Co-create Social Innovation
A mapping of Co-creation methods for Social Innovation

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With accelerating trends such as climate change and social injustice the need for social innovation is growing. Co-creation can enhance important factors in the development of social innovations but there is a lack of clarity on how to actually co-create social innovation. There is a need for a co-creation framework that makes it easier to find the "best" co-creation method for any perceived situation during the co-creation process.

The global financial crisis, climate change, demographic changes, and rising inequality are some of the global trends that pressure public leaders and organizations, civil society organizations and corporations to shift to a sustainable development. When conventional activities fail social innovations are demanded to be both drivers of positive societal change and forces against negative developments. (Hansson, Björk, Lundborg, & Olofsson, 2014)

Social innovation & co-creation
Stanford Social Innovation Review defines social innovation as “a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals” (Jr., Deiglmeier, & Miller, 2008)

Social Innovations are often cross-sectoral (involve actors working together from across sectors), open and collaborative, inclusive, engage a wide range of actors, and create new relationships (Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick, & Norman, Defining Social Innovation Part 1, 2012). All these aspects can be enhanced with the support of well-designed and well-hosted co-creation activities and processes.

Sanders and Stappers (2008) use the term co-creation for any act of collective (two or more people) creativity. But often it also indicates that all actors including the user/s are involved in the creative process, and not just professionals.

The designed co-creation process
There is a lack of clarity on how to actually co-create social innovation and therefore a need for a co-creation framework that makes it easier to find the "best" co-creation method for any perceived situation during the co-creation process. I have designed a co-creation process for Social Innovation that can work as a framework for relevant co-creation methods. It has three phases divided into sub-phases and some of the sub-phases are divided into steps (see Figure 1). Seven identified co-creation concepts: Art of Hosting, Design Thinking, Service Design, Graphic Facilitation, Visual Thinking, the Business Model Canvas and Transversal Dialogue, have been use as inspiration in designing the process.
Figure 1. The designed co-creation process for Social Innovation.

A. Discover
In the first phase the core-team is formed and the first plan for the innovation process takes form. The name is inspired by the first phase in an alternative version of the Design Thinking process (IDEO, 2012) where problems and opportunities that stimulate the team to look for solutions are identified and understood (Brown, 2010).

A1. Inspiration
During the first sub-phase in the Discover phase a general understanding for the challenge, its stakeholders and context is obtained. The first version of the purpose and vision can now be created.

A1.1 Identify and define challenge
The first thing to do is identifying and deciding what challenge/issue to address. This step is inspired by the first phase in the Design Thinking process and by the first step, Identify the real need, in The Chaordic Design Process (Møller, o.a., 2012).

A1.2 Stakeholder mapping
Step inspired by step 4 in the The Chaordic Design Process from Art of Hosting: Identify the participants (Møller, o.a., 2012). Once the challenge is identified and defined the stakeholders around the challenge can be mapped and a better understanding of who should be involve in the co-creation process is created.

A1.3 Context and trend analysis
It is important to understand the context of the challenge and how that context might change with time. There are a variety of methods for that,
therefore I created this step as part of the Inspiration sub-phase.

A1.4 Create a purpose and a vision
According to Art of Hosting formulating a clear purpose and/or vision are the first steps in creating order in complex situations (Møller, o.a., The Art of Hosting Workbook, 2012, s. 16). A purpose is a clear, commonly understood statement of what will bring a community together and a vision that answers the questions, “Where do we want to go?” (Møller, o.a., 2012).

A1.5 Reflect & Relax
In order to get inspired it is important to create time for reflection, relaxation and be social with people in a relaxed manner (Doorley & Witthoft, Make Space, 2012, s. 7).

A2. Early stage resources
When the challenge is generally understood and a vision and purpose is created it is time to mobilize people, build and develop a core team and together plan the rest of the innovation process. The steps in this sub-phase need to be considered throughout the whole co-creation/innovation process but are extra important in the beginning of it.

A2.1 Connect people and network/community building
One identified factor in succeeding with social innovation is to connect with people with the right knowledge and resources. They can become new team members, partners, someone to share information with etc. For this step I was inspired by step 4, Identify the participants, in The Chaordic Design Process (Møller, o.a., 2012) but also by Transversal Dialogue (Yuval-Davis, 1999).

A2.2 Build/develop core-team
The co-creation process needs a devoted team. This step I created inspired by Art of Hosting that has a lot of focus on the development of the team.

A2.3 Plan innovation process
Step inspired by The six Breaths of Process Architecture/Design from Art of Hosting (Møller, o.a., 2012) and the method Plan for the Innovation Process from Design Thinking for Educators toolbox (IDEO, 2012).

A3. Understand the challenge
To innovate a successful solution that meets a social challenge, the challenge needs to be fully understood. It is not enough to just interview and observe the people involved in the specific challenge, they also need to be involved in the innovation process.

A3.1 Interview
The most traditional way to get information from stakeholders is to interview them. This step is mainly inspired by methods from Design Thinking.

A3.2 Observe stakeholders and immerse yourself into the context
Plenty information can be gathered from interviews but to really understand a challenge there is also a need to observe and interact with the stakeholders that are affected by or involved in solving the specific challenge. This step is mainly inspired by methods from Design Thinking and Service Design.

A3.3 Engage and involve
In order to make sure that the stakeholders get involved enough and feel ownership over the expected solutions it is important to engage and include them early in the innovation process. There are many creative
methods for engaging the stakeholders in understanding the challenge. This step is inspired by methods from Design Thinking and Art of Hosting.

A3.4 Visual methods and templates for understanding the challenge
This step is inspired by methods from mainly Graphic Facilitation and Visual Thinking.

A4. Interpretation
This sub-phase is inspired by the Interpretation phase in an alternative version of Design Thinking process and the concept of harvesting from Art of Hosting. After all the interviews, observations and workshops the information needs to be structured and interpreted.

B. Ideation
The Ideation phase is inspired by the second space in the Design Thinking process where ideas that can lead to solutions of the problems are generated, selected, developed, prototyped and tested. (Brown, 2010) The phase covers also the fifth step in The Chaordic Design Process. “Create a new concept” (Møller, o.a., 2012).

B1. Idea/solution generation
This step is inspired by the first ideation sub-phase in an alternative version of the Design Thinking Process (IDEO, 2012) where it is important to create a lot of ideas.

B2. Ideas/Solutions selection
Step inspired by the second ideation sub-phase in the alternative version of the Design Thinking Process (IDEO, 2012) where ideas are integrated and selected.

B3. Ideas/concepts development
As soon as one or a few ideas are selected it is time to develop them into concrete concepts. This step is inspired by the first experimentation sub-phase in the alternative version of the Design Thinking Process (IDEO, 2012).

B4. Gather feedback and evaluate
After the ideas have been developed into concrete concepts and prototypes one can start gathering feedback from persons that haven’t been closely involved in the ideation process. This step is inspired by the second experimentation sub-phase in the alternative version of the Design Thinking Process (IDEO, 2012).

C. Implementation
This phase is inspired by the third space in the Design Thinking process where action planning and delivery of the final solution take place, “from project stage to peoples lives” (Brown, 2010) and to the market (Brown, 2008).

C1. Develop a full solution and a business model
After receiving the feedback from the last sub-phase, in the Ideation phase it is time to develop a full solution with a realistic business model ready for implementation.

C1.1 Develop a full solutions
In order to prototype a full solution there are various details that have to be developed. This can be done after the same logic as the general concept itself so therefore I decided use this step as iteration between sub-phase B1.1, B1.2, B1.3 and B1.4 until the full solution is developed and prototyped.

C1.2 Develop a business model
The inspiration for this came from the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder,
Pigneur, & Smith, 2010). The business model can be developed throughout the whole co-creation process but in this part of the processes it is essential that it is fully developed.

C2. Team Building/Activities
During the innovation process new people have been involved and new insights, ideas and concepts developed. The vision, purpose, and plan from the Discover phase are probably not relevant anymore.

C2.1 Decide a vision, goals and a strategy
One part of the team building process is to create and decide a common vision and common goals that way the team will know what direction to take in working together.

C2.2 Team Building
The people in the team do not only have different roles, they have different personalities as well. This can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Team Building is important to easing conflicts between the team members.

C2.3 Plan implementation
When you have a working solution with a feasible business model and a clear strategy it is time to plan the implementation on a more detailed level and create a time line of some kind

C3. Marketing and Attract Resources
To gather resources in forms of grants, investments and reach out to potential customers the team must interact with people in different ways.

C4. Manage and evolve
Finally it is time to manage and evolve the implementation of the social innovation. Sub-phase inspired by the Evolution phase in the alternative version of the Design Thinking process (IDEO, 2012) but also by the last step in the The Chaordic Design Process, Move into practice (Møller, o.a., 2012).

Methodology
The co-creation concepts and the co-creation methods have been identified and selected during a field study inspired by the first step in the Design Thinking process, Inspiration (Brown, 2009), in combination with literature studies. During this process 23 relevant actors and events in South Sweden, Denmark, South Finland, and the Basque Country were visited. An abductive approach, to iterate between theory and empirical data (Björklund & Paulsson, 2012), has been used. The information from literature studies has been combined with the results from the field research, the two affecting the development of each other. The result was later used in a creative process inspired by the second step in the Design Thinking process, Ideation (Brown, 2009), in such way that the needed co-creation process for social innovation could be designed.

The designed co-creation table
In the full report all identified co-creation methods are sorted into a co-creation table with columns according to the sub-phases and steps in the co-creation process. The co-creation process and table are helpful tools when planning a co-creation process or activity. There is a risk, though, that they are used as checklists, which could result in lack of creativity during the planning process. A lot of information is lost in a formalized process and it is important to have an open and creative mindset and a general understanding of co-creation and the topic. The designed co-creation table can work as a toolbox and as a reminder so you don’t miss any important steps in the process.
References


