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Project no. 870939

SO-CLOSE

Enhancing Social Cohesion through Sharing the Cultural Heritage of Forced Migrations
DT-TRANSFORMATIONS-11-2019: Collaborative approaches to cultural heritage for social cohesion
Start date of project: 01/01/2020 - Duration: 36 months

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1 Executive Summary

The goal of this deliverable is to infer the evaluation of the co-creation methodology starting from the design of it, illustrated in D2.3, and from the context and the premises of the So-Close project design and Consortium.

The text develops an introduction as a short analytical framework and it then suggests a web of questions to be answered to verify if the deployment of the participative, cooperative and collaborative methodology was effectively put in action.

2 List of Abbreviations

A / As	Academic / Academics
CI / CIs	Cultural Institution / Institutions
FG / FGs	Focus Group / Focus Groups
GA	Grant Agreement
GFR	Elliniko Foroum Prosfigon
MONTE	Fondazione Scuola di Pace di Monte Sole
MUME	Consorci Del Museu Memorial De L'exili
NGO / NGOs	Non Governmental Organisation / Organisations
PM / PMs	Policy Maker / Makers
R / Rs	Refugee (and Asylum Seeker) / Refugees (and Asylum Seekers)
S / Ss	Student / Students
VDA	Stowarzyszenie Willa Decjusza
WP / WPs	Work Package / Packages

3 Introduction

Considering the co-creation methodology, when it comes to the evaluation phase, the economical and market-related framework risks to prevail. The largest part of literature referred to 'co-creation' links to the core idea of a "market research" turned into a far more dynamic and creative process than a long series of experts sessions brainstorming to reach the development of an idea. Even if the humanistic field can share with the market-related field one of the milestones of this process - "be creative about whom you bring in as a possible co-creator" - the reality is that the latter turns the diversity of people / participants into a homogenous group of clients, consumers, products users. This leads to the fact that the evaluation of a co-creation process is, under some respects, outside the process itself because it is done measuring the range of variation of incomes related to the products or the services that are being produced.

This is an important issue to take into account because it gives the baseline for setting the evaluation criteria and process when it comes to the humanistic field.

First of all it says that evaluation in social sciences is possible, only it takes to be re-directed also to the process itself and not only to the final outcomes. The participative interaction is often one of the main goal of the process itself and for this reason the evaluation phase cannot be considered only as a final phase but it has to be deployed during all the stages: when it comes to the development and/or the production of the outcomes, it risks to be too late and, even if something concrete has been achieved, it could have been done without a real and effective co-creation methodology. There are parameters that have to be taken into account all along the process and multiple competences and expertises that can be put fruitfully at service of the co-creation.

Secondly, but not less importantly, being aware of the market-related trick allows humanistic experts to design different tools for evaluation, combining the attention to the process to the legitimate care for the successful delineation of the outcomes.

The So-Close project design and the Consortium selected to achieve its goals were not created just to "study" the surrounding social phenomenon of migration / refugee / asylum, but to interact

with this complex social dynamics in an innovative way, considering refugees and the target audiences from the local societies the experts in their own experiences. The Consortium in particular was asked both to bring the long sight of theoretical research and, through it, to identify, catch and possibly help to satisfy needs, requests for change, rights. This means that the goal was not the creation or the re-branding of a new product or service but it is an action of improvement of the actual characteristic of society and for this reason the above mentioned guidelines for evaluation can and have to be fully applied.

Considering the WP2 workflow, it is immediately evident that the path which enabled Cultural Institutions to have co-creation sessions was made of different steps, intensive fieldwork, knowledge of context and relation networks we may sum up in:

- ➢ Intersectional knowledge both from previous experience and from new information provided by the first phases of So-Close project about the refugees situations in the different countries where fieldwork was carried on. This intersectional knowledge referred to law, geography of the asylum, host societies complexity, relations with workers in touch with refugees, research on the situation in the different countries of origin, logistics of reception, ethics of intercultural work, knowledge of different anthropological approaches, informal social pedagogy.

So-Close was designed with different moments and phases to realize this: WP1 benefited from both the sociological perspective and research done by UAB about forced migrations and the resources of the Centre for Languages and Literature of the University of Lund about cultural heritage. Both academic departments strongly related then to the Cultural Institutions in order to tailor their findings to the specific countries contexts and to help them in deepening various competencies in terms of intercultural and social research. Moreover, the first public conference organised by the project Consortium was titled "From So Far to So Close. Addressing the Refugee Phenomenon: History, Sociology, Technology" (June 15-16, 2020), and was designed with a panel of high-qualified experts from the field of history, sociology and web/media development.

- ➢ research on the recent history of asylum in each country, together with a mapping work on the different institutions, NGOs, associations, reception structures, networks, mapping on offers of cultural projects for refugees or mixed to identify both refugees group and stakeholders
- ➢ building relations with and between all participants.

It is evident that the aim of the project is not defining a product to be launched on the market, that is why definitions as "final users" or "customers" do not make sense. Moreover, what the So-Close Consortium is developing should be of use in a quite specific context, that is why co-creation has specific coordinates of time and space.

This does not mean results, once fully developed, cannot be exported or used by others, but at the same time they are unavoidably connected with the process generating them.

In this respect, before entering a list of targeted questions in order to be able to check the correctness of the actual co-creation process and methodology, some general remarks could be usefully outlined.

Firstly, in relation to the intersectionality, it is important to add a session of analysis of own pre-assumptions about the subject of the action. When it comes to operate within the context of the society in which everybody is involved, it is not possible not to have opinions, views and judgements. Instead of hiding behind the improbable statement that claims neutrality, it is necessary to analyse the institutional and personal standing point in order to be aware of that and in order to try to be able both to mitigate possible blind-spots and to take advantage of undervalued strengths.

A second and fundamental aspect in terms of evaluation of the methodology is to create a clear and well defined set of goals in order to be able to then analyse if the achievements are related and proportional. Even if the humanistic field does not reason with the same parameters as the

market, it does not mean that the flow of actions can go wherever and that there are no objectives to reach: it is not enough to have a dialogue to have a creative process. It means that the pre-phase of setting out the aims should be done with particular care in terms of clearly defining the rank of the goals and their quality. Some of them could be so general and broad that they risk to disappear, while others, being tangible and more immediate, risk to become the focus of the process even if in reality they are more intermediate steps convertible into tools. If in marketing the goal of co-creation is set only as a new product or service, in humanities the main goal is often a kind of social change and improvement and the evaluation can be done primarily considering how much the process itself contributed to getting closer to the final impacts, keeping the evaluation of the results as a separate and more specific procedure. As stated before, evaluating the co-creation methodology means to evaluate the full process and the analysis of the congruity and effectiveness of the tangible outcomes has to be considered as a part of the general evaluation.

Finally, in relation to this last point, it is important to focus on the word 'change'.

Referring to complexity in theory while trying to simplify the situation in order to have a faster process, referring to multiplicity while treating different individuals as they are a unique and indistinct singularity, referring to innovation while pre-setting the possible outcomes are common step-backs that can occur in a process which function is to disguise the fact that decisions are taken outside the group of people called to participate and not only to validate.

There is no chance of avoiding these step-backs if the evaluation of the co-creation process is not done within and during the process itself and if the contextual conditions are not properly taken into account. If this is the case, the result then won't be a real change, as little as it can be, but it will be a confirmation of the status quo, a simple validation of a ready-made decision and, all in all, a reinforcement of the power system.

4 Testing the co-creation methodology

Once discussed and developed in general terms, the evaluation of a co-creative methodology within the humanities framework can proceed as a sort of elaborated list of questions to check.

It covers from the organisational aspects, to content, to roles and responsibilities. It is intended for helping in maintaining the path of a non directive and truly generative process.

In the So-Close project, co-creation involved people with diverse positions in society, which made evident the risk of power differentials. In such a context, chances are that refugees are perceived as a victim group, which possibly lead to victimhood, i.e. a process of objectification. That is why intersectional perspective can help both the facilitator and all the participants of the group to have a more complex understanding of others participants. Intersecting all different identities of a person should not lead to a victim hierarchy, but to a full acknowledgement and respect of a person. A humanistic and holistic approach in facilitation sublimates intersectionality as a method, in the full acknowledgement of the human complexity of all the participants. One of the facilitator's tasks is to create conditions enabling this approach to be shared by all participants.

This has a particular relevance when, as in this project case, some participants are likely to have suffered traumas and still be vulnerable.

Co-creation methodology evaluation therefore needs to check if the process has been consistent with the above criteria for facilitation and dialogue as well as the satisfaction with possible outcomes, keeping in mind that in participatory methods applied to non-marketable products, the process is also part of the outcome.

The following guidelines are planned to be more a self-evaluation which can be used by CI involved in the project. Moreover, as mentioned already in D2.3, we had to reframe co-design methodology due to Covid-19 restrictions, but similar conditions may happen again for different reasons. The evaluation, of course, takes into account the re-framing.

In general, the following guidelines are meant to be useful not only for the final evaluation of the process but also for the ongoing monitoring of the process in order to guarantee an effective co-creation.

Practical infos and creating the setting

Have you checked that all participants have the information required to understand what is their role and responsibility, both in terms of practical ones (time, venue…) and about the activity (structure, content, mode, goals…)

Have you taken actions to assure that the setting would not be perceived as hostile or judgemental? If so, which ones?

How has any power differential been mitigated?

What kind of actions were taken to provide gender balance?

Promotion of participation

What kind of agreements have participants had in terms of promoting the participation of everybody?

Has your intervention been required in order to allow every participant's expression? If so, which actions have been taken?

Has any translation/mediation been necessary? If so, what actions were taken to ensure reliability?

Have specific participatory methods or tools been used to facilitate the process, to identify ideas and help the sharing of those ideas?

Outcomes

What kind of actions have you taken in order to give feedback and create a group's memory?

Has the group expressed their satisfaction and/or the willingness to meet again?

Has the group come to a result in terms of content?

Have any creative methods been identified to be developed in the next steps of the project?

Evaluation mechanisms

Have actions been taken to monitor the process? If so, which kind of?

Has there been any informal and participatory evaluation of the session(s)?

Have the results of the co-creation session(s) been shared within the promoting organization?

Have any specific tools been used for evaluation? (forms, dialogue, creative methods)

Have the results been shared with the participants of the group?

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