were significant issues relating to a lack of trust which meant that the local population were reticent to contribute information. As Okolloh explains, “Unlike in Kenya, in DRC people are not used to a culture of free press – nor of people asking for their opinion. Most importantly, there is a huge lack of trust as well as concerns about reprisals if people are targeted for making reports.”

4.2.6 Outcomes

Since its inception in 2008, there have been more than 20,000 deployments globally. It has been used to coordinate responses to a wide range of events - in Mexican elections to report problems at polling stations to the electoral commission, to gather information about harassment in Egypt, to report flooding in Australia and fires in Russia. It demonstrates the potential and power of crowdsourcing to provide near real time information that can be used to develop effective solutions and interventions.

⁵⁹ Interview with Patrick Meier, 4th March 2013

⁶⁰ Interview with Patrick Meier, 4th March 2013

⁶¹ <https://deadushahidi.crowdmap.com/main>

⁶² D Eaves, Ushahidi and the Long Tail of Mapping for Social Change, July 2012. Sourced on 6th March 2013 <http://techpresident.com/news/wegov/22533/how-use-maps-change-ushahidi>

⁶³ O Okolloh, ‘Ushahidi, or ‘testimony’: Web 2.0 tools for crowdsourcing crisis information’ in Participatory Learning and Action, Change at hand: Web 2.0 for development, no. 59, 2009, pg. 69

There have been a few independent evaluations of Ushahidi deployments. One evaluation of the Ushahidi Haiti Project (UHP) concluded that the project represented “an impressive proof of concept for the application of crisis mapping and crowdsourcing to large scale catastrophes and a novel approach to the rapidly evolving field of crisis informatics.”⁶⁴ In particular, it found that “The UHP addressed key information gaps (1) in the very early period of the response during the first days and weeks post-quake before [the] UN and other large organizations were operational, (2) by providing situational awareness and critical early information with a relatively high degree of geographic precision, (3) by providing situational information for smaller NGOs that did not have a field presence in Haiti, (4) by helping smaller, privately funded responses to more appropriately target needs and, (5) by facilitating private citizen actors.”⁶⁵

4.3 I Paid a Bribe, India⁶⁶

The I Paid a Bribe platform. Image from <http://democracyspot.net/2012/09/14/i-paid-a-bribe-so-what/>

4.3.1 What is I Paid a Bribe?

Ipaidabribe.com is a website, set up by non-profit organisation Janaagraha in 2010, to harness the collective energy of citizens to tackle corruption in public services in India. The site collects citizens’ reports about the ‘nature, number, pattern, types, location, frequency and values of actual corrupt acts’ in specific locations. Citizens can contribute in a number of ways. They can provide reports about bribes they paid, bribes they resisted and instances where they received a public service without paying a bribe, that is, when they encountered ‘honest officers’. There is also a ‘bribe

⁶⁴ N Morrow, N Mock, A Papendieck, N Kocmich, Independent Evaluation of the Haiti Project, DISI – Development Information Systems International, 2011

⁶⁵ N Morrow, N Mock, A Papendieck, N Kocmich, Independent Evaluation of the Haiti Project, DISI – Development Information Systems International, 2011

⁶⁶ This case study is based on desk research but we would like to thank Joylita Saldanha from the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy who provided comments and additional information.

hotline’ for people to ask advice about rules and regulations, how to avoid paying bribes, how to deal with corrupt officers, and so on. The idea is that together, these reports will provide a snapshot of bribery and corruption in a particular locality.

The information collected through the site is then used to advocate for changes in governance and accountability processes. Janaagraha collate the information generated through the site into two types of reports: citizen reports (in order to help citizens avoid bribery) and reports for government agencies (which identify particularly corrupt teams or departments within public institutions and often contain recommendations for reforms to rules and procedures). The government reports are used as the basis for discussions between government officials and Janaagraha. In some cases, the ability to pinpoint corruption to a particular department can be a powerful force for change. The site has now been replicated in Pakistan, Kenya, Greece and Zimbabwe.⁶⁷

4.3.2 Origins

I Paid a Bribe is a project set up and run by Janaagraha, a non profit organisation which works with citizens to improve the quality of life of Indian cities and towns. It focuses on developing India’s urban infrastructure (e.g. road, drains, traffic, transport and water supply) and supporting citizenship, and in particular, promoting citizen engagement in public governance. The idea for I Paid a Bribe was conceived by Janagraaha's founders Swati and Ramesh Ramanathan who were concerned by the debilitating effects of corruption on citizens’ quality of life. An initial prototype was launched to test the concept – and uncover ‘the market price of corruption’. The aim was to understand the scope and scale of corruption by gathering data, to create a network of support and a space where people could share individual stories and experiences, to expose corruption and to use the data to uncover trends, call for changes and gradually eliminate opportunities for corruption altogether. In 2010 a fully re-designed website was launched to coincide with India's Independence Day on the 15th August.

Who participates and how?

As of March 2013, the site had received 1.9 million visitors from 197 countries.⁶⁸ At the time of writing (March 2013), I Paid a Bribe had collected 22,492 citizen reports, referring to 833,033,890 rupees worth of bribes from 493 cities across India. Of these reports, 16,636 refer to bribes paid, 2,266 to people refusing to pay a bribe and 763 to instances where a bribe was not demanded by ‘honest officers’.⁶⁹ By May 2012, more than 1050 questions had been answered via the bribe hotline forum. According to the site, between 25 and 50 citizen reports are added daily and roughly 20 questions are submitted to the ‘bribe hotline’ everyday.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ One of the founding principles of the site was anonymity. According to the site, “the key thing is to ensure that such approaches do not deteriorate into becoming fora for purposeless rants and name calling. It is important not to become stridently vocal against any particular group of people. The focus must be on reform of systems, not on corrupt individuals, because if systems are streamlined, corrupt individuals will fade away.” However, since 11 February 2013 I Paid a Bribe has started to accept non-anonymous reports. Citizens can now choose to stay anonymous while reporting and share their contact details so that I Paid a Bribe can validate and authenticate the individual. I Paid a Bribe has also stopped redacting names from reports.

⁶⁸ One World Foundation, 'I Paid a Bribe' in 'ICT facilitated access to information innovations: A compendium of case studies from South Asia', One World Foundation, India, 2011

⁶⁹ <http://www.ipaidabribe.com> Sourced on 6th March 2013

⁷⁰ <http://www.ipaidabribe.com/index.php?q=About-us>. Sourced on 6th March 2013

There is very little data on who participates as one of the key and founding principles of I Paid a Bribe is anonymity. Those submitting reports remain anonymous (although they can now share their contact details with I Paid a Bribe to enable the validation and authentication of reports submitted). As such, there are inherent challenges in understanding who exactly participates and contributes to the platform. However, in order to better understand the usage and impact of I Paid a Bribe, the site carried out an online user survey. Even though the survey only received 100 or so responses, the findings suggest that visitors tend to be young and well educated. Most visitors are aged between 18 and 40, with more 18-25 year olds using the site than 26-40 year olds. The majority of users have a graduate or post-graduate degree.⁷¹

4.3.3 Key resources

The project relies on citizens to contribute information about bribes they've paid, bribes they've refused and instances where bribes were not demanded. This information is central to the I Paid a Bribe mission – it enables the team behind the site to produce reports pinpointing bribery and corruption which are then used to advocate changes within public service delivery. In order to attract users to the site, Janaagraha have spent considerable resources on marketing and publicity – largely through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.⁷² They have a strong online presence which has played a key role in driving up usage.

The project also relies on a team of researchers to collect and collate the information contributed to the site to produce reports for citizens and government departments. In addition, anyone can submit a question to the 'bribe hotline' - this requires a team of researchers to find out the appropriate information, sometimes submit a question to government departments, or use the Right to Information act to get information not publicly available. Research carried out by the site suggests that most visitors use the site as a source of information (i.e. rather than to provide their own reports). This information and research support is therefore integral to the project. The most significant costs include maintaining the site, employee salaries and producing informational materials such as videos. In 2011, the total operating cost of the project was estimated at roughly 80,000 USD.⁷³

4.3.4 Value of crowdsourcing

The key value of crowdsourcing in this instance is to gather information that can be used to paint a picture of the nature, scale and location of bribery in India. This information is important for a number of reasons. First, it can be used to support citizens in their attempts to resist bribery. Second, it can be used to put pressure on government departments to change their processes and procedures, thereby improving public service delivery.

More broadly, the information collected can be used as a tool for campaigning and advocacy – it can be used to put pressure on corrupt officials and signal to citizens that they no longer have to pay bribes. According to the site, providing a place for this information is part of developing a broader social movement against corruption, "if people want to prosecute a bribe taker, they can go to the vigilance authorities and the Lokayukta [the anti-corruption ombudsman]. The task of

⁷¹ One World Foundation, 'I Paid a Bribe' in 'ICT facilitated access to information innovations: A compendium of case studies from South Asia, One World Foundation', India, 2011

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Ibid

tackling corruption is a peoples' effort, it cannot be left to a few Robin Hoods, including our website. We are a channeliser of people's energies. It is only the collective energy of people that can turn the tables on corruption"⁷⁴ and equally, "I Paid a Bribe is aiming to get citizens as a group to become intolerant of corruption. We have to overcome the fear factor. We have to realise we are not alone and build a sense of community, of standing up for each other."⁷⁵

When the project was developed, it was the first attempt to quantify corruption and measure the amount that people were paying in bribes. Most approaches simply gauged people's perceptions of corruption. It is this which makes I Paid a Bribe so innovative. So, even though there are some issues around the reliability and accuracy of the information provided, the information generated through the site provides the closest measure of the level of petty corruption in India.

4.3.5 Challenges

As with other online projects, I Paid a Bribe faces the challenge of having only a limited reach. First, internet penetration is low but rapidly increasing in India. Only those online can use the site. Second, the website is only available in English which means that it cannot be used by the majority of the non-English speaking Indian population. Third, the site focuses on urban centres such as Bangalore and Mumbai. This means that levels of corruption and bribery which take place in rural areas are not reported on the site. Consequently, the site seems to cater only to those who are based in urban centres, speak English, have access to the internet and are therefore likely to be relatively affluent. However, they are currently working on a mobile interface and exploring the possibility of having Indian language versions too. Another challenge is information verification. Even though the site now collects information from those submitting reports this remains a significant challenge.

4.3.6 Outcomes

According to the user survey commissioned by Janaagraha, the site is mainly used as a source of information. The key findings are that 36% of users visited the site to read bribe stories, 27% of users had reported a story and 34% of users accessed the site to read information about how to access public services without paying bribes.⁷⁶

It is still unclear what impact the site has had – it may still be too early to evaluate its impact. There are however, some early signs of success. For example there are numerous instances where government rules and procedures have been changed in light of information garnered through the site. One example is the Department of Transport in the Government of Karnataka in Bangalore. Based on the information in I Paid a Bribe's report, some twenty senior officials were issued with warnings. Similarly, changes were made to registrations of land transactions at the Department of Stamps and Registration in Bangalore. The user survey also shows some promising results: 21% of respondents claimed that they had resisted bribes because of the information they had gained from the site; only 5% of respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that the information available on the site had helped them to resist paying a bribe and; 65% of respondents either

⁷⁴ <http://www.ipaidabribe.com/index.php?q=About-us>. Sourced on 6th March 2013

⁷⁵ <http://www.ipaidabribe.com/index.php?q=About-us>. Sourced on 6th March 2013

⁷⁶ One World Foundation, 'I paid a Bribe' in ICT facilitated access to information innovations: A compendium of case studies from South Asia, One World Foundation, India, 2011

agreed or strongly agreed that the information was valuable in the fight against corruption in India.⁷⁷

Janaagraha are now working on developing the site to include a mobile interface as well as various Indian language versions too. And, there are plans to replicate the site in numerous countries including Azerbaijan, South Africa, Ukraine, Syria, Brazil and Tunisia.

4.4 Crowdsourcing: issues to consider

Crowdsourcing can be a powerful and effective means of gathering important information which would be difficult or impossible to gather using traditional methods and approaches. Take Ushahidi for example, crowdsourcing in this case is a way of collecting information about critical situations where people require assistance from search and rescue teams, disaster relief and humanitarian agencies and others. Information is provided by people on the ground in near real time and is geographically specific – it would be impossible to collect this kind of information in any other way. This is also true in the case of I Paid a Bribe – demanding and paying a bribe are both illegal in India so asking people to admit that they have paid a bribe and the amount they have paid is highly problematic. By providing a space where people can report anonymously, I Paid a Bribe is collecting information which is highly specific (to a particular department, transaction or team) and would otherwise be highly challenging to collect. This information can then be used to put pressure on public officials and sends a strong signal to other citizens that bribery will not be tolerated.

4.4.1 Ensuring reliability and accuracy of information

One of the challenges with crowdsourcing is ensuring that the information collected is reliable and accurate. Information verification is a challenge for both Ushahidi and I Paid a Bribe. Okolloh argues that the way to get around this issue is volume: “the idea behind crowdsourcing is that with enough volume, a ‘truth’ emerges that diminishes any false reports.” I Paid a Bribe argue that there are no incentives for false reporting as Janaagraha does not follow up individual complaints and all reports are anonymous. However, this will remain a constant challenge – the idea behind crowdsourcing is to solicit information from as many people as possible (or representative) to paint a more accurate picture of a specific situation. This means that barriers to entry have to be low; it has to be easy for people to contribute. But, where it is easy to engage people there will always be issues about the reliability and accuracy of information; if there are processes to discourage false reporting, for example, then that would make it more difficult, and less attractive for people to contribute information.

4.4.2 New technologies still require engagement strategies

Another challenge is engaging people. While new technologies open up new possibilities for crowdsourcing, these technologies still rely on people to contribute information. In the context of crisis mapping, Meier explains, “The technology is the easy bit. It’s the human element of creating the incentives, of creating a social movement, of awareness raising, the media strategies and so on around the technology that if successful will make the technology worth while. Otherwise those maps are going to be completely empty and with no dots.”⁷⁸ So, how do you engage people?

⁷⁷ One World Foundation, 'I paid a Bribe' in ICT facilitated access to information innovations: A compendium of case studies from South Asia, One World Foundation, India, 2011

⁷⁸ Interview with Patrick Meier, 4th March 2013

Meier points to the importance of creating value for citizens. He argues that “if you’re not providing a service of some sort, an information based service or other kind of service...then why would anybody want to spend a second on your project and share information? There has got to be a return on investment for participation. You have to create value and if this does not speak to the needs – information needs or otherwise - of the local community then there’s no reason at all that they should be supporting your project or getting involved.”⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Interview with Patrick Meier, 4th March 2013

PART 2 – PROBLEM SOLVING

5. Co-design

5.1 What is co-design?

Co-design describes an approach to social problems that sees designers working in partnership with service users and practitioners to develop solutions that work. The term itself has been in use for a relatively short period of time and there is no single agreed definition of co-design. However, there are two aspects that dominate most definitions. First, definitions emphasise that this methodology sits within the discipline of design. For example, Elizabeth Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers explain that they use co-design “to refer to the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process.”⁸⁰ Since the outputs of co-design are often service systems rather than products, in what sense is it a form of design? Practitioners make clear that co-design involves using design principles to approach problems in a certain way. Thomas Binder of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts notes that “co-design is not a fixed and narrowly defined method. It’s rather an approach to a design task.”⁸¹ It involves bringing the specific skills of designers, such as visualisation, to social problems. Maria Foverskov explains, “in co-design I draw on my visualisation skills. As a designer I can see how something might be different than it is today. And I can make that vision comprehensible and tangible to others”.⁸² Prototyping is another aspect of design methodology that forms an important part of co-design. By testing out ideas in a low cost, low risk way early and often, they can be quickly refined and developed.

Second, definitions of co-design make clear that it involves working with non-designers, and specifically with those individuals experiencing or responding to the particular social problem being examined. The UK Design Council’s formulation describes co-design as “a community centred methodology that designers use to enable people who will be served by a designed outcome to participate in devising solutions to their problems.”⁸³ However, this definition focuses on end users, whereas in practice many co-design approaches involve working with a range of stakeholders, such as service providers, employees and community residents. A good alternative is provided by Deborah Szebeko and Lauren Tan who describe co-design as “a creative approach that supports and facilitates the democratic involvement of people in addressing social challenges”.⁸⁴

Although the term has only been used since the early 2000s onwards, co-design has its roots in a number of older traditions and movements. Participatory practices that draw the wider public into design discussions have been a feature of urban planning and architecture practice from the 1970s onwards. The 1970s also saw a number of Scandinavian research projects on user participation in systems development. For example, the ‘Collective Resource Approach’ practiced in Norway, Sweden and Denmark developed strategies for workers to influence the design and use of computer applications in the workplace.

An extensive literature from Eric von Hippel and others from the late 1980s onwards about the importance of bringing users into the development of new products and services has contributed

⁸⁰ E Sander and P J Stappers, ‘Co-creation and the new landscapes of design’, *CoDesign*, March 2008, p 6

⁸¹ T Binder quoted in M Seifert, ‘What is Co-Design’ *Mind Design*, Danish Centre for Design Research, issue 46:5, February 2012

⁸² M Foverskov quoted in M Seifert, ‘What is Co-Design’ *Mind Design*, Danish Centre for Design Research, issue 46:5, February 2012

⁸³ <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources-and-events/designers/design-glossary/co-design/>

⁸⁴ L Tan and D Szebeko, ‘Co-designing for dementia: The Alzheimer 100 project’, *Australasian Medical Journal*, vol.1:12, 2009, pp. 185-198

to an increasing emphasis on designing with rather than for users in the commercial sector.⁸⁵ This trend can be seen in popular business publications such as Patricia Seybold's *Outside Innovation: How Customers will Co-Design your Company's Future*, which argues that thriving and successful companies need to treat their customers as collaborators.⁸⁶

Alongside these developments, there has also been a shift in understanding about what design principles and methodologies can be used for. First, there has been a significant move from design focused solely on product development to design as a discipline that can be readily applied to service systems. Through the 1990s the discipline of service design became increasingly prevalent, led by firms such as IDEO in the US and Engine in the UK. Second, there has been a moral appeal to designers to use their abilities to fulfil real needs rather than wants (perhaps most famously expressed by Victor Papanek in *Design for the Real World*).⁸⁷ And in recent years, it has been argued that the approach taken by designers (described as 'design thinking'), which focuses on building empathy and understanding of needs, is particularly applicable to social challenges. Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt argue that "by working closely with the clients and consumers, design thinking allows high-impact solutions to bubble up from below rather than being imposed from the top."⁸⁸

Co-design has emerged against this background of theory and practice. Its key underlying assumption is that individuals experiencing or responding to a social problem must be involved in developing solutions if they are to be effective. As John Thackera argues "citizens and communities must be the solution's co-authors – otherwise it won't be a solution".⁸⁹ Co-design therefore requires designers to relinquish some of their control over the end solution so that participants in the process feel ownership over it. As such, co-design "shifts the balance from designer as judge, arbiter and auteur to designer as guide, facilitator and producer".⁹⁰

Co-design, co-creation or co-production?

Co-creation and co-production are sometimes used synonymously with co-design, which reflects the fact that this is an emerging terrain with little consensus about terminology. However, these terms are distinct.

The literature around co-creation is typically more business oriented. For example, it is linked in particular with the work of C. K. Prahalad and Venkat Ramaswamy who use it to describe a shift from a firm centric view of value creation, to one where consumer-company interactions are the key locus of value creation.⁹¹

The term co-production tends to go beyond designing new solutions and refers to how services are actually delivered. The Co-production network, an initiative of NESTA and the New Economics Foundation (nef) defines co-production as "delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours."⁹²

For these reasons, we suggest that co-design best describes the concept of bringing more voices into a creative process to develop new solutions in the social field. This is the term that has been appropriated by a

⁸⁵ E von Hippel, *Democratizing Innovation*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2006

⁸⁶ P Seybold, *Outside Innovation: How Customers will Co-Design your Company's Future*, Harper Collins, 2007

⁸⁷ V Papanek, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*, 3rd edition, Random House, New York, 2000

⁸⁸ See for example T Brown & J Wyatt, 'Design Thinking for Social Innovation', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, winter 2010, pp.30-35

⁸⁹ J Thackera, 'The Innovator Next Door', *McKinsey Quarterly*, February 2009

⁹⁰ S Billings, DoTT review, p 18, 2011

⁹¹ C K Prahalad and V Ramaswamy, 'Co-Creation Experiences: The Next Practice in Value Creation', *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 18:3, 2004

⁹² Co-production network, <http://coproductionnetwork.com/page/about-coproduction#About%20Co-Production>

number of key agencies and actors in this field (Design Council, Uscreates, ThinkPublic, Participle) to describe a design led approach to addressing social challenges.

CASE STUDIES

5.2 Family by Family, Australia⁹³



Families who took part in the program – image courtesy of Chris Vanstone

5.2.1 What is Family by Family?

Family by Family is a new model of family support designed with families in South Australia that aims to enable more families to thrive and fewer to come into contact with crisis services. The programme works by finding, training and resourcing families who have overcome tough times (known as ‘sharing families’) and connecting them with families who want things to change (known as ‘seeking families’). Once families have been matched they take part in ‘link up’ activities for between 10 and 30 weeks. Sharing families are supported in their role by weekly coaching sessions and are given a grant (which they can spend on link-up activities, their own families or donate back into Family by Family) in recognition of the intensity of the support they provide. In this model, professionals act as brokers to these family interactions rather than delivering services.

5.2.2 Origins

Family by Family is the first social co-designed solution developed by The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) and was developed in the Marion area of Adelaide between May 2010

⁹³ Many thanks to Chris Vanstone for speaking with us about the development of Family by Family

and March 2011. It was the result of The Family Project led by the TACSI team members Chris Vanstone, Sarah Schulman and Carolyn Curtis, a senior manager from South Australia's child protection agency seconded to the project team who went on to lead the growth of Family by Family. The team's brief from the Department for Families and Communities in the Department of South Australia was to find a way to reduce the number of families requiring crisis services, including child protection interventions.

The project began with extensive ethnographic work with local families to better understand family life in this area, what family stress looks like and how families are coping. The team recruited these families by setting up stalls in shopping centres, super markets and bus stops, as well as going door to door. They also ran a community festival, which focused on developmental games for children, to start to build visibility and to spread information about what they were trying to do. The team had dinner with 25 families and spent two to three days with a further ten families. They used all of this information to develop lots of different ideas for services, which they presented to the families they had worked with. Although many of these were dismissed early on, the idea of training thriving families to share their experience with other families had some traction. It was also positively received by the 'sounding board' that the team used to discuss their ideas, which included representatives from the child protection services, academia, the local city and NGOs. Having seeded this initial idea (originally know as the 'Family Exchange'), the team began working with families to develop and refine it.

Who participated and how?

The project team wanted to co-design all elements of the programme, both at the conceptual level (what should the outcomes be, what would the process look like) and also the interaction level (all of the materials, communications, training resources etc.). This was done with a group of families, some of whom had been involved in the exploratory ethnographic work, and others who were newly recruited through the team's activities in local supermarkets and shopping centres.

The core tools and interactions of the programme were developed by working with a small group of 20 families - prototype sharing families who were looking to use their experience to help others and seeking families who were looking to make some changes in their lives. Over 12 weeks the team worked with both kinds of families, kids included, in their homes and with sharing families at their weekly 'sharing family dinner' to test out and refine ideas.

It was through these interactions that the families helped to design the core tools for the programme, such as the bubble diagram (figure 5 below). This was the tool participating families use to record what they want to change as a result of their involvement, what they will have to 'do, say and think' to get to that change, and what that change will enable.

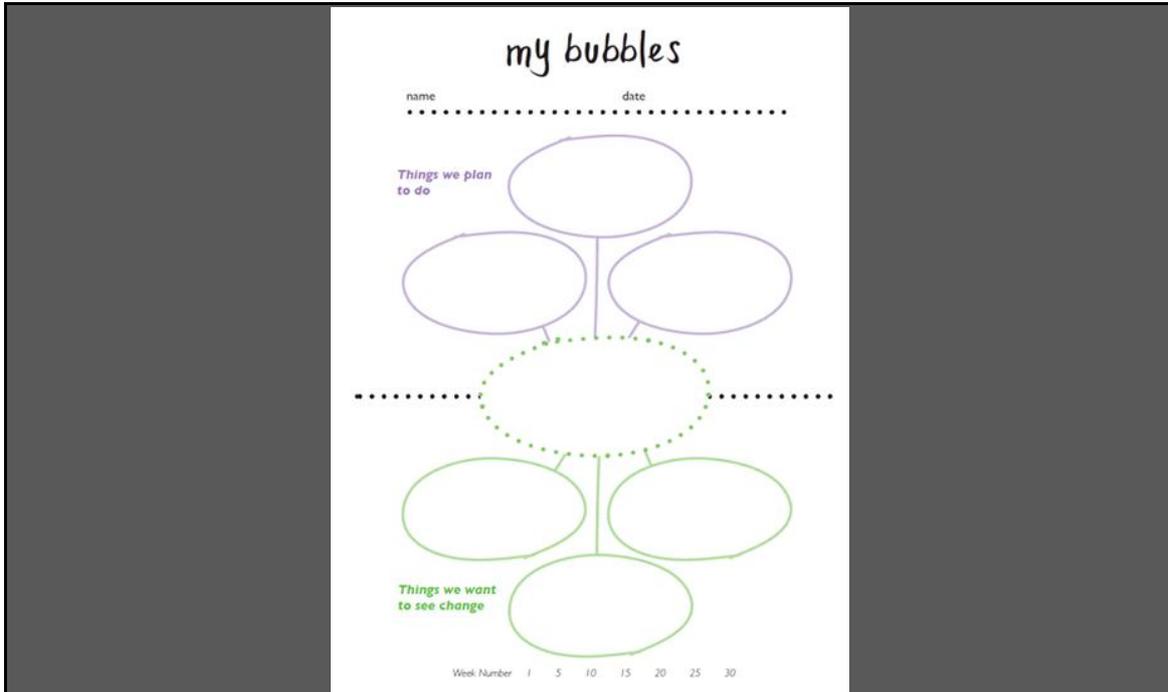


Figure 5: The ‘My Bubbles’ diagram

Family input was also essential in getting language and messaging for Family by Family right; the team went through five iterations of how they would describe the programme before hitting on an effective formulation. It was the experience of families putting up posters in their local neighbourhoods who were frequently needing to explain what the project was (and wasn't) that eventually led to the description of the programme: "We're a group of families who are about more good stuff for families. We link up families with stuff in common to change the things they want to change - like kids' behaviour or going out more as a family. We're not government. We're not religious. We're not political." This description still features on the programme brochures.

Once the core interactions and materials had been designed in partnership with families, the team began prototyping the programme at a small scale with twenty families over 12 weeks. While incentives (such as shopping vouchers) had been used with participants at earlier stages, for the prototype phase, the offer made to families was to be part of building something new. The team felt it was important to test out whether families would want to participate for the rewards of involvement itself, rather than being persuaded by incentives. However, there were some bonuses to being involved, such as weekly meals where the families came together, and invites to a number of events, such as the launch of a video that was made about the development of Family by Family. At this stage, the team emphasised that since the programme was still in development, it might be hard and frustrating at times; the most important thing was for families to be honest about what was working and what wasn't.

To recruit both 'seeking' and 'sharing' families, hearing the story from other families was essential. Families who had been involved in the ethnography and design work frequently suggested friends and colleagues to take part. And when recruiting in public, families were often much more effective at engaging families than the project team, none of whom had children themselves. This became a core feature of the programme – the invitation from families to other families had much more validity and was much more attractive than an open call led by the project team. A few

seeking families were referred from child protection services but in general the team were keen to avoid a strong association between the programme and child protection services, because of the stigma attached to child protection services and because Family by Family has some very different ways of enabling change.

5.2.3 Key resources

The physical resources required by the project were very basic – all the design work was done with paper prototypes. Facebook was a useful tool for providing a place for families to chat and to upload photos from their activities, but only once the project was up and running, not in the prototype phase. Generally the use of online platforms was quite minimal; the website was the last element to be built.

Project designer Chris Vanstone notes that a multidisciplinary team that contributed diverse skills was really important to the success of the project. Core design skills such as being able to take big ideas and make them tangible and testable needed to be complemented by someone with skills in programme design, behaviour change and working with families. Having a local person who knew the area really well and could speak ‘family language’ and ensure that everything was framed in a way that would make sense to families was also essential.

Strong relationships were the glue for the entire project. It was important to gain recognition and support from respected figures in the community, such as the mayor, early on. But the relationships with the families themselves were most critical. Following the prototyping there was a six month gap while the team waited for confirmation of funding. By maintaining these relationships and staying in close contact, the team were able to get the programme off the ground much quicker.

5.2.4 Value of co-design

Vanstone believes that taking a co-design approach in this case added value by getting to a workable programme more quickly because the team were able to test out what worked at a small scale first. By involving families in the core design work of the programme, they ensured that what they created was something attractive that families would want to be a part of and something that would create positive change. He was impressed by how willing people were to participate when they were recognised and respected as experts in their own lives.

There was also real value for the participants themselves in taking part in a co-design process. The programme was an opportunity for them to feel ownership of something in their community. For many it was also a real confidence boost to give feedback and then see the impact it made when the design team presented them with new versions of materials that incorporated their views. Vanstone also felt that a co-design approach was valuable for building momentum around an issue and getting buy in from decision makers. He noted that being able to show all the visual evidence (photos and videos) of what the team had built together with the families created a much more compelling case for investment.

5.2.5 Challenges

One of the biggest challenges in designing this programme was working with families experiencing tough times. Disruptions in their lives can mean things change quickly and unpredictably and their involvement in the project is just one aspect of their lives that they cannot always prioritise.

However, Vanstone noted that he was continually struck by the willingness of families to contribute, despite the busyness of their lives.

Another challenging aspect of co-design is that when you go into a project committed to create something that works for users, you often end up with a programme that does not fit neatly into existing service systems. This means that you need to be prepared to think about new organisational structures that might need to be set up to support a project – this was certainly the case with Family by Family which is now set up as it's own organisation, currently incubated by TACSI.

A further challenge highlighted by Vanstone relates to the role of co-design in the life of a project. There can be a tendency for co-design to be seen as a discrete stage which stops once the model for the project has been set. Vanstone and the team are keen to avoid this and have employed a full time service designer as part of the six man team that will be expanding the model into new locations.

5.2.6 Outcomes

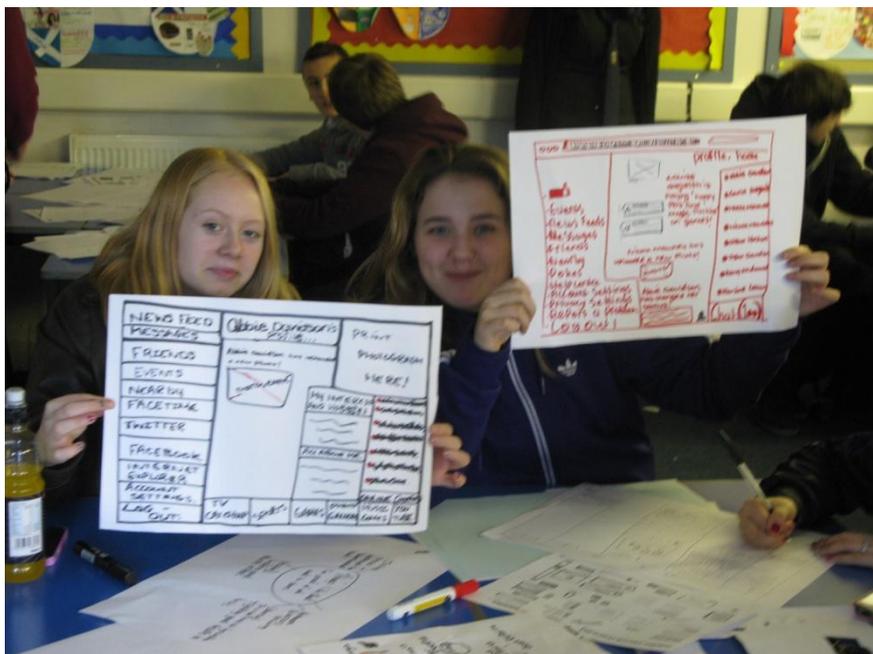
On the strength of the 12 week prototype, Family by Family raised funding to run in two locations, Marion - the original prototyping site, and in February 2012 expanded to Playford, an area recognised as one of the most disadvantaged in South Australia. (The model was adapted to ensure a good fit with this new context).

Family by Family's first independent evaluation, after a year of operating, showed that 90% of families meet the goals they set for themselves, and to meet these goals they are shifting their beliefs and behaviours. The families report greater confidence, more control over their decisions, feeling more positive about the future and spending more quality time together.⁹⁴ Family by Family's current goal is to expand further in South Australia and reach other states.

5.3 Flip Yourself, UK⁹⁵

⁹⁴ <http://www.tacsi.org.au/assets/Documents/Publications/Family-Project/TACSI-FbyF-Evaluation-Report-2012.pdf>

⁹⁵ Many thanks to Bruno Taylor for speaking with us about the Flip Yourself platform.



Young people designing their profiles which led to important insights and decisions - Image courtesy of Bruno Taylor

5.3.1 What is Flip Yourself?

Flip Yourself is a new social venture that is developing a web based programme to help young people seeking employment to build an online skills profile and portfolio of work based on feedback from their peers.⁹⁶ The core idea of the project is to harness the power of personal and social networks for young people when making career and life choices and to develop new ways of getting advice and support from people they trust.

Flip Yourself is working with a selected number of youth led organisations, including The Prince's Trust, to develop a market ready tool to be piloted in the academic year 2013/2014. The digital platform will allow young people to:

- Discover their personal strengths based on peer feedback.
- Create a digital portfolio of their achievements and profiled strengths to share with potential employers.
- Connect to tailored support to improve weaker areas and track their progress.

The platform is particularly targeted at young people aged 16 to 19 who are struggling to find employment and may find it difficult to articulate their skills for the workplace. It is designed to be used by organisations working in youth development and employment that would like to use digital tools more effectively and are searching for ways to integrate them with on the ground service delivery. Following extensive prototyping of the tool, the Flip Yourself team is now developing the business model for the social venture and entering into the next phase of development to be able to roll it out to local and national organisations in the UK working with young people.

⁹⁶ <http://www.flipyourself.co.uk/>

5.3.2 Origins

The idea for Flip Yourself began at a Social Innovation Camp event in 2010 focused on developing ideas for digital tools that could tackle re-offending amongst young people. The Flip Yourself team were one of the groups chosen to develop their ideas over a 48 hour period, working with young people and software developers. In the course of their early research, the importance of employment in breaking cycles of reoffending became clear. One of the young people at the weekend, Cheyenne, commented “I don’t know what I’m good at, but I know what my friend is good at”. It seemed that young people were able to talk about their friends’ strengths with much more clarity than their own. This insight sparked the core concept for the platform – that social and personal networks could be used to help young people identify their strengths and develop a skills profile.

While there can be a tendency for projects emerging from hack weekends to quickly lose momentum, the Flip Yourself team pursued seed funding from UnLtd which allowed them to undertake some more workshops to understand barriers to employment and what kind of digital solution might be most effective. This then led to a successful application to NESTA for concept development funding which allowed them to do further work in designing and refining the idea. Throughout, the platform has been developed through a process of co-design which saw the team working with a wide range of different service providers, agencies and young people to better understand what kind of tool might be useful and to test out different iterations of it in practice.

Who participated and how?

The Flip Yourself team worked extensively with young people in order to design the final tool. Co-founder Bruno Taylor is keen to stress that rather than beginning with a set number of co-design ‘methods’, the team began with questions they wanted to test out, and assumptions that needed to be confirmed; this determined the techniques that they used. For example, a key issue to understand was the way the young people thought about their social networks. Getting the young people to physically map out their social networks helped to uncover issues around trust and privacy which the design needed to respond to. The young people were particularly concerned that they had total control over who could rate them – this needed to be made absolutely clear in explanations about the tool. Getting reliable and honest feedback also emerged as a major concern – this was reflected in the design of the questionnaire, which takes around 10-15 minutes to complete and therefore requires a level of interest and commitment that would most likely come from closer friends that they trust. The use of wire frames and paper prototypes enabled testing different ways the site might look and operate without incurring expensive development costs. For example, the team mocked up different versions of the homepage, registration and invitation pages and were able to redesign these based on participants’ ideas.

Although there were a few core individuals who advised on the programme throughout, initially the design process was worked out with different groups that the team accessed through their relationships with a number of agencies working with young people. While fresh eyes on the designs were an advantage, Taylor commented that a consistent group to provide feedback and ideas is really important: “having a core group of design partners that will input, advise and guide the project is vital in a co-design process”.⁹⁷ The team have now established a group of design partners that are made up of four school classes working with the Prince’s Trust and Envision, another national youth charity.

⁹⁷ Interview with Bruno Taylor, 6 November 2012

One method that was used to gather views from a wider range of young people was asking participants to go out and interview friends with video cameras. This was an effective way of incorporating views of harder to reach young people who would not have attended a workshop event.

The team co-designed the final concept not only with young people but also with support workers in councils and other intermediaries, as well as employers, to understand what components they would find most useful in a skills profile. As well as interviews to understand the challenges related to getting young people into work, the team ran exercises to help them develop the ideal skills profile. They used some common tools such as Myers Briggs to mock up personality profiles and tested these with employers and support workers, asking them to identify which parts were interesting and which were unhelpful. This helped them understand the gaps in many of the current recruitment and skills tools in use. The team also went through a number of iterations of profile formats with employers and training advisors to get feedback and shape the profile accordingly.

5.3.3 Key resources

Developing relationships with organisations that could give access to the people the team needed to work with (young people, support workers and employers) was absolutely essential. Early on, the team developed a relationship with two organisations – the Young Advisors – a national organisation of people aged 15 to 21 who help community leaders and decision makers to engage young people in community life – and the Police Cadets – a voluntary organisation supported by the Metropolitan Police Service that is open to young people aged 14 to 19. This gave them access to young people that they could work with in the early stages of formulating how the platform might work.

Another key relationship was with the London Borough of Camden Council's apprenticeship scheme. The team were able to add on a number of activities to pre-existing events with young people who had applied to the scheme. And they also tagged on events to workshops for NEET young people (not in education, employment or training) run by the New Horizons Youth Centre. Since these different groups can be understandably protective of their young people and reluctant to raise their expectations, developing good relationships with these organisations early on was very important.

Commitment from the team to drive the project forward, despite juggling other work, was also key. Obtaining initial funding (from UnLtd and then NESTA) helped make it possible for the team to spend time on the project, although they note that total hours spent on development exceeded this, so personal commitment to the aims of the project were also important to its success.

5.3.4 Value of co-design

Taylor notes that although in his view it is an overstatement to say that co-design will always deliver better solutions, in this case working through all of the elements of Flip Yourself in partnership with young people, employers and trainers ultimately led to a more responsive, appropriate tool. In particular, using co-design as a method highlighted potential features that the team would not have thought to include otherwise. For example, the team discovered that the young people were keen to answer the strengths questions themselves as well as pose them to friends, so that element was built into the programme. However Taylor also cautions that although

co-design can generate new ideas very quickly, it is important to test that these ideas are actually implementable. This highlights the importance of prototyping as part of the process.

5.3.5 Challenges

One of the key challenges Taylor identified relates to co-designing with disadvantaged young people. These groups are frequently targets of research and consultations of various kinds, which quickly makes them sceptical when they see little change. Taylor cautions that when you have a great idea that you want to engage with people in, it can be easy to think that passion and enthusiasm will “get you everywhere”. However, it’s important to keep in mind the perspective of the young people you want to work with, which may well be that “there have been ten people before you and twenty after you, and nine times out of ten, the young people believe that nothing will happen”.⁹⁸

In this context, the way that you ‘sell’ participation becomes all the more important. It is important to make clear at every stage, what the value of participating will be - what will the young people get out of this particular session? This could go beyond commonly used incentives like an iTunes voucher. Taylor comments that they asked participants what they would value in exchange for their time; for some recognition of their involvement on public materials was really important. The team also ensured that the content of their co-design workshops - which involved a number of reflective exercises looking at pathways into employment and mapping out social networks - were in themselves helpful for the young people; several of the support workers commented that these were tools and techniques they planned to use in their own work.

5.3.6 Outcomes

The Flip Yourself tool has not yet been released to youth organisations so there is no data on its social impact at this stage. However, there is some evidence of the impact of being involved in the co-design process itself. Of the apprentice applicants that were involved in Flip Yourself workshops and activities, 50% went on to secure apprenticeship placements. Camden Apprenticeship Scheme officers believed this was linked to the skills and confidence the young people gained by being part of a co-design process.

Flip Yourself has secured funding from Nominet Trust for a further stage of development and will continue to work with The Prince’s Trust on the next release. This additional funding will enable several members of the team to start working on the project on a full time basis.

5.4 Co-design: Issues to consider

5.4.1 Getting people to participate in co-design can be tough and time consuming

All the practitioners we spoke to highlighted that working with groups of citizens to help design a new solution takes time because it depends on building up a relationship of trust. There are instances where co-design methods can be used with groups where the interaction is one off and limited, but practitioners were agreed that the ideal was to work with a repeat group over a longer

⁹⁸ Interview with Bruno Taylor, 6 November 2012

period to get better quality insights and feedback. Building up a rapport and trust with participants is a key skill for practitioners and finding advocates and champions in a group early on was an important strategy. Because of the time investment associated with co-design, practitioners need to think carefully before undertaking this method. With this in mind, Chris Vanstone suggests that the method is only really appropriate and cost effective if the solution will affect a significant number of people in a substantial way, or is likely to result in a model that can be scaled.

Knowing how to pitch involvement was also a key concern. While it's important to indicate the impact of being involved in the process, designers also need to be sensitive to the fact that groups may not always be looking for a high level of responsibility. As Bruno Taylor says "if you go into a community, even with the best intentions and say 'we're going to give you responsibility for co-designing a new solution' people are going to run a mile". It's therefore important to gauge how much commitment different communities are able to give and the level of responsibility that they want to take on. Taylor notes that it's best to "start small, ask for little and build on that. People need to build their enthusiasm for your project so that it becomes 'our project'."⁹⁹

5.4.2 Co-design is still poorly understood and there is a shortage of skilled practitioners

Several of our interviewees said that misconceptions about what co-design is and is not presents a barrier to its use. The term co-design is being used in some cases to describe activities that do not amount to much more than traditional community consultations.

Another issue relates to skills and the shortage of individuals who can apply co-design principles. Vanstone highlighted that design education has lagged behind practice. In general there are few courses that focus on design for social challenges, or even service design. This means that most people using co-design to tackle social challenges have to learn techniques and methodologies on the job while working at a handful of agencies that use these. Strong design communities also tend to be clustered in a few large cities which can make it challenging to use co-design methodology in smaller cities or more rural areas.

5.4.3 Co-design carries risk

Another common theme was the risk involved in co-design. On the one hand there is inherent risk associated with the uncertainty that accompanies genuine co-design; where outcomes really are unknown, practitioners have to remain open to solutions they would not have predicted, and which do not necessarily fit within existing structures or institutions. But there is also real risk associated with raising expectations about the kind of solutions that can be delivered. Katie Collins, who has worked on a number of co-design projects related to health, notes that while you can arrive at much better solutions by engaging with the community, you also have the potential to do harm in a way that isn't possible if you produce something without their involvement. Where you have built up relationships of trust with a community "the sense of betrayal", as she put it, is much greater if the solutions you develop together are not implemented.¹⁰⁰ This can easily lead to cynicism and an unwillingness to engage with community projects in the future.

This issue is a particular concern for agencies that may be brought in to deliver a co-design process on behalf of public service agencies. Mary Rose Cook, co-founder of Uscreates says that it is

⁹⁹ Interview with Bruno Taylor, 6 November 2012

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Katie Collins, 4 December 2012

essential for them to have a sense of who is committed to carrying on the work with a community once their official role ends, before they will agree to a co-design project.¹⁰¹

5.4.4 Co-design will not always produce innovation

Although the practitioners we spoke to were agreed that co-design can contribute to the development of social innovations, because it brings real lived experience into the designing of solutions, and a new way of looking at things, several noted that it would not always result in totally new solutions. For example, Mary Rose Cook cautioned that there can be a danger of designers entering into a co-design process with a commitment to produce an innovative solution.¹⁰² But it may well be that what is needed in a community is an existing model or service that has been well developed elsewhere. Designers therefore need to be genuinely open about what the outcomes might be at the beginning of the co-design process.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Mary Rose Cook, 20 November 2012

¹⁰² Interview with Mary Rose Cook, 20 November 2012

6. Competitions

Much has been written about the contribution of competitions to innovation. However our particular focus here is on how competitions can be thought of as a method of citizen engagement. How can competitions be a mechanism for bringing individuals and groups, beyond the usual suspects, into the development of new responses to social challenges? This provides the lens with which we examine competitions in the case studies below.

6.1 Competitions and innovation

Open competitions that offer financial rewards in order to spur innovation are not a new idea. Famous historical examples include the competition to design the Florence Duomo in 1418, the 1714 Longitude Prize initiated by the British government and the 1795 French government's Food Preservation Prize to supply Napoleon's army. In fact, it was only following the emergence of modern firms with centralised R&D departments that innovation competitions became much less common. In the modern firm, innovation strategy was based on hiring the best people, carrying out internal research and development and then safeguarding this investment by securing intellectual property rights.

But in the last twenty years or so there has been greater interest in the idea of open innovation, which recognises that a single organisation cannot contain all the knowledge and skills required to solve its research and development challenges. The paradigm of open innovation (a term first coined by Henry Chesbrough¹⁰³) acknowledges that the firm is not the only locus of innovation. Firms wanting to generate innovation need to source ideas and solutions externally, by opening up problems to solvers who exist outside the boundaries of the firm. Intermediary platforms such as InnoCentive have emerged to help match a company's challenges with solvers who are able to respond to them.

One of the products of this shift towards open innovation models has been the phenomenon of challenges and competitions offering prizes to induce innovation. These kinds of prizes are described as 'ex ante' as they reward new initiatives in response to the announcement of a challenge. They are distinct from 'ex post' achievement prizes (such as the Nobel Peace prize or the Pulitzer Prize) which are given in recognition of an achievement and have a limited degree of influence over the behaviour of recipients. We can also distinguish between prizes that ask entrants to suggest possible, untested ideas and those that require them to develop proofs of concepts by demonstrating impact of their idea or by achieving specific results.¹⁰⁴

The rationale of using prizes to induce innovation is that they attract new capital to a problem, providing new incentives that outweigh those that currently operate. And they attract new people, who use new kinds of resources, to focus on the problem at hand. The central belief underlying the use of competitions is the idea that "a well defined and meaningful solution can come from anywhere, especially from areas outside of the accepted culture".¹⁰⁵ This idea has been bolstered by recent research on open innovation platforms demonstrating that individuals who come from

¹⁰³ H Chesbrough, *Open Innovation*, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2003 and H Chesbrough, W Vanhaverbeke and J West (eds.), *Open Innovation: Researching a New Paradigm*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006

¹⁰⁴ J Morgan, *Inducing Innovation Through Prizes*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2008

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

outside the established field of a particular problem are more likely to develop successful solutions.¹⁰⁶

Research from McKinsey shows that both the number and value of challenge prizes has risen sharply in recent years. They identified 219 current prizes with award values of over \$100,000 and note that the total value of these prizes has increased by more than 15 fold over the past 35 years.¹⁰⁷ And challenge prizes are now more often of the 'ex ante' form that can actually stimulate innovation. Before 1991, 97 per cent of prize money offered took the form of recognition prizes for past achievements. But since then, 78 per cent of new prize money has been offered for the future solution of problems.¹⁰⁸

Recent years have also seen the emergence of mega-prizes, particularly in the fields of science and technology. The 2004 Ansari X Prize offered \$10 million (the largest ever prize pot at the time) for the development of a private spacecraft and the Google Lunar X prize will award \$30 million to the first privately funded team to safely land a robot on the Moon which is capable of sending data back to Earth. While many prizes have been based on large scale philanthropy, governments have also begun to use competitions as a tool. For example the Obama administration has backed the use of prizes and awards as a method for promoting innovation in government. The White House created the challenge.gov web platform which federal agencies can use to post specific problems. And in December 2010, Congress included a prizes component in legislation that expands the authorisation to use prizes to every agency head.

With all this activity around competitions and challenges, organisations are also emerging to support and co-ordinate efforts in this space. X Prize Labs based at MIT provides a platform to educate university students and faculty around the emerging field of prize theory.¹⁰⁹ In the UK, Nesta has established a Centre for Challenge Prizes to build understanding of how challenge prizes can play a strategic role in stimulating innovation.¹¹⁰

Competitions and social innovation

While the majority of challenge prizes are focused on innovation related to technological or scientific problems, there is growing interest in the use of this model to address challenges with a social and environmental focus. Many of these have been led by large philanthropic foundations. For example, in 2010 the Rockefeller Foundation joined forces with GlobalGiving and InnoCentive to launch a competition to find new solutions to tackle water related problems in developing countries. More than 2,200 solvers participated, resulting in 325 solutions submitted to the InnoCentive platform. In 2007, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation worked with HopeLabs to develop the Ruckus Nation competition which challenged people to develop new products that would get young people active as a response to the obesity crisis.¹¹¹ Most recently, the European Commission has established a social innovation prize in memory of Diogo Vasconcelos to find the best solutions to help people move towards new types of work.¹¹² Design consultancy IDEO have also emerged as a leader in this space, developing the competition platform OpenIDEO which is

¹⁰⁶ See B Jeppesen and K R Lakhani, 'Marginality and problem solving effectiveness in broadcast search' *Organization Science*, vol.20, 2010. This research is discussed in greater detail in our accompanying Tepsie paper, 'The value and role of citizen engagement in social innovation', also available on www.tepsie.eu

¹⁰⁷ McKinsey, 'And the Winner Is: Capturing the promise of philanthropic prizes', 2009

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.xprize.org/prize-development/x-prize-labs>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.nesta.org.uk/challengeprizes>

¹¹¹ <http://www.ruckusnation.com/>

¹¹² <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/competition/>

used by a wide range of organisations who want to crowdsource responses to specific social challenges.¹¹³

Figure 6 - A snapshot of recent socially focused competitions

Name	Year	Sponsored/run by	Issue area
The Big Green Challenge ¹¹⁴	2007-2010	Nesta	Community innovation for reduction in CO ₂ levels
Bold Ideas Better Lives Challenge ¹¹⁵	2009	Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)	General – a search to find “Australia’s strongest social innovations”
Ruckus Nation ¹¹⁶	2010	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and HopeLabs	A search for products to help young people get active and tackle obesity
Global Giveback Challenge Series ¹¹⁷	2010	Rockefeller Foundation, GlovalGiving and InnoCentive	Finding solutions to dire water-related problems in developing countries.
Suwon Social Invention Competition	2010 and 2011	The Hope Institute, South Korea	An open call for ideas to improve life in Suwon, South Korea
The Buy Better Together Challenge ¹¹⁸	2011	Co-operatives UK and Department for Business Innovation and Skills	A search for new models for community buying
Ideias de Origem Portuguesa ¹¹⁹	2011	Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	Challenging Portuguese citizens to team up with members of Portuguese diaspora to develop ideas related to social inclusion, ageing, environment, sustainability and intercultural dialogue
Naples 2.0 ¹²⁰	2011	Euclid Network, UniCredit Foundation	Responses to six specific challenges in Naples, e.g. innovative ways of promoting inclusion of the Roma population
European Social Innovation Competition ¹²¹	2012	European Commission	A search for solutions to help people move towards work or into new types of work.

¹¹³ <http://www.openideo.com/open>

¹¹⁴ http://www.nesta.org.uk/areas_of_work/public_services_lab/past_projects_public_services_lab/bgc_home

¹¹⁵ Bold ideas Better Lives Report, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI)
<http://www.tacsi.org.au/assets/Projects/Challenge/TACSI-Challenge-Paper-01.pdf>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.ruckusnation.com/>

¹¹⁷ <http://www.innocentive.com/innocentive-globalgiving-and-rockefeller-foundation-advance-open-innovation-solutions-world%E2%80%99s-water>

¹¹⁸ <http://www.uk.coop/challenge>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.ideiasdeorigemportuguesa.org/>

¹²⁰ <http://www.euclidnetwork.eu/projects/current-projects/european-social-innovation-naples-20.html>

¹²¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/social-innovation/competition/>

Name	Year	Sponsored/run by	Issue area
UNDP Renewable Energy Challenge ¹²²	2013	UNDP with Nesta	To find a renewable energy solution capable of providing off-grid power to cover the needs of an average war-returnee family in rural Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CASE STUDIES

6.2 Nesta Big Green Challenge, UK¹²³



The Finalists in the Big Green Challenge. Image courtesy of Nesta

6.2.1 What is Nesta's Big Green Challenge?

The Big Green Challenge (BGC) was a social challenge prize designed to uncover imaginative community responses to climate change. It was one of the first examples of a large inducement prize fund (£1 million) being used as an incentive for community led innovation. The programme ran over two years finishing in January 2010 and involved four distinct stages, beginning with very low barriers to entry and progressively becoming more demanding. It began with an open call for ideas about how to achieve measurable CO₂ emissions reductions in a way that engaged a community and that had potential to be replicated by others. Over 350 entries were received at this initial stage. 100 of these entries then progressed as Semi-Finalists to a second stage where they received support from Nesta and UnLtd to develop their initial idea into a more detailed plan. Shortlisted projects were then invited to pitch their ideas, and ten Finalists were selected. These

¹²² <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/articles/2012/11/30/undp-launches-energy-challenge-for-war-returnees-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>

¹²³ Many thanks to Vicki Purewal for speaking to us about BGC. (Interview conducted 26 February, 2013)

finalists then had 12 months to trial their project, with support from Nesta and partners (UnLtd, Cred and others). Final awards were made on the basis of actual outcomes - projects were evaluated on whether they'd been able to prove effectiveness against measurable criteria. Finalists managed to achieve impressive CO₂ reductions of 10-46 per cent in just one year.¹²⁴

Three overall winners each received £300,000 to develop further their community-based carbon reduction schemes. They were The Green Valleys in Brecon, the Isle of Eigg's Green Island project and Household Energy Service, Ludlow. One runner up, Low Carbon West Oxford, received £100,000.

6.2.2 Origins

When the idea for the Big Green Challenge was developing (partly inspired by the work of the X Prize Foundation) climate change was particularly high on the political and media agenda. The team, led by Vicki Purewal at Nesta, knew that significant investment was already being made in science and technology research and development responses to climate change. And there was also major investment in communications campaigns around individual behaviour, such as switching off lights, appliances etc. However, something else was emerging in response to climate change which was more community led (for example, the movement around Transition Towns). The team believed there was untapped potential in communities to devise innovation responses to climate change, and that a challenge prize might be the right way to uncover this latent potential.

Who participated and how?

This competition targeted groups rather than individuals. However, it was open to un-constituted, informal groups as well as established community groups, charities and so on. Evaluations of the competition show that it attracted participation from less established groups; just under half of entrants were from organisations set up less than five years ago, and 51 groups came together for the first time to be part of the Big Green Challenge.¹²⁵ A high proportion (73%) of entrants were groups originating in a bottom up way from the community, rather than being established by another larger organisation.

How did entrants find out about the challenge? The initial communications drive about BGC took place from October to December 2007. Although the team had some web presence (a Facebook page, website and blog), the communications were mostly offline. Traditional media was leveraged through a non-exclusive partnership with the Mirror. However, Vicki identifies three elements as most crucial in getting information to a diverse group of potential applicants in the UK:

- Local media – they conducted many regional radio interviews, for example.
- Using networks of voluntary umbrella bodies, for example local youth organisations, to spread information to their members/email lists.
- Road shows across the country – they did 10 of these in total. The opportunity to talk to people face to face was really important because the concept was so new. For those used to traditional grant applications, it was important to be able to emphasise the ways this was different (the staged process, the focus on outcomes). And for those who were not used to

¹²⁴ In aggregate, the Finalists cut CO₂ emissions by at least 1,770 - 2,059 tonnes. CO₂ reductions in the Big Green Challenge year were monitored by CRed on behalf of NESTA. They estimated reductions achieved by Finalists across the Big Green Challenge year to be 10-46%. The emissions reductions achieved, during and beyond the challenge prize, may well be higher than the reductions reported in the evaluation.

¹²⁵ Full evaluation of BGC, <http://www.nesta.org.uk/library/documents/BGC-Evaluation-Exec-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

grants or any work of this sort, face to face interactions enabled the team to explain that they genuinely would consider the ideas of a new or emerging community group and take them as seriously as the ideas developed by a government department.

The prize pot of £1 million acted as an important hook for media stories, and for creating excitement around the initiative. In addition, Vicki notes that a huge part of the value for participants was the support they received throughout the process. The guiding principle of the challenge was at whatever point they exited the competition, every entrant should be in a stronger position than before.

6.2.3 Key resources

Given that this was to be the first competition of its kind in the UK, Nesta approached the challenge as an experiment that could be used to learn a lot about the use of prize models for social challenges. They therefore invested a lot of resource in delivering this competition. There was a full time dedicated person working on BGC for the duration of the two years. And others at Nesta were pulled in at various points to assist with administration and communications. But in addition to this, Nesta worked with a host of other partners; a web contractor built the site and online entry forms and a communications company helped with some of the media work. For subject expertise, they worked with the CRED carbon reduction team at the University of East Anglia who were able to advise Finalists on their data collection and to analyse all the data that came back from entrants. Social enterprise organisation UnLtd co-delivered the workshops and led the coaching support that was given to Finalists.

Overall, BGC was developed in a fairly resource intensive way and required major financial investment. In the more recent challenges Nesta have run, now that the concept of challenge prizes is more established, they have been able to cut down the resource intensity to some extent. For example, they have not conducted road shows across the country specifically on recent challenges and rely more heavily on tapping into existing networks and social media to raise awareness.

6.2.4 Value of competitions

Several types of value emerged from the BGC competition process. First there was value attached to the way the competition was able to reach and engage communities who wouldn't normally have got involved in innovation around climate change - in particular because of the knowledge and experience that they bring. As Vicki describes, there was "a real benefit to generating ideas from people who know the way people in their communities live and work, what motivates them and what their community assets are".¹²⁶ For example, one of the winning teams, Green Valleys was built around an understanding of current assets – disused micro-hydro systems – in that community. This was coupled with a motivation within the community to strengthen the local economy.

Nesta's evaluation of the programme concluded that the challenge "mobilised untapped resources"¹²⁷ and "acted as a beacon and focus, including for people not previously active on climate change".¹²⁷ The evaluation showed that the majority of entrant groups did not have an environmental focus, which demonstrated that the challenge was picked up by a broader range of groups than those with pre-existing interests in the environment or energy use.

¹²⁶ Interview with Vicki Purewal, 26 February, 2013

¹²⁷ Full evaluation of BGC, <http://www.nesta.org.uk/library/documents/BGC-Evaluation-Exec-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

Second, there was also real value for the community groups who participated. The support and training they received helped many of them to progress and take ideas forward, regardless of whether they were chosen as eventual winners. Recognition and reputation built up during the competition was also instrumental in the decision by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to award £600,000 to all the 17 Semi-Finalists who were not eventual winners. Vicki notes that the competition model itself was also very useful for getting people excited, motivated and for focusing their energies for a specific purpose over a defined period of time.

However, Vicki cautions that “there are a lot of ifs” when thinking about potential value. Competition models such as BGC only bring in more diverse ideas and voices if you get the communications strategy right, and they can only strengthen community organisations if you get the support right. So while there are some features inherent to the competition model that are beneficial (the hook of a prize for motivating and driving interest, the way it can generate buzz and focus people) much of the value depends on contingent factors about how the challenge is developed and run.

6.2.5 Challenges

One of the distinctive features of BGC was that to win, entrants needed to demonstrate not just that they had a good idea, but that they could put it into practice and show evidence of how their project had reduced CO₂ over a period of 12 months. This focus on outcomes meant there were major challenges around measurement. Vicki explains that because they were keen to be able to compare the projects confidently, they asked entrants to be completely standardised in the way they reported their impact, using the same tool. On reflection, this might have held back some of the entrants who were already interested in measurement, and made the process seem onerous and off-putting for those who were not. However, there was value in being able to feel confident in their results of projects achieving reductions of 10-46% over the 12 month period. Learning from this experience, one of Nesta’s latest competitions focused on ageing has a slightly more flexible approach; they have developed a list of indicators and projects are able to choose which ones are most appropriate for them to report against.

6.2.6 Outcomes

All of the winning projects identified in the Challenge are still operating and have grown their activities. The Green Valleys project, which started as an informal group of local people has become a Community Interest Company (CIC). They also used some of the prize money from BGC to set up a subsidiary company, TGVHydro Ltd which operates commercially to design, gain permissions for and install hydro turbines for both private individual and community schemes. Profits generated by TGVHydro are returned to the Community Interest Company, and are reinvested in community projects. Another winner, Household Energy Service, Ludlow (now operating as Light Foot Enterprises) recently secured European funding to provide free independent energy surveys for 20 community buildings in the South Shropshire area. Overall, the ten Finalists between them leveraged well over £2 million in grants, donations etc.

Nesta has built on the experience of the Big Green Challenge to develop new prizes based on a similar model. In the past year they have launched two challenges. The Ageing Well Challenge Prize asks communities to develop innovations that can reduce isolation and increase the mobility of vulnerable older people using the time, skills and resources available in that community. And the Waste Reduction Challenge is offering a prize for innovation that achieves the largest measurable

reduction in waste by providing new opportunities for communities to come together to give their time, skills and resources.

6.3 The Suwon Social Invention Competition, South Korea¹²⁸



Final presentation at the Suwon City Social Invention Competition 2011. Image courtesy of the Hope Institute

6.3.1 What is Suwon Social Invention Competition?

In 2010 and 2011, the Hope Institute and the Suwon municipal government worked together to run a competition inviting citizens to develop ideas in response to social and environmental issues in Suwon, South Korea. The competitions were structured as a month long call for ideas (which were uploaded to the 'DIY Suwon' website), followed by a week of voting for the strongest ideas. In both years, the city government gave some guidelines for issues they would like to see citizens tackle. For example in 2010, they suggested that citizens might provide ideas for how to regenerate a deprived area of the city where a stream runs, and in 2011 they expressed interest in ideas for environmental projects for Suwon. However, these were given as suggestions only, and citizens were free to submit ideas related to any social issue. Five projects were then given two months and a small amount of funding (\$900) to test out their ideas. The projects then presented to a panel who selected the winning projects. In both 2010 and 2011 there were three eventual winners.

6.3.2 Origins

The competitions in Suwon are rooted in previous work by the Hope Institute establishing similar competitions in the capital, Seoul in 2008 and 2009. This competition model itself followed on from another Hope Institute initiative – an online ideas bank for Seoul, launched in 2006. This was a web platform for gathering citizen ideas to solve social problems in Korea. On a weekly basis, staff and a citizen panel would examine the submitted ideas and choose the strongest to be debated at a forum gathering citizens, experts and relevant government officials. While it generated many fresh

¹²⁸ Many thanks to Jungwon Kim from the Hope Institute for speaking to us about the Suwon competitions in 2010 and 2011 (interviews conducted 20 February and 14 March 2013).

and unexpected ideas, the resource implications of assessing all the ideas were considerable. And the ideas bank did not give much opportunity for people to participate in the process of implementation and improving ideas. The competition model was therefore designed to build on and further develop the experience of the ideas bank.

Who participated and how?

The Suwon competition was open to all city residents and workers in Suwon. Basic statistics collected about entrants showed that in 2010 nearly half were young people (25% were secondary school students and 24% were university students).¹²⁹ Only 5% of entrants were civic groups or organisations and 2% social enterprises. The largest single category was 'individual citizens' (44%). In the second iteration of the competition in 2011, 'individual citizens' grew to 64% and the proportion of education institutions declined substantially (8% secondary school students and 14% university students. This reflects comments by organisers that by the second iteration in 2011, the idea of the competition had become much more widespread, moving beyond education institutions and had begun to take hold amongst more diverse groups in the community.

How did Suwon residents find out about the competition? Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were used to disseminate information about the call for ideas. The organisers also posted messages in an online café run by Korea's largest search engine. Online methods were chosen for cost effectiveness (the competition needed to be developed with quite a small budget) but also because the high proportion of Korean citizens who are regularly online means that this is an efficient way of reaching many people. However, the organisers note that this did mean that participants tended to be younger. They felt that newspaper adverts would have been a good addition, but in the end these were prohibitively expensive. Similarly, the organisers also wanted to do a campaign via text message although in the end this proved to be too resource intensive. However, they were able to support the online dissemination with some basic offline marketing, such as leafleting in busy areas and using networks of civil society groups to spread the word.

As well as participating by submitting ideas, citizens could also play a role in the competition by voting for favourite ideas. However, the impact of the public choice was limited; public votes accounted for 10% of the overall score given to a project, with the other 90% being decided by a panel of local civil society representatives.

6.3.3 Key resources

The competitions were run on a fairly lean budget and to a much shorter timetable than the example from Nesta above. But they did require a full time employee from Hope Institute to work on each iteration of the competition for its duration.

Strong communication skills and the ability to manage some tricky stakeholders were the most important attributes for getting the project off the ground. Jungwon Kim from the Hope Institute notes that engaging various civil society actors had to be done sensitively. Several could be quite hostile to the ideas of the competition organisers (they were seen to be new to this space) so it was essential to be able to take a step back and acknowledge the contributions of more established civil society actors.

¹²⁹ Statistics provided by Jungwon Kim, Hope Institute.

6.3.4 Value of competitions

The Suwon competition has resulted in a number of new citizen-led ventures which are still running as social enterprises. This is particularly true for the three winners of the 2010 competition, all of which are still operating. For example one of the winning entries from 2010 was submitted by a group of university students. They are now implementing their concept – an education program for young people related to environmental issues – as a full time organisation. But there has been no consistent trend relating to the outcome of winning projects. In 2011, winning ideas were submitted by individuals who did not have capacity to take them forward so they have remained as small scale initiatives. One of the winners was a woman who had developed a community gardening project for her apartment block. She continues to be involved in this project but has not been able to introduce the model to other blocks in the area.

Although the outcomes of the competition have not been very consistent, the organisers explained that a major source of value relates to introducing a new dynamic and culture in Suwon. Suwon is a satellite city of Seoul – you can reach the capital in under an hour. Despite having an important history and cultural significance, Suwon tends to be overshadowed by Seoul. People wanting to start new ventures or businesses typically relocate to Seoul and levels of pride in the city are low. The competitions in 2010 and 2011 provided mechanisms for people motivated to get involved in improving Suwon; previously there was little infrastructure to support citizen action. For the municipal government, the competition model has revealed latent potential amongst citizens, especially younger people, to make active contributions to Suwon. And for participants, the competition has highlighted that government is prepared to work differently. This all contributes to a renewed dynamic which the Suwon local government hopes will encourage people who have grown up in Suwon to develop enterprises there.

6.3.5 Challenges

The Suwon competition was entirely funded by sponsorship from the Suwon City Government. It was a strategic decision by Hope Institute to work with the local authorities, both to make the ideas easier to implement (assuming there was government support for them) and to encourage the city government to build capacity to run this kind of initiative by itself. But this brought its own challenges. Although the mayor of Suwon proved to be a great advocate for the competition (and spoke about it widely), many of the civil servants involved were initially very sceptical of the whole process. It was a major cultural shift for them to consider this kind of citizen participation. This highlights that citizen engagement processes often involve a shift in existing power dynamics and can therefore be quite disruptive. As Sarah White notes, participatory activities are frequently the site of conflict and in fact “the absence of conflict in many supposedly ‘participatory’ programmes is something that should raise our suspicions”.¹³⁰

A further challenge relates to the sustainability of the ideas that have emerged. The Suwon competition was designed with very low barriers to entry. The organisers wanted to place a much lower burden on participants than other competitions which are about citizens wanting to develop their own venture or enterprise. Conversations with participants showed that these more intensive competition processes could seem very daunting, especially for those with careers and caring responsibilities. So the Suwon model intended to provide an option that might be more appealing to ordinary citizens rather than those who consider themselves activists or are looking for a new career direction. While this approach might encourage more diverse participation and

¹³⁰ S White, ‘Depoliticising development: the uses and abuses of participation’ in D, Eade (ed.) *Development, NGOs and Civil Society: Selected essays from Development in Practice*, Oxfam, Oxford, 2000 p. 155

contributions from unexpected sources, it makes it much more challenging to ensure ideas are implemented and have a life beyond the competition. Hope Institute also runs a scheme for social enterprises looking for investment, and the three winners from 2010 were successful in securing funding from this initiative. So for some citizens, the Suwon competition acts as a ‘primer’, giving them an incentive to develop an idea on a small scale that might later become a much more serious venture. However, where citizens do not have capacity (or desire) to take their idea further, and in the absence of a government commitment to take ideas forward, there is no guarantee that the projects emerging from the competition have longevity.

6.3.6 Outcomes

Having led the competition for two years, the Hope Institute has now devolved responsibility to the local Suwon government. The competition model developed in Suwon is now being used in a new competition in Seoul supported by the mayor, (previously the Hope Institute’s founder), Won-soon Park. This began a call for ideas in October 2012 and the final winner was announced at the end of March 2013.

6.4 Competitions: issues to consider

6.4.1 Social innovation competitions are resource intensive

To drive high levels of participation, and crucially, participation from a wide range of actors, a major commitment of resource is required throughout the life of the competition. Competition models increasingly involve a staged process, and the opportunity to test out ideas for several months, which means that staff might need to be assigned to manage the project for a year or more. The best competition models do not end once good ideas have been selected – they mentor participants through the process of turning those ideas into reality. For example, as part of its competition to fund ideas related to ageing and intergenerational issues, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation funded co-design group Think Public to work with each of the finalists (11 groups from the UK and 7 from Portugal) to ensure that users were a key part of the project design. Luís Jerónimo from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation comments that “the work is not finished when you award the grants - that is when the work begins”.¹³¹ The scale of the investment required to run these kinds of ‘best in class’ competitions may limit the types of organisations that are realistically able to use this approach.

6.4.2 Scoping the problem and identifying success are particularly challenging for social competitions

Finding the right level for the question or challenge is complex. Partly this is about pitching the challenge in a way that will be motivating. The challenge or problem statement needs to be “solvable but not too solvable”, Vicki Purewal explains; too easy and there is no real challenge, too complex or unclear and people will not get excited about it. But it is also about designing the challenge in such a way that success can actually be judged. Marco Zappalorto who works for Nesta’s Centre for Challenge Prizes notes clients often come with a huge issue that they want to find responses to, such as ‘unemployment’. The challenge is then reducing this into a question that is manageable and where it will be possible to recognise and reward success: “you always have to think about how to structure the challenge in order to be able to measure the impact of the

¹³¹ Interview with Luís Jerónimo, 29 October, 2012

innovation”, he explains.¹³² This is especially hard for complex social issues that centre on relationships and behaviour change. The UNDP’s recently launched challenge to develop affordable and clean energy to refugees in Bosnia has a clear social purpose, but there are clear criteria for testing which devices are most successful – how much they cost and how much clean energy they produce. This is not nearly so simple when the challenge cannot be met by technical or product innovations.

¹³² Interview with Marco Zappalorto, 7 November, 2012

PART 3 – TAKING AND INFLUENCING DECISIONS

7. Participatory Budgeting

7.1 What is participatory budgeting?

Participatory budgeting is a process for directly involving citizens in making decisions about how public money should be spent. Usually, this means involving citizens in identifying spending priorities, making and then voting on proposals about how to spend the budget, and then involving citizens in overseeing and evaluating how the money was spent. The process can be organised geographically (e.g. by neighbourhood, local authority or municipality) or thematically (e.g. via school, health, housing or social care budgets).

Yves Sintomer, Carsten Herzberg and Anja Röcke have looked at the way that participatory budgeting has been applied in Europe.¹³³ They have identified a number of criteria that must be present for a budget allocation process to be called participatory. These are: the financial aspects of the budget must be discussed; the process must involve the city or a subdivision of the city (such as a borough or ward) that has some administrative power; it has to be a repeated process – it cannot be a one-off event; it must include some form of public deliberation and; there is responsibility for ensuring that plans are implemented.¹³⁴

The first participatory budget was introduced in 1989 by the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) in Porto Alegre. The PT was established in 1981 by a coalition of intellectuals, liberation theologians, militant trade unions and landless and urban movements that opposed the ruling military dictatorship. As Hilary Wainright explains, “This history shaped the party’s distinctive vision of democracy. The PT combined respect for liberal democratic rights with a belief – partly inspired by the participatory methods and the traditions of popular education typical of the movements that formed its base – in the need to open state institutions themselves to the participation of citizens.”¹³⁵ In this way, the participatory budget was an attempt to democratise decision making processes in a way that was aligned to the PT’s history and traditions.

For Olivio Dutra, the PT Mayor that introduced participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, this experiment was part of an overall process of democratizing the state. This “means people becoming the subjects of policy rather than the object of policy. It is not only a better way to make decisions about how to meet the needs of the people, but it is about inclusion, respect and a new political culture – it is a project for the democratization of every day life.”¹³⁶ So, from the outset, participatory budgeting aimed to achieve political goals – namely, to strengthen democracy by enabling direct popular participation in decision making processes. But it also had a strong social justice component: the process aimed to secure a more equitable distribution of resources by prioritising investment in infrastructure and services for the poor and marginalised. Another key aim was to encourage transparency in an attempt to curb rampant corruption and clientelism across the municipality.

The practice of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre is based on five principles. First, that every citizen has the right to be involved. Second, the process is city-wide. Third, the negotiations take place within an agreed framework which is open and transparent. Fourth, the process is supported

¹³³ Y Sintomer, C Herzberg & A Röcke, ‘Participatory Budgeting in Europe: Potentials and Challenges’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 32 (1), March 2008 164–78

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ H Wainright, *Reclaim the State: Experiments in popular democracy*, London, Seagull Books, 2009 p.48

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.2

by but independent of the Government. Fifth, participation does not end with the budget – the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the budget is also part of the participatory process and this information is used to help plan the following budget.¹³⁷

So how does it work in practice? The city is divided into 16 ‘regions’ which consist of a number of neighbourhoods. There are also five thematic city-wide budget groups: transportation; education, leisure and culture; health and social welfare; economic development and taxation; and city organisation and urban development. The participatory budget process starts with an open public meeting in each of the 16 regions and for each of the 5 themes. This is where residents review the last year’s budget and elect delegates to represent neighbourhoods in later budget discussions and negotiations. There is then a round of neighbourhood meetings where delegates and local residents discuss and then identify spending priorities. These spending priorities are then negotiated with other neighbourhoods at the next open regional assembly where the regional spending priorities are voted on by the whole assembly. At this meeting, budget councillors for the city wide Municipal Budget Council are elected from the group of regional delegates. These Councillors draft the participatory budget, taking into account not only the regional spending priorities but also the level of need and deprivation and the size of the population in those different regions (i.e. regions with the largest number of people or where the deprivation is greatest will receive more funding). During these negotiations, the Municipal Budget Council is supported by the municipality’s planning office (GAPLAN) that ensures the technical and financial viability of budget proposals. The budget is then submitted to the Mayor for his/her endorsement. The budget delegates are also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the budget and reporting back to the local community.

Almost 25 years later, the process now involves more than 50,000 residents and 20% of the City’s budget. Evaluations show that there have been a number of successes – in particular, there has been much greater investment in poorer neighbourhoods, especially in terms of education, transport, sanitation and water. The Porto Alegre experiment has been seen as a leading example of the potential of participatory budgeting. And the practice has now spread across the globe - first across South America, then Europe and now in North America and parts of Africa and Asia. It is seen as a means of empowering citizens, providing greater transparency and accountability, making decisions that better reflect the needs and preferences of citizens, delivering better public services, strengthening communities by building social capital and encouraging social cohesion and making more equitable spending decisions by favouring the poor and marginalised.

However, in this process of replication and imitation, the practice has been transformed into something quite new and often quite removed from what the early PT champions called ‘participatory budgeting’. In the UK, for example, the process is often used as a way of distributing small grants to local charities and community groups. In Germany and France, participatory budgeting is akin to more traditional methods of public consultation. While in Poland, private companies play a much greater role in shaping the process as they make a significant cash contribution to the overall budget.¹³⁸ In this case study we look at two particularly innovative examples of participatory budgeting in Europe: the *You Decide!* project in the London borough of Tower Hamlets in the UK and Berlin-Lichtenberg in Germany.

¹³⁷ H Wainwright, *Reclaim the State: Experiments in popular democracy*, London, Seagull Books, 2009

¹³⁸ For more information on the way participatory budgeting has been applied in Europe see Y Sintomer, C Herzberg and A Röcke, ‘Participatory Budgeting in Europe: Potentials and Challenges’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 32 (1), March 2008 164–78

CASE STUDIES

7.2 Berlin-Lichtenberg, Germany¹³⁹



Participants in the PB project. Source: <http://www.buergerhaushalt-lichtenberg.de/>

7.2.1 What is Participatory Budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg?

Most examples of participatory budgeting in Germany are quite different from the original Porto Alegre model. Indeed, many are more akin to traditional forms of public consultation, where the focus is on providing information to citizens and giving them some, limited opportunities to provide feedback and influence decisions. This is not however the case in Berlin-Lichtenberg which is now in its eighth year of participatory budgeting. Despite various legal constraints, this borough of East Berlin has tried to keep as true as possible to the spirit and principles of the Porto Alegre model. This process engages citizens from the outset – in developing proposals – before deliberating and then voting on these proposals. As such, Berlin-Lichtenberg is an example of the potential of participatory budgeting in Germany.

7.2.2 How does it work?

Berlin-Lichtenberg is a Borough of East Berlin with just over 260,000 residents. The Borough consists of 13 wards or neighbourhoods and has a borough assembly (elected by German citizens and EU nationals) and a borough administration (a Mayor and Councillors who are elected by the assembly). Because of its status as a borough of Berlin, which is both the capital of the country and a federal state in its own right, Berlin-Lichtenberg cannot raise taxes or borrow money and is therefore limited in its ability to determine its own budget. It receives almost 85% of its budget from the Berlin state government. Most of this budget is allocated on services mandated by the federal government (i.e. services guaranteed to citizens by law) and over which the borough has no

¹³⁹ This case study is based on conversations with Eva Roeder and Jochen Franzke from the University of Potsdam.

control. The remaining 6% can be spent by the local borough at its own discretion and is used for the participatory budgeting process.¹⁴⁰

The process is based on the idea that all citizens have the right to vote on and submit proposals for new services. Citizens are invited to submit proposals on the following themes: libraries, health, children and youth, culture, music schools, public roads, volunteering, services for the elderly, sports, environment and nature and economic development.¹⁴¹ Citizens can submit proposals online via the participatory budgeting portal or at residents meetings, which are open to all residents and held across the borough. Citizens then have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on these proposals at the residents meeting and online. The borough administration collects and reviews all proposals and amends them where appropriate to make them ready for voting. Citizens can then vote for their favourite proposals either online or at the residents meeting. There is now a ‘voting day’ where all voting takes place. The borough also carry out a household survey - a randomised sample of the population are asked to vote on their favourite suggestions. Initially 5,000 residents were surveyed but in 2013 this number increased to 50,000. The final votes are then passed on to the co-ordination committee at the borough who carry out feasibility studies, assess the financial costs of the proposals, make a decision about which ones to implement and start the implementation process. The assembly is accountable for the final decisions and the implementation of projects. The monitoring committee, which consists of local residents, assembly members, councillors, civil servants and civil society representatives, is responsible for evaluating and improving the process. Every year, there is also an evaluation meeting with local residents where people can suggest and discuss improvement to the budgeting process.

7.2.3 Origins

Participatory budgeting started in Germany in the late 1990s. At the time, the Bertelsmann and Hans Boeckler Foundations were co-ordinating a network called “Municipalities of the Future” which examined different kinds of municipal reforms, including participatory Budgeting. This formed the backdrop for the first experiment in participatory budgeting in Germany - between 2000 and 2004, 6 municipalities in North Rhine-Westphalia ran their own participatory budgets.¹⁴² Partly inspired by these developments, discussions about how participatory budgeting could be adopted and applied in Berlin started to take place.

In 2002 a Working Group was established in Berlin with the specific remit of examining how the process could be introduced in the city. This working group consisted of local activists, city planners, academics and activists from the UN backed sustainable development process, Agenda 21. In 2005 two pilots started in Berlin-Lichtenberg and Berlin-Hellersdorf-Marzahn. In Berlin-Lichtenberg it was strongly advocated by the local Mayor, Christina Emmrich who saw it as an important tool for strengthening democracy and reversing declining levels of public trust in government institutions.¹⁴³

Who participates?

¹⁴⁰ J Franzke, ‘Chances and limits of participatory budgeting in German municipalities: the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg’ in G Grossi, R Mussari & C Reichard (eds.) Local governance and its impact on public service management, CEDAM, Siena, pp153-176, 2008

¹⁴¹ For a full list see <http://www.buergerhaushalt-lichtenberg.de/thema> Sourced on 21st March 2013

¹⁴² J Franzke, ‘Chances and limits of participatory budgeting in German municipalities: the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg’ in G Grossi, R Mussari & Ch Reichard (eds.) Local governance and its impact on public service management, CEDAM, Siena, pp153-176, 2008

¹⁴³ Ibid.

In the first year of participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg, roughly 4,000 people took part which was 1.6% of the local population. For the 2013 budget, almost 10,500 people have taken part (either online, via residents meeting, meetings on voting day or the household survey) which represents 4% of the local population.¹⁴⁴ This marks a significant increase in participation over the last seven years.

This growth in participation can be attributed to two main factors. First, the borough has provided three different ways in which people can contribute ideas and vote on proposals: online, via the household survey and at public meetings. This multi-media approach has been cited as a key factor in the success of participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg. Indeed, in 2013, more than 6,000 people participated online and via the household survey. Second, the administration has made a concerted effort to engage groups which are usually under represented – in particular, families, young people and members of the Vietnamese and Russian communities. Even though progress has been made it is not clear exactly how represented these groups are now because the borough does not collect data on the socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds of participants.

7.2.4 Key resources

One of the key factors for the success and longevity of participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg is cross party support. The Mayor, Christina Emmrich, was the driving force behind participatory budgeting in the first few years. However, she was able to secure cross-party support for the process and support from all levels within the borough (the assembly, the administration and the councillors) which is why the process is still in place, despite there being a new Mayor and a new political party in charge of the borough.

It was also made possible by the introduction of new accounting and performance management rules in 1994 which meant that the boroughs of Berlin were each given lump sum payments by the federal state and were able to set their own financial priorities.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the legal 'duty to consult' citizens on issues relating to the borough, which was introduced in 2005, was both a symptom and a cause of a climate which was far more favourable to citizen engagement.¹⁴⁶

7.2.5 Value of participatory budgeting

In the last decade, representative democracy in Germany has been supplemented by various forms of direct democracy (such as referenda and participatory budgeting) and citizen engagement (citizen juries and other consultation exercises). The move towards participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg was part of this wave of local government reform to strengthen democracy and reverse declining levels of trust and public participation. Also, when it was introduced, Berlin-Lichtenberg suffered from high levels of unemployment and low levels of social cohesion.¹⁴⁷ The process was seen as a tool for social cohesion, social inclusion and building social capital.

¹⁴⁴ Daten und Fakten zum Bürgerhaushalt 2013. Available here: http://www.buergerhaushalt-lichtenberg.de/sites/default/files/files/info/04_2013_daten_und_fakten_bueha2013_endfassung.pdf. Sourced on 22nd March 2013

¹⁴⁵ J Franzke, 'Chances and limits of participatory budgeting in German municipalities: the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg' in G Grossi, R Mussari & Ch Reichard (eds.) *Local governance and its impact on public service management*, CEDAM, Siena, pp153-176, 2008

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ B Geissel, 'How to improve the quality of democracy? Experiences with participatory innovations at the local level in Germany', *German Politics and Society*, Issue 93 Vol.27, No.4 Winter 2009

Others argue that participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg was driven by the need to cut costs and reform public services. Giessel argues that the main aim of the process – at least in the first year – was to balance the municipality’s budget deficit.¹⁴⁸ According to Giessel, local municipalities are also feeling the pinch; austerity measures have put pressure on local municipalities to drastically cut costs and services. In this context, the value of participatory budgeting is to lend legitimacy to that process. Others, such as Carston Herzberg argue that the process is a way of improving public services by harnessing citizen’s expertise.¹⁴⁹

For Eva Roeder, participatory budgeting represents a new form of governance: “In general, it’s not only about the proposals, or about legitimacy, or about money – it’s about getting closer to a new form of living together, or a new idea of co-governance. It’s a mutual learning process.”¹⁵⁰ Roeder argues that this form of collaboration leads to better understanding which in turn can yield better solutions to social challenges.

7.2.6 Challenges

There are three main challenges to participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg. The first is participation. Even though 4% of the population has been involved in the process, this is still a relatively small number. Moreover, there are still concerns about how representative the process is. Brigitte Geissel for example, claims that middle class and “already active and organised citizens”¹⁵¹ are over-represented in the process. This issue of representation was mentioned back in 2009 by the then Mayor Christina Emmrich,

“When I look at the target groups, then young families are very under represented. That however is due to our own stupidity, as when I organise a community meeting between 6pm and 9.30pm, that’s the time when young families are at home and can’t be anywhere else. Or when I say that too few migrants are there, which is true, and I see that the Vietnamese, of whom 60% are shop keepers or wholesalers; they tend to have their shops open at this time. We are shutting these people out - the same people we are trying to involve. We must make it easy for these people to participate where they are and not expect that everyone will come to the places where we have stipulated.”¹⁵²

Another issue is citizens’ limited influence. First, only the discretionary budget is able to be used in the process. This represents just 6% of the total municipal budget. There are significant constraints to what local residents can achieve through this process; the budget does not cover the vast majority of public services which means that they are beyond the scope of the process and therefore not subject to changes. This means not only that there are significant constraints on citizens’ ability to advocate radical reforms or entirely new services but also on the ability of the process itself to generate substantial changes. Second, not all the discretionary budget is allocated through this process. According to Jochen Franzke, the value of the suggestions implemented is

¹⁴⁸ B Geissel, ‘How to improve the quality of democracy? Experiences with participatory innovations at the local level in Germany’, *German Politics and Society*, Issue 93 Vol.27, No.4 Winter 2009

¹⁴⁹ C Herzberg, Democratic innovation or symbolic participation? A case study of participatory budgeting in Germany. A Paper written for 6th ECPR General Conference Panel 25 – Democratic Innovations in Europe – A comparative perspective 25th – 27th Aug. 2011, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2011

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Eva Roeder on Friday 19th April 2013.

¹⁵¹ B Geissel, ‘How to improve the quality of democracy? Experiences with participatory innovations at the local level in Germany’, *German Politics and Society*, Issue 93 Vol.27, No.4 Winter 2009

¹⁵² Translated from the original interview in German <http://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/160457.mit-dem-buergeretat-durch-die-lande.html>. Sourced on 22nd March 2013

only between 0.4 and 1.2 million Euros. In addition, it is the municipality and not the citizens that have the final decision making power.

A third challenge is accountability and transparency. Proposals which are submitted are reviewed by the Borough Administration. Many proposals are rejected at this stage because they relate to issues or services over which the Borough Administration does not have either the power or responsibility to act – often because the duties belong to the Federal Government or Berlin Senate. Eva Roeder explains that the feedback from the Borough Administration to citizens has been poor in the past - often people do not understand why their proposal has been rejected.¹⁵³ In these cases, poor feedback can cause frustration among citizens and fuel criticism about the legitimacy of the process more generally. According to Roeder, there is a perception among some quarters that the participatory budgeting process is being used to legitimise the ideas and decisions of the Borough Administration.

7.2.7 Outcomes

The success of participatory budgeting in Berlin-Lichtenberg can be assessed in numerous ways: by looking at how many people take part, how many proposals have been submitted and how many of these have been implemented. However, assessing the impact is far more problematic: it is difficult to track cause and effect. This is especially the case given the relatively small sums of money actually involved in the process.

In its first year, 1.6% of local residents took part in the process. Eight years later this has risen to 4% of the local population (or 11,000 people). Between 2005 and 2011 1,888 citizen proposals have been collected by the borough administration. Of these, 414 were presented to the borough assembly. Of these, 83 were rejected by the assembly but 331 have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Some research suggests that the process has been successful in increasing participation rates of under-represented groups, has helped to build social capital in the borough, has strengthened the problem solving capacity of the local community and increased legitimacy and transparency of the budgeting process.¹⁵⁴

One interesting outcome of the participatory budgeting process was the establishment of district funds. Each of the districts in Berlin-Lichtenberg now receives 5,000 EUR every year, to be spent on hyper-local activities – such as street festivals, planting trees, improving playgrounds and so on. Decisions about how this pot of money should be spent are decided by local residents through citizens' juries.

7.3 You Decide! UK¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Interview with Eva Roeder 19th April 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Jochen Franzke 19th March 2013.

¹⁵⁵ This case study is based on interviews with Alan Thornton from Church Action on Poverty and Shazia Hussain from Tower Hamlets Council.



A family learning class selected by Tower Hamlets residents as part of the You Decide! project.
Source: Tower Hamlets Council

7.3.1 What is You Decide!

You Decide! was the participatory budget introduced in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 2009. During the process, almost £2.4 million was allocated by local residents on additional mainstream council services, making this the largest experiment in participatory budgeting in the UK at the time. The budget process was repeated in 2010.

Tower Hamlets is a populous and diverse London borough. It consists of more than 220,000 people speaking more than 100 languages. It has the highest proportion of young people as residents in London and nearly 50% of the population is non 'white British'. The project was therefore seen as an opportunity to bring community members together to reduce some of the tensions between and within communities, while at the same time giving local people more decision making powers over which local services should be purchased. It was also seen as a way of improving public services and developing skills and capacity for public participation in the Borough.¹⁵⁶

7.3.2 How did it work?

The Borough of Tower Hamlets is divided into 8 areas called Local Area Partnerships (LAP) which contain 17 wards. Each LAP has its own steering group which consists of residents, local councillors and service providers. Each LAP Steering Group sets its own strategic priorities and is responsible for overseeing local service improvements. The You Decide! project was divided into these 8 LAPs. The cabinet set aside £2.4 million to be spent on mainstream council services for 2009.

The council consulted the local community on the Council Cabinet's key priorities and asked about the types of projects that local residents wanted. This information was then fed back to senior managers who were then responsible for putting together ideas and proposals to be pitched to the local community at the various meetings that took place across the borough. Residents who

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/case-studies/case-studies/you-decide-tower-hamlets-london>.
Sourced on 14th March 2013

attended these meetings discussed and deliberated on these ideas and decided on which ones should be purchased with the money made available at the LAP level.

The public meeting had three parts. First, the senior managers pitched their ideas and proposals for services. In 2009, there were 33 different services on offer, categorised under five main themes: tackling anti-social behaviour, improving cleanliness, improving the quality of the public realm, raising GCSE results and reducing levels of youth unemployment. Possible services included a Drugs Outreach Worker for two years, Litter Pickers, Community Tree Planting, Extended Learning (Out of School Hours), Youth Inclusion Programmes and a Youth Disabilities Employment Project. The combined value of these services was £750,000 but each LAP only had £280,000 to allocate. Second, the residents discussed the various options. Residents sat at tables with trained facilitators who facilitated the discussion. Third, residents used digital voting pads to vote on which services to purchase. The voting took place in rounds. In the first round, participants voted for the service that they thought was the most important. The service with the most votes then got selected and the money for that service was removed from the total. Then there was another round and this continued until there was no more money left.

The LAP Steering Groups were then responsible for overseeing the development and then implementation of the chosen projects. Local residents on these groups had quite considerable influence on the way these projects were shaped and delivered. There was a final public meeting at the end of the year to evaluate the projects and reflect on the process.

7.3.3 Origins

In the early 2000s, the UK Government introduced a range of policies to encourage citizen engagement, community empowerment, devolution and decentralisation. It is against this backdrop that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and then the Department for Communities and Local Government supported first the creation of a Participatory Budgeting Unit and then 22 local pilots across the country. In its National Strategy for Participatory Budgeting published in 2008, the Government claimed that “Participatory budgeting is at the heart of the Government’s drive to pass more power to local communities and help re-invigorate local democracy.”¹⁵⁷

It is in the context that Tower Hamlets Council decided to experiment with participatory budgeting. The immediate catalyst was a conference on public participation with guests from Porto Alegre who had been invited to share their experiences of participatory budgeting in Brazil. Inspired by the stories of Porto Alegre, Shazia Hussain returned to Tower Hamlets Council and immediately discussed the possibility of replicating the model in the East London Borough. For Hussain and her colleagues, participatory budgeting seemed a natural next step for Tower Hamlets, which has a rich history of public participation and local activism.¹⁵⁸

The idea was supported by the Cabinet, the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team, who were keen on staying as true as possible to the original Porto Alegre methodology, rather than another small grants programme. The Council set aside £4.5 million from core funding to be spent over two years.

Who participates?

¹⁵⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government, Participatory Budgeting: A National Strategy – Giving more people a say in local spending, London, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

In 2009, 815 local residents took part in the process. The council were able to collect equalities data and there was relatively good representation across all key groups and communities. There was a slight under-representation of the white, elderly population, despite targeted advertising and support with transport to and from events. And, there was a slight over-representation of the Bangladeshi community. According to Hussain, this shows how “different communities are able to mobilise themselves differently depending on how networked they are. The Bangladeshi community, which is highly networked is very effective at mobilising itself”

The council used traditional marketing approaches – such as leaflets, posters and adverts in the local press - as well as leveraging existing local networks. They promoted the process via the LAP Steering Groups, local Councillors, Neighbourhood Management Teams, community groups and local organisations.

7.3.4 Key resources

To realise and then to make the process successful, support is needed at both senior levels within the council and grassroots levels in the community. This process was made possible in Tower Hamlets by the support of the Mayor, the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team, who ultimately made the decision to allocate the funds in this way from the Council budget. The process also needs buy in and support from the local community; without residents actively taking part – either through the public meetings or the LAP Steering Groups – the process would not be possible. Above all, the process needs to be credible. As Hussain explained, the process “has to have credibility, it has to be fair, it can’t be monopolised by one group – it’s for everybody”.¹⁵⁹

7.3.5 Value of participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting is an important tool for social cohesion. As Hussain argues, it’s essential in “bringing different communities together and building a sense of community”.¹⁶⁰ This is especially important in a Borough like Tower Hamlets where there are a variety of communities living together in a very densely populated area. It’s also an effective way of finding out directly from residents what their needs are, what their priorities are and the kinds of services they want the most. The process enables citizens to come together and shape not only which services are delivered but how those services are delivered. And this relates to the way in which participatory budgeting can empower citizens. For Hussain, this is the fundamental aim of participatory budgeting, “the main thing is that people feel a sense of worth for both themselves and their communities, to feel that they can make changes and that they’re an important part of what is going on locally and the decisions that are being made locally.”¹⁶¹

7.3.6 Challenges

In the first two years, the You Decide! project faced two challenges in particular, the first was the under-representation of the elderly white community (mentioned above) and block voting which took place in a number of public meetings.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

¹⁶¹ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

During the process, large numbers of young people attended, and many voted together in order to purchase youth related activities and services. Some participants felt that young people should not have been involved in the process as they do not pay local council taxes. Others complained that they voted as a block and prioritised their own, rather than the community's needs. One participant remarked, "As there were a very large amount of young people present they voted for their priorities. Although this was commendable I feel it was too heavily weighted and some consideration should therefore be given to higher priority for other pressing issues i.e. crime/drug operations that affect everyone!"¹⁶² It is important to note that young people do make up a large percentage of the Tower Hamlets population and that the issue of block voting was not an issue in all the public meetings. However, the local council amended the process in the following year to include a meeting specifically for young people, where ironically, participants overwhelmingly purchased services for the Borough's elderly population as well as services for the homeless. According to Hussain, this may have reflected the way the young people felt vis-à-vis other members of the community. As Hussain notes, "when it was just their event, and just for them, they thought they should buy for other members of the community. In the larger group they felt more marginalised so protected their interests but when they were making the decisions and had the power, they didn't feel so marginalised and made purchases for other people".¹⁶³

According to Hussain, participatory budgeting and other forms of citizen engagement are often obstructed on grounds of accountability. Detractors will argue that it is not appropriate or legitimate to give control to people who lack the experience and expertise to make appropriate decisions. Others argue that the citizens that take part in such processes are not elected, are not representative of the community at large and therefore lack the mandate to make decisions. However, she argues that this is often an excuse: "people put up barriers of accountability, expertise and legitimacy but participatory budgeting shows that you can release power to citizens and you can deliver better outcomes."¹⁶⁴

7.3.7 Outcomes

A survey was carried out to evaluate the process in 2009. Results were promising with 78% of respondents saying that they would take part again, almost two-thirds thought that the event was a good way to decide where money should be spent on local services and, just over three-quarters agreed that a contract between residents and service providers would help improve local services. The process was repeated in 2010 but discontinued thereafter. However, new plans are currently underway to reintroduce participatory budgeting in the Borough later this year.

The new model is quite different and envisages a far greater role for local residents in identifying local spending priorities, co-producing plans and proposals and deciding how money should be spent. As Hussain explains, "In the past we were focusing on the question – 'can we enable people to participate?' 'Can we help people to develop a greater sense of belonging?' Now we want to build on that and talk about co-production. How do we work with citizens and service providers to come up collectively with solutions around the perennial problems that we can't address on our own?"¹⁶⁵ Each ward will have its own community forum and a community organiser who will be responsible for organising public meetings and supporting local residents to develop plans and

¹⁶² Evaluating You Decide! June 2009. Available at:

<http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/documents/2009%2007%2009%20Evaluation%20document%20APPROVED%20Tower%20Hamlets.pdf> Evaluation. Sourced on 25th March, p.3

¹⁶³ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

proposals for services and other activities. In the first year each ward will receive £10,000 but this is envisaged to grow in the following years. So, not only will residents identify their own priorities, they will also be partly responsible for working with service providers to develop and then implement solutions. According to Hussain, “this means greater power but also greater responsibility for local residents...the best models are when the residents have ownership of the process from the start to the end. It’s much harder to do but it’s a much more effective process.”¹⁶⁶

7.4 Participatory budgeting: issues to consider

In most cases, participatory budgeting in Europe is quite far removed from how it was initially conceived and practiced in Porto Alegre. In the UK, participatory budgeting is a way of allocating small grants to community and voluntary groups while in Germany, participatory budgeting is a way of consulting residents about local spending. However, the cases we have shown here – of Berlin-Lichtenberg in Germany and You Decide! in London are both pioneering in their own contexts. In the former, citizens are not simply consulted – they are invited to submit proposals for new services and vote on the best ones – and the whole discretionary budget could potentially be allocated in this way. In London, citizens were directly involved in purchasing and commissioning mainstream public services.

7.4.1 Participation and representation

However, in both of these cases two issues stand out. The first is about participation and representation. In Tower Hamlets, only 815 people took part in the first participatory budgeting process. This is less than 1% of the local population. Even though this group was fairly representative of the local population (except for the elderly white population which was slightly under-represented) there are questions about whether or not decisions taken by such a small number of local residents are legitimate. To whom are these residents accountable? Are there enough participants to claim that they speak on behalf of all residents? Participation rates are much higher in Berlin-Lichtenberg but still relatively low at just 4%. This increase can be attributed to the fact that there are now multiple channels for citizens to submit and vote on proposals (online, via the household survey and public meetings) and that the borough have made a concerted effort to reach out to under-represented groups. The question that remains, however, is what is a good rate of participation?

7.4.2 Influence or empowerment?

Second, how empowering are these processes really? Participatory budgeting is often lauded as a tool for community empowerment, giving people the power to make decisions locally. But to what extent are these claims true? In Berlin-Lichtenberg, decision making powers rest firmly with the borough assembly. There is no stipulation which forces the borough to implement even the most popular proposals. In Tower Hamlets, spending priorities were decided by the Mayor and the local authority – not by local residents. Indeed, some participants argued that the ‘menu of options’ from which citizens purchase services should have been put together by residents themselves. This feedback has been taken on board and citizens will be responsible for determining spending priorities in the next participatory budgeting process. However, there are real questions about the extent to which these kinds of processes deliver ‘real control’ and ‘real power’ to local citizens – especially when the sums of money involved are only a small proportion of municipalities’ total budgets. In Tower Hamlets for example, the Council set aside £2.4 million for this process. In the

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Shazia Hussain on 14th March 2013

same year (2010-2011) the Council's gross expenditure on services was £1.35 billion. Similarly, in Berlin, only 6% of the overall budget is available for the participatory budgeting process.

What is necessary for mainstreaming participatory budgeting? In the case of Berlin-Lichtenberg, the process could only be mainstreamed through changes to Federal law (giving local authorities greater powers over their actions and budgets) or for a higher level of government (such as the Berlin Senate) to adopt participatory budgeting processes.

7.4.3 Changing relationships

However, advocates would argue that these processes do deliver real value. For Alan Thornton from Church Action on Poverty, participatory budgeting changes people's perceptions of local services and help them to feel more involved in local decision making. For him, participatory budgeting "changes people's relationships with services and investment. People have more of a stake - the language changes and they start talking about 'our services'. Which is significant in terms of people's valuing of public services generally but also how they respect it and take responsibility for it. So people do say – that's the bench or that's the youth worker I helped fund – and given the direction of austerity and budget cuts - that is the growing responsibility that is expected."¹⁶⁷ This, as well as growing evidence of the benefits of participatory budgeting in terms of social capital, community cohesion and so on, suggests that participatory budgeting is a valuable and important form of citizen engagement.

For others, participatory budgeting is an example of co-production – of local authorities coming together with local citizens to develop ideas and make decisions together. Indeed, participatory budgeting in Tower Hamlets and Berlin-Lichtenberg are both part of a broader strategy for engaging local citizens and co-producing local services. For example, the process in Berlin is part of a broader strategy to create a 'citizen's municipality'.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Alan Thornton, 5 March 2013

8. Co-operative governance

8.1 Background

Co-operatives are jointly owned and democratically controlled organisations that are established to meet common economic, social and cultural needs. The model for co-operatives was established in Rochdale in the north of England in 1844 by a group of tradesmen who joined together to open their own store selling food they could not otherwise afford, forming the first consumer co-operative. The ‘Rochdale Principles’ form the basis on which co-operatives operate globally, and are incorporated in the statement on co-operative identity adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance at its centennial congress in 1995 (see the box below). In contrast to the nineteenth century expansion of philanthropy (the wealthy helping the poor) the co-operative movement centred on the principles of self-help and mutual aid – the less well off helping one another.

Across Europe there are now 160,000 co-operatives, employing nearly 5.4 million people.¹⁶⁸ These organisations work in many different sectors including agriculture, retail, housing, health, education, travel, banking and care. In some countries, particularly southern Europe, co-operatives are a long-standing and significant portion of the economy. In others, there has been a resurgence of interest in co-operative models in recent years. For example, in the UK, co-operatives are increasingly seen by policy makers as a new model for public service delivery; the Coalition government is currently spinning out a number of public bodies and agencies into cooperatives and mutuals. The argument is that the democratic ethos and structure of co-operatives will make them better suited to serving the public and meeting social needs.

One of the distinctive features of co-operative organisations is their emphasis on democratic governance. Governance refers to the way an organisation distributes power, rights and responsibilities. In co-operatives, members participate in decision making according to the principle of one member, one vote. Of course there is a continuum of democratic involvement in co-operatives. At one end of the scale, in small cooperatives it might be feasible for all significant decisions to be made by all members. At the other, in very large retail co-operatives, member participation might amount to little more than voting at annual general meetings. There are also many different models for membership in co-operatives. Members of a co-operative can be employees (a worker co-operative) tenants or owners (a housing co-operative), savers or borrowers (a credit union), consumers (a retail co-operative), user producers (a co-operative consortium) or some combination of all of these (a multi-stakeholder cooperative).

Why examine co-operative governance in the context of citizen engagement? Unlike many of the other forms of engagement we have looked at in this report (co-design, crowdsourcing and competitions) this is not a method focused how citizen involvement contributes to the generation of new ideas and projects. Rather, participation in governance is about sustaining existing projects. As such it also has a very different character, being an on-going form of participation as opposed to a discreet, one-off form of engagement. It therefore provides an opportunity for us to examine a distinct form of participation, focused on how people can take and influence decision making processes.

Co-operative models of governance are clearly not new – they have a long history. However, they are starting to be applied in more and different contexts. A good example of this is in the development of one type of multi-stakeholder co-operative, co-operative schools. Although today

¹⁶⁸ Co-ops UK, *The UK Co-operative Economy: Britain’s return to co-operation*, Co-ops UK, Manchester, 2012

this appears as an innovative development, it is more of a return to an earlier tradition of co-operative engagement with education. Provision of educational activities for members was a common feature of nineteenth century co-operatives. In the UK, the Rochdale pioneers dedicated 2.5% of their profits to supporting education and by 1876 they had a library of 12,000 volumes, a full time librarian and 11 reading rooms.¹⁶⁹ Followers of Robert Owen formed co-operative schools in Salford, Wigan and elsewhere. Successful consumer co-operatives also set up their own schools, although these typically became absorbed by the state education system. In the last five years in the UK there has been a renewal in the relationship between co-operatives and formal education with the emergence of Co-operative Trusts and Co-operative Academies. There is also a long history of co-operative schools throughout Europe. Co-operative schools emerged in Spain from the 1960s onwards and there are now over 600 co-operative schools there, employing nearly 20,000 teachers.¹⁷⁰ These schools have developed a strong regional and national voice through their network of regional and local structures. In Poland, the Polish School Cooperatives celebrated their 100 year anniversary in 2010. And there is increasing interest in co-operative models of education in Africa; there are currently over 8,000 African students currently enrolled in co-operative colleges.¹⁷¹

Co-operative identity, values and principles¹⁷²

Definition:

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Co-operative Values:

Co-operatives are based on the values of **self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity**. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of

¹⁶⁹ P Gurney, *Corporate Culture and the politics of consumption in England 1870-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, quoted in K Facer, J Thorpe and L Shaw, *Co-operative Education and Schools: An old idea for new times?* The BERA Conference, September 6th 2011, London, UK

¹⁷⁰ K Facer, J Thorpe, & L Shaw, 'Co-operative Education and Schools: An old idea for new times?' The BERA Conference, September 6th 2011, London, UK, 2011

¹⁷¹ L Shaw, *International perspectives on co-operative education* in Webster, Brown, Stewart, Walton & Shaw (eds) *The Hidden Alternative: Co-operative values past, present and future*, Manchester: Manchester University Press

¹⁷² <http://ica.coop/en/what-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>

which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6. Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

CASE STUDIES

8.2 Student voice in Co-operative schools, UK¹⁷³

8.2.1 Origins

Co-operative schools emerged in the UK following the 2006 Education and Inspections Act which introduced the model of Trust schools. While they continue to be funded by local authorities, these schools become independent charitable trusts, inviting outside groups and local businesses and charities to become partners in the school, involved in its governance and leadership.

Representatives drawn from parents, staff, learners and community organisations are elected to a stakeholder forum, which holds the Trust to account, shapes its decisions and elects some of the trustees. The school's land and assets also transfer from the Local Authority to the trust and the schools also gain additional powers, becoming both the employer and admissions authority. In March 2008, Reddish Vale Technology College in Stockport became the first co-operative school. Since then hundreds of schools have become co-operatives; the majority of these as Trust schools, which can consist of a single school or a cluster of schools which collaborate and pool resources. In addition, following the Academies Act in 2010, there is now a model for co-operative academies.

The basic concept behind co-operative schools is to find a way of rooting the school in its local community. The co-operative school model “gives the opportunity for members of the wider community to participate in school governance by becoming members of the co-operative, broadening the involvement and accountability of the school beyond its walls and those who have a direct self-interest as a student or parent”.¹⁷⁴

Who participates and how?

¹⁷³ Particular thanks to Mervyn Wilson at the Cooperative College and the authors of their handbook ‘You Cooperative Trust: Making it Work’ which was an invaluable source of case studies for this piece. We are also very grateful to Jamie Audsley for sharing recent primary research on co-operative schools in the UK.

¹⁷⁴ J Audsley and P Cook, ‘Co-operative schools: learning democracy’, *Shifting Grounds*, May 1 2012, <http://shiftinggrounds.org/2012/05/co-operative-schools-learning-democracy-2/>

Co-operative Trust schools are multi-stakeholder co-operatives which means they have four different types of members: parents/carers, staff, pupils and community groups (and sometimes local residents within a certain radius). Building up membership and engagement amongst these three groups is done in many different ways. Here we focus on one particular group: the students.

Students play a formal role in governance through the stakeholder forum which feeds into the meetings of the Trustees of the school. The stakeholder forum consists of some representatives that are appointed by Trustees. These include individuals from the school's strategic partner organisations that enter into a formal partnership when the Trust is formed. These usually include a local college, higher education establishment or university, or a prominent local business. Often another co-operative is included as a strategic partner since they can bring expertise in co-operative working. For example the Holmsfirth based Fair Traders Co-operative is a strategic partner in the Royds Hall Co-operative Learning Trust in Kirklees.¹⁷⁵ There will also be representatives from local community members – organisations that work with the school in some way but do not have the capacity to be a strategic partner. An example might be a local allotment organisation that is working with the school on gardening projects. The Local Authority is also usually represented. Alongside these individuals appointed by Trustees, there will be elected representatives from parent, staff and student members. For students, taking part in the forum offers “the chance to work as equals alongside adults and to engage in discussion and debate in a way that will have real impact on the nature and content of their own educational experience”.¹⁷⁶

Although typically only a few students will be part of the stakeholder forum, many more will take part in the various Councils or other student led groups that feed into the forum. How do these bodies differ from school councils which are a feature of many existing, non-cooperative schools? Mervyn Wilson from the Co-operative College argues that “the interesting transition is when you move from talking about the state of the toilets to talking about curriculum, performance and other more central activities”.¹⁷⁷ At Ashton Park School, a team of students joined a recent planning away day that involved all governors and the senior management team. What marked this out was the content of what they were discussing. Headteacher Tessa Thomas describes the conversations as being very high level, “about where the school is going and how we should use our resources”.¹⁷⁸ They also discussed quality of lessons and one of the outcomes of the day was a plan for students to develop a charter outlining what elements they think make up a good lesson.

Another example of student involvement at co-operatives is in appointment of staff. Although some form of student involvement is becoming more common across schools in the UK, in co-operatives their involvement tends to be of a more substantive nature. At Ashton Park, students formed a panel that interviewed prospective head teachers.¹⁷⁹ The panel was chaired by the head boy and head girl and included representatives of each year group. They structured interview questions and presented their conclusions to the selection board. The students were given clear assurances that their feedback would be given equal weighting as panels conducted by members of

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.roydshall.org/cooperative-trust/trust-partners/254/>

¹⁷⁶ C Gardner, J Thorpe, R White and C Wilkes, 'You Cooperative Trust: Making it Work', The Cooperative College, 2013, p. 56

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Mervyn Wilson, 13th March 2013

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Tessa Thomas, 26th March, 2013

¹⁷⁹ Ashton Park is part of the South West Bristol Co-operative Learning Trust which includes Luckwell Primary School, Compass Point: South Street School and Children's Centre, Ashton Vale Primary School, Bristol City Council, Bristol City Football Club, The University of the West of England, Bristol Futurelab and The Co-operative Group. See case study in C Gardner, J Thorpe, R White and C Wilkes, 'You Cooperative Trust: Making it Work', The Cooperative College, 2013

the Senior Leadership Team and Governors. The headteacher who was selected through this process, Tessa Thomas, has continued this model for new teacher appointments. She says student involvement goes well beyond the typical practice of having students show candidates around the school, and their input has been “really discerning and insightful”.¹⁸⁰ She also notes that it develops a much greater sense of ownership for students when they know they contributed to decisions about appointments.

Face to face meetings, forums and councils are not the only format for student voice. Co-operative schools are also making extensive use of online tools to provide mechanisms for on-going feedback. At Whalley Range School in Manchester, student ‘Digital Leaders’ appointment to design and disseminate online surveys (usually using free tools such as Survey monkey and Google Forms) to gauge opinion on current issues.¹⁸¹ They are also tasked with monitoring online forums for student discussion and reporting any issues that are emerging.

Figure 7 - A poster advertising stakeholder forums at Reddish Vale



8.2.2 Key resources – what is needed to enable student voice to be effective?

When a school has recently transitioned to become a co-operative, it is important to familiarise students with the concept of membership and what it means in practice. At Royds Hall Trust, staff developed a six week tutor programme to be delivered to students.¹⁸² This included sessions outlining the basic idea and benefits of membership, introduction to cooperative values and explaining the democratic structures for student representation. Learning from other co-operative

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Tessa Thomas, 26th March, 2013

¹⁸¹ Case study 15, C Gardner, J Thorpe, R White and C Wilkes, ‘You Cooperative Trust: Making it Work’, The Cooperative College, 2013

¹⁸² Case study 21, C Gardner, J Thorpe, R White and C Wilkes, ‘You Cooperative Trust: Making it Work’, The Cooperative College, 2013

schools is another common strategy. Tessa Thomas of Ashton Park says as a new co-operative they were very aware of the need to learn from more established schools.¹⁸³ They have taken groups of students on study visits to other schools (such as Lipson Community College in Plymouth) to get ideas and expose students to how others have organised themselves and found ways to get their voices heard. However, Tessa emphasises that there is no blueprint for how this should be run, so each school will have to adapt these ideas to fit their own school context.

Managing membership not just of students but all stakeholders requires significant staff resource. At Royds Hall, two associate assistant head teachers were appointed with particular responsibilities for developing membership and the stakeholder forum.¹⁸⁴ Working with members also requires particular knowledge and experience. The Cooperative College has developed a number of courses and provides support materials to help with this. For example it runs a course specifically developed for ‘membership champions’ on ways to recruit and engage new members from each stakeholder constituency – parents, carers, staff, students and community representatives. The College’s trainers can also be engaged to help with specific events such as launching a membership day.

8.2.3 Value of co-operative approach

Although it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between co-operative status and academic performance, headteachers attribute major improvements in school results to the strength of the co-operative model. Dave Boston, former headteacher at Sir Thomas Boughey (and now head of the Schools Co-operative Society) notes that they moved from 30% of pupils gaining 5 GCSEs grades A to C to 74% in 2011.¹⁸⁵ At Burnt Mill School in Harlow in 2009, just 27% of students were achieving five good (A to C) GCSEs. Since becoming a co-operative Trust school in 2010 and then converting to a co-operative academy, there has been a significant improvement in attainment with 72% of students achieving five good GCSEs in 2012.¹⁸⁶

How do educationalists relate these successes to the co-operative model? One explanation is that becoming a co-operative school gives pupils and teachers a new status, as members and owners of their school. As a trustee at Royal Docks Community School in East London, Mervyn Wilson has observed a major shift in attitudes, with pupils becoming really proud of their school “membership has given them that sense of belonging”.¹⁸⁷ Whether people move from talking about ‘the school’ to talking about ‘our school’ is a good indication of how far co-operative values have penetrated a community. And this shift is directly related to the culture that comes out of the structures for governance and representation. Wilson argues that this sense of ownership is what tends to be missing from the large sponsor academy chains, commenting “the community can never have the sense of ownership and engagement in something they are structurally barred from having a voice in”.¹⁸⁸ A former pupil at Reddish Vale says that “the equality within the membership of a cooperative school Trust is a valuable tool for altering the relationship between teacher and pupil by ensuring the strength of the students’ voice is equal to that of the teachers”.¹⁸⁹ Another at St

¹⁸³ Interview with Tessa Thomas, 26th March, 2013

¹⁸⁴ Case study 21, C Gardner, J Thorpe, R White and C Wilkes, ‘You Cooperative Trust: Making it Work’, The Cooperative College, 2013

¹⁸⁵ http://www.co-operativeschools.coop/what_we_do/case_studies/case_study_2/stb_video_5

¹⁸⁶ <http://test.school.coop/case-studies/record-results/>

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Mervyn Wilson, 13th March 2013

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Mervyn Wilson, 13th March 2013

¹⁸⁹ Christopher Hill, interviewed on school.coop <http://test.school.coop/case-studies/the-student-experience/>

Clere's which formed a Co-operative Trust with a local junior and infants school in 2012 comments: "I know now that my thought counts...before I always thought that it was all the grown ups that make the decisions, but now we can put our input in, and we can change the things that we want."¹⁹⁰

Being a member of a co-operative school also has an impact on learners beyond academic achievements. The experience of being a member of a co-op often inspires pupils to get involved in their communities beyond their time at the school. Wilson notes that pupils often get really switched on to co-operative values, are able to articulate them and can become "passionate advocates of the cooperative values and model."¹⁹¹ For example, Ashley Simpson who was involved in the founding of the first co-operative school, Reddish Vale, went on to get involved in the co-operative movement in football and became chair of the Stockport Country Supporters Co-operative. In this sense, the value generated by co-operative schools may best be understood over the longer term relating to how people develop and contribute to their communities, not just in how they perform whilst at school.

8.2.4 Challenges

Bringing a democratic element to students' engagement with schools requires a major shift of mindset. Tessa Thomas also notes that developing a more democratic approach involves a significant level of trust. Students have to be given real responsibility, and inevitably that comes with concerns from some quarters about whether they have sufficient knowledge and experience to take a role in decision making.

Adding a student led dimension to governance is not in itself transformative. Wilson comments, "it's values, not structure, that are important". And new values can take a long time to develop. They also come out of a whole-school approach to embedding a co-operative ethos. Wilson emphasises that although governance is an important strand of co-operative practice, it is only ever one piece of the puzzle. Co-operative values and practices also need to seep into the curriculum, pedagogy and continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers.

There is also a particular challenge associated with the way that co-operative schools are emerging in the UK. Co-operatives have historically developed in response to needs of members that could only be met by self help. There is much discussion and debate about how the co-operative might operate and only later is it established as an organisation. However, in the UK, this model is being turned on its head. Schools must first establish co-operative status in terms of their legal form before anything else. Getting to this point takes six months (minimum) hard work negotiating complex bureaucracy. During this time, teaching staff are typically very concerned about working conditions and what the transition will mean. Schools can arrive at the end of this process with a staff who are exhausted by the demands of changing the organisation, but have not yet had much time to consider their collective vision for what it means for the school to embed co-operative values in its activities.

8.2.5 Outcomes

It is now five years since the first co-operative school became legal in the UK and there are now almost 450 co-operative schools, with more expected to be established throughout 2013. There are a number of moves to bolster and support schools in their transition to co-operative status. The Co-

¹⁹⁰ Interview with students at St Clere's – transcript from interview by Jamie Audsley

¹⁹¹ Interview with Mervyn Wilson, 13 March 2013

operative College recently developed a Co-operative Identity Mark to help schools to benchmark their progress in being shaped by co-operative values.¹⁹² The mark gives schools a way to evaluate how cooperative principles are being put into practice in five key areas: governance, curriculum, pedagogy, staff development and community engagement.¹⁹³

Co-operative schools are also gaining support from diverse quarters. In July 2012, the NASUWT (the largest teaching union in the UK) which has been strongly opposed to school reform that removes power from local authorities, signed an agreement with the Schools Co-operative Society. Professor Ron Glatter describes co-operative schools movement in the UK as “by far the most hopeful development of recent years given its rapid expansion and the clear indication that it meets the preferences of many professionals and local communities”.¹⁹⁴ However, Tom Woodin points out that if growth continues, there may well be strong opposition from existing interests and “it remains to be seen whether democratic futures can be constructed within existing restraints”.¹⁹⁵

8.3 Teacher engagement in co-operative schools, Spain

8.3.1 Origins

Co-operative schools emerged in Spain in response to a desire for more varied approaches to education. Under General Franco’s dictatorship, Spanish was the only language that could be used in schools and the Catholic Church was also extremely dominant in education. Some of the first co-operative schools were consumer co-operatives established in the late 1960s and 1970s in Catalonia by parents unhappy with the rigid national curriculum and exclusion of the Catalan language. Following the transition to democracy in 1975, many co-operative schools developed in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Andalucía and Valencia. Then in the 1980s, rising unemployment and job instability amongst teachers led many to develop new employee led co-operatives.

There is a huge variety across Spain, but there are some common commitments that tend to stand out in Spanish co-operative schools:

- Teaching in local language and promoting local culture
- Meeting local needs (for example through vocational training which is designed in partnership with local employers).
- Inclusion: many co-operative schools provide education for those with particular needs or disabilities.¹⁹⁶
- Independence: in some regions (for example Andalucía) there has been a desire to provide education that is independent from the state and also not controlled by the Catholic Church.

Today the regions with the highest proportion of co-operative schools are Andalucía, Catalonia, Madrid and Valencia.¹⁹⁷ Of all these cooperative schools in Spain, 96% are “concertados” – private

¹⁹² Whalley Range High School for Girls (Manchester), Birches Head High School (Stoke-on-Trent), Royds Hall High School (Huddersfield), William Shrewsbury Primary School (Burton upon Trent), Fountains Primary School (Burton upon Trent) and Royston Summer Fields Primary School (Barnsley) were the six schools that piloted the CIM

¹⁹³ <http://www.co-op.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CIM-brochure.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ R Glatter, ‘To whom should schools belong? Towards a new model of ownership’ in *Making it Mutual: The Ownership Revolution that Britain Needs*, ResPublica, London, 2013

¹⁹⁵ T Woodin, ‘Co-operative schools: building communities in the 21st century’, *Forum*, vol. 54:2, pp. 327-339, p. 337

¹⁹⁶ FS Segura and MJ Pons Fuster, *Cuadros de Pedagogia*, No 351 November 2005 pp. 50-53

schools with public funding - which means they must guarantee students free education.¹⁹⁸ For this research, we have focused on the co-operative schools on one particular region: Madrid and the surrounding area. Here a specific scheme contributed to the boom in co-operative schools. A decade ago, Madrid's local educational authority began to push for bilingual programs in schools. One way they encouraged this was by holding contests where they would award organisations the land needed for a new school and commit to partially subsidising the school so that there are no tuition fees for students. The winning organisation is then responsible for building the new school, managing it and providing bilingual (English as well as Spanish) education; the teachers put up 30% of the costs for the new building and finance the rest via a bank loan. Although the Catholic Church has been most successful at winning these contests, the new policy also encouraged groups of teachers to form co-operatives and compete. The scheme is no longer active (it is not viable given the difficulty of obtaining debt finance since the financial crisis) but it was significant in the development of co-operative schools in the region.

Who participates and how?

Teacher run co-operative schools have a democratic governance structure. There is an Assembly which consists of all the members of the co-operative. The assembly delegates some of its powers to a board which normally has a mandate for four years. This comprises a President and typically four or five other members who undertake the roles related to finance, resources, staff management and so on. The Board is responsible for appointing a Head teacher but their nomination has to be approved by the Assembly. The head of the school will not usually be part of the board but rather focuses on pedagogy, recruiting new teachers and managing heads of department.

At least in the Madrid area schools we spoke to, formal membership of the school co-operative is restricted to school employees, since the model is one of a worker co-operative. The majority of these are employed as teachers but some other staff are members (for example Carmen Duran from Colegio Gaudem says that at her school, cooks, caretakers, librarians and secretaries are all members alongside teachers.)

Rates of participation in the co-operative by school workers tend to be high. At Gredos San Diego Co-operative (which includes six schools, serving 12,000 students), 847 out of 1215 employees (70%) are members of the worker co-operative.¹⁹⁹

Maria Cabo, president of the Board of Colegio centro de estudios castilla (a small school in central Madrid, serving a mostly immigrant population) explains that there is also a democratic forum for non-member stakeholders – teachers, parents and community groups. They are invited to general assembly meetings - a legal requirement of the co-operative form in Spain. At these meetings the teachers present information about their financial status as well as their plans in terms of curriculum and so on. The community then has an opportunity to vote on various proposals for the school.

¹⁹⁷ For a regional breakdown, see D Villalba Gil, "Las Cooperativas De Enseñanza: Una Perspectiva Jurídica". Available online at <http://uvadoc.uva.es/bitstream/10324/1821/1/TFG-L73.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ D Villalba Gil, "Las Cooperativas De Enseñanza: Una Perspectiva Jurídica". Available online at <http://uvadoc.uva.es/bitstream/10324/1821/1/TFG-L73.pdf>

¹⁹⁹ Gredos San Diego Report On Corporate Social Responsibility. Email correspondence with Javier Martínez Cuaresma,

The shape of governance in these co-operatives looks very different depending on the character of the school. For example, Maria's school is very small (270 students and just ten teachers) so it is not difficult for them to be in constant contact. In other schools (some of the members of the Madrid Union of Co-operative Schools have as many as 1300 students) the assembly meetings provide a rare opportunity for all the teacher members to meet and discuss the status of the school.

8.3.2 Key resources

Because teacher owned co-operative schools require teachers to take on responsibility for running all aspects of the school, there is a real need for training and support in financial literacy, management and leadership. Often there is a division of labour regarding management and pedagogy. For example, Carmen Duran from Colegio Gaudem explains that in her school, six teacher members are responsible for the economic management of the school and six are responsible for the educational aspects.²⁰⁰

There are also key skills required related to the governance elements of the school. Maria Cabo comments that in her role as President of the Board, she needs to spend a lot of time thinking about how best to organise people, and to make them feel useful and included as members of the co-operative.

The role of federative support networks which provide training and advice is therefore important. Co-operative schools are usually allied to regional networks (such as UCETAM for Madrid) and there is also a national Union of Co-operative Schools for Spain. These networks help to provide expertise in co-operative management and support the training and development of teachers. They can also provide legal support on the transition to a co-operative legal form and when necessary, help to lobby government.

Another key enabler for co-operative schools is a favourable legislative environment. Spain has a long history of co-operatives which has been bolstered by certain policies. For example at the national level there are reduced rates of corporation tax for co-operatives and a system whereby people can use unemployment benefit of a lump sum to help them to finance new co-operative ventures (this is called the 'pago único' – one off payment). It is also significant that there is institutional support for setting up co-operative schools in most regions in the form of guaranteed state support for accepting students from the local area.

8.3.3 Challenges

José Manuel Caballero De Zulueta of UCETAM (the union for Madrid co-operative schools) highlights that although decision making processes are highly democratic, they can lead to slow decisions or stalling of processes. This is particularly so in the very large schools. However, this is partly mitigated by delegating some decision making to the Board.

²⁰⁰ Email correspondence with Carmen Duran, dated 26 April 2013

There is also significant personal cost to teachers who decide to become members of a new co-operative school. The education authority in Madrid does not pay salaries and social security for member teachers directly, but gives a total amount to the co-operative to distribute. Since in the early years the school will have a significant loan to pay, the teachers will have to accept a significant cut to their salary. They also tend to work a much longer day than in other schools (Jose suggests that 8am to 9pm is more typical than 9-5).

Currently there are also real challenges related to being able to raise debt finance so that teachers can actually purchase part of a school.

8.3.4 Value of teacher led cooperatives

What is it about teacher ownership and co-operative status that makes a difference? José Manuel Caballero De Zulueta argues that the difference “lies in commitment”. Because the teachers own and are responsible for the school, their level of commitment to the school is so much greater. As he puts it “the school is their lives; if it sinks, they sink”.²⁰¹ It is this extra commitment from staff that contributes to the education outcomes of the schools; typically they perform better than regular state schools.

Having a financial stake in the school also means they have far greater levels of job security than in the state system. Ultimately the level of control and autonomy that teachers enjoy makes it much more personally satisfying. Maria Cabo explains: “We have to fight every day, but now I cannot imagine teaching as a civil servant. It’s not a good business – if you’re looking to make money, don’t do it! But if you believe in your work and want to try new things and create good education for young people, then it’s the best way.”²⁰² Similarly, Carmen explains that “because we paid a lot of money to enter the co-operative, we are very involved in the school and it doesn’t matter how much you have to work, because you feel the school is yours”.²⁰³

8.3.5 Outcomes

At least for the Madrid area schools, the real emphasis is on the teachers as members of the co-operative, which reflects the way they were established. But Jose explains that there are aspirations to get more stakeholders – particularly parents and local businesses involved in the schools – but at the moment this remains an aspiration.

There is also currently not as much collaboration between different co-operatives schools as there might be. This is something the Spanish National Union of Co-operatives is working on – for example by establishing an intranet to share best practice.

8.4 Co-operative governance: issues to consider

8.4.1 Formal vs. informal participation

There is on-going debate about the right level of balance between participation in formal structures of governance and participation in discursive activities that might influence decision making. Linda

²⁰¹ Interview with José Manuel Caballero De Zulueta, April 5, 2013

²⁰² Interview with Maria Cabo Díaz, 11 April, 2013

²⁰³ Email correspondence with Carmen Duran, dated 26 April 2013

Shaw of the Co-operative College notes that in many cooperatives, member participation has focused on increasing participation in formal committee structures rather than offering a number of different channels through which members can engage with their society. She argues that more time should be spent thinking about how organisations can “devise strategies to communicate with, engage and educate their growing membership outside of the formal committees”.²⁰⁴ It is important she says, to “conceive of democracy in terms of the active engagement of members, not only their rights of voting.” Similarly, Robin Murray argues that “contributing ideas and having them listened to will often be more meaningful than voting for candidates that members have never met or even heard of”.²⁰⁵ This highlights that although influencing and taking decisions is often presented as the most substantive form of engagement, in reality it can be rather shallow in terms of the impact it has on participants.

8.4.2 Governance as one lens on co-operative participation

The way that co-operatives make decisions is just one aspect of these organisations and therefore it can be difficult to look at this in isolation. Taken on its own, the democratic value of co-operatives expressed as the right to vote or to elect others to take decisions may not seem very significant. But this needs to be put in context. A right to vote in crucial decisions about an organisation is indicative of a level of ownership and autonomy innate to co-operative models that can be very valuable. For example, in worker co-operatives, employees “can use their knowledge and expertise to better effect. They are not constrained by orders and directives from others more distant and less knowledgeable than themselves.”²⁰⁶

8.4.3 Can co-operative models of governance hinder innovation?

However, the relationship between co-operative governance structures and capacity for innovation is not straightforward. While on the one hand, a worker co-operative governance structure may be a sign of greater autonomy and professional freedom, in some instances it might impede innovation. Gorgi Krlev in his work on social entrepreneurship has noted that combining co-operative governance with more corporate like governance structures might be particularly important for some sectors. He looked for example at renewable energy provider EWS, Elektrizitätswerke Schönau which is a cooperative based in Baden Württemberg, Germany. The founders note that while co-operative values have been very important to them, being able to combine the co-operative structure with a limited society that can make immediate decisions and react quickly to changes within guidelines that have been agreed democratically, is very valuable: “It would be difficult if I had to ask the cooperative in every business decision. There are a considerable number of decisions that we take by ourselves in our role as executives, of course, within the guidelines that the cooperative has set.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ L Shaw, Co-operative Education Review, The Co-operative College, 2011, <http://www.co-op.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Co-operative-Education-2011-web.pdf>

²⁰⁵ R Murray, Co-operatives in the Age of Google, Co-operatives UK

²⁰⁶ J Le Grand, ‘The Public Service Mutual: A revolution in the making?’ in *Making it Mutual: The Ownership Revolution that Britain Needs*, ResPublica, 2013

²⁰⁷ Interview transcript provided by Gorgi, May 29, 2013.

9. Conclusion

The case studies in this paper have sought to highlight and illustrate the many forms of citizen engagement in social innovation. From participatory budgeting in Germany, to co-design processes in Australia, to the Social Invention Competition in South Korea – there are numerous institutions and organisations that are engaging citizens in the process of developing and then sustaining new solutions to social challenges.

We have argued in this paper and elsewhere that there are reasons why citizen engagement may be of particular importance to social innovation: first, citizens have specific knowledge of their own lives which no organisation can claim; engagement processes therefore enable a better understanding of problems that an innovation might address. Second, citizens can be the source of innovative ideas. Third, engaging citizens enables contributions from varied and sometimes unexpected sources, which introduces divergent thinking; these diverse perspectives add particular value when trying to address complex challenges. Fourth, innovations which are developed by and with citizens may be seen as more legitimate than those which are developed without engagement activities. And finally, many of the challenges that social innovations aim to tackle, such as obesity or climate change, absolutely require the participation, co-operation and ‘buy-in’ of citizens because they depend on fundamental changes to behaviour and attitudes.

As well as highlighting these reasons for engagement, we have also called for some caution: evidence of the benefits of engagement and participation is often patchy, and the value of engagement and participation tends to be contingent on the form and practice of that activity, the context in which it is performed, and the supporting structures around it. Moreover, research suggests that engagement and participation activities which are poorly executed or fail to take contextual factors into account can generate harms or negative outcomes – for example, unmet expectations can lead to cynicism and further disengagement. The most commonly cited challenges are about making sure the right people are being engaged - the people involved need to be representative of the community, target group or of society generally. Key challenges are those of co-optation by vested interests and elite groups and over-representation of the most affluent, articulate and educated members of the community. Where processes are not seen to be representative, decisions which are taken may be seen as illegitimate and lead to further disengagement. These challenges are particularly well-documented in the field of civic renewal, participatory democracy and international development.²⁰⁸

But how do they relate to social innovation? To answer this question we first need to be clear about what ‘citizen engagement in social innovation’ means. Providing clarity has been the overarching aim of this paper: first, by clarifying and explaining what citizen engagement in social innovation might mean by outlining the different functions that engagement activities perform; and second, by illustrating some of the many methods of citizen engagement in social innovation.

We define citizen engagement in social innovation as the ways in which more diverse actors can be brought into the process of developing and then sustaining new solutions to social challenges –

²⁰⁸ See for example the collection of essays in B Cooke and U Kothari (eds.) *Participation: The New Tyranny*, Zed Books, London, 2001

essentially how citizens can be involved in developing social innovations and in social projects which are innovative. And, we identified three functions that citizen engagement in social innovation can perform: providing information and resources; problem solving and; taking and influencing decisions. We then chose case studies to illustrate each of these three key functions. For each of these functions we have developed two case studies, focused on a specific method (e.g. participatory budgeting) and illustrated by two specific examples, either particular projects or instances where the method or approach has been applied, usually in a specific location. For each of these case studies we examined the way in which citizens were engaged, the main risks, challenges and benefits of using the particular method and the outcomes and impacts that emerged.

In the tables below, we give an overview of both the kinds of value and challenges we uncovered in our case studies of citizen engagement. This is clearly not a comprehensive list, nor does it suggest that every instance of these methods will lead to these benefits or challenges. Rather, this summary reflects the points that our interviewees, who are closest to these methods of engagement, chose to highlight.

Figure 8 – Benefits of engagement

Benefits of engagement	Method/Case Study
New perspectives on problem	User led research; co-design
Better understanding of issue	User led research; crowdsourcing; co-design
Quality and timeliness of information gathered	Crowdsourcing
Accessing information which cannot reasonably be gathered in any other way	Crowdsourcing; user led research
Greater diversity of ideas	Co-design; competitions; PB
Better access to hard to reach groups/engaging people and groups who wouldn't usually be engaged	User led research; competitions
Mobilising untapped resources	Competitions
Increased confidence and skills in participants	User led research; co-design; competitions
New and stronger networks and relationships for organisation	User led research
New and stronger networks and relationships for participants	User led research; co-design; competitions; co-op governance
Facilitating, enabling and supporting citizen action	Crowdsourcing; competitions; co-op governance; co-design
Making a case for change	Crowdsourcing; co-design
Developing solutions more quickly	Co-design
More appropriate/better targeted programmes/responses	Co-design; crowdsourcing; participatory budgeting
Social cohesion and social inclusion	Participatory Budgeting
New model of governance/collaboration	Participatory Budgeting
Improvements in performance	Co-op governance
Sense of ownership over actions/decisions	Co-design; Participatory Budgeting; co-op governance
Sense of empowerment	Co-design, Participatory Budgeting
Sense of belonging	Co-op governance

Figure 9 – Risks and challenges of engagement

Risks and challenges of engagement	Method/Case Study
Protecting participants from risks	User led research
Accessing hard to reach groups	User led research; Participatory Budgeting
Accessing a diverse group of participants	User led research; co-design; PB; crowdsourcing
Accessing a representative group of participants	Participatory Budgeting; crowdsourcing
Co-option by particular groups	Participatory Budgeting
Shortage of people with skills to deliver participation activity	Co-design
Being able to analyse data gathered	Crowdsourcing
Reliability and accuracy of information gathered	Crowdsourcing
Raising expectations in a community that might not be fulfilled	User led research; co-design; Participatory Budgeting
Cultural barriers to participation (e.g. lack of trust)	Crowdsourcing
Physical barriers to participation (e.g. lack of internet)	Crowdsourcing
Scepticism and participation fatigue as barriers to participation	Co-design
Cynicism from public sector	Competitions
Implementing citizens' ideas and making solutions sustainable after the process	Competitions; co-design
Securing adequate resources	User led research; Participatory Budgeting
Measuring impact and 'success'	Competitions
Requires intensive resources and securing resources can be challenging	User led research; Participatory Budgeting; competitions
Outcomes are unknown at the beginning of the process	Co-design
Requires significant time to implement and see impact	Co-design; co-op governance
Identifying the 'right' challenge to solve can be problematic	Competitions
Slower decision making	Co-op governance

Given the diversity of activities we examined, it is not surprising that we uncovered such a range of benefits and challenges; we examined a broad range of activities which were developed for myriad reasons, by a diverse range of actors to achieve often quite divergent goals.

Looking at the diversity of challenges and benefits identified above provides a clear illustration of the difficulties associated with abstracting from specific types of engagement and talking about all this activity under the generic heading of 'citizen engagement'. Our case studies do not enable us to provide recommendations or a simple toolkit for citizen engagement understood as a unified concept. Rather, they suggest that a much more instructive approach and a fruitful avenue for further research is to focus on specific forms of activity. It is through a better understanding of specific varieties of engagement that we will gain an understanding of how they can best be used in the development and implementation of much needed social innovations.

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