Co-Production Star Action Learning through five Co-Production Labs with the Offenbach Employment Agency

21st Midlands Co-Production Network Workshop
17 October 2019
About Governance International

• A non-profit organisation working with public organisations and communities internationally to improve citizen outcomes since 2002

• Training, facilitation and tools based on the Co-Production Star toolkit since 2012, externally certified since 2017

• Provides 70+ international co-production case studies, now featured on the OECD Observatory Public Sector Innovation website.

• Provider of evidence-based research and projects on co-production (Cabinet Office, MHCLG, Joint Improvement Team Scotland, Welsh Government, many local councils and nonprofit organisations in UK and internationally).

• Co-ordinator of the (West) Midlands Co-Production Network
What co-production is about?

"Co-production is about public service organisations and citizens making better use of each other’s assets, resources and contributions to achieve better outcomes or improved efficiency.“
Key co-production approaches: the Four Co’s

- **Co-commission**
- **Co-design**
- **Co-deliver**
- **Co-assess**
How to achieve better outcomes through co-production?
The five steps of the Co-Production Star

1. Map existing co-production approaches and new opportunities (Co-production Explorer)

2. Focus on those with highest impact (Outcome- Contribution-Matrix)

3. People your co-production approaches (Capabilities Assessment)

4. Market the behaviour change (Outcomes Assessment)

5. Grow co-production through culture and system change (Co-production Charter and Outcomes-based Commissioning).
What the Co-Production Labs are about and how they work

Governance International
Co-Design Toolkit

EXPERIENCE
EXPLORATION
EXPERIMENT
EVALUATE
EVOLVE
How do the Co-Production Labs work?

Each Co-Production Lab is free to choose its own way of working, depending on the context and the needs of the stakeholders involved.

However, Governance International suggests the following steps as an initial guideline, based on our Co-Design Toolkit:

1. **Experience**: Find out what your service users and local communities are already doing, and want to do, to contribute to your co-production initiative.
2. **Explore** how to shape the co-production initiative together.
3. **Experiment** with new solutions through small-scale actions – and several interesting experiments will be more revealing than just one approach.
4. **Evaluate** the lessons learnt and the results achieved - these lessons will feed into Workshop 4, which follows the Labs.
5. **Evolve**: Consider how to grow the co-production initiatives and embed effective co-production approaches in your organisation and community.
Employment services in Germany: political and legal context

• “Hartz 4“ reform (2005): merging unemployment benefits (for long-term unemployed) with welfare benefits

• Provision of integrated services, to achieve holistic approach for service users – a one-stop shop including support and financial assistance for job-seekers and their families, and payment of welfare benefits

• 408 Jobcenters established at the level of local authorities throughout Germany as integrated service providers (”passive“ benefits, ”active“ employment services, and social services for client with specific needs)
  • 303 Jobcenters as consortia of municipalities and the Federal Agency for Employment
  • Another 105 Jobcenters as local government agencies, including Offenbach
The Employment Agency of Offenbach Council at a glance

- Offenbach Council borders Frankfurt am Main - about 125,000 inhabitants
- In the State of Hessen about 2/3 of employment agencies have been integrated into local councils. This also applies to the Offenbach Employment Agency, which was established as a municipal agency („Eigenbetrieb“), managed and governed by the City of Offenbach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff 2018</th>
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<tr>
<td>Job-Counselling, Job-Placement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefit Management</td>
<td>111</td>
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<td>Overhead</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>277</td>
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Lab 1: Co-commissioning ‘employability budgets’ with young jobseekers

Experience/Explore
Frontline staff enable service users to identify their own goals and milestones for development and to co-determine use of an ‘employability budget’ up to 500 Euros (e.g. for obtaining driving license)

Experiment
• Co-commissioning with three young people who agree their goals and the budget they need with the employment agency
• Collaboration between frontline staff of Employment Agency and a third sector organisation providing coaching for young jobseekers

Evaluate/Evolve
• One young person has achieved first milestone (internship), the two others are progressing in the right direction
• Staff have learnt to support service users to identify a wider range of (their own) wishes and goals
• Communication between the involved staff and service users is more open, in particular, trust in service users has increased
Lab 1: Co-commissioning ‘employability budgets’ with young jobseekers

Source: Jobcenter Offenbach © 2019
Lab 2: Co-designing a “Citizen Symposium” with service users (on getting ready for retirement)

**Experience/Explore**
Service users help frontline staff to identify which information service users require to prepare for retirement, in order to design a public event which provides citizens with relevant information and also recruits new people who can provide peer advice and support.

**Experiment**
- Front-line staff engaged with service users (close to pension age) to identify what they need to know and how they would like to access information.
- The public event also involved other public agencies and third sector organisations relevant for this topic.

**Evaluate/Evolve**
- Event took place on 14 October.
- Small and more frequent events are better than one big event to reach a maximum of service users.
- Staff benefits from events as well (up-to-date information and new collaboration opportunities with other organisations).
- How can the Employment Agency enable service users to propose other topics for public events?
Lab 2: Co-designing a “Citizen Symposium” with service users (on getting ready for retirement)

Source: Jobcenter Offenbach © 2019
Lab 3: Co-designing service offers from the ‘Luise 34’ second-hand shop

**Experience/Explore**
Service users who work in the ‘Luise 34’ second-hand shop provide service offers for other users of the Employment Agency, which improves the employability and safety of those working in the shop.

**Experiment**
- Front-line staff used a questionnaire to identify what service users wished to learn and what they could teach others.
- This was followed by a workshop where the survey results were analysed and offers were designed, based on the expressed willingness to co-produce and feasibility of the proposed service offers.
- This Lab involved collaboration between the Employment Agency and two (later three) third sector organisations.

**Evaluate/Evolve**
- The Lab had to change its initial plans due to complex issues of service users who were no longer able to co-produce a peer support network.
- Therefore the Lab Coordinators decided to start with IT training which would be co-delivered by a service user with IT expertise supported by staff.
- It was difficult to recruit the first cohort of service users who had the self-confidence to support/teach others.
Lab 3: Co-designing service offers from the ‘Luise 34’ second-hand shop

Source: Jobcenter Offenbach © 2019
Lab 4: Co-delivering peer support for and with people seeking a job

Experience/Explore
Service users are matched with each other based on a ‘strengths & weaknesses’ analysis and enabled to provide peer support to each other while working in close collaboration with front-line staff.

Experiment
- Front-line staff initially matched 3 under-25 year olds and 3 over-25 year olds to each other, after a careful analysis of possible matches.
- The service users were encouraged to meet weekly, followed by meetings with front-line staff to assess progress made.
- In each meeting with front-line staff milestones were identified and tasks agreed to be tackled by the tandems for the next ‘milestone meeting’.

Evaluate/Evolve
- There is evidence that in the case of some service users self-efficacy has been increased.
- The feedback of both involved staff and service users has been very positive.
- Insight that young people who have taken up a vocational training no longer have the time to provide peer support.
- Peer support initiatives benefit from co-commissioned ‘employability budget’.
Lab 4: Co-delivering peer support for and with people seeking a job

Source: Jobcenter Offenbach © 2019
Lab 5: Co-assessing training courses and other projects with participants

**Experience/Explore**
Frontline staff enable service users to identify which personal outcomes are important to them and to assess training courses and other projects offered by the Employment Agency.

**Experiment**
- Participants on a German language training course and a few participants of other training courses were invited to a workshop where they identified what matters to them and assessed the courses they had participated in, including suggestions for improvement.
- Workshop included ‘fun activities’ to build trust between participants and staff.

**Evaluate/Evolve**
- Most improvement suggestions have been implemented so that now courses/projects are tailored better to the needs of participants.
- Involved service users considered the workshop as a positive experience.
- However, the recruitment of service users willing to assess has been difficult.
Lab 5: Co-assessing training courses and other projects with participants

Source: Jobcenter Offenbach © 2019
Next steps on the co-production journey of the Offenbach Employment Agency

- Co-production Celebration Event in order to value the contributions of all co-producers and to reflect on next steps

- Gathering further evidence of improved outcomes (both qualitative and quantitative)

- Spreading the lessons learnt to other employment initiatives and other public services in Offenbach and Hessen

- Your ideas...?
We wish you lots of success in your co-production journey!

Stay in touch...

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Action Learning Programme