



Enable

From culture of caring
to culture of co-production



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CADIAI
COOPERATIVA SOCIALE

lebenshilfe
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AMPONS

Content

Introduction..... 4

1. The Enable Project..... 5

2. Co-production..... 6

3. Impact and Results.....9

4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations.....14

Introduction

The ENABLE project aimed to develop an inclusive training on how to develop services through the approach of co-production together with service users, professionals and families, and through the development of an inclusive and accessible online platform.

The theoretical framework of co-production suggests that conventional public service reform is failing because the consumer model of public services – where professional systems deliver services to grateful and passive clients – misses out what is most effective about their ‘delivery’: the equally important role played by those on the receiving side. Co-production suggests abandoning the traditional deficit model concentrated on identifying the ‘needs’ of passive recipients that are viewed as burdens on an overstretched system in order to provide people with opportunities for personal growth and development so that they are treated as having unique knowledge and experience that are assets to a common approach.

The ENABLE project was based around co-production methodology and each partner worked in co-productive partnership with people with intellectual disabilities, their families and other stakeholders at all stages of the project



The Project

The ENABLE project “From Culture of Caring to Culture of Enabling: Co-producing Services for People with Intellectual Disability” was developed through the implementation of a co-production framework and related methodology and, as a result, developed an Inclusive Training/Learning Platform on how to co-design, co-deliver and co-evaluate services for people with Intellectual Disability together with: services users, families, professionals in disability and local community representatives¹.

The co-production methodology aims to overcome traditional approaches which tends to perceive service users as having needs that place a demand and a burden on a system which may already be overstretched. Co-production focuses on the proactive role played by those on the receiving side in order to provide opportunities for personal growth and development to people who have abilities, experiences and knowledge which can be regarded as assets in working towards common goals.

There was a strong commitment to innovation by the ENABLE partnership throughout the 2 years of project implementation. In particular, ENABLE worked to:

- Implement an innovative methodology to address target groups and build reciprocal relationships between professionals services users and other stakeholders;
- Bring innovation in social services design and delivery by blurring the distinction between producers and consumers in social services;
- Provide innovative approaches to increase the awareness and competences of professionals on equity, diversity and inclusion challenges in the training environment ;
- Bring innovation in knowledge production and knowledge transfer with the aim to reduce learning disparities for disadvantaged groups.

¹ <http://enable-info.eu/learning-2/>

ENABLE objectives developed in this way allowed the partnership to:

- Plan and deliver services together with service users, families, communities with the aim to improve the quality of life of people with Intellectual Disability
- Enable service users and families to be equal partners in the planning and delivery of services, enhancing self-determination of the users;
- Provide opportunities for the development and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Promote the development, testing, nurturing and implementation of innovative practices in the field of training and learning;
- Promote activities that could better prepare professionals on equity, diversity and inclusion challenges in the training and learning environment

The objective of the partnership was to bring innovation in services for people with intellectual disability through the promotion of inclusive learning and the mechanism of knowledge transfer aimed at reducing learning disparities for disadvantaged groups. In this sense the partnership developed a learning and training platform (<http://enable-info.eu/learning-2/>) to offer access to the materials developed during the implementation of the project and that show how to successfully use the co-production approach.

Co-production

Co-production is the conceptual framework and the related methodology that underpins the ENABLE project. This is an innovative approach since it moves beyond simple consultation or participation of service users.

Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and the related community.

At a European level co-production is considered an inclusive way of delivering services. Due to the economic crisis and related cutbacks in the provision of public services, the concept of co-production has been approached as a new way of developing and delivering public services. In particular, it has been proposed as a way of developing new forms of service delivery, particularly for the disadvantaged groups that have been most affected by austerity measures. It is also promoted as a way of strengthening citizen engagement through a more inclusive, bottom-up and participatory approach. It is important to note, however, that the primary aim of co-production is neither that of reduction of costs nor of “getting something for nothing”; co-production takes a wider and inclusive view of the inherent assets of a community, including its citizens, and the core economy that they and their inter-relationships represent.

Co-production has been defined in different ways. An interesting definition, for the purpose of ENABLE, is the one provided by The Cooperative Council² that consider it *“the process that literally turns services users from passive recipients into active shapers of public services because it means involving all stakeholders, including the people who use a service, in the process of determining what services are delivered and how they operate”*.

However, co-production is also about people’s role in public services. It is a mind-set, attitude, and set of values that are necessary in order to recognise and promote richness, diversity and flexibility of practice.

, people using services, their families and their community.

² <https://cooperativecounciltoolkit.wordpress.com/whatcooperativecouncil/what-is-co-production/>

The co-production approach is based on reciprocity between the user and the service provider. Reciprocity ensures that people are actively involved in partnership, providing experiences of feeling included, needed and valued by others and can play an important role in increasing self-esteem, personal aspiration and a sense of purpose for the person with Intellectual Disability. Both service users and professionals are jointly engaged in a learning process that acknowledges personal experience, skills and knowledge as being shared assets on which everyone can build regardless of role or social status.

The core principles of co-production (as described by the Nesta foundation) are:

- **Recognising people as assets:** seeing people as equal partners in the design and delivery of services, not passive recipients or burdens on public services.
- **Building on people's existing capabilities:** rather than starting with people's needs (traditional model), co-produced services start with people's capabilities and look for opportunities to nurture and develop them.
- **Mutuality and reciprocity:** co-production is about a mutual and reciprocal partnership, where professionals and people who use services come together in an interdependent relationship recognising that each are invaluable to producing effective services and improving outcomes..
- **Peer support networks:** developing peer and personal networks alongside professionals as the best way of transferring knowledge and supporting change.
- **Blurring roles:** blurring the distinction between professionals and recipients and between producers and consumers of services by approaching services.
- **Professionals as catalyst of change:** Enabling professionals to become facilitators and catalysts of change rather than providers of services and focusing on delivering. Professionals become people who help change to happen.



The co-production model and methodology increase also the awareness and knowledge of staff working with people with Intellectual Disability on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion and how these should be core features of their daily work.

Co-production represents therefore an innovative approach since it moves away from a reliance on consultation or service user participation to regarding service users and their communities as partners who possess experience, skills and knowledge that can be regarded as shared assets; those who are usually recipients of service delivery determined and prioritised by others are instead encouraged and supported use the skills and experience they have to help co-design and co-deliver public services.

The co-production approach establishes equal and reciprocal partnership between professionals, people using services, their families and neighbours and it foresees four phases within the creation and delivery of public services:

- Co-design (planning of services)
- Co-decision making in the allocation of resources
- Co-delivery of services
- Co-evaluation of services



Co-production methodology

The co-production approach on which the ENABLE project has been developed is fundamentally rooted in addressing social injustice and inequity. Training and focus groups were approached from the standpoint of collaboration and partnerships that regard diversity and inclusion in training environments as vital assets that contribute to the richness, accessibility and effectiveness of learning and training activities. ENABLE strongly believes that the service user with intellectual disability is to be considered as an individual with unique experiences, knowledge and skills who requires access to lifelong learning and personal development opportunities on an equal basis with others.

All the activities carried out during the project implementation were guided by the following principles:

- Providing opportunities for personal growth and development of people with intellectual disabilities;
- Investing in strategies that develop the emotional intelligence and capacity of local communities;
- Using peer support networks instead of just professionals as the best means of transferring knowledge and capabilities;
- Blurring the distinction between producers and consumers of services;
- Encouraging service providers to become catalysts and facilitators of change rather than simply providers;
- Devolving real responsibility, leadership and authority to 'users' and encouraging self-organisation rather than direction from above;
- Offering participants a range of incentives that aim to embed the key elements of reciprocity and sharing.

Impact and Results

The project lasted 2 years during which partners worked together to implement the co-production methodology and set up the learning platform with learning guidelines.

Focus Groups

All the National partners organized 2 focus groups with people with intellectual disabilities. The groups that worked for more than two years on the Enable project each consisted of users, families, educators, a service manager, a public administrator and the project manager.

The groups met on several occasions during the period of implementation to work on different WPs.

In the **co-design phase**, several group activities and role-playing games were created to enable an understand what co-production was and what its principles are. In the case of CADIAI, once the group had clarified what is and what is not co-production, they went on to investigate in their area if there were recognisable paths of co-production, and some service users went to interview public administrators, family members and other users of services.

In the phase of **co-delivery** partners tried to put into practice all that had been learned and to experiment with the co-produced activities.

All the activities necessitated a phase of planning and sharing, participants in addition to realising and developing their own resources, learned from others, and also were also enabled to modify their own ideas and approaches accordingly.

In the **co-evaluation** phase, the groups involved analysed different situations assessing whether these had all the characteristics to be considered "co-produced".

More precisely, each project partner selected a topic or a small-scale project. The selected group of each organisation carried-out the project in a co-productive way developing it as an unique learning experience for all participants.

Three main topics were selected and within these topics the groups developed their activities:

➤ **Independent Living**

- OpenGroup developed a co-design for a path to an independent life: imagining our home together outside the family.
- Cadiai focused on how to improve the quality of life in independent living through the creation of common rules: rights and duties. The 'Decalogue' of a 'good tenant'.

➤ **Lifelong learning**

- DeLork Group focused on learning, growing & "blooming": creating opportunities for personal development.
- APEMH Group activity was called "We explain – We are the experts" and focused on new ways of learning: Interactive and inclusive learning situations where the user plays the active part.

➤ **Social Inclusion and Political Participation**

- AMPANS developed an inclusive training guide for the media on how they should represent disability.
- Lebenshilfe focused on how to create a co-productive und inclusive atmosphere in meetings between service users and decision makers in the political setting.

Learning Platform

The main output of the ENABLE project however is the Inclusive Training/Learning Platform on co-producing services for people with intellectual disability. It has been developed through the co-production methodology passing through the four different phases. Focus groups were an essential part of its development, and a specific Assemblies-Focus was created to develop the content of the training and evaluating its impact. The Assemblies gathered a variety of stakeholders involved in the process of co-

design, co-delivery and co-evaluation composed in the following way in each partner's organisation: service users, family members, managers, assistants, and representatives of the local community. The assemblies met regularly and were guided by a coordinator appointed by each partner's organisation.

The Training Platform is composed of two products:

- An Interactive user lead inclusive learning portal integrated in the ENEBLE website (<http://enable-info.eu/learning-2/>)
- Training guidelines on developing inclusive training

The Learning Platform

The learning platform is the result of a wide and transversal range of different activities. The platform is in fact a container that channels the materials and contributions obtained through project activities and networking. It is introduced by a video developed in easy to read and easy to understand methodology that invites users to access and enjoy the platform.

Training Guidelines

The guidelines on Inclusive Training/Learning development in face to face and digital settings are meant to provide practical know how and knowledge on how to develop inclusive learning opportunities for external interest groups out of the partnership. They impact adult education and training on local, regional and EU level by:

- Providing knowledge on innovative approaches to increase the awareness and competences of professionals on issues of equity, diversity and inclusion challenges in the training environment
- Providing knowledge production and transfer, will explore how people learn most effectively with the aim to reduce learning disparities of disadvantaged groups.

The learning guidelines on the development of inclusive training tackle the following objectives:

- Adult educators' competences
- Enhancing digital integration in learning, teaching, and training at various levels
- Reducing disparities in learning outcomes affecting disadvantaged learners

The learning guidelines provide knowledge on how to develop high quality, inclusive training, both virtual and face to face, supporting the transfer knowledge on new and innovative co-productive approaches aiming to reach disadvantaged groups. These learning guidelines however provide support also for training professionals on equity, diversity and inclusion and how these should be core features of their daily work.

The training guidelines benefit service users through the promotion of important rights and principles enshrined in the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and the labour market (Raising awareness Art 8 (iii) UNCRPD)
- Provide information in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities (Freedom of expression and opinion and access of information art 21 UN CRPD)
- Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others (art 24 UN CRPD education)

The activities carried out and the results obtained had a relevant impact for all the stakeholders involved both at European level and in the Countries involved. Co-production gives a practical way for people organising services to sit down together with users and talked about how about do it together. It helps move from organising services for users to organise services with users.

In particular, for the service users ENABLE represented an opportunity to foster empowerment and self-esteem, as well as equal opportunities and active citizenship:

- A first hand opportunity to take part in the implementation of a relevant actin that contributed to the construction of a more social Europe, learning to develop together innovative approaches in social services.
- An increased self-confidence of the participants thanks to the active involvement in activities with a European dimension.
- An increased resilience of individuals and communities thanks to the participation in shared and co-developed experiences.
- Promotion of equality and equal opportunities for all the participants.
- A re-definition of the role of individuals from passive consumers of services into citizens with a shared responsibility and decision within the production and delivery of services along with other members of the organisations and their communities.

For the professionals, the project provided a new and challenging perspective, enabling them to develop a new set of skills and insights in the implementation of co-production. The ENABLE project represented an innovative approach in preparing professionals on equity, diversity and inclusion in the working and training environment.

For the local communities the project meant the opportunity to promote inclusion and equal opportunities, in particular reducing discrimination and disadvantages.



Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The ENABLE Project can be described as a two-year participatory process that saw 6 very committed partners work together in a co-productive way to test and promote co-production as a new participatory way to provide services for people with intellectual disability.

The results were positive and went beyond that which was foreseen in the project description as it involved a process of personal growth for the persons involved, both for the users and the service providers.

The ENABLE partnership is convinced that co-production represents a unique opportunity to re-think the partnership between the state and the citizen through the redefinition of the role of service users, families, professionals and local community making them equal partners and engines of change within the production and delivery of social services.

The ENABLE experience allowed the partnership to make the point on what should be done at European, National and local level. In particular:

- Promote co-production as a way to foster equal opportunities;
- Sustain co-production as a way to favour self-determination and active participation of persons with intellectual disabilities and in general of all disadvantaged groups;
- Co-production is an ongoing teambuilding process that that brings an added value to the whole community. The main limitation is related to the mind-set, promoting this kind of change is difficult as co-production can also be about needing to relinquish power and control. Therefore this methodology should be promoted already at school and foreseen as a part of the training for service providers;
- Favour programmes that support and promote a co-productive approach for users but also for service providers
- Co-production is a process and needs time, therefore needs long-term planning.
- Being a methodology addressed to disadvantaged groups, the system of communication needs to be accessible (easy-to-read and easy-to-understand) in order to overcome possible barriers;

- Co-production should not be limited to users and service providers, but open to families and other stakeholders.
- Co-production is supposed to be an ongoing process. Therefore, public administrations have to support (also financially) processes that allow "open results", instead of paying for services listed in an already existing catalogue.
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