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# CO-CREATING WELLBEING

An Erasmus+ Project about co-creation in wellbeing



## IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- Updates from each country

## UPDATES FROM DENMARK

In late spring, a Co-creation program was agreed upon for Sønderborg Municipality. Everyone was well aware that the program was under pressure and not quite ideal because it was scheduled over the summer holidays. Such a location is usually not desirable because the approximately two months of summer vacation in Denmark provide an inappropriate break in a teaching program. A total of 25 participants were registered for the course in June, and 20 showed up for the training day.

**The course was organized as a combination of presentations and a more practice-oriented part, where small exercises were done, and we talked about the participants' experiences and future implementation of projects based on Co-creation principles.**

The first day ended with the participants coming up with some projects based on Co-creation thinking that could be implemented in their own practice. The idea was that the participants would start a process over the summer vacation, which would then be reported to the Care Department's management at the end of September. It was agreed that the participants could contact the two trainers during the summer vacation if needed. We wrote to all participants after the course with a reminder of the course deadlines and reminded them of the opportunity to get represented.

As trainers, we experienced a good atmosphere among the participants, and were surprised that the evaluation was not as unambiguously good as we had expected. Later, we had the opportunity to talk a little more in depth with some of the participants, who told us that there was a big difference in the prerequisites that the participants came with.

Some had almost no knowledge about Co-creation - and others had extensive knowledge and experience with the subject. This meant that some felt the review was too easy and others that it was too difficult and abstract. Another issue was the very short timeframe that participants had been given to prepare to attend. Many participants had not received an introduction to what they were going to participate in, which for some meant a frustration of being "taken" out of their daily tasks. They also had doubts about what the project was going to lead to, whose idea was it and whether the municipality would do anything with this afterwards.

This has given us teachers the experience that it is important that, in this case, the municipality clearly states what the idea of such a project is and how it will be followed up.

No one contacted the teachers over the summer vacation, and we agreed to invite them to a teaching day in Sønderborg, where we could review the status of the individual projects.



The follow-up day was held just after the end of the summer vacation in mid-August. The day was called a little late, but 10 participants showed up, all of whom had a project where they had initiated something or made some concrete thoughts about initiatives. This session was mainly used to review the participants' projects and prepare for the projects to be presented to the department's management at the end of September.

There was a good atmosphere in the class and a general feeling that it had been a good day. We linked theory regarding co-creation and gave ideas for the use of concrete models and material during the review of the individual initiatives. It was a combination of theory and practice. The participants were once again told that the trainers were available for advice and guidance if needed.

On the day of the presentation, the 10 participants and the trainers started an hour and a half before the actual presentation, so there was an opportunity to go through the individual presentations and get the practicalities ready for the actual presentation. The presentation itself went incredibly well. There was a good atmosphere. The management was very satisfied and interested in the various projects. The participants also had the opportunity to express their frustration with the way the course was announced by the municipality, and the management explained how important this topic was and how they intended to proceed with co-creation as an approach. There was also a discussion between management and employees about how to work on spreading the idea of co-creation in the workplace.

A new meeting has been agreed at the beginning of 2025, where the department will continue to work with the ideas and projects that the course resulted in.



# UPDATES FROM THE UK

In the meantime, here are some of the feedback highlights so far:

*"Honestly, I thought it was one of the most engaging workshops I've ever joined. The activities were inclusive, everyone got a chance to listen and to have their say. Right now I honestly can't think of any improvements."* [Hybrid Co-Creator]

*"The practical activities were brilliant, really fun, engaging and most importantly taught us what we wanted to know about co creation while were co creating ourselves. Lots of laughs all around. LEGO activity was so much fun and brought out everyone's creativity!"* [Hybrid Co-Creator]



The second UK cohort of the CoCreating Wellbeing course culminated in early October with two "hands on" sessions where co-creators could utilise their new knowledge by applying them to real-life co-creation activities, aimed at co-creating an alumni group to keep everyone connected following the end of the course.

**This year, the UK cohort comprised 39 co-creators spread across two different delivery modes - hybrid (as per last year), and 100% online.**

The addition of the fully online mode allowed us to be more inclusive with our course participants, and we had people join from Ireland, Indonesia, Ghana, and Australia!

We are now beginning to look at the evaluation data to see what changes we can make to form our "final" version of the course at the end of the funded project.



*"Thank you for a really enjoyable course. The online module was full of really useful information which I will refer back to lots no doubt."* [Online Co-Creator]

*"I really enjoyed having the opportunity to work with everyone in the cohort - the discussion was lively and interesting and I felt there was a high level of collegiality fostered in a relatively short space of time"* [Online Co-Creator]



# UPDATES FROM PORTUGAL

**The challenge of using the flipped classroom pedagogical model in co-creation.** In refining the 25-hours CCW Course, the 17 kindergarten educators and teachers involved, from five different institutions, were invited to use the flipped classroom pedagogical model. This model challenged them to prepare the theoretical part of the course outside the classroom, organized in communities of practice in their schools, based on video conferences, with later sharing of their learnings in chat sessions.



**The challenge of co-evaluation involving adults and children.** Using the co-creation consultancy model, teachers, as facilitators of co-creation processes in their professional contexts, began preparing their interventions. With the initial co-creation group, all Kindergartens and schools involved were able to put into action their co-creation projects that are still in development.

**The challenge of collaborative practice, reflection on context and innovation.** To promote integration between theory and practice, two days of practical co-creation activities were held at the University of Minho. The cue cards activity, the photo report activity, the sticky notes activity, the six-thinking hats and fish bowl were some activities designed to identify needs, collaboratively formulate the problem and identify necessary resources.

To feel self-confident with the implementation of the co-design and co-refinement phases of the three CO's structure, which includes collaborative problem solving, co-design actions to implement solutions, and co-production and refinement of the prototype, the activity that was most successful again was LEGO Activity.



Several projects were initiated: How to involve students in regular physical activity; How to improve the architecture of school spaces; How to improve the school's pedagogical pond to promote children well-being in outer space; How to improve interpersonal relationships between children and, children and adults; how to promote multisensory skills that provide comfort and well-being to children.

All participants in the Course agreed that it is very important to evaluate co-creation throughout the process and that co-creators should decide together from the beginning how they will co-evaluate co-creation, include formative co-evaluation throughout the process at the end of a set of activities to allow for iterative development and perform a summative co-evaluation when specified final milestones are achieved. The big challenge was deciding how to involve children between 4 and 6 years old in this challenge. We did it with the Carroussel activity and the data collection instruments are in action!

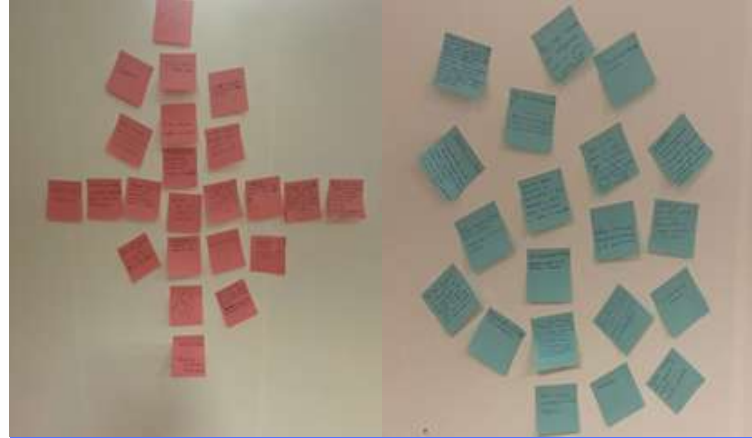
## A New CCW2 Training in Portuguese Residence Care

In the last months of the project, a new training course was running during October and November 2024 in one residence care in the city of Braga, Portugal. Since its beginning more than 130 years ago, this residence has welcomed boys from infancy to the end of adolescence, empowering them during their growth, promoting their autonomy, and preparing them for world work. The direction and the whole staff of the residence aim to provide good conditions of the house, mainly on rooms, study moments and space, food, lazer activities, affection and all the possible ways for their health and well-being.

The residence currently has two different reception responses, keeping the original one and adapting a wing to receive refugee teenagers, both boys and girls. This house is called specialised residence care.

The staff includes educators, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, teachers, volunteers, as well as kitchen, cleaning and laundry workers. All these caregivers interact daily with the children and adolescents, and all know very well their needs and behaviours. Given the diversity and vulnerabilities of children and adolescents, it is a challenging job where well-being has been a target of discussion. Thus, this training emerged at a crucial moment and was very timely.

To start the training course, we organised a previous meeting with the responsables by each section of the residence care and defined the training schedule. The group attending the CCW training includes 25 participants, who are very active in the needs analysis and wellbeing cocreation.



In the first training session, the team identified well-being as their priority, highlighting communication as one of the main factors that affect it.

Considering the cocreation concept and the three "COs", the participants engage not only in the identification of the problem but also in cocreated suggestions.

The exercises were done using Post-it, being the rose for the "problem identification" and the blue for the "solutions to be cocreated".



The reflexive training already realised two additional sessions and, in the final of the third one, a global priority was stated: difficulty in maintaining coherence in strategies from the moment they are defined until they are fully realised in the daily routines (e.g. studying, using mobile phones, organising their space and belongings). The co-creation of the solution was guided by the following questions: What's really going to happen? Who will do what? When will it be done? Each participant wrote their proposals for the different questions or steps.

During these training sessions, real needs were identified by the group of trainees, with a serious engagement in searching for an efficient solution, following the 3Cos and the six principles of creation. So, we are in a good application of the project, with fruitful outcomes.

# UPDATES FROM ITALY

The organization of this second edition started from the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the first edition, which ended in November 2023.

In this process of reflection feedbacks from participants and trainers collected both through questionnaires and through direct exchanges were crucial.

**The new program, developed between May and September 2024, involved a group of 38 people including educators, social workers, psychologists and project coordinators working at LeGO's.** It was made up of two courses, each focussing on some specific aspects of co-creation and targeting a specific audience. Each course was made of 4 or 5 meetings.

Course 1 focussed on Co-design and Design thinking , in the fields of services addressed to vulnerable children and families.

Course 2 focussed on **the skills for Co-Creation** (active listening, emotions, creativity, conflict management, participation) and how to implement co-creation in the work with adolescents.

The two courses shared the first session (Introduction to co-creation, the three co's approach) and the last one. This final meeting was divided into 3 parts:

Part 1 - sharing reflections about the course (thoughts about the co-creation process, emotions felt, skills acquired);

Part 2 - co-evaluation;

Part 3 - final lego-based activity: how do we see Co-creation now?



For the Co-Evaluation activities the participants were divided into 2 groups, each of whom experienced a specific co-evaluation methodology.

The first group worked on **motivations**. The participants were divided into 3 small sun-groups. Each sub-group reflected on the motivations that may encourage a person to participate in co-creation activities. In a second step, the participants, all together, discussed the motivations and identified the main ones.

The other group worked on **summative and formative co-evaluation** with the "Carroussel" method. Working in smaller groups, the participants reflected on how to include formative and summative co-evaluation throughout the co-(define, design or refine) process.



Overall, the learners gave very positive feedbacks about their participation. Here is some of their thoughts on the most important things they learned:

- *The beauty of teamwork*
- *The importance of humour*
- *Creative vision, thinking outside the box*
- *Creative conflict management*
- *Working with people who work in LeGO, but whom I had never met before*