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CCO
Co-creation Orchestration

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Co-Creating and Orchestrating Multistakeholder Innovation

4. The promotion of assets in the community

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From a multi-stakeholder Co-Creation perspective, asset-based approaches have become effective alternatives in successful community development, and the utilisation of human resources as assets has become essential. It has been found that governmental programme-based solutions to community problems will be gradually replaced by strengthening the role of civil society organisations and their participation in governance at the local level (Mathie, Cameron and Gibson 2017, 55; Mathie and Cunningham 2003, 474).

The aim of this paper is to explore experiences with an e-participatory budgeting process application in southern Finland in Espoo City Centre (Espoon keskus) during the years 2017–2018. In the project, people were encouraged to come up with ideas to develop their neighbourhoods with the goals of making them "more alive, more cheerful and more beautiful". The participatory budgeting process, called My Idea, was also an experiment in e-participation. One of My Idea's objectives was to understand how the project promotes the mobilisation of the assets of people and use of the resources available in Espoo City Centre.

The source material consists of development proposals of residents and the experiences of the ideas' creators in the project. The results show that residents proposed several assets for use in community development. Social assets, such as people, associations and enterprises, were emphasised in the proposals. Other assets were the knowledge and skills of people, material assets and the environment and culture. In addition, the results reveal that e-participation as an asset should be developed to be user-friendly. The project's call unintentionally evoked an individual mind-set among participants, and therefore collaboration should be motivated in the project orientation stage.

CO-CREATION AND AN ASSET-BASED VIEW OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Multi-stakeholder Co-Creation processes, goals and applications vary in different environments and raise different issues and considerations. It is also important to analyse these issues in more detail for further development of the Co-Creation processes in specific contexts. The aim of this article is to explore experiences with an e-participatory budgeting process application in southern Finland in Espoo City Centre. In the project, people were encouraged to come up with new ideas to develop their neighbourhoods with the

goals of making them "more alive, more cheerful and more beautiful". The participatory budgeting process was called MyIdea, and it was also an experiment in e-participation. One of the objectives of MyIdea was to understand how the project promotes the mobilisation of the assets of the people and use of the resources available in Espoo City Centre. This starting point defined an asset-based perspective of community development as a one of the guiding principles in the project.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003, 477) propose that asset-based community development (ABCD) can be understood as *an approach* and as *a set of methods* for community mobilisation and as *a strategy* for community-based development. The origin of the ABCD approach is in Krezmann's and McKnight's (1993) studies of success stories and experiences communities had in the US with their efforts to mobilise local skills and capacities through informal and formal associations. Instead of focusing on deficits and demands of the communities, they paid attention to internal resources and capabilities in community development stories (Krezmann and McKnight 1993; Mathie, Cameron, and Gibson 2017, 56). According to Blackman, Buick and O'Flynn (2016, 1634), ABCD has its roots in an appreciative enquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987), which refocuses attention from the negative and failing on what is successful and working.

Asset-based community development and other asset-based approaches have become effective alternatives in community development. Several projects following these principles have been applied globally in different development settings (Mathie, Cameron and Gibson 2017, 55). This development may, according to Mathie and Cunningham (2003, 474), represent a change to the bigger picture, where governmental programme-based solutions to community problems will be gradually replaced by strengthening the role of civil society organisations and their participation in local governance. At the same time, participatory budgeting as a political strategy, in various forms, pursues the democratisation of local resource allocation (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012, 1–2; Speer 2012; Krenjova and Reinsalu, 2013). However, the processes of these two approaches, to some extent, resemble each other.

ABCD ELEMENTS IN THE MYIDEA PROJECT

However, the more important area in ABCD, and other strength-based approaches, is a perspective of the elements present and available in communities and among people. Those elements – human, social, material and cultural – become functional assets only through signification and appreciation. For instance, specific places in a residential area may be useless to some but an inviting opportunity for placemaking to others.

Mathie, Cameron and Gibson (2017, 56) refer to the work of Kretzman and McKnight (1993) and state that ABCD was codified as a deliberate process designed to encourage citizen agency, using the language of assets to generate activated subjects and collective actions. Russell and Smeaton (2009, 14) define features that are characteristic elements in ABCD. These are, for instance, initiatives that were supposed to be citizen-driven internal solutions. In addition, residents of the housing area, community, associations, municipalities were seen as assets and co-producers. Furthermore, a collaboration between residents and other stakeholders has happened in former projects. These functional relationships were interpreted as assets and strengths. Most of these characteristic elements of ABCD are also found in MyIdea.

In Scotland, there has been a critical discussion of the need to clarify the meaning of an asset-based approach (MacLeod and Emejulu 2014, 440–441). MacLeod and Emejulu highlight that asset approaches and asset speech are widely used in various methodologies and contexts; however, it seems that asset terminology, or the lack of it, does not itself define whether actions were unambiguous examples of an asset-based approach or not (ibid.). Although MyIdea clearly has many similarities with asset-based community develop-

ment principles, in light of this criticism it would be more accurate to see MyIdea mainly as an "ABCD-like" project. However, one purpose of the MyIdea project was to share the proposed ideas with participants and, if possible, combine them. In these encounters ideas were linked and people and stakeholders united for further co-operation and bonding (Blackman, Buick and O'Flynn 2016, 1637; Flora, 1988; Zahra, Gard and McGehee 2013; Mathie and Cunningham 2003, 479).

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN ESPOO CITY CENTRE

According to Krenjova and Raudla (2013, 18), participatory budgeting (PB) may be defined as a process of participation that enables ordinary citizens to make decisions about budget allocation.

The aim of PB is more inclusive and transparent decision-making and open discussion among community members about the priorities of community development. In other words, it is a way of re-organising power relations between ordinary citizens and administration (Krenjova and Raudla 2013; Ganuza and Baocchi 2012, 1).

My Idea is a research and development project that explores the participatory budgeting process in Espoo City Centre in Finland during the years 2017–2018. MyIdea was administered by the Espoo City regional development group. The purpose of participatory budgeting is to provide an opportunity to identify and prioritise targets of public funding and promote residents' role in participation, discussion and decision-making concerning public resources. In practice, this was implemented by offering small grants for initiatives ideated by residents and which were successfully chosen by residents through voting. MyIdea was partly an experiment in e-participation, and one issue to be observed was the functionality of the online platform for idea design and voting (Lund 2019).

The sum to be shared among successful initiatives was EUR 10,000, and funding for each individual initiative was a maximum of EUR 3,000. Residents were invited to come up with ideas to make the Espoo City Centre "more alive, more cheerful and more beautiful". People were asked to describe their ideas on a digital platform and estimate the amount of money needed for implementation. The project was promoted and advertised in various ways, such as through the internet, at public events, through the local newspaper and by contacting people and associations directly.

The proposal instructions on the digital platform were rather simple: the idea should be implemented in the Espoo City Centre neighbourhood and should be open and free to everyone. The idea could be, for instance, an event, a work of environmental art, improvement of the urban environment, an investment for the common good, a training course or educational event and so forth. The main point was that the proposed idea should be implemented by the creator or in cooperation with others.

After the ideas were presented on the digital platform, the creators were invited to two workshops where their ideas were discussed more closely and their development facilitated with the help of relevant city professionals, depending on the nature of the idea and the questions that arose. Facilitators represented different branches, such as city planning, environmental services, cultural services, social services, city communication and NGOs. After the workshops, the creators finalised their idea summaries on the digital platform, to be voted on by residents. Voting was advertised through many channels, but the voting itself was made possible only through registration on the MyIdea digital platform. Finally, the outcome of the voting was published and the winning ideas were celebrated at a gala to which all participants were invited. A third workshop was arranged a few months later for evaluation of the MyIdea project's strengths and weaknesses as well as proposals for its further development.

MyIdea's objectives, philosophy and principles were discussed at several events but more in depth in workshops. In the project, where people were encouraged to come up with ideas and apply their interests, skills and networks to jointly undertake something for the good of the community, an asset-based approach was emphasised. People were asked to invite friends to the workshops and to seek out possible supporters and partners to help carry their ideas forward. Networking with relevant authorities and associations was supported. Most importantly, every idea creator was afforded the same opportunity and support needed to proceed in a way appropriate for their case.

RESEARCH IN A NUTSHELL

MyIdea was a participatory action research project in which professionals from the city, residents, local firms, associations and researchers from Laurea University of applied Sciences and Helsinki University were involved. The project was funded by Helsinki Metropolitan Region Urban Research Program. From an asset-based perspective, we were interested in how this experiment encouraged residents to come up with ideas, what things they hoped to enable for other residents and how they would use available assets and resources, both human and material, to make their ideas work. In addition, we closely studied the planned roles of the residents in these descriptions. The proposals were analysed by content analysis.

All of the idea descriptions (in total 31) were categorised by applying summarised content analysis, but we focus our analysis on the descriptions (16) that proceeded to the voting phase. We also explore how participants evaluated the MyIdea process they were involved in.

We interviewed nine idea creators about their experiences in the project. The interview questions were designed to open up the experiences of the MyIdea project from different angles. We were interested in what thoughts they had about the MyIdea project in the first place. We asked about motives for participation, the idea development process, workshops, collaboration, what support they received, what obstacles they met, how the digital platform worked, what they learned, what local resources they were able to benefit from, what were they were happy or unhappy with and what should be improved in the MyIdea project implementation.

All interviews were recorded and analysed by applying thematic analysis principles. The concepts of asset-based community development and participatory budgeting were applied in the analysis to help identifying themes in the data. We have been sensitive to phrases and words related to the concepts of social and human capital and that can be interpreted as speech about assets and resources.

WHAT WAS FOUND?

Proposals

Thirty-one proposals were submitted through the digital platform. All citizens who had submitted ideas were invited to the workshops. The first workshop concerned feasibility issues related to the ideas, including clarifying the content of the idea, necessary collaboration needs, budgeting, communications, etc. The focus of the second workshop was marketing and communicating of the ideas with the target audience and other residents in the Espoo City Centre.

During the process, some of the ideas were rejected or combined with another idea. Six participants dropped out. Ultimately, 16 ideas by 13 citizens were to be voted on. The ideas were:

Suvela Bazaar: a feast for old and new Espoo dwellers of different ages and backgrounds
CenttiFest, a local music festival.
Building of a flower garden
Move green: combining exercise with environmental protection

And one example of the ideas with detailed description:

"A Torrent of Colours"
Come make a torrent of colours! Torrent of Colours is a textile community art for the Espoo City Centre. This work of art will be created together with residents of the neighbourhood by banding textiles on the handrails of the bridge. You can bring your own blue-coloured textiles with you if you'd like. The Torrent of Colours will demonstrate how community members are able to promote a beautiful environment. The Torrent of Colours brings joy and colour to Espoo City Centre. Let's make a more beautiful city centre together."

The proposals could be roughly divided into four categories: public art in the urban environment, activities for people, events, and a social issue. Depending on the proposal, the number of things to be offered (enabling things) varied from two to seven.
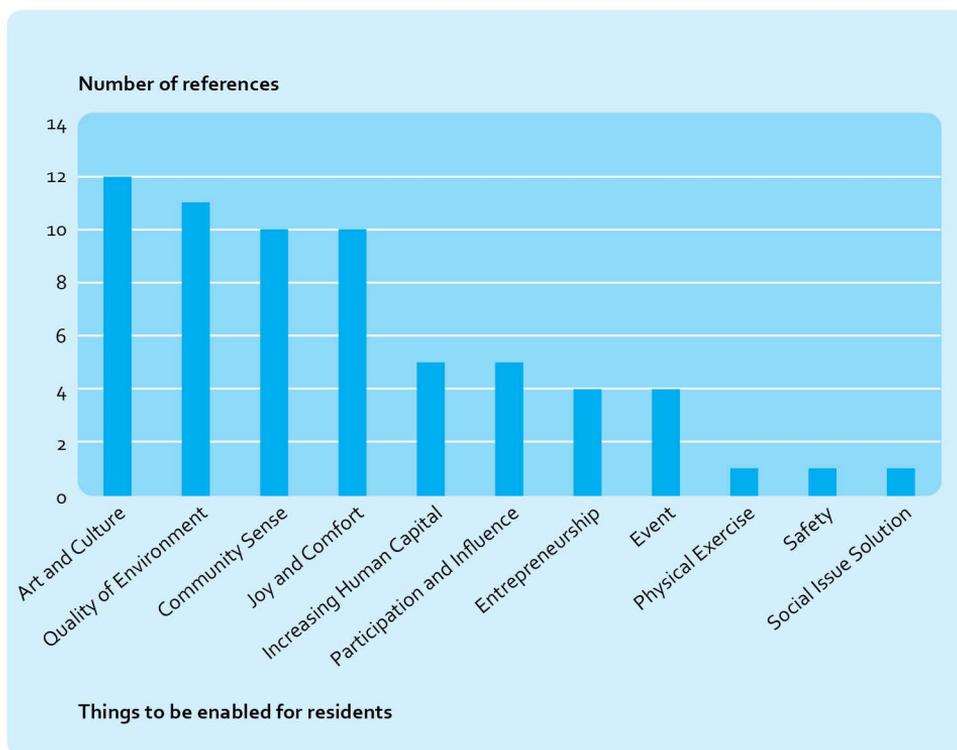

Figure 1. *Idea proposals: Things to be enabled for residents.*

In the majority of descriptions, art and culture were proposed to residents of Espoo City Centre. Almost as often, improvement of the environment, strengthening the sense of community and increasing joy and comfort were mentioned as positive results of the ideas. Increasing human capital refers to skills and knowledge to be shared among residents in different activities and events. This, and possibilities to influence the environment or environmental awareness among people and new means for participating, were often mentioned. The promotion of local entrepreneurship and events, such as music festivals or other performances, were referred to almost as often. Organised physical exercise for residents, better safety and solutions to social problems were mentioned in a one description only.

ASSETS IN IDEA PROPOSALS

The idea descriptions contained references to different kinds of assets. We applied Clarke's (2015) framework of situational analysis in identifying assets embedded in the descriptions. In the content analysis, these references could be defined as follows:

- Social assets (people, associations, enterprises, city professionals, experts)
- Material assets (artefacts, material objects)
- Environment (local spaces and places)
- Knowledge and skills (of the residents and experts)
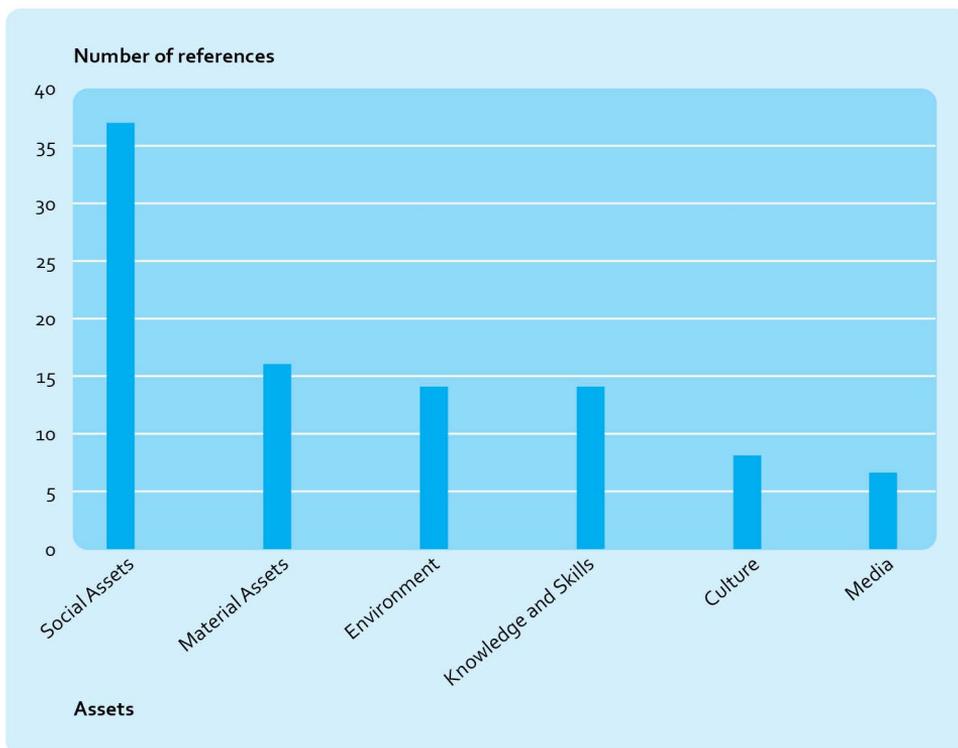- Culture (cultural heritage, tradition, proverbs, multiculturalism, art gallery)

Figure 2. *Assets in the proposals.*

Most often, participants referred to social assets to be used in implementation of their proposals. Social assets and knowledge and skills (social and human capital) comprised over half of the assets; material assets and the environment represent about one-third. Here, media (and partly culture) may be considered one socio-material element in which social activities are intertwined with technologies.

ASSET-BASED SPEECH IN INTERVIEWS

Collaboration and social support/social capital

The participants experienced collaboration differently.

Most of the comments attached to the workshop processes were usually seen as polite and beneficial to one's idea development. Usually, participants spoke about their interest in meeting one another and hearing about other ideas in more detail. The interviewed participants were happy with the positive feedback they received from the others, which included ideas, encouragement and support. Many of the interviewees referred the facilitators` and city experts' encouragement and support in the workshops and during the process. Some of the participants were especially satisfied that facilitators were prepared in advance and provided accurate feedback and advice for further development; they were also able to be connectors or suggest possible partners. City professionals were described as being committed and even enthusiastic. Some of the participants referred to local support and assets they have used in the development of their ideas; these might be one's one personal contacts and networks. One of the participants spoke about tacit knowledge and personal experiences people have concerning certain kinds of social issues. In one comment, the surrounding community was seen as a source of inspiration that motivates one to find solutions for sustainable community development.

However, there were other opinions. Four participants raised more critical viewpoints. One said that the first workshop was not very helpful because there was no progress in her own project. She explained that her time was spent listening to other participants' ideas. Generally speaking, the facilitation process was challenging but also beneficial. It challenged participants to explore one's idea from various viewpoints. These were, for instance: questioning realistic commitment to implementation, questioning collaboration and networking, evaluating strengths and weaknesses of the idea proposal, exploring the possibilities of optional routes for promoting one's idea if this implementation turn outed to be too demanding, and questioning budgeting and communication. Some participants became annoyed with "improvement suggestions" from others because they felt that their own proposal was not appreciated. One participant explained that everyone held fast to their own ideas; according to him, the networking did not serve idea creation very well. The researchers observed that at some point, people started to talk about "an idea competition".

Personal assets/human capital

The participants explained and rather often referred to experiences with personal empowerment and opportunities to learn, share and use one's personal assets. These experiences manifest themselves as positive personal emotions but also as the practical development of skills. One of the participants was pleased with the chance to bring joy to other residents and herself with her idea. Another participant spoke about her enthusiasm in being able to benefit others and get them involved. Growth of knowledge and skills, such as learning to act in a new virtual environment was mentioned by a few. One participant explained that he and his co-crea-

tors had learned how to plan and organise an open event for residents, including budgeting, prioritisation and other necessary skills. In addition, they believed they could help their community demonstrate its potential.

Digital platforms and social media as assets

The digital platform was the only means for submitting one's proposal to the MyIdea project, as well as the only way to vote. The interviewed participants saw the promotion of new e-participation possibilities as basically desirable. On the other hand, the functionality of the MyIdea platform was more or less criticised by all participants, with two exceptions only. The positive aspects were related to the flexibility and speed of the application, and they did not face technical difficulties. One of them saw the online environment as a good way to reach different age groups. Others offered critical remarks. Voting, for example, was uncertain, because you could not tell if it was successful. Two participants explained that not all necessary information was available, such as appropriate sizes for picture or how to edit idea descriptions on the platform. Two participants used the expression "to thread" to describe the complexity of posting their ideas on the platform. According to most of the participants, the registration procedure was viewed as a source of frustration. Many of them raised the fact that people who were going to vote just gave up because of the difficulties.

DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES, POSITIVITY WINS

The positive approach in the MyIdea project invitation was clearly seen in the proposals. This phenomena was interesting because the centre has typically been considered an area of varied and bigger problems than elsewhere. In contrast, participants did not pay attention to social problems or other social issues. Instead, the ideas touched on art and culture, environmental quality improvements, a strengthening of the sense of community, and joy and comfort in the city area.

It is possible that the participants looked upon their neighbourhood positively, seeing more possibilities than obstacles. They were granted a chance to come up with their own ideas and promote a positive image of their neighbourhood and its residents. We may say that the project invitation liberated, or at least encouraged, people to create something they saw as new, positive and inspiring. This resembles Mathies' and Cunningham's (2003, 477) notion about ABCD's principle in which a recognition of strengths and assets is more likely to inspire positive action for change in a community than an exclusive focus on needs and problems.

In the MyIdea invitations, phrases were used that evoked an individualistic and competitive attitude among participants, such as "how would *you* do it", "each *winning* proposal gets funding" and "voters choose the *winners*". These were likely to foster a spirit that did not encourage collaboration, even if this was proposed in the first workshop. The facilitators could not do much to change the course of the individualistic orientation. However, we have to keep in mind that positive experiences with collaboration were emphasised more than negative ones.

Experiences of the e-participation included a lot of criticism. The digital platform was not user-friendly, especially in the voting stage, and this frustrated many potential voters. It can be concluded from these experiences that the e-participation somewhat failed, since it did not work as an asset as planned. Based on our experiences, we suggest that in participatory budgeting, as well as in any asset-based approach to community development, close attention should be paid to project implementation as a social process at a very early stage. The ideas should be constructed and developed together. Information technology and social media

are powerful assets, but they should not be the only options for attending a participatory budgeting process, such as in this case. There should be opportunities to get involved and possibilities for those with poor technical skills and incomplete ideas to take part. And, of course, technical applications should be absolutely user-friendly. In addition, the requirement that participants be responsible for the implementation of their ideas may be too demanding. Participants should be encouraged to take part in accordance with their abilities. These would be important contributions to participatory budgeting as an asset-based process and the successful co-creation processes in community development.

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LAU REA

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WE ARE LIVING in a world that is changing at a rapid pace. Globalization and technological development are bringing about many benefits. However, the challenges we meet are often complex, inter-connected and systemic, so-called *wicked problems*. The challenges are no longer local or one-dimensional.

Addressing wicked problems requires new rules and new ways of thinking that are determined by collaboration, inclusiveness and openness. These global challenges call for updated models that both help to enhance involvement of multiple stakeholders in *co-innovation* and *value co-creation*, and help stakeholders to benefit from them.

The set of articles within this book demonstrate how such concepts as *multi-stakeholder partnership, co-production of research* and *participatory Research, Development and Innovation* take place in practice. The articles epitomise how new collaborations, dialogues and partnerships are being formed among academic, public and private partners, and civic society. As the described collaboration is characterised by impactful interdisciplinary and creative methodological experimentation, this publication seeks to engage a wide audience of researchers, educators, policy-makers, practitioners and others with an interest in combining collaborative academic, business and public expertise.

These articles introduce research results, methodological considerations and practitioners' experiences on multi-stakeholder collaboration allowing for and benefiting from open research, innovation and educational processes. They make apparent the wide range of practices, tools and benefits of co-creation in the context of *Open innovation, Open science* and *higher education*. The articles shed light on the prerequisites of purposeful multi-stakeholder partnership and collaboration in different thematic and regional contexts.