Calling All Masters of Co-Design

A PROUD Masterclass

19th March 2013
Capital D, Eindhoven

Aims

The session was aimed at designers and others looking to share experiences and insights of co-design, and to challenge participants to collectively develop new ways of designing and managing exceptional future co-design projects.

An inspirational co-design approach ensures that ideas and proposals taken forward are remarkable for the reflection, innovation and relevance to key issues, and the fact they are developed not by designers or experts but everyday participants of a co-design process.

To prepare for the masterclass we invited participants to select examples of the best, worst and most inspiring co-design in advance. These could be projects participants have been involved with, or other projects that they know about.

PROUD

Participants

Aike Heuvelink

Andy Walmsley

Aniela Hoitink

Cindy van den Bremen

Florian de Visser

Hanna Zoon

Heather Daam

Jan Glas

Koen Clostermans

Lotte Van Wulthe Palthe

Michelle Baggerman

Mikael Liljeroth

Rodolfo Baiz

Tieke Veuskens

Tom Veeger

Wisse Trooster

Niko van Mars

Loretto Pizarro Silva

Michael Hohne

Wieteke Brocken

Shirley van Piere

Gemma Coupe

Agenda

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13.00 - 10:05	Welcome. Introduce masterclass aims
10.05 - 10:10	Hexagons exercise - your experience of co-design
10.10 - 14.00	Analysis of responses
14.00 - 14.40	Group feedback and discussion
14.40 - 14.50	Coffee break
15.00 - 15.40	The Realities of Co-Designing: Case study presentations
15.40 - 16.45	Discussion and exchange of insights and experience
16.45 - 16.55	Next steps
16.55 - 17.00	Close

What is your experience of co-design?

The workshop started with tea and coffee. Facilitator Leon Cruickshank introduced the aims of the afternoon. Participants were invited to spend ten minutes filling out themed hexagon tools giving examples of how they define co-design. Plus different projects they knew about or have been involved in which had a brilliant co-design outcome, been an excellent co-design process or a complete co-design disaster! Everyone was asked to complete at least two of each example.
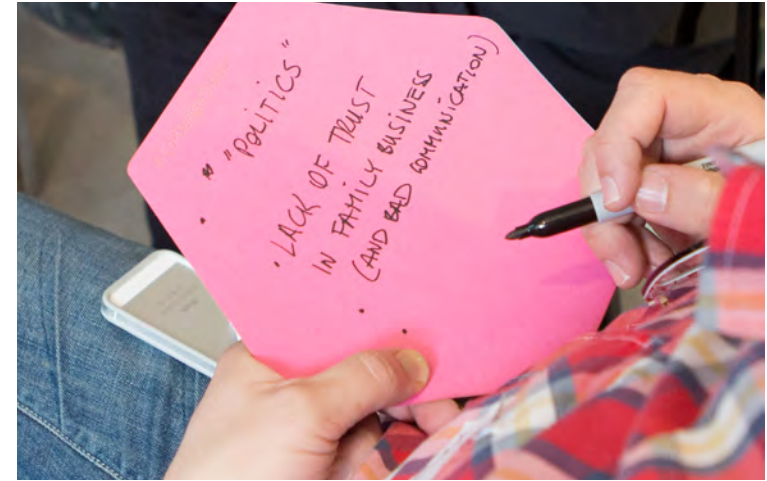
Analysing co-design experiences

Participants were asked to stick their completed hexagons onto a glass wall, grouping the hexagons by theme. The group was then split into 4 small groups, and each group asked to look closely at the responses and between them discuss, identify and link the common issues.

Mapping common threads

Once the groups had reviewed the responses, identified and linked common issues or responses they were asked to map these out using thread, stickers and labels. Each theme could have as many common threads as the group wished. After the common issues had all been mapped, each group presented findings back to everyone for discussion. A summary of findings follows with common threads highlighted in bold.

I define co-design as...

Co-design was defined by participants as being a **collaborative multidisciplinary** process, which brings together and **involves users and non-designers** in all phases of a design process.

A co-design process explores and values differences in opinion and experience and uses all kinds of expertise to **create solutions** that are innovative and go beyond the average. Designing **tools and methodologies** can be effective in helping everyone to be creative in their own way.

Describe an excellent co-design process

In excellent co-design processes expert **facilitation** was seen as valuable in engaging people and encouraging people to relax and open up. Good facilitation helps to ensure all views are heard, respected and even challenged constructively to ensure lively co-design workshops with excellent outcomes.

Creative techniques used to engage people such as **gaming** and story telling can help people to generate ideas and come up with new concepts in a co-design process.

The group used to term **'comodelling'** to describe a process where collaborating and sharing expertise, valuing differences in personalities and opinion, prototyping and testing iterative versions of ideas can create previously unimagined solutions.
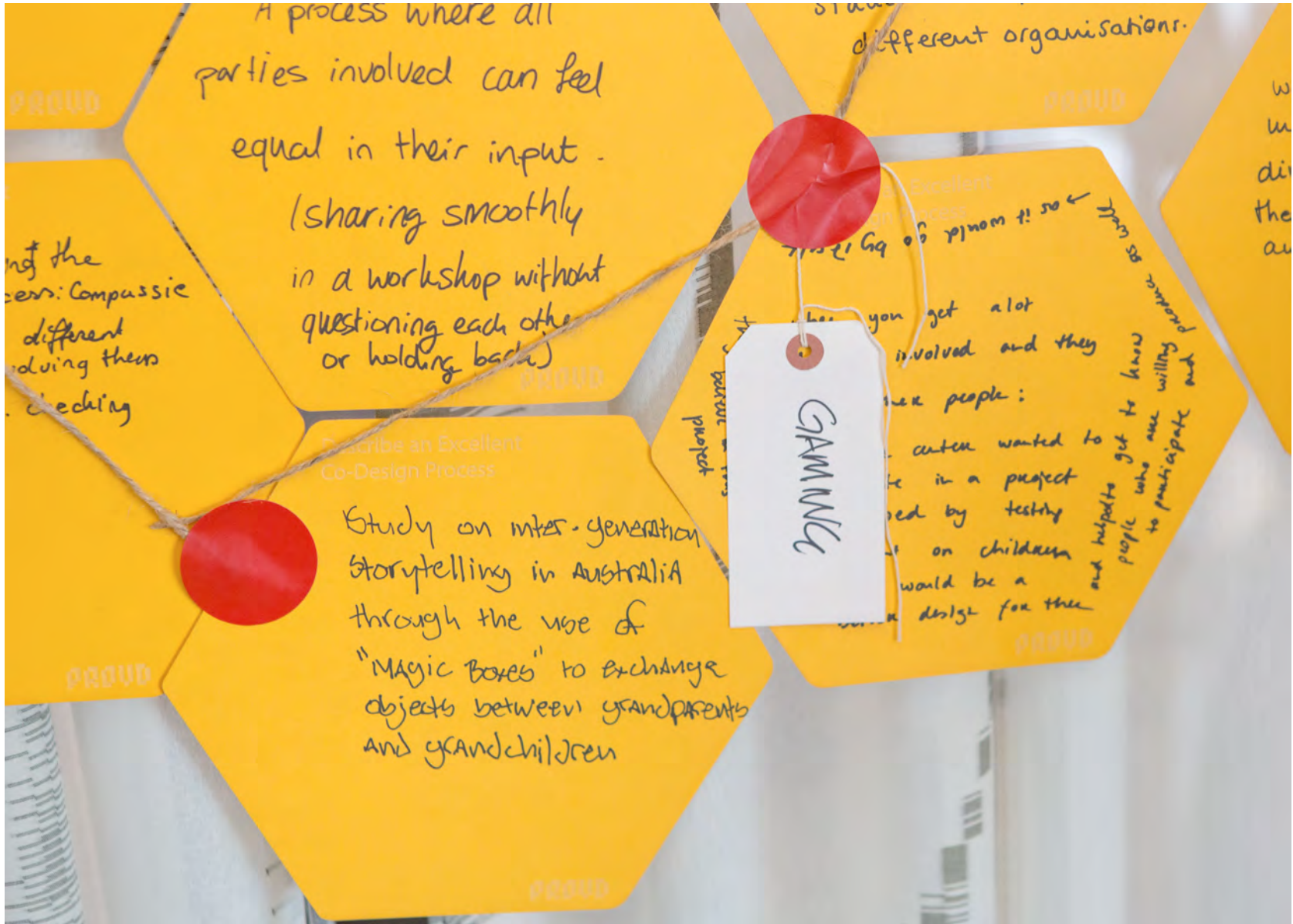
A brilliant co-design outcome

A major common thread running through the responses of how to achieve a brilliant co-design outcome was the role of the **designer as facilitator** of other peoples creativity. In successful co-design processes designers use a variety of techniques and tools to stimulate a **dynamic, creative dialogue** collaborating equally with a diverse range of people with the aim of creating the best possible design outcome.

A co-design disaster

Responses to this question had many issues in common. As in any project good **communication** and project management were seen as key to avoiding disaster. **Trust** between collaborators in vital – both for people who are collaborating and for the ultimate decision makers who have to trust the intelligence of others to come up with excellent ideas. Politics as ever can come into play as can a **lack of money.**

A bad co-design workshop where people are reluctant to become involved can do real damage and lead to a loss in momentum. Co-design reverts to consultation or **'no-co'** as it was called when projects lack ambition, or a clear start and end point / creative framework for people to work within.

Unimaginative facilitation in co-design workshop can discourage people from opening up and exploring things from new perspectives which can lead to increased collaboration and new insights. With no real vision or effective ways to exchange knowledge people remain fixed on their own agendas and made to agree on averaged out solutions that nobody is truly happy with.

The realities of co-designing

Gemma Coupe, Design manager for the PROUD project at Lancaster University presented a case study of a project she had played a big part in while working for Lancashire County Council called Blaze - a youth-led co-design project with inspiring outcomes.

Insights from Blaze were: letting the young people name their project and co-design their own brand and merchandise. Recruiting a project manager with an affinity for young people. Training the young people to interview the artists and designers that they wanted to work with all got the project off to a great start.

Trusting the young peoples vision and insight was crucial to produce ground breaking events, even if this felt risky to the board the pay off was high. Blaze Bloggers project mentored young people so they could host all the events and manage their own social media campaigns to reach out to other young people in their own language.

Pilot projects allowed the young people to collaborate with artists so they could experiment creatively whilst at the same time learning to become young producers. Peer mentoring and inspirational visits to other festivals produced by young people in Europe helped them to co-design a process that was right for the design of their own festival in the Olympic year of 2012 leaving a legacy of skilled young producers.

http://www.blazeonline.org.uk/

Lotte Van Wulften Pathe, Studio LVWP

Lotte spoke of the realities of co-designing, of the challenge of being a designer employed on a co-design project where the project lead struggled to let go and trust the designers to design and deliver a co-design process without over managing the creative process.

Lotte felt designers work most effectively when they are given a clear framework and brief to respond too with clearly defined roles. Good project management encourages collaboration within the design team, regularly reviews overall progress and supports the design team to change direction if necessary making for a flexible co-design process that responds to information and ideas coming out of the co-design process.

http://www.lvwp.nl/

PROUD
co-design projects

Andy Walmsley, Wash Design

Andy spoke honestly at the reality of coming together in a new design team at the beginning of a co-design project and how at first he felt unsure of his role and held back on giving his opinion. He was concerned that the outcomes of a co-design process where non-designers generate ideas could be disappointing and reflect badly on his company. The hardest thing for the whole design team to grasp, was that instead of responding to a design brief, the design team were tasked with creating a process that enabled everyone to be creative an generate ideas and solutions, turning the traditional design process on its head.

Since Beyond the Castle Andy's company Wash have taken on the co-design mantle and designed an online portal that allowed young people to create their own brand, and continuing to work with Lancaster City Council on the next phase of Beyond the Castle.

http://wash-design.co.uk/

PROUD
Beyond the Castle

Leon Cruickshank, UK project lead for PROUD

To lead us into a discussion where we wanted participants to feel they could really open and share experiences and insights of co-designing, Leon shared some very honest stories of where things hadn't gone as planned, and the valuable lessons learned along the way.

This included collaborating with a company who was not willing to admit any kind of failing and who had no remit for the community engagement the university was trying to create. A disaster for Leon was facilitating a workshop that he hadn't been involved in designing and failed to engage people.

We believe we learn much more from our mistakes than the successes we have and sharing these mistakes is a form of generosity and openness that lies at the heart of co-design and knowledge exchange. The discussions in this section of the master class were enlightening, encouraging and moving. We want to encourage more discussion about 'worst practice'.

My co-design disasters
(a small sample)

How do these issues relate to your experience?

After the presentations a question and answer session took place with Leon, Gemma, Andy and Lotte focussing on the issues raised. There was a real empathy for the situations they had found themselves in and valuable experiences and lessons learned were shared. There was an agreement that co-design is not the easy option. A co-design process can really push everyone involved out of their comfort zones and not everybody is suited to it. The session then opened up to the wider group. A photo summary of the main learning points catured from the in-depth discussion and debate follows.

At the end of the masterclass the group agreed they would like to carry on meeting regularly to share further insights and experiences of co-designing facilitated by different participants or co-design experts. Capital D suggested they could help to organise regular themed events. Their offer was readily accepted by those present and the workshop came to a close with a real positive energy and new contacts made.

PARAMETERS DESIGNERS
o good listener (say less than you listen)
o admit you do not know
o designers as a kind of guide
   in the process
o MAKING OTHER PEOPLE BRILLIANT
o BUILDING ON IDEAS
o CONSTRUCT SCAFFOLDING
   MOUNTED OR LESS MOUNTED
   (different levels of capability)
o SPEAKS at different LEVELS (EMPATHY)

o knowing when is the most valuable po[int]
to get feed BACK

o BE ABLE TO COPE WITH frustration, BE comfor[t]
about being uncomfor[t]

ROI? → the value of your mother

types of indicator!

o MEASURE different sorts of value!

o EVERYBODY'S ROL[E] changes

CO.DESIGN IS A NEW WAY of MANAGING

KEEP INVOLVING PEOPLE IN THE ENTIRE projeeT?

WHERE DOES the designers' ROLE END?

HOW CAN WE CONSTRUCT a CO-DESIGN COMMON GROUND?

Parenting
Ego.
Politics
Communication
Documentation
Going beyond the
first idea

Distributed
⊕ WHAT TOOLS — Toolkit
Experience exchange
network.
Rolls/Responsibility

Thank you for your participation.
Let's keep talking...

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Gemma Coupe

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PROUD

People Researchers Organisations Using Design

This masterclass was designed and run by ImaginationLancaster at Lancaster University as part of the PROUD project which is funded by EU INTERREG IVB. PROUD stands for People Researchers Organisations Using Design for innovation and co-creation. PROUD brings designers together with public organisations, business and user communities to experience the value of design whilst working together on innovative solutions for today's real world problems. Working with parters across Europe we are developing and sharing new ways of co-designing improvements to public space and public services.

http://imagination.lancaster.ac.uk/activities/PROUD

http://www.proudeurope.eu/

Investing in Opportunities

This project has received
European Regional
Development Funding
through INTERREG IV B.

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LANCASTER

LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY