

Co-production: How fast can it go? A 2024 UK KMb Forum Ideas Jam

SUCH, Elizabeth and LANGLEY, Joe <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9770-8720>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/35079/>

This document is the Published Version [VoR]

Citation:

SUCH, Elizabeth and LANGLEY, Joe (2024). Co-production: How fast can it go? A 2024 UK KMb Forum Ideas Jam. FigShare. [Other]

Copyright and re-use policy

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

Co-production: How fast can it go?

A 2024 UK KMb Forum Ideas Jam

Liz Such and Joe Langley

Co-production – the end to end process of working with knowledge creators and users in research – is popular in knowledge mobilisation (KMb) circles. We are comfortable with bringing people together to build and make sense of research. It has sound philosophical, ethical and methodological underpinnings and the evidence points to some good outcomes. Co-production brings us closer to meeting the ambition of including research in the process of social change for good. It has lots of potential benefits.

Co-production now or never

However, all the research on the process of co-production with policy, practice or communities suggests it is laborious. It takes time to build trusting relationships between partners and time is something everyone seems to have less of. It takes time to equalise power, build confidence and trust between all those involved researchers, communities, service users, policy makers. Ultimately, it takes time to bring people together in one place at one time, over time. Time is a critical resource.

Yet the demand for evidence from decision makers is impatient. Evidence is needed for policy input as the sands of policy forever shift. Practice innovation is in constant demand to reduce costs and improve services. Communities want to see change in their neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

Fast or slow? Can co-production change to meet the needs of everyone?

How do we square this circle? Could we or should we seek to speed up the process of co-production to meet the demands of decision and change makers? Or do we need to stick to hard won principles and practices of co-production and instead work on slowing up demand? This was the topic for the House of Co, a collection of willing KMb specialists at the UK KMb Forum in Dundee in May 2024. Our debate in the House played with ideas from the traditionalists and the opposition on if, how and why we could speed up co-production or keep it slow. Both sides of the House had their say. Co-production was understood as a deep relational process that did require time but the realpolitik of it suggested we might want to amend our approach, depending, of course, on context.

Here are a few suggested techniques taken from the group discussion to help you improve your chances of making your co-produced research and KMb timely:

1. Start off on the right foot. If you know your time limits, work to them and map out any opportunities for abbreviation at the start, checking and noting how this might affect the claims you can subsequently make about your work being 'co-productive'
2. Plan for doing, don't plan for planning. Avoid long 'sign off' or approval processes.

3. Know your networks. Ensure you are not starting with a blank piece of paper, go to the people and places where you know networks exist. Work with them.
4. Be honest about narrowness/exhaustiveness. Be clear about with whom you are co-working and with whom you are not. Never aspire to or claim representativeness.
5. Don't wait for the big hitters. Work with who is in the room and willing or keen to start.
6. Connect with the connectors. If you don't have clear sight to ultimate decision makers, connect with those who do or at least have some influence on them.
7. Avoid 'what aboutism'. Encourage 'good enoughism'. All issues can be explored at considerable depth but remember your purpose. Are your discoveries fit for purpose? You can have a 'parking lot' to record issues that are acknowledged but out of scope for the current project.
8. Be prepared to adjust the pace. Move faster or slower in response to the group dynamic, preferences, capabilities and resources.

The House of Co raised some risks of speeding up co-production: it can erode trust, result in 'surface-level' conclusions and undermine the very foundations of the co-production ethos. As long as we have these risks in mind, we can collectively support speedier co-production. It is certain that the approach will remain popular, these ideas might just help us do it in a more timely way.

Take a look at the supporting infographic for our 8 Top Tips

https://figshare.com/articles/poster/8_Ways_to_speed_up_coproduction/25958692

Originally published on the UK Knowledge Mobilisation Forum.

<https://knowledgemobilisation.net/co-production-how-fast-can-it-go-a-2024-uk-kmb-forum-ideas-jam/>

Liz Such, Joe Langley and Andy Tattersall, July 2024

Liz, Joe and Andy lead Knowledge for Public Health (KNOW-PH), the NIHR Public Health Research knowledge mobilisation team. See <https://www.know-ph.ac.uk/>

elizabeth.such@nottingham.ac.uk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2242-3357>

<https://linktr.ee/lizsuch>

j.langley@shu.ac.uk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9770-8720>

<https://linktr.ee/joelangley>

a.tattersall@sheffield.ac.uk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2842-9576>

https://linktr.ee/andy_tattersall