



4.2 Implications of transplanting Co-Creation from PSS into the Urban Design Context

The content of this section arose when trying to apply pure Co-Creation - as practiced in the context of Product Service Systems (PSS) - to the context of Urban Design. At first sight, the two fields of expertise (designers and architects) seem to be very similar: both professionals 'design' something for their customers. However, the nature of the Urban Design context largely affects the potential role of the customer (i.e. citizen) in Co-Creation. Five implications were identified and described below.

Implication 1: Democracy instead of individual choice to buy

The first implication is about what is done with the end product. Once a product (or service) is launched a potential customer in the end has the final say: to buy or not to buy. He or she will consider whether the investment is worth the product promise. On the contrary, in the context of Urban Design, the citizen will be affected by the new product (e.g. a train station), whether he likes the design or not. However, the level of acceptance by the citizen can be managed to a certain level and depends on several factors. [Chapter 4.5](#) will dive into the topic of *acceptance finding and change*.

In line with democracy, decisions about e.g. a design should be made by either elected representatives or by the majority of the people. The main challenge however, is how to make sure that the actual participants represent the full range of opinions. [Chapter 4.3](#) will elaborate on this bias of participant selection.

Implication 2: Project duration of >15 years instead of 1-2 years

Another big difference between PSS and Urban Design is the project duration. Most PSS projects take 1 or 2 years, while the project duration of Urban Design projects often exceeds 15 years. Especially in the early stages of a project the motivation of a citizen to participate in a Co-Creation activity in Urban Design is therefore much lower for multiple reasons, e.g. because of the lower sense of urgency of the citizen and because of the fact that once the project is finished they entered a new life stage or are even moved away already.

The main challenge resulting from this implication is how to engage participants along the project, especially in a very early stage. Gamification can play a significant role, therefore the topic of gamification will be explored in [chapter 4.6](#). Obviously, transparent and continuous communication is crucial to inform, involve and engage the public. This communication should be executed in a technical correct way. In [chapter 4.4](#), two more technical topics are covered: communication channels and boundary object.

Implication 3: Shifting group of participants instead of stable groups of participants

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This implication is a result from the longer project duration. For Co-Creation activities, often people are selected who are potential buyers (i.e. the target group). It is likely that the same people will still be in the target group in the next 1 or 2 years. If professionals in the Urban Design context want to include the target group of a new building project (e.g. starters), these people will have totally different needs in 15 years from now. Since they will not have the direct benefit of providing input for their own benefit, it is more challenging to motivate them to Co-Create the project. In addition, they often lack the trust that an effort that they make now, will still be embedded in the final design in 15 years from now.

With a stable group of participants synchronous Co-Creation activities can be conducted, using the principles from Creative Facilitation as described in [chapter 3](#). With a shifting group of participants asynchronous activities are more obvious. Digitizing the approach will facilitate asynchronous and remote activities. Stormz¹ is an interesting example of translating the traditional (in-person) Creative Problem Solving process into a hybrid method of on- and offline Creative Facilitation. This and other interesting tools and methods will be discussed in [chapter 5](#): Current tools and methods.

In addition, in line with the previous implication, engagement (and therefore communication and gamification) will play a role here.

Implication 4: Fuzzy, complex and shifting goals instead of a focused goal

The nature of long-lasting large Urban Design projects is that the future is unpredictable and subject to external factors like economic growth and politics, which enhance complexity. Due to the changing environment, the goals of the project are shifting as well. Even decisions made can be revised. This often leads to frustration of the citizens and affects their perception of their level of influence. In [chapter 3.4](#) the importance of a clear problem statement (the so-called SPARK'ling problem statement) was emphasized. A way of dealing with fuzzy, complex and shifting goals is by presenting clearly defined sub challenges with the public (instead of one big hairy goal). This way focus is made and will also provide more flexibility for the project leaders of the participation activity to deal with shifting goals. Besides, sub challenges could be of interest as well for the engagement of the public, e.g. one can select sub challenges in line with their interest.

Regarding fuzzy and complex goals attention should be paid on how to present challenges and designs. [Chapter 4.4](#) will therefore elaborate on the concept of Boundary Object and explain how to find the balance between plasticity and robustness of objects under discussion. In addition, transparent and continuous communication executed in a technically correct fashion will be key in dealing with shifting goals. Communication for informing the public will be investigated in [chapter 5.3.2](#).

Implication 5: SuperModerator (SuMo) instead of Creative Facilitator

A creative facilitator is the person who takes primary responsibility for the creative process. The facilitator selects appropriate tools and methods; guides the participants through diverging, reverging and converging stages; helps the participants to focus on the task, and is sensitive to any sentiments and group dynamics. Within the context of PSS it is always recommended to appoint an

¹ <http://www.stormz.me>



independent facilitator to guide the creative process. However, in the U_CODE context the independency of the facilitator is even mandatory, in order to gain and maintain the trust of the citizens. The facilitator of the U_CODE process is named “SuperModerator”.

Although the primary focus of a SuperModerator is on facilitating the process, he/she should also have sufficient content knowledge to understand the context and the nature of the problem or challenge. In deliverable D4.1 the role of the SuperModerator is explained in more detail.

Derived from <http://www.u-code.eu/results/project-reports>. Full report can be downloaded from http://www.u-code.eu/download_files/D2-3_SurveyOnCo-designMethodologiesInUrbanDesign.pdf