



Local Voice Framework Co-production Definition and Principles

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Definition of Co-production

Co-production is the building of respectful and empowering relationships alongside the sharing of ideas between those with lived experience and other stakeholders. Both contribute their knowledge, skills and experiences to co-create actionable change. Co-production is a challenging process that requires reflection and dedication to ongoing collective learning.

Principles of Co-production

1. Embed Co-production

Co-production should be embedded from the beginning to the end of the project when possible.

When feasible co-production should be embedded at different stages of a project, and at all levels including strategic, governance, and operational, across areas of public relevance.

For example: opportunities to engage across the life course of a project such as being involved in bids and project plans, co-evaluate projects, co-commission services, co-design systems, dissemination.

2. Plan Appropriate Infrastructure and Support

Co-production needs to be rooted in the structure of organisations.

Co-production should be supported by organisational systems and processes in addition to necessary resources for effective sustainable practices. Training and support may be needed to embed co-production in organisations.

For example: Human resources policies, reward and recognition policies, long term funding opportunities.

3. Promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Co-production should be an accessible opportunity, where difference between people is valued and respected, and practices are inclusive.

A range of opportunities for those with lived experiences and other relevant stakeholders should be provided to celebrate difference and recognise the different skills people have and contributions that they can make.

For example: outreach work through networks to reach marginalised groups, inclusive and flexible methods and formats for involvement reflecting personal and challenging circumstances.

4. Build Empowering and Equal Relationships

Co-production should be underpinned by trusting, respectful, and empowering relationships.

Co-production should focus on the value of reciprocal knowledge exchange and collaborative decision making between those with lived experience and other stakeholders to meet shared responsibilities as equal partners.

For example: openly challenge stigma and assumptions, promote conscious presence, promote empathy not sympathy when people share experiences.

5. Foster Open and Transparent Communication

Co-production should be based on honesty and transparency.

Co-production should be supported with approaches that foster active listening, wider awareness and deeper understanding, informed decision making, and collaborative production of policies, plans, and outputs.

For example: construct clear role descriptions and person specifications, avoid jargon and acronyms, identify any need for confidentiality and why, be clear about limitations, manage expectations.

6. Provide Ongoing Support

Support should be made available for those with lived experience and other stakeholders who are involved with co-production.

It is important that support is available for those with lived experiences and other stakeholders to opt into based on individual and collective needs to help ensure safety, development and wellbeing.

For example: peer to peer networks, skilled facilitation, training, mentoring, building on existing skills, sharing next step opportunities, crisis support, emotional support and awareness of advanced support services, maintaining communication.

7. Learn, Reflect, Adapt with Partners

Co-production should be an ongoing and collaborative learning process.

Co-production should be supported by collaborative knowledge shared across networks, reflexivity, and piloting of alternative approaches to enhance practice. Those involved in co-production should be able to recognise when an idea is not working and use this as an opportunity to grow and move forwards in an alternative way.

For example: share and celebrate impact and lessons learnt, disseminate learning through webinars, reduce duplication through mapping what is known.

8. Share a Vision of Meaningful Change

Co-production should be recognised as a social movement.

Co-production should be a catalyst of a movement of positive social change, with those with lived experience and other stakeholders seeking opportunities to build a far-reaching network of influence.

For example: influence organisations locally, nationally, and internationally across diverse sectors. Encourage others to embed co-production by sharing its value and impact.

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