

Co-creation navigator: guided co-creation and mindset development

The co-creation navigator – which is in open development, and is being co-created with practitioners in a wide range of professional contexts. The description below will give a first impression of what we are working towards.

Introduction

Co-creation is a powerful way to deal with 'wicked problems'¹ and innovate your professional practice. The co-creation navigator will help you perform at your best as it guides you through the different stages of co-creation, from preparation to execution. With just a few minutes a day, you will learn how to build your team, how to get in the right frame of mind and how to remain innovative throughout the co-creation process.

The co-creation navigator uses the metaphor of a subway map to guide you on your journey through the different stations of a co-creative process.



Why

Any project that is too complex for a simple top-down approach can benefit hugely from co-creation. There may be many interdependencies, or different stakeholders that might not be able or willing to articulate their position, a context which is subject to sudden change. Co-creation will give you a better understanding of the problems you're trying to address and of all stakeholders involved. It will ensure that your project has the buy in from everybody involved. In this context, many organisations and professionals are looking for ways to implement a co-creative approach.

Who should use the co-creation navigator

Professionals wishing to engage in co-creation with a diverse group of stakeholders. First timers will learn about co-creation (methods and mindsets) and people more experienced in co-creation can explore new methods (and in the future add and share their own preferred methods).

¹ a wicked problem is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize.

What the co-creation navigator does

The co-creation navigator teaches you to work co-creatively, based on a tested educational programme². You can use it at work, at home or anywhere else, as long as you are online. The Navigator is set up as a journey through the co-creative landscape.

Everyone on your team can use the co-creation navigator as it is open to browse and explore. But you could also 'buy' a ticket, and follow the tracks, being guided through the entire co-creation journey, and get feedback and advice on the way. In that case, it is wise to assign one team-leader of the process (probably you :-)).

Though co-creation isn't necessarily a linear process there definitely is a structure that can give guidance. The co-creation navigator defines five zones or stages that you go through in that process.

1. It starts with a focus on the team - your team - that will start working in co-creation with stakeholders. Here you will focus on the skills and mind sets necessary to design a good co-creation process and on the interpersonal relations in the team.
2. The next stage focuses on sensitizing in order to get beyond your personal point of view: getting acquainted with your project's specific context, and being sensitive towards that context.
3. Once you're aware of the specifics of this context, you will start building your community.
4. With that community in mind and at heart, you are coached to create your co-creative space in which you, your team and your stakeholders will work together.
5. And last but not least, you will be handed tools to reflect on the results you gathered and - maybe more importantly- on the relationships you built.

You can move back and forth between the stages.

What the co-creation navigator offers

The co-creation navigator is a 'self-help' tool that offers:

1. Easy access to a curated repository of (existing) methods and tools, offering you a vast and growing repertoire of activities.
2. An easy, comprehensive structure for setting up a co-creation process.
3. A 'learning by doing' approach, in which you explore and reflect on different elements before you execute them.
4. (Scripted) Personal coaching, guiding you through the process, offering expected and unexpected messages and exercises relevant for the stage which you're in.
5. Access to a community of practitioners.

² The education programme has been developed through experiences in the following (European) projects; Vetlicat, Decarbonet, Planting the Future, Big Picnic, Cities-4-People and Mobility Urban Values.