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A New Agenda for Co-Creating Public Services

COSIE

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A New Agenda for Co-Creating Public Services

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Co-creation of Service Innovation in Europe

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1. Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Why co-creating public services has never been more important

The world is changing rapidly. We face increasing and new social needs such as ageing populations; mass immigration; the rise of long-term, chronic health conditions such as diabetes; high rates of unemployment for young people; a mental health epidemic; increasing loneliness across the generations; homelessness; and, new trends in substance misuse. At the same time we have witnessed the rise of populism, nationalism and the erosion of public trust in government and public services. Economic shocks of recent years including the financial crisis that started in 2008 and the current COVID-19 crisis is making difficult decisions about the future of public services more immediate.

If improvements in public wellbeing are to be achieved we need public services designed to deliver social outcomes more effectively for less resources and in more joined-up ways. However, the way that public institutions design and deliver these services also needs to change. There is recognition, from across the political spectrum and civil society that top-down policy-making and faceless, impersonal and sometimes inadequate in addressing the problems at hand public services are out of step with people's expectations in the twenty first century. People want something different from their governments and from their public services:

> *"In recent years, there has been a radical reinterpretation of the role of policy making and service delivery in the public domain. Policy making is no longer seen as a purely top-down process but rather as a negotiation among many interacting policy systems. Similarly, services are no longer simply delivered by professional and managerial staff in public agencies but are coproduced by users and their communities."* (Bovaird 2007: 846)

Many models of innovation involve co-creation, which implies that people who use (or potentially use) public services work with providers to initiate, design, deliver and evaluate them (Voorberg et al. 2015, Torfing et al. 2019). The goal of the Co-Creation of Public Service Innovation in Europe project (CoSIE) is to contribute to democratic renewal and social inclusion through co-creating innovative public services by more actively engaging diverse citizen groups and stakeholders in varied public services beyond traditional and less effective participation channels, such as consultative boards.

CoSIE assumes that co-creation becomes innovative if it manages to meet social needs, and to enable

CoSIE Pilots

- Poland: Co-housing of seniors
- Estonia: People with disabilities in remote areas
- Spain: Entrepreneurial skills for people long-term unemployed
- Hungary: Household economy in rural areas
- The Netherlands: No time to waste
- The Netherlands: Redesigning social services
- Italy: Reducing childhood obesity
- The UK: Services for people with convictions
- Sweden: Social services for people with disabilities
- Finland: Youth co-empowerment
- Greece: City allotments

the beneficiaries of policies, by changing socio-political relations and redistributing socio-political responsibilities. More specifically, it aims to a) advance the active shaping of service priorities and practices by end users and their informal support network and b) engage citizens, especially so called 'hard to reach' groups, in the collaborative design (and implementation) of public services. One way it does this is through the development of ten pilot cases, embedded in national and local contexts which strongly differ in socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economical dimensions.

The CoSIE project builds on the idea that public sector innovations can be best achieved by creating collaborative exchanges or partnerships between service providers (i.e. public sector agencies, third sector organizations, private companies) and citizens who benefit from services either directly or indirectly. Co-creation in CoSIE is a collaborative and power balancing activity that aims to enrich and

If improvements in public wellbeing are to be achieved we need public services designed to deliver social outcomes more effectively for less resources and in more joined-up ways.

enhance the individual and collective value in public service offerings at any stage in the development of new service and during its implementation. It is manifested in a constructive exchange of different kinds of resources (ideas, competences, lived experience, etc.) that enhance the experienced value of public service. Individual and public value may be understood in terms of increased wellbeing, shared visions for the common good, policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks or new services.

This paper draws together key findings from CoSIE with a particular focus on what these imply for new policy and practice in public services in the form of a discussion paper aimed at European, national and regional policy-makers. The big ideas emerging from CoSIE can be grouped together as ideas associated with conceptualising co-creation, implementing co-creation and moving beyond piloting co-creation to extending co-creation across systems. However, we start by defining co-creation.

1.2 What do we mean by co-creation?

In co-creation, people who use services work with people who manage and deliver services to design, create, steer and deliver those services (SCIE 2015). Involvement of users in the planning process as well as in service delivery is what distinguishes co-creation from closely related concepts such as co-production (Osborne and Strokosch 2013).

Co-production is closely related to co-creation (Voorberg et al. 2015) and many practitioners use the terms interchangeably. However, for analytical purposes it is useful to distinguish the two concepts. In co-production people who use services take over some of the work done by practitioners whereas in co-creation, people who use services work with people who manage and deliver services to design,

create, steer and deliver services (SCIE 2015). Similarly, Osborne and Strokosch (2013) argue that co-production does not necessarily require user involvement in the service planning process, but where this occurs it is often termed 'co-creation'. Despite acknowledging the use of other terms – such as co-design, co-governance, co-delivery, co-evaluation (Bovaird and Loeffler 2013; Pestoff 2015, Voorberg et al. 2015; Lember et al. 2019) - to describe the various phases within the whole process, this contribution wants to focus specifically on the difference between co-production and co-creation, in order to clarify both concepts and their particularity.

Co-creation clearly covers a range of activities and therefore it is useful to try and develop a typology of co-creation. Bovaird's (2007) typology distinguishes between the role of professionals and people who use services in relation to planning services and delivering services and these two dimensions are important and form the basis of the typology we set out in Table 1. However, our typology introduces a more fine-grained distinction between co-production and co-creation. Thus, on the horizontal axis we distinguish how responsibilities and control between the two groups can be distributed in the planning process so that even when there is co-planning between professionals and

Table 1: A typology of co-production and co-creation.

Who leads the PLANNING / Who leads the DELIVERY	Professionals as sole service planners	Professionally led service planning with user and community consultation	Professionals and people who use services and/or community as co-planners	People who use services and/or community led service planning with professional input	People who use services and/or community led service planning with no professional input
Professional as sole deliverer	Traditional public service delivery model	Traditional public service delivery model	Co-production	Co-production	Co-production
Co-delivery between professionals and communities led by organisational/ system priorities (deficit-based)	Co-production	Co-production	Co-production	Co-production	Co-production
Co-delivery between professionals and communities led by user / community priorities (asset-based)	Co-production	Co-production	Co-creation	Co-creation	Co-creation
Users / communities as sole deliverers	Co-production	Co-production	Co-creation	Delegated control	Traditional, self-organised community provision

people who use services, responsibility and control can be distributed in favour of either group. On the vertical axis, we recognise that even when people who use services are involved in delivery, their needs can sometimes be subsumed by organisational or system priorities.

Our typology assumes that co-creation occurs when people's needs and capabilities are properly understood and take priority over organisational and system needs and priorities. What our typology does not capture is another important dimension: the temporal one. Models to the lower right-hand side of the table, which we characterise as co-creation, often take longer to develop and the development process is often not linear. This is because these models of co-creation tend to be grounded in a recognition of the complexity of public service organisations and systems.

Recognising these different dimensions and the complexity of co-creating public services, CoSIE used the following definition of co-creation:

> *Co-creation is a collaborative activity that reduces power imbalances and aims to enrich and enhance the value in public service offerings. Value may be understood in terms of increased wellbeing and shared visions for the common good that lead to more inclusive policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks or new services.*

In the remainder of this paper we discuss some key themes implied by this definition:

Conceptualising co-creation

- Strengths and capabilities
- Value co-creation as a moral endeavour

Implementing co-creation

- New roles for front-line workers
- Re-thinking risk
- Re-designing organisations and systems
- The role of technology

Beyond piloting co-creation

- Evaluating
- Scaling-up

2. Conceptualising co-creation

2 Conceptualising co-creation

2.1 Strengths and capabilities

In common with many others concerned with co-creation, we took as a point of departure its much cited characterisation by Voorberg et al. (2015, p. 1335), as "active involvement of end-users in various stages of the production process". This is a description rather than a definition and quite broad, so interpretations can vary in detail and emphasis. Implicit within it are new roles and responsibilities and, at least potentially, changes in the balance of control. This was present from the outset of the CoSIE project. As the pilots progressed, engaged with diverse stakeholders and began to share their learning, it became more prominent and explicit within CoSIE that co-creation attempts to reconsider and reposition people who are usually the targets of services (i.e. have services 'done to them') as asset holders with legitimate knowledge that has value for shaping service innovations.

Strengths or asset-based approaches focus upon people's goals and resources rather than their problems (Price et al. 2020) (see Box 1). This runs counter to much deeply engrained thinking in public services on managing needs and fixing problems (Wilson et al., 2017; Cottam, 2018). Put more formally, it means that co-created public services are premised on people exercising agency to define their goals in order to meet needs they themselves judge to be important. This suggests choice, but co-creation is not synonymous with consumer models and notions of service recipients as 'customers' (see next section). As enacted in CoSIE, co-creation is informed by versions of 'deep personalisation' (Leadbetter 2004) inspired by social activism and advocacy, initially

mainly by people with disabilities seeking support for independent living (Pearson et al. 2014). Rationales for the individual CoSIE pilots overwhelmingly emphasised issues of social justice for people who are marginalised and lack control and voice.

There are many varieties of strengths-based working. For instance, Price et al. (2020) identified seventeen different strengths-based approaches that are used within adult social care in the UK. However, strengths-based working often involves approaches to one-to-one work such as Appreciative Inquiry Solution Focused Therapy, Motivational Interviewing and area-based approaches such as Local Area Coordination and Asset-Based Community Development. Some pilots used specific approaches, so, for example the UK pilot made use of the Three Conversations Model, which helps front-line staff to structure three conversations with people they work with to explore people's strengths and community assets, assess risks and develop long-term goals and plans.

2.2 Value co-creation is a moral endeavour

Thinking on co-creation often draws on models developed in the private sector (Brandsen and Honingh 2018). Some of the 'Design Thinking' methods used by CoSIE teams draw quite heavily on commercial rationales about 'customer experience' (Mager 2009). Short intensive events inspired by Design Thinking bring rapid results and can lead to quick wins. But the CoSIE project also illustrates that co-creation in public services cannot simply replicate thinking from the private sector. Being a customer of a business and using a public service differ. In public services, citizens have a dual role. They may make use of a service, but as citizens and constituents they also have a broader societal interest (Obsorne, 2018).

Businesses, moreover, normally have willing customers, whereas people who use public services may do so unwillingly or even be coerced or mandated

Box 1: What is strengths-based approach?

Strengths or Asset-based approaches start from the position that people have assets or 'strengths'. These include both their current personal and community resources (perhaps skills, experience or networks) and their potential to develop new personal and community assets. They therefore draw together concepts of participation and citizenship with social capital (Mathie and Cunningham 2003). Thus, Baron et al. (2019) note that strengths-based approaches explore, in a collaborative way, the entire individual's abilities and their circumstances rather than making the deficit that brought them to the service the focus of the intervention.

Asset-based approaches don't impose the same structure on diverse communities. Instead they support citizens' development of their capacity and their opportunities to exercise agency in undertaking small acts that build meaningful relations. These can make huge differences in people's lives. This implies that services should be personalised and contextualised by community, asking questions such as 'what matters to people?' and not 'what is the matter with them?' (Prandini 2018).

Lessons from the CoSIE project

1. Strengths-based working is always possible in the delivery of public services: All the CoSIE pilots took the asset or strengths-based perspective to heart. They demonstrate that it is possible to recognise and legitimate the knowledge of people who receive public services, and nurture their participation in service innovation and decision-making. This has proved to be so even in contexts that look highly unpromising, for example in services where people are compelled to receive the service (work activation, criminal justice) and in places where there are longstanding traditions of patriarchal attitudes and top-down provision (Hungary, Poland).

2. Stengths-based working is time and resource intensive: The CoSIE pilots demonstrate that strengths-based working is time consuming, resource intensive and susceptible to capture by particular interests. Engaging people unused to having their voices heard demanded hard work, new ways to communicate, sensitivity to their needs, and sometimes extra resources. All the pilots achieved this to some extent. Outstanding examples were in the Estonian, Finnish, Polish and Dutch pilots.

3. Sustaining co-creation is harder than animating it: Preparation of co-creation sessions is important to ensure inclusion, but follow-up is even more so. Although the methodologies applied in CoSIE were well appreciated and we can evidence that participants gained confidence and a sense of empowerment, they do not inevitably lead to change. Animating activity, as pilot teams explained in their lessons learned, can be hard work but is much easier than maintaining it. Real, visible results are essential because without them there is a danger of disillusionment and cynicism, the very opposite of what co-creation should achieve.

For example, this was a serious threat to the pilot in Finland at one stage when the local authority back-tracked on its original intention to implement ideas from young people's hackathons. The CoSIE team reflected that implementation should happen quickly because the young people's timespan is relatively short. Fortunately, the university and an NGO stepped in and developed (with the young people) an idea for training about how to encounter a young person as a customer that emerged from a hackathon. Visible results formed significant breakthrough points in other pilots, for example cleaner streets in Nieuwegein (the Netherlands) and a summer installation on a housing estate in Popowice, Poland.

to 'use' a service. Thus, and somewhat paradoxically, being 'customer' of public services means both more and less power over service providers. In the for-profit sector it is generally assumed that people who use services, often referred to as 'customers' or 'clients', have agency and capabilities that are sufficient for them to engage in the co-creation of services. But these approaches are based on a conception of agency that is overly individualistic and tend to assume that agency is synonymous with choice. This is very often not the case in the public sector where considerations of social justice apply. As Claasen

(2018: 1) notes "In a just society, each citizen is equally entitled to a set of basic capabilities".

In the CoSIE project co-creation in public services was intrinsically related to strengths-based, capability-building approaches. Partners and stakeholders throughout the CoSIE pilots were inspired by the moral rather than the efficiency and effectiveness promise of co-creation. Rationales for the CoSIE pilots expressed in needs analyses overwhelmingly emphasised issues of social justice for people who are marginalised and lack power. They typically referred

either explicitly or obliquely to people's strengths and assets. Utilising lived experiences and capabilities of service beneficiaries to enhance user wellbeing or autonomy as an expression of social justice implies new service relationships and culture (see below).

The Capabilities Approach is referenced in both the literature on co-creation and asset-based approaches. For example, discussion of capabilities and explicitly the capability approach (Sen, 1990, Nussbaum, 1988) have featured in the approach to asset-based working or 'radical help' advocated by (Cottam 2018) and underpin the concept of 'good help' promoted by NESTA (Wilson et al. 2018). The basic insight behind such a capabilities approach is that acquiring economic resources (e.g. wealth) is not in and of itself a legitimate human end (Sen, 1990, 2009). Such resources, commodities, are rather tools with which to achieve wellbeing, or 'flourishing living' (Nussbaum 1988).

The capabilities approach assumes that each citizen is entitled to a set of basic capabilities, but the question is then, what are these capabilities (Claassen 2016)? Nussbaum provides a substantive list of ten capabilities based on the notion of a dignified human life (Classen and Duwell 2013) whereas Sen adopts a procedural approach and argues that capabilities should be selected in a process of public reasoning (Claassen 2016). But as Claassen (2016) describes, both the substantive objectivist list theory of well-being (the Nussbaum approach) and proceduralist reliance on democratic reasoning (the Sen approach) have been criticised and it's not clear what the basic capabilities are that we are all entitled to.

Asset-based approaches are based on people exercising agency to define their own goals in order to meet needs that they define as important. But this is not simply about giving people choice. As Fox argues:

Choice cannot be the organising principle of life. Human beings want and need to organise themselves around the hopes, interests and ambitions for themselves, their family and their community. If they had the choice, people would choose the 'good life' above all other things." (Fox 2013: 2)

Alongside choice, people need a guiding vision of a good life, well lived (Cottam 2018). This seems a promising line of argument for asset-based approaches and aligns with arguments for human rights that draw on concepts of agency and purpose therefore implying that asset-based approaches and co-creation in public services are not simply desirable, but morally necessary. For example, the neo-Kantian philosopher Gewirth (1978, 1996) shows how the rational individual must invest in society and in social solutions in order to satisfy their basic needs. The starting point of his argument is that human action has two interrelated, generic features: voluntariness and purposiveness.

Gewirth goes on to show that the two basic human needs or goals which are required to allow the individual to act are freedom and wellbeing. This is a normative or moral argument. Gewirth shows that, if the individual claims that they have a right to freedom and well-being, they must also recognise that all prospective, purposive agents have the same rights, an idea he captures in something akin to a 'golden rule' that he calls the Principle of Generic Consistency. To put it another way, once it is accepted that freedom and well-being are basic human needs in the sense that they are preconditions for human action and interaction (Doyal and Gough 1991), then a moral argument can start to develop which says that freedom and well-being ought to be recognised as universal rights and that a failure for other people and wider society to do so is logically inconsistent.

Recently, these two strands of thinking – capabilities theory and Gewirth's normative, or moral, theory – have been drawn together. Claassen (2016) recognises the criticisms that have been made of capabilities theory, particularly the challenge of describing what the basic capabilities are that we are all entitled to. Arguing that Nussbaum's substantive list is 'perfectionist' but that Sen's procedural approach to defining capabilities is 'empty' he develops a capability theory of justice which aspires to be substantive but not perfectionist. He does this by following the approach adopted by Gewirth (Claassen and Dowell 2013) and using a conception of individual agency (instead of well-being or human flourishing) as the underlying normative ideal to select basic capabilities (Claassen 2016).

Using this approach basic capabilities are those capabilities people need to exercise individual agency. A particular conception of individual agency is implied, one in which individual agency is necessarily connected to social practices and where basic capabilities are those necessary to for individuals to navigate freely and autonomously between different social practices (Claassen 2016).

Thus, rather than simply replicate thinking from the private sector, co-creation in public services instead requires fundamental re-thinking of how people who accessing services are viewed: both what they bring to the co-creation of services and the purpose of the services that they help to co-create. It also has important implication for the reform of public services and the possibility of democratic renewal. The co-creation process may be one way of responding to the call from normative democracy theorists to the improvement of politics, and subsequently welfare policies (Rosanvallon, 2008). Alternatively it may help to elaborate a practical process for realizing the 'relational state' (Cooke and Muir 2012).

Lessons from the CoSIE project

1. Co-creation has a moral dimension: At the heart of co-creation is the concept of individuals exercising agency and "agency becomes the normative criterion for the selection of basic capabilities required for social justice" (Classen 2018: 1). Individuals co-create with public services to grow their capabilities.

2. Re-thinking the welfare state: The idea of co-creating public services implies a fundamental re-thinking of the role of the welfare state and hence the relationship between individuals and the state (Cooke and Muir 2012). As Cottam puts it "The current welfare state has become an elaborate attempt to manage our needs. In contrast, twenty-first-century forms of help will support us to grow our capabilities." (emphasis added) (Cottam 2018: 199)

3. Policy on co-creation should support state-resourced responsiveness, not state-retrenched responsibilisation: As Pill (2021) notes in a recent study, co-production can range along a continuum between state-resourced responsiveness and state-retrenched responsibilisation, we would argue that the same is true of the closely related concept of co-creation. However, the claim that co-creation is a moral endeavour reinforces that, from a policy perspective, co-creation is a necessary practice in creating more socially just public services, not merely desirable. Therefore, policy in support of co-creation should not be used to assist state withdrawal from service provision through prompting self-reliance in the face of fiscal tightening (Pill 2021).

4. The practice of co-creation should help people build their capabilities: From a practice perspective, the focus on supporting individuals to develop their capabilities suggests new modes of working for organisations and front-line staff, which are radically different, requiring organisations and staff to fundamentally re-think their purpose and how they relate to people who use services (see below).

3. Implementing co-creation

3 Implementing co-creation

Four broad issues seem key to implementing co-creation: the changing role of front-line workers; re-thinking risk; re-designing organisations and systems; and, the role of technology. The CoSIE project illuminates all four of these issues.

3.1 The changing role of front-line workers

Co-creation implies redesign of the relationship between professionals and service beneficiaries. From a practice perspective, asset-based approaches normally involve ways of working that differ from 'business as usual' for organisations and front-line staff. Mortensen et al. (2020) argue that co-production creates a break with the former roles of frontline staff as either the providers of services to passive clients or customers, instead giving them the role of the 'professional co-producer' expected to motivate and mobilise people who use services' capacities and resources. Mortensen et al. argue that these 'professional co-producers' are often subject to multiple pressures as they handle top-down and bottom-up expectations simultaneously as well as potential horizontal pressures stemming from the expectations of staff from other organisations.

However, there is a tendency in co-creation/co-production to focus on the people who use services with relatively little thought given to the implications for professionals (Hannan 2019). Thus, the scientific literature on co-creation/co-production is usually oriented to the role of users/clients in the process of service design. There is a systematic underestimation of the role, tasks and responsibilities of professionals in the co-creation and co-production processes (Osborne and Strokosch 2013, Mortensen et al. 2020). The involvement and contribution of professionals are often taken for granted and Osborne and Strokosch (2013) describe this as one of the main weaknesses of scientific studies on the topic.

The main policy implication with regard to professionals is a need to reverse the underestimation of their roles, tasks and responsibilities in co-creation. There is no single change guaranteed to advance co-creation but possibilities include: new approaches to staff training; enhancing and extending reflective practice; and greater emphasis on lived experience for professionals themselves or others as part of their teams. We explore some of these themes below in more detail.

Changing professional mind-sets through learning and reflective practice

A number of professional practices and interventions are regularly associated with strengths-based, co-created working including appreciative inquiry, Solution Focused Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing. However, the pilots also suggest that, to be effective, particular methods have to be underpinned by a more fundamental change of mindset. This has many elements. It includes seeing citizens in terms of their strengths and capabilities, rather than as a problem to be fixed, an ability to work relationally and empathetically, a commitment to lifelong learning and having an outward looking and entrepreneurial approach to practice.

Several CoSIE pilots focused specifically on professionals' 'mind-sets' and the need to influence and change them, notably Sweden, Finland, the UK and the Netherlands. In Sweden, for example, the pilot focused on service managers' perceptions of their environment and strengthened their abilities to act for change by introducing concepts such as 'change leaders', 'health promoting leaders', and 'health promoting employeeship'. Bespoke coaching sessions with elements of action learning demonstrably increased service practitioners' capacity to deploy new tools and skillsets. This was a partial but not complete recipe for change. As noted in the implementation evaluation, challenges for service organisations and their employees were both structural (high workloads, fragmented teams, rapid staff turnover) and cultural (morale, professional ethics, openness to learning).

The largely successful learning sessions for service staff in the UK and Swedish pilots were delivered by external specialists. With regard to the upskilling of public-facing professionals, CoSIE co-created a much more radical initiative in the 'encountering training' designed by young people themselves for Finnish youth services. This challenged standard practice and reversed accepted roles in that the intended targets of the service make a substantial contribution to the training of professional staff. It has been extremely successful and taken up beyond the city of Turku where it was initiated and developed.

A common theme across several pilots in changing professional practice and mindsets was the importance of reflective practice. Reflective practice can be defined as:

> *"The process of engaging self … in attentive, critical, exploratory and iterative … interactions with one's thoughts and actions …, and their underlying conceptual frame …, with a view to changing them and a view on the change itself …" (Nguyen 2014: 1176)*

Reflective practice is recognised as important across multiple sectors including education, health and social work to name a few. Developing reflective practice is not straightforward. At the level of the organisation reflective practice needs to be supported, for instance

by allowing front-line staff time for reflective practice and ensuring that managers and management practice support reflection (Mann et al. 2009). At the level of the individual practitioner, reflection is sometimes limited or non-existent because practitioners defend themselves against the sensory and emotional impact of the work they are doing and the high anxiety they are experiencing (Ferguson 2018). Both of these types of challenge were observed in the UK pilot.

Unlearning as well as learning

We can also learn about roles of public-facing staff from pilots that did not set out with such a strong emphasis on particular professional groups. Taking co-creation seriously often involves discarding cherished assumptions, as reported in the process evaluation. Ideas have to be unlearned as well as learned. Actions that were once thought essential may have to cease. As one individual in a pilot 'catalyst' role in Valencia, Spain reported, when people at a distance from the labour market were asked what they wanted from entrepreneurial training they said they did not want entrepreneurial training, there was plenty of it around already and it did not help them. As a result of hearing this, "our preconceived ideas came tumbling down around our ears".

Understanding resistance to change

Despite some clear evidence of shifts in employee attitudes, change was sometimes incomplete. In the Swedish Personal Assistance service, some front-line staff feared devaluing of their skills while probation workers (UK pilot) generally embraced person centred practice but resisted what they saw as weakening of their professional discretion with more innovative experiments to empower people who use services. In several pilots we came across similar examples of staff resistance to change. However, both the literature and the experience in some of the CoSIE pilots suggest that it is important that managers and organisations seek to understand this resistance and avoid seeing it

in purely negative terms as a 'problem' to overcome. There are at least three reasons for this.

First, resistance to change is not uncommon and in public bodies this is particularly the case in professions that exhibit a high level of technical and procedural knowledge, for example, surgeons, nurses, teachers and probation officers who are all depositaries of a set of standardized knowledge that they apply to each individual case. They operate following what has been defined as 'inward look' (Boyle and Harris 2009) and they have difficulties in adopting an 'outward look', meaning recognizing the 'lay knowledge' and 'resources' of people in caring about themselves and

these expectations. When making decisions about how to respond to people who use services street-level bureaucrats find themselves with only a limited amount of information, time or resources. Often the rules they follow do not correspond to the specific situation in which a decision must be made.

However, street-level bureaucrats are also able to exercise a certain amount of discretion in how they implement policies and apply rules (Lipsky 2010). Faced with competing pressures they therefore develop coping mechanisms that include modifications to common work practices and to how they understand their roles and how they conceive

When making decisions about how to respond to people who use services, street-level bureaucrats find themselves with only a limited amount of information, time or resources.

the others they are related with. This is a problem for organisations that want to move towards strengths-based and co-created ways of working where staff will need to operate an 'outward look' to deliver complex interventions that are social and not technical (Mortensen et al. 2020).

Secondly, the motivations of front-line workers can be complex. In the public policy literature, the role of street-level bureaucrats in the implementation of public policies is well documented. Street-level bureaucrats are front-line workers such as teachers, social workers, nurses and probation officers. They are often committed to public service and have high expectations for themselves in their careers, but the demands of their work setting challenge

of their clients. The literature suggests that, at best, such modifications can lead street-level bureaucrats to develop "modes of mass processing that more or less permit them to deal with the public fairly, and appropriately and thoughtfully" (Lipsky 2010.: xiv), but at worst can lead them to "give in to favouritism, stereotyping, convenience, and routinizing – all of which serve their own or agency purposes' (Lipsky 2010.: xiv). Some of the responses of some front-line workers in the UK pilot, which took place against a backdrop of significant organisational change and pressure on resources might be understood in these terms and would help explain why, even with the best of intentions, front-line workers sometimes adopted practices that limited co-production and co-creation.

Thirdly, in the organisational literature research on the micro-politics of resistance (Thomas and Davies 2005) also highlights the complexity of front-line workers' responses to organisational change. Thomas and Davies (2005) note that resistance to change is often conceived of in a linear fashion and reduced to a dualism of control versus resistance. However, they argue first, that this fails to appreciate the ambiguity and complexity surrounding resistance and secondly that it assumes that resistance is negative: a response to repressive power often framed within a workers–management dialectic. Instead, Thomas and Davies (2005) theorize resistance at the micro level of meanings and subjectivities. They draw attention to its multidirectional and generative effects in identity construction and offer a more fluid and generative understanding of power and agency (Thomas and Davies 2005).

This recognition of the micro-politics of resistance alerts us to the possibility of 'productive resistance' (Courpasson et al. 2012), reminding us that in complex public service environments where front-line workers manage competing priorities and exercise discretion, resistance to change can be productive.

New roles that recognise lived experience

Most of the emphasis in the pilots was on upskilling workers in their existing jobs but new professional roles also emerged directly from the pilots. For example, individuals trained as "welfare community managers" were confirmed to be efficient in facilitating processes of co-creation. Some pilots involved volunteers who may themselves be people who use services (or former ones). In the UK, peer mentors brought lived experience of receiving the services while in Sweden semi-retired practitioners acted as critical friends. One participant in a hackathon in Estonia assertively challenged service providers to create paid roles in their organisations for people with lived experience of disability to advise on services. These actual and

Lessons from CoSIE

1. New skills will define front-line work: The importance of relational working, and skills and values such as empathy and good communication and listening skills (Mortensen et al. 2020, Needham and Mangan 2016) are crucial for strengths-based co-created working.

2. New approaches to recruitment, training and personal development will be needed: Creating the new 'professional co-producers' will be challenging. It may well start with value-based recruitment practices, but also implies new approaches to staff training, different ways of assessing worker's development needs and different understandings of how 'cases' are managed with new connections and divisions of labour. All this can lead to profound questions about the reconfiguration work and who performs it (Glucksmann 2009; Wilson et al. 2017).

3. Reflective practice is key: Reflective practice is likely to be central to the new, relational way of working if 'trained incapacity' is to be avoided where professional co-producers struggle to respond to competing requirements of top-down, bottom-up and horizontal pressures while trying to work in new ways when their training took place in an earlier service delivery paradigm (Mortensen et al. 2020). As part of the process of reflective practice, professional co-producers will have to 'unlearn' previous practice and make a conscious break with previous value systems that shaped their prior professional training and practice.

4. Lived experience is important: The lived experience of people who use services is central to co-created, strengths-based working. Part of the solution to promoting this type of working be to ensure that more professionals either have lived experience themselves or that people with lived experience are part of the team they work in.

5. The inclusion of vulnerable groups in co-creation processes requires focusing on the barriers that prevent members of vulnerable groups from participating and translate this knowledge into actionable guidelines and practical tools.

putative variations on paid and unpaid work with and for services seem to and embody the blurring of user/professional roles and possible hybrid forms in ways that go right to the heart of co-creation.

3.2 Re-thinking risk

Co-created, strengths-based models of working empower citizens to help themselves. However, strengths-based working involves huge changes for organisations and their workforces. One illustration of the challenges of delivering strengths-based approaches that give people scope for co-

creating services is the perennial organisational and professional challenge of how to respond to and manage the 'risks' presented by the citizens they work with. As Fox (2018) documents, the State and the professionals who work in public services often struggle to develop meaningful relationships with people who use services, constrained as they are by rigid thinking about 'risk' and 'safeguarding' and 'resource allocation'. Moving from 'deficit-based' approaches to 'strengths-based' ones require front-line staff and their organisations to fundamentally re-think their concepts of risk, from the way they assess it, to the language they use to describe it, to the ways they respond to it. This doesn't mean ignoring risk,

but it almost certainly does mean addressing people's underlying needs rather than just the 'risk' that they presented with and drawing on people's wider assets that reside in their relationships with their families, friends and communities when responding to 'risk'.

The pilots that worked directly on professional 'mind-sets' bring insights into the kind of skills service staff need to develop to ensure a more pro-active and open-minded attitude toward understanding and managing risk and the contribution that beneficiaries make in decisions about their services. Seeing a person as a whole rather than as a collection of problems is especially important but surprisingly hard to do, given the tendency of many services to work in silos. A municipal employee who took a lead in the Dutch (Houten) pilot observed that, "despite all my good intentions, I discovered that in the end I was fulfilling our agenda not the agenda of the citizens. In fact, I did not even know what their agenda was! I missed the broader perspective and the person as a whole".

However, in the UK pilot that took place in the criminal justice system where deficit-based thinking on risk is the norm and risk assessment of people focuses on their criminogenic risk factors, an advantage of person-centred practice was its ability to uncover aspects of a person's life that were otherwise unknown to the service. Possessing a deeper understanding

of a person's life improved the accuracy of risk assessments. One case manager suggested that obtaining information about risk was possible in a way that was less intrusive when using person-centred ways of working.

3.3 Re-designing organisations and systems

In the CoSIE project pilots that highlighted the need to address mind-sets of individual staff also saw change in organisational practices and cultures as necessary to advance co-creation. Before co-creation can become institutionalised and enter the culture many small steps have to be taken including new organisational structures, new approaches to performance management and embedding continuous learning.

Systems thinking focuses on the way that a system's constituent parts interrelate and how systems work over time and within the context of larger systems (Stroh 2015). Most systems are nested within other systems and many systems are systems of smaller systems. The ways in which the agents in a system connect and relate to one another is critical to the survival of the system, because it is from these connections that the patterns are formed, and the

feedback disseminated. The relationships between the agents are sometimes more important than the agents themselves. Connectivity and interdependence point out that actions by any actor may affect (constrain or enable) related actors and systems. Therefore, it can be said that a system and its environment co-evolve, with each adapting to the other (Byrne & Callaghan 2014).

Performance management
Professionals at street level may be interested in developing strengths-based and co-creative services but their working environment (e.g. tight time scales and procedures they are expected to follow) may not enable them to switch to a new set of practices. In the UK pilot organisation (a private company delivering rehabilitation for offenders), there was quite strong commitment to co-creation at middle and senior management levels but the requirements of performance targets and reporting meant that some front-line professionals found it hard to commit to more person-centred working in their everyday practice[1].

Co-creation implies a different approach to performance management in which learning is the central focus and purpose of performance management and data is used to encourage reflection (Lowe et al. 2020). Such models of performance management in turn imply different models of governance. As Morgan and Sabel (2019) clarify, Experimental Governance – a form of multi-level organisation in which goals are routinely corrected in light of ground-level experience of implementing them – is a form of co-governance and is already re-imagining the delivery of public services and regulation in ways that take up this challenge.

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[1] The failure of this pilot to deliver fully on its promises however was not for individual or organisational reasons but because of a national government volte face on criminal justice policy.

Lessons from CoSIE

1. Re-think the language of risk so that risk is framed in strengths rather than deficit-based language.

2. Take advantage of more person-centred and relational ways of working to move towards more holistic understandings of the risks that people present and ensure that this way of thinking is built into risk assessments. In this way risks can often be better managed and with less conflict.

Continuous learning

The pilot with Personal Assistance in the Jönköping municipality (Sweden) was by far the most successful in achieving organisational change. Impact evaluation showed that changes in organisational routines and also in culture (evidenced by monitoring of the service narrative) resulted from the piloting interventions in CoSIE. A particularly important factor was the use of reflective sessions to explore and challenge engrained thinking about service norms, actor identities and roles though facilitated dialogues.

These sessions engendered an open, respectful atmosphere and enabled front-line managers to act as change agents and leaders. This success underlines the need for practice-based learning to upskill professionals through experimentation, adaptation and learning (Sabel et al., 2017).

However, embedding continuous learning to aid the spread of new co-creative relations requires a new approach to governance among participant actors and organisations. Co-creation and social innovations gain from a management and governance logic that is specific to public service organisations and service networks, for instance Human Learning Systems (Lowe et al. 2020). Such learning systems adopt an iterative, experimental approach to working with people. This implies creating a learning culture – a 'positive error culture' that encourages discussion about mistakes and uncertainties in practice. Service delivery and improvements become an ongoing process of learning. An essential feature is to strive for using data from services to instigate reflections and conversations of change rather than to monitor the achievement of some predefined targets (outputs). National funders may play a role here by commissioning for learning, not particular services – aiming at the funded organizations' capacity to learn and adopt new thinking and service governance.

Often such shifts in governance will imply the creation of new organisation structures.

New organisational structures

The social challenges that co-creation often addresses are increasingly complex and traditional public services often look ill-suited to address them. Traditional public services established in the second half of the twentieth century were designed as hierarchical bureaucracies, to solve short-term problems such as fixing broken bones or providing assistance when someone was unemployed. But today's social challenges such as long-term health conditions in ageing populations or in-work poverty are increasingly complex and highlight the ineffectiveness of traditional, hierarchical approaches (Hannan 2019).

Traditional hierarchical management structures can impede the development of co-created services. As one participant in a pilot observed, "grassroots workers and middle management are often too tied up and busy with their daily work to take the time and space needed to consider matters more broadly". In the Finnish pilot, youth workers in the city of Turku were keen on co-creation and reported progress towards it but despite the CoSIE team's efforts they could not reach middle managers because of the way services in the municipality are siloed.

For organisations, adopting co-created strengths-based working comes with a need to recognise that co-creation at the grass root level is important but not necessarily sufficient. An 'open innovation' ecosystem or an experimentalist governance (Morgan and Sabel 2019) needs to be created in which organisational structures are flatter, based on networks rather than hierarchies, organisational boundaries are more permeable and knowledge flows across organisational boundaries (Chesbrough and Bogers 2014). Experimental Governance, which is a form or

organization in which goals are routinely corrected in light of ground-level experience of implementing them – is already re-imagining delivery of public services and regulation in ways that take up this challenge (Morgan and Sabel 2019).

Complex interventions, situated in complex systems

Mortensen et al. (2020) divide public sector solutions into complex interventions/human procession solutions where the problem is complex and the intervention is adaptive, or, simple interventions where the problem is simple and the intervention is politically regulated and standardized. Simple interventions in this sense might typically include medical procedures or unemployment benefits. They are interventions with clear cause– effect connections between interventions and outcomes, wide stakeholder agreement concerning the goal of the intervention and the skills required to deliver the intervention are of a technical and procedural character (Mortensen et al. 2020).

By contrast, complex interventions are social and not technical, implying that the problem constantly changes and that interventions to address the problem are socially dependent and adaptive. This means that there is no single, 'best' solution" rather the solution is context dependent, and open for negotiation

Traditional hierarchical management structures can impede the development of co-created services.

between stakeholders of the intervention (Mortensen et al. 2020). Interventions and approaches developed by the CoSIE pilots tended to fall into the category of complex and adaptive interventions to complex problems.

CoSIE pilots also tended to operate across systems rather than within organisations. They involved - in different ways and to different extents - public sector professionals, civil society organizations, universities, for-profit companies as well as final users (the so-called 'quadruple helix' described by Curley 2016) to solve societal challenges. However, while all sectors were engaged to some extent, engagement was not equal. Overall, the commitment of civil society organizations was extremely high while for-profit enterprises played rather more limited roles. The types of civil society participating in pilots was very diverse, including large NGOs, small charities, membership organisations and advocacy groups, churches, foodbanks, sports clubs and informal local community groups. For-profit engagement was relatively weak and took place in only half of the pilots, as noted in section 4. One counter example to the tendency for high civil society and low private sector involvement was the work-related pilot in Valencia, Spain. A prominent NGO originally thought of as an essential stakeholder proved unresponsive and even hostile, while a local bank not initially identified at all became an active and valued supporter.

Another pilot with unusually high private sector engagement was in Estonia, where for-profit enterprises started to show interest in social hackathon events when the pilot changed its communication strategy to emphasise the future of the entire community rather than just public services. The participating enterprises were impact oriented and for them the hackathon events provided an opportunity to extend and highlight their impact. A positive outcome was when local schools started

to cooperate with local bio farmers who provided healthy food for school catering with the help of local municipalities who created new standards and procedures emphasising health and green future of the county. In Poland a private sector property developer supported the community living space installation.

Universities were partners in all the CoSIE pilots. The contributions universities have made to pilots are far more significant and varied than envisaged at the outset of the project. In several pilots, they were the initiator of the pilot, the main driver or both. An academic partner, as reflected in a one partner meeting, is seen as non-threatening and able to bring parties together acting not only as boundary spanner

but also 'boundary shaker', shaping the nature of what is possible/desirable. One long-term university role identified in some of the pilots is as educators of future professionals.

In the Finnish pilot Turku University of Applied Sciences furthered the upskilling of professional workers for co-creation in a more immediate way within the project lifetime, using its expertise in innovation and outreach to involve lecturers and students with the youth directed 'encountering training'. Some pilots involved university students as intermediaries to reach out to potential participants. Potentially, if the students are future service professionals, it will sensitise them to co-creation. This was a practical way of advancing co-creation

by tapping into the energy and knowledge of young people and can help to deliver on the mission of universities as 'anchor' institutions that contribute to the communities in which they are located.

Enabling cross organisation collaboration
Wellbeing services are, necessarily, relational and their multi-agency and often extended delivery creates a need for information channels and instruments such as catalogues and booking systems, profiling tools and collaborative case management and record systems. These requirements that generate the need for shared platforms and infrastructure. As a consequence of the multiplicity of services and service components we have discussed, questions of service governance cannot be concerned only with individual services but also of the joint efficacy and efficiency of the set of services that have been combined in a service plan or pathway (Fox et al. 2020).

The multiplicity of services and the requirement for specialisation in response to the complexity and long-term nature of many cases of need, generates a requirement of intermediation and brokerage between the individual service provisions and the client (Fox et al. 2020). There is a need for 'system stewarding' roles to ensure that systems operate effectively to produce desired outcomes. This involves multiple actors taking on "a distinctive supra-organizational role, responding most specifically to governance complexity" (Lowe et al. 2020: 3). In some cases, such as in Sweden, dedicated public managers and participatory researchers acted as public service entrepreneurs (Petridou et al., 2013) in promoting co-creation ethics in their organisations and service units.

Sometimes pilots called for a strong steering actor. This is understandable because with multiple actors and no central hierarchical authority, it can seem that things move slowly with a tendency to more talk than action. On the other hand, co-creation inherently implies power and control that are dispersed between different agencies as well as between service providers and recipients. It is certainly demonstrated in the CoSIE pilots that there needs to be an energetic and committed facilitator able to navigate multiple interests and hierarchies and span their boundaries. The 'boundary spanner' may be an individual or a group, sometime referred to by the pilots as a catalyst. Personal contacts and relationship building were essential in searching for catalysts and several pilots attributed successes to managing to enrol one strategically placed individual. This could be a strength but also potentially a weakness. As one pilot leader reflected, "I found a person at city hall who completely understood what co-creation / social investment was. He was knowledgeable about co-creation. Unfortunately he left his position".

A framework for thinking about organisational and system change
In its early stages, the CoSIE project drew heavily on concepts of New Public Governance (Osborne 2006, 2008). This is a model of public policy that rejects the emphasis on markets, managers and measurement (Ferlie et al. 1996) characteristic of New Public Management. Osborne (2006) argues that New Public Management assumes effective public administration and management is delivered through independent service units, ideally in competition with each other and its focus is on intra-organizational processes and management. Thus, within New Public Management the key governance mechanism for public services is some combination of competition, the price mechanism and contractual relationships and its value base is contained within its belief that the market-place and its workings, including private sector practice around rigorous performance management and cost-control, provides the most appropriate place for the production of public services.

By contrast, New Public Governance recognises that top-down policy-making and faceless, impersonal public services are out of step with people's expectations in the twenty first century. It recognises the increasingly fragmented and uncertain nature of public management in the twenty-first century and assumes both a plural state, where multiple inter-dependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services and a pluralist state, where multiple processes inform the policy making system (Osborne 2006).

Drawing on public service-dominant logic, an alternative body of public management research and theory, that addresses directly the nature of 'service' and 'service management' New Public Governance emphasises the design and evaluation of enduring inter-organizational relationships in public services, where trust, relational capital and relational contracts act as the core governance mechanisms Osborne 2006). New Public Governance influenced the development of the CoSIE project because it places the interaction between citizens and public services at the heart of public management, recognizing that:

> *"[Public service organisations] do not create value for citizens – they can only make a public service offering. It is how the citizen uses this offering and how it interacts with his/her own life experiences that creates value." (Osborne 2018: 228)*

Co-creation of public services is therefore key and New Public Governance characterises co-creation between citizens and services as "an interactive and dynamic relationship where value is created at the nexus of interaction" (Osborne 2018: 225).

However, as the CoSIE project has developed and particularly as we seek to analyse practice in the CoSIE pilots and suggest future directions for co-created public services we have reached the limits

of New Public Governance as a useful theoretical framework.

While New Public Governance is undoubtedly grounded in "the reality of public service management in an increasingly complex, fragmented and interdependent world" (Osborne 2018: 225) and provides a useful framework for thinking about public policies that promote co-creation, it lacks specificity when we come to consider the implementation of co-created services. Reflecting on some of the themes that have emerged from our work in CoSIE - the importance of human relations in public service delivery; the need to situate co-creation in the complexity of public service organisations and wider systems; the importance of continuous learning; and the need to re-think the performance management of co-created services - we have increasingly been drawn to Human Learning Systems (Lowe et al. 2020) as a useful framework for thinking about implementing co-creation in public services.

Human Learning Systems is a response to the complexity of public sector governance and the perceived failings of New Public Management (Lowe et al. 2020). It responds to the complexity that people using public services experience by emphasizing that services should engage with "rounded human beings" (Lowe et al. 2020: 2). This implies services that adopt strengths-based approaches to build people's capabilities, which in turn emphasizes human relationships in service delivery. Another key pillar of the model is learning, which is discussed more below. The final of three pillars is a recognition of systems as the basis for social interventions, rather than organizations or projects. Interestingly, co-creation (and co-production) are not explicitly mentioned within accounts of Human Learning Systems, but are clearly implicit within the relational model of service delivery that is described.

Lessons from CoSIE

1. Open innovation ecosystems: In addition to changing the way that professionals work, organisations must also change. Typically changes will be consistent with those that create 'open innovation' ecosystems in which organisational structures are flatter, based on networks rather than hierarchies, organisational boundaries are more permeable and knowledge flows across organisational boundaries.

2. Practice-based learning: Building organisational cultures to support co-creation requires practice-based learning to upskill professionals through experimentation, adaptation and learning (see below). This in turn requires reflective practice to be valued and space to be created for practitioners to engage in reflection.

3. Boundary spanners: Co-creation inherently implies power and control are dispersed between different agencies as well as between service providers and recipients. This necessitates energetic and committed facilitators able to navigate multiple interests and hierarchies and span their boundaries. The 'boundary spanner' may be an individual or a group, sometime referred to by the pilots as a catalyst. Personal contacts and relationship building were essential in searching for catalysts and several pilots attributed successes to managing to enrol one strategically placed individual

3.4 The role of technology in co-creation and innovation

Digital technology can narrow the gap between service providers and citizens. De Jong et al. (2019), for example, found that digital platforms increased citizens' intentions to take part in co-creation processes. Lember et al. (2019) suggest that digital technology enables establishing direct interaction, motivating citizens to participate in co-creation, bringing resources to the service, and sharing decision-making power between public service organizations and citizens. Driss et al. (2019) argue that digital technology could accelerate citizens becoming government policymakers through the capacity to enable citizens to create, share, and comment on issues in a way that is uncontrollable.

While digital governance promises opening and sharing of government data and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of public administration, it also includes a risk of unintended, unexpected and undesired outcomes and new kinds of political, governmental, ethical, and regulatory dilemmas. Instead of efficient and effective public services, digital technology has introduced new kind of complexity (Helbig et al. 2009). It is noteworthy that digital development has also challenged our fundamental notions of human power and agency (Neff and Nagy 2019). It has been suggested, for example, that the use of technological applications may also reallocate control and power towards specific groups in society (Lember 2018).

All CoSIE pilots constructed 'platforms', meaning structures to collaborate and co-create. Platforms

included –as appropriate to the local condition of each pilot – virtual space enabled by ICT and/or outreach events and forums in literal, physical spaces. In this section we examine the role of technology.

Social media

All the pilots used social media to some extent and several but not all incorporated it into co-creation (Jalonen and Helo 2020). Successful examples of reaching out with high use of social media to contribute to co-creation processes are the pilots in Italy, Finland, and Spain. All of them feature multiple resources and platforms selected and mixed in ways that were made to work in the relevant local and service contexts. In Spain, for example, social media accounts and the webpage were run by Co-Crea-Te beneficiaries themselves with occasional input and guidance from mentors. For this pilot the technology is a leveller in the sense that, due to its increasing accessibility, it could be done by anyone and handing this over to citizens gives them a feeling of belonging. Indeed the transfer of power was real and could be a source of tension with public service organisations[2].

Estonia is an instructive example of a highly digitalized county where the use of social media in CoSIE was medium rather than high as we might have expected. The pilot set out to adopt social media with enthusiasm and some success. However, for their target group personal meetings and encounters were still very important. Reflecting back with hindsight, the pilot leaders observed that, "we wouldn't expect so much from technology when it comes to small, rural communities and vulnerable people"[3].

Social media has the potential to reach groups who do not respond to more traditional methods (Vainikka 2020, Jalonen et al. forthcoming). This was a main driver for the Finnish pilot with young people outside employment, education or training. In addition to organising hackathon events in physical space, this pilot curated social media data to highlight different points of view from the target group. The Finnish CoSIE team developed a dedicated tool for scanning, classifying and analysing social media content. This was successful in that it yielded valuable information about the lives of young people not accessible any other way, although a downside was that data could not be linked any particular location or service. Social media data, they reflected, is not necessarily better than data acquired in other ways (e.g. via trusted NGO partners) but can be a powerful tool with different indicators and ideally would be used from the start to end of a project.

Some pilots did not utilise social media for co-creation (although they deployed it for purposes of communication and dissemination e.g. Co-Create lab Twitter in Spain, Facebook community sites in Poland, use of YouTube channel in Hungary). There are good reasons for this from which learning for policy can be derived. On a positive note there was the potential of innovative, non-digital ways of interacting for co-creation. A less positive reason was that digital exclusion proved much deeper than the pilot teams had imagined at the outset. It was not entirely surprising that digital exclusion would be an inhibiting factor for engaging people beset by various forms of social exclusion on account of age, income, health, skills or geographic location (Sakellariou 2018).

However, rather less predictably the so called 'digital divide' was not the only issue that limited opportunities for co-creation through digital technologies. In the UK pilot in criminal justice, professionals and people who use services alike associate social media with shame and stigmatization. In Nieuwegein (the Netherlands) the barrier was similar. Inhabitants in the pilot site (a community beset by many social problems) were distrustful of digital communication with municipality services and also thought the community was stigmatised in social media because the local reputation for anti-social behaviour.

It is very easy at policy level to overstate the potential of digital media and understate the reasons it may be unwelcome and even inappropriate for some marginalised and stigmatised groups. This goes deeper than limits of assets and skills that, in theory at least,

It is very easy at policy level to overstate the potential of digital media and understate the reasons it may be unwelcome and even inappropriate for some marginalised and stigmatised groups.

could be relatively straightforward to fix. Commercial proprietary social media platforms in some contexts are seen as (and are) inherently transactional, harmful and inflexible in terms of the forms that are available (a position that worldwide events since the start of the CoSIE project may tend to amplify). Also, the US commercial origins of many of the popular Social Media platforms means the penetration of the platforms into some languages and dialects remains fairly shallow and the use of 'hashtags' in areas of service innovation in public management context fairly minimal. This was exemplified during a CoSIE KE workshop which identified a range of EU language terms for '#co-creation' which are represented in the word cloud below.

Alternatively, bespoke developments in CoSIE (for instance the App developed in the Italian pilot or the platform in the Estonian pilot) are subject to constraints of the limits to the resources that can be invested beyond the initial scope of and beyond the lifetime of the project. The pandemic and consequent lockdown caused some resourceful instances of rapid uptake of digital solutions in the CoSIE pilots but also serves to remind us how much co-creation benefits from face-to-face relationships. Our learning from the project is that in the current environment this creates a tension in relation to the development and/or deployment/use of data and ICTs including Social Media giving an invidious choice between an approach which priorities sustainable bespoke community

engagement or sustainable business models for commercial platforms. Perhaps the real potential for co-creation using social media approaches is through hybridisation of methods and tools in longer term horizon scanning and engagement processes with communities.

Open data

Much has been expected of open government data at national and EU policy levels. To transform raw data into information capable of being useful, it must first of all be interpreted (Cornford et al., 2013; McLoughlin et al., 2019). The CoSIE pilots made various uses of data sets publicly available from national and local sources (sometimes but not always officially branded as 'open data'). Most typically, this was done at the needs assessment stage of the pilots and university teams with relevant expertise led or assisted in data interpretation and analysis. There were some notable examples of more imaginative ways in which pilots attempted to make open data part of their co-creation processes. In Estonia, open data available from statistical databases were given to hackathon participants to elevate the quality of their projects. In Spain, the Co-Crea-Te team used open data portals as a gamification tool during events such as the Open Day to make people aware of its advantages and aspects. Another, rather different, expansion of open data occurred in the Swedish pilot. They not only utilised an important national open data set for disability, but helped to enhance its quality by educating 'questionnaire assistants' among their service personnel.

However, the CoSIE project also illustrates the limitations of using open data to co-create services. These included the lack of detail and relevance (usability) of the data for the particular service contexts and the challenge of interpreting (accessibility) data for those who are digitally excluded or those that may not possess required technical and analytical

capabilities. It is often assumed that open data can be used to identify populations and contexts where improvement is required, thereby improving government transparency, releasing social and commercial value, and participation and engagement. Recent critiques of open data have signalled that these problems of the granularity, provenance and accessibility of the data are increasingly recognised as issues and the experiences from the project reflect these issues where the real benefits came when the community of practitioners and citizens and other key stakeholders came together in a safe and trusted environment (Jamieson et al. 2019).

The focus of CoSIE on the socially, and often by implication, digitally excluded meant those people and communities who it was perceived might benefit from the application of insights from data were rarely involved in any co-creation process of what the data ought to be never mind addressing wider structural problems of accessibility to data or social media tools. Within the CoSIE project it was more meaningful for service actors to hear individual lived experiences (often through community reporting described below) or by extracting knowledge and insights in extensive thematic dialogues, workshops (Social Hackathons) or focus groups with the help of neutral facilitators.

Community reporting

Far more than social media and open data, the pilots demonstrate the power of the digital interventions that were incorporated into the CoSIE project as tools to advance co-creation. All the pilots used Community Reporting either as an input into co-creation, for co-evaluation, or both. Community Reporting is a storytelling methodology that supports citizens to use digital tools to share their own lived experience: stories that highlight their aspirations, needs and perceptions, as well as gathering stories from their peers. It uses experiential knowledge (i.e.

lived experience stories) as a catalyst for bottom-up change processes between citizens, and services and institutions.

As a research methodology Community Reporting is a citizen-led, peer-to-peer methodology that facilitates equity in the power dynamic and relationship between researcher and participant. It allows people with lived experience to help shape the evaluation and set the agenda. The predominantly audio-visual outputs produced are fed into the wider evaluation and also used during dissemination to 'bring to life' key messages and issues.

Community Reporting in the CoSIE pilots shows a step forward in the way "lived experience storytelling can be a mechanism through which public services can truly reconnect with citizens" (Trowbridge and Willoughby, in press). In contrast to many popular commercial platforms, Community Reporting curates stories in ways that are governable and ethically responsible. It enables them to be mobilised for change.

Living Lab models and CoSMOS tool

One of the aims of the CoSIE project was the application of Living Labs (Gascó-Hernández, 2017, Dekker et al. 2020) to support pilots with meeting the problems of service innovation and co-creation through the innovation of relationships. The challenges of working with a heterogenous set of pilot projects across a panoply of service contexts, socio-political, linguistic, technical and levels of maturity meant that the practical challenges of working with multiple stakeholders in distributed environments required an evolution of approach (Jamieson and Martin, in Press). Learning from the first phase of work in the engagement with the pilots led us to move our emphasis from supporting co-creation sensemaking processes through modelling and deliberation (Martin et al. 2019).

Although the initial activities within the project supported stakeholders' reflection on the wide range of social, ethical, moral, organisational and technical challenges of sustainable and effective services and associated service environments we then began to focus efforts on the testing and application of the emerging models through the knowledge exchange processes and their eventual deployment in an online tool (Jamieson and Martin, in press).

The CoSMOS tool (Jamieson et al. 2020, Jamieson and Martin, In Press) was designed in collaboration with pilots is used to generate insights in various modes of co-creation into the characteristics of social innovation at a project, ecology and platform level. The aim of the models within the CoSMOS tool is to enable, support and guide the complex discussions that are required to identify, and strengthen participation in the co-creation processes of service innovation in context. It is an attempt to create the opportunity to put in place a reflective process in which models that are sympathetic to various stages of maturity and co-creation approaches of a service innovation initiative to raise key external elements and factors which, are relevant in any development lifecycle.

The modelling method of CoSMOS supports the concept and practice of co-creation and offers a significant potential for stakeholders, service designers and participants to jointly improve their understanding of their environment, service provision and creation of service platform infrastructure in a range of settings by providing a structured approach to the co-creation process. This form of deployment of a Living lab approach, which seeks to improve collaboration in new ways, is challenging particularly as service innovation project developments such as the ones in CoSIE are often highly focussed, tightly resourced and pragmatic by their nature. However, we see emerging evidence that the CoSMOS approach scaffolds a wider range of conversational

possibilities between stakeholders involved in the co-creative process in relation to complex public service areas thereby making innovations potentially more sustainable and scalable.

ICT as infrastructure and a facilitator, not a driver, of co-creation

Co-creation of public services with digital technology can be "more complex, more unpredictable, and more political" than the rhetoric indicates (Worthy 2015). Unsurprisingly, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how citizens can actually be digitally integrated into the co-creation process. Particularly lacking are empirical studies focusing on vulnerable groups, which are by definition hard to reach (Brandsen 2021).

While new tools for e-participation hold out the promise of widespread access of citizens to the policy formulation process the engagement of citizens is still very low (Roszczynska-Kurasinska et al. 2017) and digital divides exist, not only in developing countries but also within seemingly connected populations (United Nations 2014). Much thinking in relation to the role of technology in co-creation and social innovation comes from the business world (Townsend 2013). But, as we know, the relationship that business has with its customers is often very different to that the public sector has with its people who use services (see McLoughlin and Wilson 2013, Osborne 2018 for example). As Lember et al. (2019: 1) note: "Despite growing interest in the potential of digital technologies to enhance coproduction and co-creation in public services, there is a lack of hard evidence on their actual impact."

Different technologies, services and target populations must be considered in order to combat promotional hype while recognizing genuine opportunities (ibid.). The CoSIE pilots together demonstrate a policy lesson that ICT technology in co-creation is definitely an enabler and catalyst, but at the level of service innovation generally complementing rather than replacing personal encounters and communication. Overall, there was more engagement across the CoSIE pilots with open data than with social media and some experimental actions suggest ways its value could be expanded in the context of co-creation.

In the light of the ongoing failure of projects to scale and sustain the real potential for the deployment of ICT is at the infrastructural level as flexible platforms which support sustainable co-creation processes beyond the lifetime of individual initiatives. The main challenge is the reconceptualization of such programmes from ones producing specific technologies/services in situ, to ones that create infrastructures on which innovations are cultivated (McLoughlin et al., 2013). Programmes are needed that invest in infrastructural approaches support the sort of hybrid sociotechnical environments in which the co-creation engagement of stakeholders is possible beyond individual project design phases and lifecycles.

Lessons from CoSIE

1. The limits of digital governanance and e-government: The CoSIE project does not suggest that digital governance and e-government in their current forms are the answer to improving public service innovation and driving co-creation of services. Rather these are tools that can, sometimes, facilitate greater innovation and co-creation with stakeholders.

2. Hybridisation: Approaches which develop the understanding and realisation of the need to develop a new forms of hybrid sociotechnical infrastructural platform elements for the co-creation processes which scaffold service innovations is key.

3. The potential of social media: The current infrastructure of social media and open data does have a potential role to play in the development of co-creative approaches to wellbeing services. Two vital points here are meanings of 'data', and issues of provenance, trust, confidentiality and safety. It is axiomatic that wider conceptions of 'data' for co-creation activities are required (for example accessible representations of service interventions). Moreover, there is often a core set of facilities, resources and information management functions that must be provided under the governance umbrella of local service environments at a number of levels in order to enable the widespread adoption and implementation of co-creation and associated practices.

4. The power of stories: Digital interventions, such as Community Reporting, in which people hear stories of individual lived experience, and the Living Lab CoSMOS innovation (developed in CoSIE), can be powerful tools that help to advance co-creation and may hold more promise than social media and open data.

5. Digital exclusion: Digital exclusion can be an inhibiting factor (Sakellariou 2018) but, even where this is not the case, social media in particular, can be a force for harm as well as for good and this must be anticipated when social media is utilised in co-creation.

4. Beyond piloting co-creation

4 Beyond piloting co-creation

4.1 Evaluation

Shiell-Davis et al. (2015) in a review of the evidence on scaling-up innovations find that being evidence-based is the most common requirement for an innovation to be spread and scaled up. However, the evidence-base for many of the approaches to working with people discussed in this report is limited. For instance, in their systematic review of co-creation and co-production Voorberg. et al. (2015) identify over a hundred empirical studies of co-creation and co-production between public organisations and citizens (or their representatives) but only 14 papers evaluated the outcome of co-production in terms of an increase (or decrease) in service effectiveness, leading Voorberg et al. (2015: 16) to conclude that:

[G]iven the limited number records that reported on the outcomes of cocreation/co-production, we cannot definitely conclude whether co-creation/co-production can be considered as beneficial.

In a recently published systematic review of the evidence for different strengths-based approaches in adult social work Price et al. (2020: 4) concluded that:

"There is a lack of good quality research evidence evaluating the effectiveness or implementation of strengths-based approaches."

There are various reasons why the evidence base is limited, of which complexity is a key one:

"The public sector is challenged to achieve goals that are interconnected, ambiguous and wicked … in a context where complexity is increasingly recognized as an unavoidable feature of modern governance" (Lowe et al. 2020: 1)

One manifestation of complexity is the difficulty of defining outcomes for co-created and co-produced initiatives that are explicit and therefore susceptible to evaluation. As Brix et al. (2020) note, New Public Governance assumes that co-production leads to beneficial outcomes, but reviews of the evidence-base for co-creation and co-production in public services do not provide clear-cut support for this proposition (Steen et al., 2018, Cluley et al. 2019, Jalonen et al. 2020) and clear cause-effect relationships between co-production activities and their outcomes are difficult to define Brix et al. (2020). Thus, one important role for evaluators in a complex context (e.g., an organization, policy domain, economy, or ecosystem) is to find leverage points in the system at which a small shift in one factor can produce widespread changes.

Multi-method approaches that prioritise learning

In a review of evaluation practices in social innovation Milley et al. (2018) found that most evaluations had developmental purposes, emphasized collaborative approaches, and used multiple methods. Prominent drivers were a complexity perspective, a learning-oriented focus, and the need for responsiveness. Part of the solution to the challenge of complexity is therefore to adopt a pragmatic approach to evaluation in which evaluation is built into the whole life cycle of an innovation from problem definition to scale-up, small-scale experiments employing multiple methodologies are undertaken to identify 'what works' and solutions are then taken to scale within organisations and across local systems with a strong emphasis on practical learning as a continuous process (Lowe et al. 2020).

The use of evaluation in CoSIE pilots tended to follow this trajectory. Pilots focused on learning for project development, often using rapid experimentation and collaborative methodologies where research was co-created with people with lived experience. For example, the Estonian pilot and others that used 'Design Thinking' inspired methodologies report that the fast-pace is not suitable for everyone but many practical measures can enable more people to take part (e.g. shorter sessions, accessibility logistics, mentor support, appropriate communication). From the perspective of those invited to contribute there is an important message that goes beyond such practicalities, necessary as they are. In the words of one hackathon participant, "is someone really listening or are they just nodding their heads?" What she meant by this was that people with 'special needs' must not only be invited to take part, their contributions must make a difference.

Theory-led evaluation that captures lived experience

Another challenge for evaluation in this sector revolves around the relative merits of participatory versus objective, 'scientific' evaluation methodologies when evaluating co-creation and strengths-based approaches. For example, in a recent study Allen et al. (2019) note the tension within health and social care between co-produced research and producing evidence of quantifiable outcomes using validated outcome measures.

Durose et al. (2017) in a discussion of the state of the evidence base on co-production in public services argue that theory-based and knowledge-based routes to evidencing co-production are needed (see also Brix et al. 2020).

Durose et al. (2017) cite a range of 'good enough' methodologies which community organisations and small-scale service providers experimenting with co-production can use to assess its potential contribution, including appreciative inquiry, peer-to-peer learning and data sharing. Storytelling is particularly important in co-production processes as it helps to build "shared commitment and understanding" (Layard et al. 2013) and allows for the representation of "different voices and experiences in an accessible way" (Durose et al. 2013). Durose et al. (2017) argue that storytelling is particularly important in co-production, not only in evidencing the significance of its relational dynamics but also in representing different voices and experiences in an accessible way. They argue that storytelling offers a way to draw on the insights of the people working in co-productive ways, rather than assuming that they are too 'close' to the case study to be able to offer valid insights.

Another related approach to better understanding the co-creation process and its impact is through the framing and re-framing of collective service narratives. Evidence from CoSIE suggests that reflective dialogues between stakeholders may contribute to the framing of a new more coherent and empowering service narrative. Storytelling by Community Reporters was an important element of the CoSIE model, providing a key mechanism for users and beneficiaries of services to co-produce evidence that informs both the design of the pilots, but also their ongoing evaluation. CoSIE evidence suggests that reflective dialogues between stakeholders may contribute to the framing of a new more coherent and empowering service narrative. The new narrative expressed openly at least in one public arena provides a better policy evidence than fragmented, insufficiently explored or reflected service accounts. This may be one way of responding to calls from normative democracy theorists to the improve politics:

"Politics does not exist unless the range of actions can be incorporated into a single narrative and represented in a single public arena" (Rosanvallon, 2008, p. 23).

Evaluating outcomes

However, the complexity of strengths-based co-created approaches should not rule out the possibility of also undertaking evaluation that focus on outcomes. These are likely to come later in the lifecyle of an innovation when mid-level theory is clarified, context understood and investment in taking an approach to scale requires a focus on outcomes. One of two broad strategies might be appropriate. One strategy is to undertake what are variously termed mixed-method or realist randomized controlled trials or RCT+ designs (Morris et al. 2020). A related approach is to implement randomized designs that combine randomization with mixed method implementation process evaluation (ibid.). While in the past such mixing of methodologies might have fallen foul of the so-called 'paradigm wars' increasingly researchers argue there is no essential link between method and paradigm. Some adopt 'pragmatism' as a philosophical perspective to underpin their research, others operate in the 'realist' tradition (Morris et al. 2020).

A second strategy, starts by switching from discussing 'attribution' of interventions to outcomes to discussing the 'contribution' of interventions to outcomes, recognising the importance of supporting factors in understanding impact in more complex settings (Mayne 2012, Stern et al. 2012). These alternative impact evaluation designs are not simply 'qualitative' alternatives to 'quantitative' impact evaluation. Perhaps the best known approach in this broad tradition is Realist Evaluation (Pawson and Tilley 1997). However, case-based impact evaluation approaches are of increasing interest and used in sectors such as international development. Befani and Stedman-Bryce (2017) suggest that case-based methods can be broadly typologised as either between case comparisons (such as qualitative comparative analysis) or within case analysis (for example contribution analysis). Brix et al. (2020) make the case for contribution analysis in evaluating

Lessons from CoSIE

- **Evaluation is important**: Evaluation is an ongoing part of the development, implementation and scaling of strengths-based, co-created approaches to delivering public services.
- **Choosing methods**: The choice of evaluation methodologies and frameworks must take into account complexity and the importance of capturing lived experience. Innovative approaches such as story-telling have a part to play.
- **Multi-method outcome evaluations**: Taking approaches to scale will entail evaluating the potential of programmes to deliver outcomes; however, outcome evaluations can draw on a wide range of methodologies underpinned by philosophical approaches that recognise the complexity of attributing outcomes to programmes in social policy and employ theory-led, mixed method approaches that are tailored to the intervention, its stage of development and the context within which it operates.

the outcomes of co-production, arguing that it is an approach that addresses cause-effect questions using theory-based evaluation to infer causation. However, increasingly evaluation practitioners in this field opt to combine several case-based approaches in a single study.

4.2 Scaling, spreading and sustaining

The CoSIE pilots achieved valuable and outstanding episodes of co-creation. They have demonstrated impact in specific sites and services at the micro and meso levels. However, the ambitions of CoSIE extended beyond this, to embed co-creation and inspire change much more widely. In common with all social innovations, they face the challenge of how to get beyond local implementation within and then beyond the project timeframe. But addressing this challenge is not straightforward.

What are we trying to achieve?
Social innovation processes seem to follow a spiral path starting from the recognition of a need to change through to system change (e.g. Murray et al. 2010). This path is usually portrayed as following six or seven steps but many innovations fail to get beyond the third step (prototyping phase). Another stream of social innovation literature (Ganugi and Koukoufikis 2018, Moulaert and McCallum 2019) refers to three dimensions to be achieved to make the innovation sustainable: the satisfaction of unmet needs, community empowerment and governance transformations. Many innovations achieve only episodic changes of governance rather than durable changes.

However, it is not always clear what we mean by the term 'scaling-up', which can encompass a range of related activities such as spreading, diffusing, disseminating, and adopting (Shiell-Davis et al.

2015). The end goal of scaling-up not always clear. If an innovation is inherently social and place-based, is it possible for it to be scaled-up or even spread to other, similar places? Albury (2015) challenges the assumption that innovations spread and scale through transfer from one organisation or locality to another. Instead, he notes that while this might work for some incremental innovations, for more systemic, radical or disruptive innovations scaling-up involves the innovative organisation scaling-up, increasing its market share and displacing less innovative organisations. However, this view of spread is contested. Termeer and Dewull (2018), for example, suggested a small wins framework. In a nutshell, the idea is to make progress by cultivating small changes in a way that makes them larger and stronger. The aim is to energize different stakeholders instead of paralyzing them. The framework is based on the three following steps: identifying and valuating small wins (and avoiding small losses), analyzing whether the right propelling mechanisms are activated and organizing that results feedback to into the policy process.

Without the identification of small wins, there is a risk is that they remain unrecognized and never become institutionalized. Propelling mechanisms are needed for scaling up, broadening or deepening small wins. Propelling mechanisms are sort of chains of events that enable the accumulation of small wins through feedback loops. Identification of small wins and mechanisms of amplifying their consequences are useless, unless there are procedures to ensure that results feed into agenda setting, policy design, implementation and evaluation. In the Netherlands' pilots, for example, a small change in waste collection made streets visibly cleaner. In similar vein, in the UK, the Living Lab approach was used for facilitating the pilot to identify with their stakeholders' inventive approaches to 'wicked' problems and better ways of getting things done.
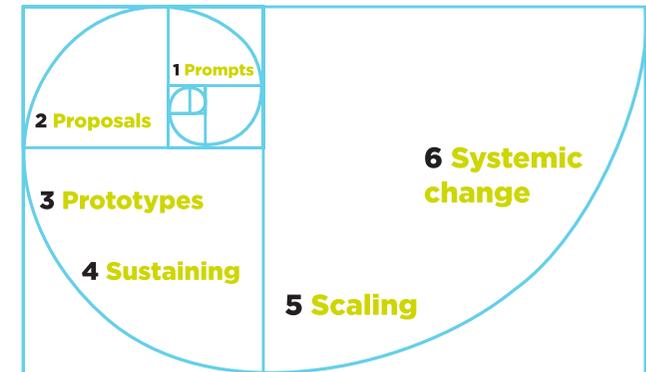
The six stages of social innovation (taken from Murray et al. 2010: 11)

The Living Lab was seen as a propelling mechanism that supported and nurtured the change by making the roles, responsibilities and associated with complex socio-technical systems and situations explicit and perspicuous.

Davies (2014) also argues that we should focus less on organisational growth as a means of spreading innovation and more on non-growth strategies such as replication and dissemination, although Albury (2015) challenges the idea that scaling-up is primarily about informational issues or primarily a supply-side issue (i.e. by increasing the pipeline of innovations the likelihood of spread and diffusion is increased). Instead, he draws attention to the importance of thinking about and shaping the demand for innovation.

What factors support scaling-up?
EU funded research with a broad range of social innovations worldwide concluded that political opportunity, legitimacy, and funding can all contribute to survival and development of social innovations, and (occasionally) their entry into the mainstream (Kazepov et al., 2019). Albury (2015) develops a conceptual framework of three mechanisms for

scaling and diffusion that research has shown to be promising in health and social care:

1. Organic growth situated in three interacting communities: a community of innovators (or practice) who are structured, facilitated and supported to use disciplined co-design and innovation methods; a community of potential adopters; and, a community of interest, not yet committed to adoption, but interested in developments.

2. Building the widest possible range of stakeholders (people who use services, citizens, policy-makers, managers and professionals) to mobilise demand and build a movement.

3. Developing an enabling ecosystem covering dimensions such as culture, leadership, investment funds, rewards and incentives and an appropriate regulatory framework.

Building on these ideas and a series of empirical case studies, Albury et al. (2018) suggest enablers for scaling innovation can be divided between those that are within the remit of innovators and those that create the conditions for spread at a system level. For innovators in pursuit of spread, enablers are:

- Building demand through existing networks and narratives
- Using evidence to build demand
- Balancing fidelity, quality and adaptability
- Scaling vehicles rather than lone champions.

Enablers at a system level are:

- Capitalising on national and local system priorities
- Using policy and financial levers to kick start momentum
- Commissioning for sustainable spread
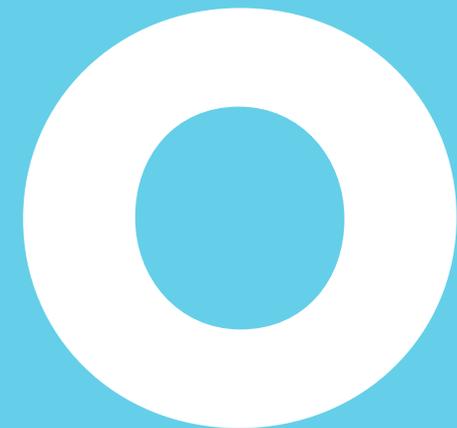- The role of external funding spread

Some CoSIE pilots have already managed to make a difference beyond implementing ideas in a specific setting. Common factors that distinguish them appear to be energetic and proactive networking, enrolling the interest of powerful stakeholders, and meeting perceived needs of other agencies in other places. These pilots have been particularly successful in building demand through existing networks and narratives, and aligning co-creation with emerging national and regional priorities (e.g. sustainable cities, rural economic development).

Our experience and in particular recognition that co-creation and strengths-based approaches are closely related suggests that when thinking about scaling-up it is important to identify key principles that underpin the intervention and that part of the process of scaling-up will be articulating and promoting these principles. Reflecting on the findings in this paper, several principles emerge.

- Building capabilities to lead a Good Life: There is a moral principle underpinning co-created, strengths-based approaches to delivering public services that recognises that the purpose of public services is to help people lead a good life and that to do so requires helping them people to build their capabilities (see above).
- Building relationships: Whether viewed through the theoretical constructs of New Public Governance or Human Learning Systems, or captured in our Community Reporting or evaluation work, productive relationships are key to the delivery of co-created services.

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