Innovation in Cities: Whose prerogative?

Knowledge Exchange Platform on Public Sector Innovation
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OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

OPS_SI Observatory of Public Sector Innovation

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THE OPSI

The Observatory of Public Sector Innovation exists since 2013 at the OECD. 2016 a team was assembled to build up different work-streams of the Observatory. OPSI works with close partnership with the European Commission.

UNCOVERING WHAT IS NEXT
Identifying innovative practices at the edge of government and providing insights into what they mean for government. E.g., OPSI platform of public sector updates, biannual updates from OECD member countries, Global Innovation Review (February)

TURNING THE NEW INTO NORMAL
Investigating the frameworks, skills, and methods to unlock creativity and innovation, and helping embed them in the day-to-day work of public servants. E.g., OPSI skills framework, innovation lifecycle studies, systems thinking workshops

PROVIDING TRUSTED ADVICE TO FOSTER INNOVATION
Identifying contextual and system-specific barriers to innovation, and supporting countries in finding ways to overcome them. E.g., public sector innovation review of Canada, advice on specific projects (UAE, Latvia, Slovenia etc.)
Governments are innovating to conceive of new ways to provide identities to individuals and businesses through emerging technologies.

Governments are using innovation to lead a paradigm shift in the way government services are provided.

Governments are rallying behind the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), finding new paths towards gender equality, and easing the transition and economic circumstances for migrants.
PIRET TÕNURIST

INNOVATION SPECIALIST AND LEAD ON SYSTEMS THINKING
OBSERVATORY OF PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION

SYSTEMS APPROACHES TO
CREATING PUBLIC VALUE ON THE CITY LEVEL
WHY DO WE NEED CHANGE?

SYSTEMS ARE NOT FAILING; THEY ARE WORKING FOR THE AIMS THEY WERE DESIGNED…
IT IS THE AIMS THAT HAVE CHANGED

01 END OF KNOWN KNOWNS
Uncertainty is on the rise and not everything can evidenced (in time)

02 COMPLEXITY
Problems are becoming increasingly complex, while out solutions remain reductionist

03 PROXIMATE FAILURE, DISTANT IMPACT
Increasingly todays interventions – and failures – will have long-term effects

04 MENS ET MANUS
There is a need for reflection in action: fuzzy fronts and open ends

05 CONTEXTUAL VARIANCE
Most problems are contextual and akin to the system they derive from. Toolkit fatigue – not all processes can be described in linear actions

06 NEW AIMS
The way we live our lives has changed and so have our expectations of government and public services
Tactics for systems change

TO CREATE THE POSSIBILITY TO INITIATE AND CARRY OUT PROJECTS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

PEOPLE
Combining a diverse set of people: “If you know everyone in the room: you will fail”

PLACE
Creating the neutral space to deliberate and set back from the everyday system

DWELLING
Creating the time and conditions to think and deliberate on the end purpose

CONNECTING
Connecting to all stakeholders to both inform the process and form advocacy coalitions

FRAMING
Framing the issue based on the outcome/purpose (public value) not existing system structures

DESIGNING
Based on the analysis before, designing solutions that may have systemic effects

EXPERIMENTING
Reducing uncertainty by experimenting on a smaller scale with different solutions and clear action plans

PROTOTYPING
Creating a prototype for scale that can be tested by diverse populations

STEWARDING
Guiding and supporting the process by both creating the resources and political backing for change

MEANINGFUL MEASUREMENT
Measuring the effects based on the outcomes wanted to achieve, not proxies
SMART CITIES – FOR WHOM?
Transformative change on the city level

- How to frame public value around complex challenges on the city level?
- Technology push at smart cities, but what value and for whom?
- How to have a deliberative process with stakeholders and citizens?
- How to use the information in building a future vision of cities?
- What scale to work on to make challenges actionable?
How to frame problems on the city level?

There is no one answer fits all, but there are some examples we can learn from.
Reference panel playbook

HOW TO RUN A DELIBERATIVE PROCESS BASED ON BROADER SOCIAL VALUE?

#01
DEFINE THE TASK

#02
PLAN YOUR RESPONSE

#03
ENSURE INDEPENDENCE & BALANCE

#04
WHO SHOULD BE IN THE ROOM

#05
CREATE A CURRICULUM

#06
INOLVE THE WIDER PUBLIC

#07
HOST & FACILITATE

#08
TIME & MONEY

MASS LPB CREATIVE COMMONS: https://www.masslpb.com/the-reference-panel-playbook/

LEADERSHIP FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE
SMART CITIES – FOR WHOM?
Transformative change on the city level: main challenges

CONTEXTUAL NEEDS

- Not all cities have the same needs
- Issues cities face today do not follow administrative bounds (city vs suburb vs region vs state)
- Variety of strategies to reach the same aims

Lack of dedicated analytical capacity and other resources (money, time etc.) around innovation and smart solutions

- Difficulty in ascertaining the real public value connected to projects (Antwerp)
- Funder and private sector perspective starts to domineer the agenda (Boston, Antwerp, Gothenburg, FP)
- Cities have little time to react and research does not inform processes in time (Gothenburg, FP)
- Engineering over public value (Antwerp, Amsterdam)

Fragmented agendas: silos and agencies dealing with specialized issues

- Discussions around technologies (IoT, circular economy etc.) affecting the whole of government are difficult (e.g., Amsterdam): experimentation vs working on scale
- At the same time, precedents in different areas (procurement, data ownership etc.) start to affect cities ability to define a coherent agenda (Amsterdam, Antwerp)

New deliberation approaches require sharing of power with citizens and stakeholders which is difficult for city governments

- Both top-down and bottom-up approaches present, but some level of political buy-in is necessary (e.g., Seoul, Namyangju, Gothenburg, Boston), however it become a double edged sword in the long run (e.g., Boston, Gothenburg)
- Lowest common denominator collaboration (Gothenburg) and alternative strategies
- User perspective as the legitimizing factor (Boston, Toronto, Vancouver); however, getting into systemic issues becomes difficult
- Sharing of power is much easier in areas of prior government blind spots or new emerging policy fields (Seoul, Namyangju, NRW); much difficult in more traditional fields (urban planning – Gothenburg; water governance – Amsterdam)
Where to go from there?

Developing more systemic, purpose-driven strategies of innovation in cities with concrete action plans to institutionalise new practices…