From passive recipients to contributing partners
Embedding community engagement & co-design principles to improve outcomes and impact

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Opening up and letting go

The Family Centre has been progressively increasing it’s capability in the areas of community engagement and co-design. This allows a shift in the locus of responsibility and control, so that services users and program participants become active partners in designing, producing and delivering services, rather than being passive recipients of pre-determined programs.
Design in the social context

Co-design

“The process of designing with people that will use or deliver a product or service” (Design Council, UK).

Co-creation

“The systematic process of creating new solutions with people not for them; involving citizens and communities in policy and service development” (Christian Bason, 2010)

Co-Production

“Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours” (David Boyle and Michael Harris, 2009).
By, with, for or to?

**BY**
P2P service design, initiated and designed by clients in response to their own needs

**WITH**
Service designed and delivered in partnership and with the active participation of both service providers and users

**FOR**
Services designed and delivered by service providers for the benefit of clients and service users

**TO**
Services designed to generate an impact but which are experienced as ‘being done to’

Co-design opportunities are more likely to emerge at this end of the continuum

Ingrid Burkett 2013
Challenges of working with your community

• Government funded programs often prescriptive, targeted and output based
• Program resources are focused on meeting program output targets
• Short-term contracts discourage innovation & investment in co-design & community development approaches
• Community development approaches often have unclear outputs and lack immediate measurable outcomes
Challenges of working with your community

• Organisational re-alignment and investment in professional development

• Two way communication on social media, website, general enquiries – needs technical expertise and staff resources to manage multiple channels

• Resources required to follow-up opportunities and enquiries to engage with people and groups
Instilling community engagement & co-design principles into organisational culture

• Start with values and outcome statements
  Children are happy and safe – Young people are capable and resilient – Relationships are caring and respectful – Our community is strong and vibrant

• Research community engagement, co-design, co-production and co-delivery approaches

• Leadership commitment

• Incorporate into practice principles, practice framework and evaluation and performance accountability framework
Instilling community engagement & co-design principles into organisational culture

• Embedded in policy and procedure
• Internal workshops and awareness raising re community engagement & co-design approach to get buy in from all staff
• Test small ways to implement co-design, co-production and co-delivery into existing programs
• Embed reporting on co-design initiatives in annual program reviews
• Highlight, reward and celebrate success
Internal developments

**Governance & management**
- Diverse board member representation
- Aboriginal leadership at board and sub-committee level
- Volunteer leadership group
- Flat management structure & distributed leadership model

**Outcome & impact measurement**
- Strong commitment to evaluation and continuous improvement – Results Based Accountability framework
Language is important

Clear messages that signify inclusion and participation:

• Our organisation is owned by our community
• We are driven by our values
• TFC is a valuable community asset
• We are the custodians of the skills, knowledge, human and physical resources that can help to improve the quality of life in communities
Murwillumbah Farmer’s Market
Examples of co-design in government funded programs

- Early Years Network community development project: Murwillumbah community co-design initiatives
- REALskills Take a Stand program: participant involvement designing and delivery programs to younger peers
- REALskills: Prime to High program developed in co-design workshops with year 6 students and teachers
- Parenting programs – past participants co-delivering programs
Murwillumbah co-design session
Supporting community groups to design, produce and deliver programs

• It Takes a Town – Murwillumbah Community initiative
• Cabarita Youth Service – assist with resourcing and funding events and activities cross promote
• Aboriginal parent group to support parents promote positive parenting
• Life Education partnership (64% Aboriginal children)
• Delivering youth programs at the Hari Krishna school in M/bah. They felt comfortable for the first time to reach out to a mainstream service to co-design a high school program to address issues that they had identified
• Co-design of our Reconciliation Action Plan with Aboriginal Advisory Subcommittee & TFC staff
What we’ve learned

• Our community has many social strengths and physical assets
• We (ngo & govt sector) don’t ask the community what they think or want nearly enough
• Vulnerable parents are reliant on services but alienated from them and find it hard to connect
• Unresponsive and outdated services models need to change
• Co-design takes time. We’ll all find it challenging to change the way we’ve always done things
• We need to do more experimenting with co-design methods
Thank you

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