



EUROCITIES Social Innovation Lab

26-27 March 2019, Glasgow

Co-creation workshops - Wednesday, 27 March 9.30 - 12.00

Venue: Grand Central Hotel, 99 Gordon Street, Glasgow



Workshop E: Rotterdam city challenge - How can we provide the most appropriate interventions to help vulnerable young adults become self-sufficient?

The co-creation workshops organised at the Social Innovation Lab in Glasgow give city representatives the opportunity to work together to co-design possible new and more effective responses to a common complex social challenge presented by one city.

Objectives

- Learn about co-creating innovations to city social challenges
- Formulate more effective and efficient responses to a critical challenge of a city, in a collaborative learning process with inputs from different cities

Format

Participants will work together in a workshop to co-design possible solutions to real cases of complex social challenges in cities. The case study of city challenge will be presented, discussed and explored through situation-based group work. The workshop will result in a set of ideas for actionable solutions that the representatives from the city concerned by the given challenge could take back home and consider acting upon. The logic is to generate out-of-the-box ideas and a fresh perspective to help a city that is looking for innovative ways to tackle a pressing challenge it faces at the moment.

Structure of the workshop

9.30 - 9.50	Introduction to the workshop
9.50 - 10.20	Presentation of the city challenge
10.20 - 10.35	Brainstorming in pairs for ideas of possible solutions to the challenge
10.35 - 11.10	Collaborative brainstorming and shortlist of possible solutions
11.10 - 11.30	Pitching - presenting solutions to the city concerned by the challenge
11.30 - 12.00	Group work to turn ideas into actionable solutions
12.00	Closing of workshop
12.00 - 12.30	Plenary presentation of actionable solutions co-created in workshops

Expected outcomes

- One **challenge brief** - real case scenario of complex social challenge in a city
- List of **possible ideas for solutions** brainstormed by fellow city experts in the workshop
- One or two **actionable solutions** that the city concerned by the challenge can take back

Questions for reflection

1. Have you had a similar challenge in your city? If yes, how have you tackled it?
2. Are there common elements /factors of the city challenge that you can recognise in your city? Do they manifest in a different way?
3. What ideas can you contribute to tackling the city challenge?
 - Adding a new element or taking something away
 - Integrating a new idea
 - Turning the practice upside down, assigning new roles to the actors involved
 - Segmenting the solution, exchanging one-size-fits-all for more personalised approaches
 - Bringing elements or practices associated with another field
 - Adapting responses from my city addressing this challenge
 - Learning from interventions from other cities, any other public body, social organisation, private sector or hybrid solution that could contribute to solve the challenge
 - Activating untapped (community or other) resources
 - Who can be part of this solution? (change-makers)

CHALLENGE BRIEF

City: Rotterdam

Challenge: How can we provide the most appropriate intervention project to our vulnerable young adults to help them become self-sufficient?

Topics: Social Inclusion and Self Sufficiency for youngsters

The challenge

Social exclusion by not being able to participate in society and youth unemployment are social challenges we face, in which municipal policy is only a part of the solution.

Unemployment numbers for 18-27-year olds in Rotterdam is estimated at 10,000 youngsters (2017). Many of them are NEET's: they do not study, train or work on a regular basis. Their transition to adulthood, with all its obligations and responsibilities, has been problematic. This has costly implications for society but mostly for the youngsters in the long term: lack of participation in society; lack of self-sufficiency and high reliance on social services in the long term. There is a big range of causes, with different levels of complexity and chronicity. The problem is worse on the south part of Rotterdam. Many young people still live there in, so-called, focus areas.

Among these young people there are those who may never be able to fulfil a full-fledged job. For those youngsters we must provide appropriate daytime activities and care. Municipalities and social services have the task to provide these vulnerable young adults with support to overcome challenges in their development and promote their development as self-sufficient and participating members of society.

In Rotterdam this task prominently lies with the Rotterdam Youth Desk. The Rotterdam Youth Desk has a wide variety of interventions, but we have difficulties in offering the most appropriate mix of interventions to the young people approached our Youth Desk. One-size-fits-all approaches are clearly ineffective.

The challenge is therefore: how can we provide more customized and appropriate set of interventions to our vulnerable young adults?

Problem tree

The core problem is the difficulty and need to improve the effectiveness of the actions the City to the multidimensional factors of every young person and his/her vulnerability. We have difficulties at getting a proper insight and therefore, at providing with the appropriate mix of interventions to the specific person.

This is caused by the dispersion of information on different crucial elements (from mental health to their financial situation), the lack of integrated early warning mechanisms, the lack of evidence on the outcomes of these interventions, the level of data registration and poor quality of data.

With over 40 services available, there are plenty of options. Youth coaches, however good their intent, are limited in their knowledge about all these services and would match youngsters on those they know well, not necessarily the best suited. We need to know what would be more effective to every specific person. The challenge therefore is not the lack of interventions but the need to be more effective in proposing the appropriate mix of interventions to every individual.

The effects to the youngster are profound. Not providing the right service to the youngster could leave them in danger of life long social exclusion. We need to access and better process information, develop the ability of predict potential risks and opportunities, and have a better capacity to offer the best mix of interventions adapted to each young person.

The context

For the youngsters' social inclusion, health and wellbeing are all negatively impacted by unemployment, from young adulthood throughout life. Although in 2018, youth unemployment has declined enormously, as a result of the improving labour market in the Netherlands, this college period focuses on a better connection between education and the labour market and on better guidance from education to work.

Together with the business community and educational field, the municipal executive committee wants to ensure that young people who leave school do so with a diploma and a job. This way young people can make a flying start with their careers, make optimum use of their talents and reduce social exclusion indicators and stimulus (e.g. stress, debt and mental health issues). This college period focuses on a better connection between education and the labour market and on better guidance from education to work.

Extra support, however, is needed for young people with social benefits because the group of young people who are still in the social service often have a large distance from the labour market and there is a mismatch between the demand from employers and the supply of young people.

Our investment and interventions are less relevant and significative if we cannot customize them to the specific needs of a person. The investment is huge, and we need more effectiveness and efficiency in the use of recourses. If we are ineffective, exclusion becomes chronic. This makes it more difficult and expensive to resolve and has high social costs to the person itself. And the opposite also works: if we are successful in effectively helping them in early stages of adulthood, we are decreasing the likelihood of other problems and social protection needs.

Testimonials

One of the youth coaches: *“it is hard to make a choice between the many interventions and changing set of interventions we can offer a youngster because I can't oversee them all. There is no set of good criteria or a tool which can help make a good decision.”*

One of the suppliers of interventions: *“it regularly happens a youngster gets referred to our program and we wonder if it was the right match. If we do have the inclination a youngster would be better off with another program, we report this back to the Jongerenloket.”*

Quote from a youngster with a good matching intervention:

“Look, I ended up here in this project and I have trainers, who know what I go through because they have had the same experience. They also had to deal with social services at a moment in their lives and still managed to study and have ambitions in life. The training and workshops they give are real, I can put it to use in my own life.”

Quote from a youngster who feels the project he’s attending, which had sports as one of the main activities, isn’t the right one for him because certain factors overshadow his unemployment. Such as physical and mental problems. These problems are not solved by the project he is attending:

“Frankly, this sport, for me this is actually no use. I mean, you can help me a lot better to find me a home, a job and learning place. Those kinds of things.”

Previous experience

The youth desk is a municipal instrument acting as a one-stop-shop for youngsters in need of help. For 15 years, it has been offering a variety of services to vulnerable youngsters with multiple problems e.g. with education, schooling, housing. The integrated approach is unique: it looks at debts, health issues, addictions etc.

The full municipal service delivery system and mandate (income support, reintegration offers, care offers etc.) is made available at its premises.

On average 5,000 youngsters have an intake at the Youth Desk with the goal to get an allowance, eventually 2,500-3,000 youngsters receive their social welfare via the Youth Desk. 33% needs support to return to school, 24% in getting a job and 43% (additional) care before making future steps to self-sufficiency.

However, the assessment of need and assessment of the most suitable service provision is still not effective enough.

An additional municipal programme ran, specifically addressing youth unemployment, from 2015-2017. Although the quantitative targets to get +- 600 youngsters employed (per year) have been achieved there is still a world to be won to reach more youngsters and offer them the right (level of) public services. The challenge is to better adapt the mix interventions offered to each individual youngster.

Key actors involved

The Youth Desk of the city of Rotterdam is the main actor in the problem of youth unemployment and becoming self-sufficient. Depending on the needs at hand it will coordinate, work together with or procure services from stakeholders.

Education and inhouse care are mostly nationally funded. Local service providers are engaged with on the basis of shared multiple needs assessment methodology.

Furthermore, we consider the youngsters as important actors and we are looking for best practices in how to involve them.

Obstacles

- Lack of evaluation of existing programs to address issues: Many different types of interventions and training are employed while information on effectiveness and efficiency of these measures is not transparent. Knowledge on effective strategies is limited.
- Lack of knowledge about specific needs of a youngster: To overcome the social challenge, we have to know the specific needs of a youngster and be able to offer appropriate help: match the needs (demand and supply). In reality, we don't know the specific needs of a youngster, don't exactly know what works and don't know how to make certain that every youngster gets the help (intervention) they need.
- Lack of appropriate data: Our level of data registration and quality of data is too poorly to give good insights in the effectiveness of interventions. Variety of interventions can make the life of professionals more difficult:
- The large number of interventions (> 40) for specific target groups means that our professionals can't see the wood for the trees.

Opportunities

We see a huge opportunity in the potential use of big data in order to improve the suitable match of needs and services. Can we learn from historical data and use the possibilities that data-science offers? The opportunity lies in the immense data we have on youngsters and developments within the municipality of Rotterdam to experiment and learn from data-driven projects.

Contact details

City of Rotterdam

Claudia Toet, Manager Rotterdam Youth Desk, c.toet@rotterdam.nl

Regina van de Vijver, project manager Rotterdam Youth Desk, rt.vandevijver@rotterdam.nl



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>