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SoCaTel

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SUMMARY

- Co-creation has been promoted as a way to improve the quality of health and social services by involving end users as partners in the planning, design and development of services.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way people interact with each other (acquiring more information and services online) and imposed limits on face-to-face interaction, circumstances where digital co-creation is particularly valuable.
- Even prior to this, the use of technologies in the delivery of health and social services has increased, and online platforms have gained momentum as the proposed space for co-creation.
- Despite its advantages, co-creation is a complex and demanding process for all stakeholders involved and as such it requires careful planning and evaluation.
- The biggest challenge is to engage a motivated group of stakeholders whose knowledge and contributions realistically can lead to improvements in a service that benefits the intended target group. Knowledge in this context includes experiential knowledge.
- The process of co-creation is in principle less time-consuming than traditional forms of consultation such as focus groups. However, co-creation still requires investment of time and sometimes up-skilling or training of the involved parties. This is particularly important for digitalized services and online co-creation in groups that involve people with little previous exposure to working online.
- Successful co-creation benefits from the services of an experienced facilitator / moderator.
- Co-creation only makes sense when a government unit, an administrative section, a service delivery organisation, or a business is willing to invest resources in implementing the co-created ideas so as to warrant the effort involved in co-creation.
- In order to justify the effort and resources required for co-creation, we provide key recommendations around three principles: (1) Planning, (2) Conducting, and (3) Evaluating the co-creation exercise.

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Expression
SOCATEL	A multi-stakeholder co-creation platform for better access to Long-Term Care services.
LTC	Long-term care (services).
Buddy	A Buddy (who may also be a carer) provides assistance to participants during the co-creation process to reduce the computer literacy gap.
Co-creation	A collaborative process between stakeholder groups, bringing in both empirical knowledge and professional expertise, to generate knowledge and develop meaningful (digital) public services that are tailored to the needs of both the ageing population and providers of these services.
Co-creation pilot	A trial of the multi-module/multi-stakeholder platform, involving service users, government authorities, universities and the public and private sector, using on/offline co-creation techniques.
Co-creation Platform	A digital platform where different stakeholders can co-design services using co-creation methodologies.
Hackathons; SoCaTel	<p>SoCaTel hackathons are sprint-like events in which people involved in software development (web developers, UI/UX designers, data analysts, etc.) will meet to engage in collaborative computer programming, and compete in teams to design and develop the best prototype of the LTC service co-created and shortlisted within the platform. The winning team is awarded a 3-month contract to turn the prototype into a production-ready web application through co-design with end-users within the platform, which is eventually published on the Ozwillo app marketplace and piloted by the pilot site's end-users who co-created the innovative LTC service.</p> <p>SoCaTel hackathons do not serve the purpose of co-designing the platform nor will they be an obligatory component of the SoCaTel life-cycle after the project. They are merely a tool available and used in the project to find software programmers and designers to implement a co-created digital LTC service. SoCaTel hackathons could also be used by service providers to conceptualise ideas through prototypes as a final validation step before engaging further costs in developing the fully-fledged application.</p>

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DEFINITION

A white paper is an evidence-based document intended to inform the reader on a particular topic. It combines expert knowledge and research into a set of key arguments and recommendations pertaining to an issue of societal relevance. A succinct white paper helps the reader to gain a level of understanding, to make some initial decisions and to proceed to further investigation of the issue.

1.2 THE SOCaTEL WHITE PAPER

According to the Grant Agreement, Deliverable 7.3 (SoCaTel White Paper) entails the following:

Task 7.4 Policy recommendations (TCD, participating: URV, FONTYS, GFC, UTA, M30-M36) Drawing up policy recommendations for the development of co-creation and the related digitalization in services for older people. The results will be a whitepaper delivered by the partners to local, national and European authorities, as well as disseminated to various platforms (...).

D7.3: SoCaTel White Paper

Report on the development of co-creation, including policy recommendations for incorporating co-creation practices in social services. Drawing up policy recommendations for the development of co-creation and the related digitalization in services for older people. The results will be a white paper delivered by the partners to local, national and European authorities, as well as disseminated to various platforms including AGE, Alzheimer Europe, European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), Spanish Older Adults Institute – IMSERSO, Design for All Europe.

This White Paper provides the context and essential information leading to policy recommendations for the incorporation of (digital) co-creation practices in social services, focusing specifically on the use of co-creation for the development of ICT solutions in home care for older adults. It highlights key factors that have

been identified as important for successful co-creation. It will also highlight pitfalls and potential challenges. The identified factors are the result of extensive research via focus groups, interviews, workshops, observations, digital co-creation workshops and use of a specialised software, Hotjar (which produces heatmaps of users' interactions with the platform) (D1.2; D5.1 and D5.2), as well as a review of existing co-creation literature.

The audience of the White Paper comprises academic groups, public service managers, policy planners, IT developers, private sector, non-governmental and research funding organisations. A thorough account of the background information to understand what kind of knowledge, methods and tools are needed to support the incorporation of co-creation practices in social services is already contained in the SoCaTel Co-creation Manual (D1.3); the focus in this White Paper is specifically on the use of (digital) co-creation for the development of digitalised solutions in home care for older adults, and the generic lessons learned for others who wish to engage online co-creation in (elder care) services.

2 BACKGROUND

The concept of co-creation first emerged in the private sector to refer to processes of interaction and dialogue between consumers and companies aimed at creating value. Co-creation requires the active involvement of stakeholders – especially end-users - in shaping products and services, with the hope that through their participation, user-friendly and innovative products may be created (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). More recently, with Covid-19 accelerating the digitalisation of many activities, interest has moved to online co-creation, where co-creators are encouraged to share experiences and collaborate with others through the use of online platforms. While the SoCaTel project originated in a pre-pandemic world, it has truly become topical and relevant under circumstances where online communication is 'the only game in town'.

The European Commission has high expectations on co-creation as a promising new approach to service development and design. The term co-creation featured in a large number of calls within the H2020 Framework. Co-creation has been portrayed as essential for securing the future sustainability of the welfare state (Væggemose, Ankersen, Aagaard, & Burau, 2018). The assumption is that through the use of digital technologies, in this case deployed as co-creation platforms, citizens will engage in co-creation together with public service representatives to create better services. However, while citizen-driven service development of public services has been promoted greatly at European and national levels for the past decade, this approach still has some way to go before it becomes commonplace.

In the SoCaTel project, co-creation was a collaborative process between stakeholder groups, bringing in both empirical/experiential knowledge and professional expertise, to develop meaningful digital public services that are tailored to the needs of both the ageing population and providers of these services (Deliverable 1.3 presents a detailed co-creation manual). The aim was to co-create a platform for digitalising co-creation processes with the involvement and participation of all stakeholders. The services to be co-created are long-term care (LTC) services to improve the quality of life of older adults. Furthermore, the project aimed to build a tool and a methodology as a potential solution to the demographic changes affecting Europe and other parts of the world.

The outputs of the project are a) the SoCaTel platform, which allows service providers to co-create with other stakeholders effective and relevant services for older people; b) service conceptualisations co-created through the SoCaTel platform (D1.3: 11) and later digitalized at the hackathons at each pilot site location and in Eindhoven (Fontys) (as outlined below and in greater detail in D5.3). SoCaTel followed the quintuple-helix approach, in which service users, care professionals, researchers, policy makers and innovators collaborate throughout the process. The SoCaTel project has undertaken four pilot projects in Spain, Ireland, Finland and Hungary.

In June 2018, the pilot sites started to organise the preliminary co-creation workshops that took place in October-November 2018. The co-creation manual was consulted, the most adequate technique for each pilot was chosen, and virtual meetings were conducted with Fontys as the co-creation expert partner. Contact with key stakeholders was made by phone, e-mail or face-to-face. In September 2019, the co-creation workshops and online co-creation on the platform took place across the four pilots. In November 2019, Hackathon events were organised in all four pilot sites and in January 2020 in Eindhoven, the location of Fontys (see <https://www.socatel.eu/hackathons/>) in order to commission the development of digitalised services co-created in September 2019.

In the course of the project, key principles for co-creating LTC services for older adults using an online co-creation platform were identified. These policy recommendations were developed through the analysis of project data and selected literature in the area of co-creation. In the next pages, the key recommendations are outlined, structured into three sections based on the principles proposed by Leask et al. (2019): Planning; Conducting and Evaluating.

3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 PLANNING

Not all social services are equally well suited for co-creation. Local services generally work better for co-creation as they feel more relevant to service users' knowledge and potential contributions; it is also here that change is more feasible and easier to implement, within shorter timelines (in contrast to vast national programmes). Meaningful, sustained and productive co-creation is demanding for all parties involved and requires a considerable investment of time and resources. Therefore, the focus on the service to be (re)designed needs to be chosen carefully. Prior to embarking on a co-creation process, initiators have to

make a number of decisions, relating to framing the problem, sampling and up-skilling participants.

Co-creation requires a clear framing of the problem, specific aims and purpose

The problem to be solved through the co-creation process should be clearly defined. 'Problem' here refers to an investigation of a fact or phenomenon where participatory methodologies are used to co-create a solution (Leask et al., 2019: 5). Defining the problem and the problem owners (co-creators) is often half of the work (Butterfly Works, 2014). Many problems are complex and multifactorial, so when framing the aim of the study, it is important to define what part of the problem the co-creation process will address. Conducting co-creation with a project aim that is too broad has been highlighted as the reason why many co-creation projects fail (Greenhalgh, Jackson, Shaw & Janamian, 2016). The SoCaTel process also bears out the wisdom of the recommendation that the problem should be narrowed to a *specific* (social care) need and to a *specific* (service user and provider) population.

Co-creation methodologies suggest partnering with a local organisation or council to conduct context analysis and baseline surveys in order to establish a clear picture of the social need and to commit resources to solving a particular problem (Butterfly Works, 2014). In addition, further research should focus on users' needs, available technologies, and the potential partners for co-creation. It is important to select carefully the relevant co-creation partners, as research shows that when participants are asked to try to produce new ideas (without contextual reference to their own problems and personal notions of value), they are less likely to come up with worthwhile and useful ideas for co-creation (Kristensson, Matthing & Johansson, 2008). In short, co-creation should be grounded, realistic and focused from the outset.

SoCaTel pilots started with an open-ended aim as to what social services should be co-created. The main guiding principle was that it had to be a digital service, of relevance to LTC of older adults, that could later be developed into an

application at the hackathon (D5.3). Pilots generated a few potential topics through the preliminary co-creation workshops (see D5.1) that were then used to populate the platform. Otherwise, the platform would have been empty making it very difficult for people to start co-creating. Despite these efforts, feedback from participants indicated that some participants still felt that there were too few topics provided for co-creation (see D5.2) and some found it difficult to relate to the topics. We have learned that the definition of the problem at the outset was probably too open-ended and might have discouraged some participants from engaging more extensively with the co-creation process. This again leads to us reiterating the central importance of defined, manageable focus and scope for co-creation endeavours.

To ensure a degree of representativeness, recruit co-creators using purposive sampling

Co-creation is based on the idea that a small group of citizens can generate an outcome that matches the needs and resources of a much wider target audience of a co-created service. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges when embarking on a co-creation process is to engage a group of citizens that can speak for the needs and requirements of the whole target group. This is why sampling / participant selection is a critical element in the success of co-creation. Whilst the purpose of sampling has traditionally been to construct statistical inferences of the population derived from the sample, this may not be appropriate for co-creation. The sampling process for recruiting co-creators has two key aims 1) ensure a *reasonably representative* sample of end-users so the co-created outcome is relevant to the target group and could potentially be scaled to population level; 2) ensure there is representation of necessary expertise from relevant stakeholder groups (Leask et al, 2019).

Co-creation is a complex and demanding process, and the group to address a complex societal problem will not just emerge organically. The sample needs to be purposively recruited to ensure it is reasonably (not statistically) representative of the larger population of service users and/or providers. The co-

creators may also need to be up skilled in the problem at hand and in co-creation techniques (Leask et al., 2019).

In the case of SoCaTel, all co-creators did have some links to LTC services and there were extensive efforts to recruit participants purposively to solve a specific social care problem. However, the pilot teams also used (to varying degrees) convenience sampling to recruit the different co-creator groups. This brought about challenges when trying to spell out clearly defined common objectives that could bring cohesion and sense of purpose to the group of co-creators. We learned that considerable energies must go into recruitment of older participants in particular, in order to strike an ethically acceptable balance between involving people with care needs, yet not creating excessive participant burden, and certainly avoiding the embarrassment that can arise if presenting people who are not familiar with technology with complex systems that they would struggle to master. These principles also apply in digital co-creation and are in fact even more important as access to ICT may vary considerably and a core group of facilitators need to ensure that all parties can remain engaged throughout the process.

To keep the momentum, it is likely necessary to train and up-skill co-creators

Research recommends the up-skilling of co-creators so they can all share a similar baseline when starting the co-creation process, as co-creation is based on an even distribution of power and knowledge (Leask et al., 2019). In the case of online co-creation, older adults recruited need to have basic ICT skills and might need to be up-skilled in some regards, to be able to participate effectively. Correspondingly, developers might need to be educated regarding older adults' needs and researchers might need some training on the technical aspects of using technology for co-creation. Only after these steps can all parties approach the co-creation task meaningfully and on an equal footing, respecting and understanding each other's unique standpoints and expertise.

During the SoCaTel project older participants in pilots were a carefully selected group, most of who possessed at least some basic level of computer skills. Pilots carried out preliminary workshops, which were used to familiarise participants and the pilot sites' team members with the co-creation methodologies (Table 1). However, in observing research participants in our project, we still witnessed examples of older persons who felt 'out of place' or even incompetent as participants in the co-creation process. In one pilot site, the older adults involved were residents of nursing homes and mostly computer illiterate. As a consequence, they needed help using the computer, and a 'buddy' (please refer to SoCaTel glossary) to help them with the co-creation process (D5.2). These challenges are likely to be present in many contexts, especially the ones with persistent digital divides, and we do not have a perfect solution to this issue; rather, a degree of representativeness must be accepted whereby more digitally adept older adults advocate for their digitally excluded peers.

Table 1 - Preliminary co-creation workshops

	Ireland	Finland	Spain	Hungary
Session I	Home care services	Empower LGBTQ people's equal rights in home care services	LTC law benefits and services	Identify the necessary improvements in social care/residential care
Techniques and other tools used in Session I	World café Mind map Graphic illustrator	Round table	Lego Serious play Mind map Graphic artist	World café
Session II	Co-creation on the mock-up of SoCaTel platform	Co-creation on Kotitori (Finnish co-creation platform) and input on the mock-up of SoCaTel platform	Co-creation on the mock-up of SoCaTel platform	Co-creation on the mock-up of SoCaTel platform
Techniques and other tools used in Session II	World café	World café	Design thinking Graphic illustrator	World café

Source: Deliverable 5.1

3.2 CONDUCTING THE CO-CREATION EXERCISES

This section provides recommendations for conducting a co-creation process through an online platform.

Online co-creation process requires an accessible platform for a diverse group of people

Online platforms enable some older people to vocalize the often-hidden aspects of how they experience health and social care services. However, the nature and degree of participation granted to and required from online platform users depends on the possession of certain skills, capabilities, and resources for dealing with both technology and information (Hargittai, 2002). In most developed countries the issue is not so much about a binary classification around the digital divide, e.g. considering whether someone is or is not an Internet user, but much more about the second and third divide. This is to say, differences in people's level of skill with respect to finding information online (Hargittai, 2002) and focusing on questions regarding who is online, what 'onliners' do and which outcomes can be produced through internet use (van Deursen, and Helsper, 2015). To successfully co-create online, older people must not only navigate a platform, but also translate their experiences into contributions that are relevant for the site's anticipated goals (e.g. service co-creation) and can be repackaged for these purposes (Adams, 2011). ICT skills are constantly improving and we can anticipate that future cohorts of older people will be more adept at digital co-creation.

After the compilation of the information in the SoCaTel diaries used during the September 2019 workshops (see Deliverable 5.2), the findings show that the percentage of participants who understood the purpose of the platform is estimated to vary between 60% and 75% across pilot sites. However, these figures might be lower still, as some participants initially thought the purpose of the platform was to search for existing services and/or provide a forum for discussion, rather than for co-creating new services. Some older users had difficulty in navigating the platform; they were frustrated and needed help (D5.2).

Further efforts towards developing older-adult-friendly platforms are essential to enable participation of all stakeholders.

Using the information gathered from Hotjar, we could see that first-time visitors to the platform did not scroll down to the bottom of the homepage but navigated to other pages instead. This could mean that there was too much information provided on the homepage. Recommendations were made to developers to reduce the page length to focus on key content for first-time visitors (D5.2), and the SoCaTel project also produced videos and a MOOC that explain how to engage with the platform and online co-creation more generally. We strongly recommend similar iterative learning and feedback loops in all applications of the SoCaTel platform and indeed in the development and use of all co-creation platforms.

Co-creation benefits from external and professional facilitators

Successful co-creation needs professional moderation and facilitation, employing the appropriate methods for the respective target groups and subject area. In many cases social service employees might lack the relevant competencies and skills as moderators and facilitators. Furthermore, participating citizens may not consider them to be neutral. It is important that the co-creation process is perceived as fair and transparent. Research on the success factors of citizens' participation has shown that external professional moderation is one of the key success factors in co-creation (Leask et al., 2019).

After the co-creation workshops, participants in the SoCaTel project were given diaries to fill in with their co-creation journey (as documented in Deliverable 5.2). When we examined the evidence collected in the SoCaTel diaries, we noted that these remained rather underutilised. The majority of participants started to fill them in but discontinued after 5-6 days. There were no new ideas to be discussed and people stopped logging in to the platform. This was a common element across all pilot sites. To remedy this situation, during the last days of the pilot, moderators tried to re-energise discussions and engage participants, but

this remedial action was probably too late to generate new debates and engagement. It is clear that people needed ongoing encouragement to contribute and participate, in order to keep the momentum going. Some participants commented that waiting for ideas to progress slowed down the process and they lost interest (D5.2). Furthermore, the online co-creation process lasted 10 days, and this might have been too long for participants causing them to lose interest. The literature recommends a co-creation process of maximum 3 to 4 full days (Leask et al., 2019). Depending on the context, we would even suggest a shorter period of a couple of days, provided the time is well-used; at any rate, the quality of the process is far more important than its duration, meaning that the process must be well-organised, properly supported and highly responsive on the part of facilitators.

Perceived transparency and fairness are also important. Some participants felt that the moderation process was not explained properly and wondered about the process for judging which ideas would progress from one stage to the next, for instance a participant asked: '*why would one idea be chosen over another?*' (D5.2) The facilitator not only needs to identify relevant topics and ideas to be co-created but is also required to lead discussions, summarise viewpoints, justify decisions and encourage people to participate. This applies especially in those cases where people feel they do not have the expertise, knowledge or qualifications to contribute to the discussion. The SoCaTel pilots used team members as facilitators, however, it was evident that the role of the facilitator had been underestimated and is integral to the process of co-creation, regulating, energizing and fostering co-creation between the different participants. The centrality of the facilitator role is one of the important learnings from SoCaTel, and indeed both the project's exploitation plans (WP 8 and associated deliverables) include suggestions for training courses for service providers and local authorities interested in using the SoCaTel platform.

3.3 EVALUATION

When co-creating a public social service, evaluation may take two forms. Firstly, the co-creation process may be evaluated by considering factors like co-creators' satisfaction and ensuring the developed idea is representative of co-creators' opinions. Secondly, the effectiveness of the co-created service can be evaluated by embedding the outcome into a pilot trial (Leask et al., 2019), in the case of SoCaTel by using and testing the apps developed through the Hackathons. Co-creation can only be considered a success when end-users appreciate and benefit from the solution and, ideally, when they feel a vested interest in the solution's long-term sustainability (Butterfly Works, 2014).

Key performance indicators need to be set in order to evaluate satisfaction of participants with the co-creation process and outcome

When co-creating a new or improved service concept, evaluation of the process is a key part of the procedure (Parkin, 2009). As co-creation is an iterative process, the evaluation is best embedded throughout the process to ensure that it is representative of co-creators' opinions and perceived as fair, transparent and effective. Member checking (Carlson, 2010) can be used throughout the process to increase the rigour of findings (Birt, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016). This means that data (and analysis of what is going on in the data) are returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. This will involve co-creators reflecting on their previous discussions and can therefore be used as a tool for continuous learning throughout the process. Reflection occurring by the co-creators interacting with each other can help uncover both strengths and weaknesses in thinking and therefore improve the developing intervention (Leask et al., 2019).

The evaluation criteria must include assessing the co-creators' perceived engagement and enjoyment of the process (Leask et al., 2019). Engagement can be measured by the commitment to the process, for example assessing the retention/dropout rate of co-creators. Alternatively or additionally, evaluation

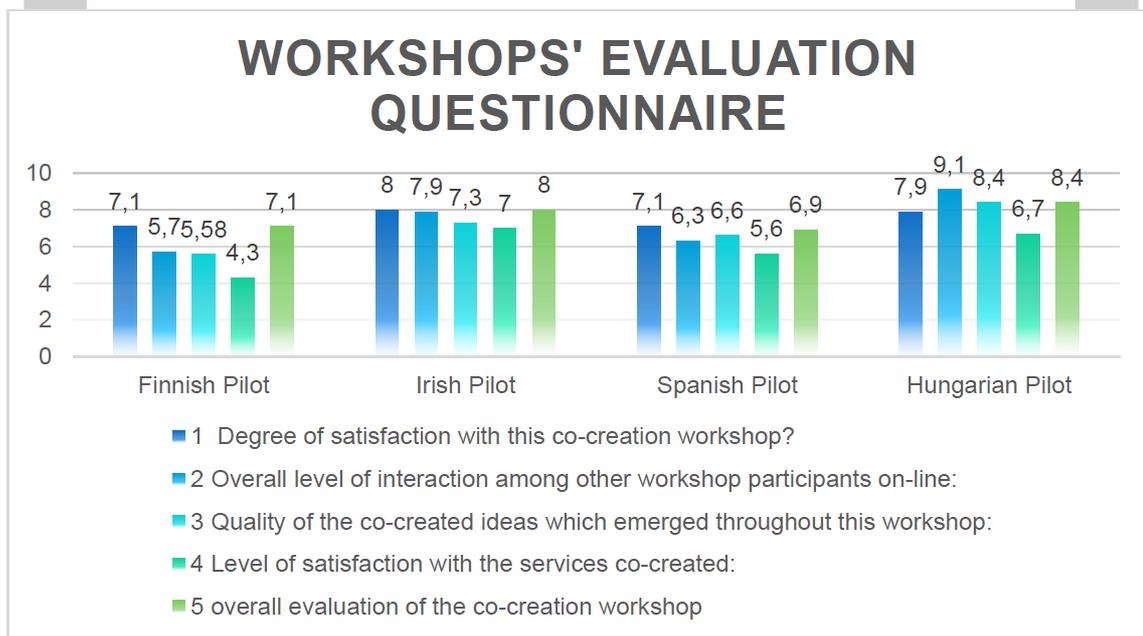
questionnaires can be used (Caro, Altenburg, Dedding & Chinapaw, 2016) measuring factors such as: satisfaction with engaging in the process, feedback on the emerging service concepts (Macaulay, Paradis, Potvin, Cross, Saad-Haddad, McComber et al. 1997) and perceived knowledge and skill development (McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman and Mitchell, 1995).

The SoCaTel preliminary co-creation workshops were held across pilot sites during October-November 2018 (see D5.1), using purposive sampling to recruit a sub-sample of participants from the focus groups stage. The aim of the workshop was member checking (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016) and training participants in co-creation techniques. At the end of workshops questionnaires were distributed to measure satisfaction with the event. The Irish pilot used a questionnaire - which was distributed at the end of the workshop - to measure the satisfaction with the co-creation process and the co-created ideas. The results showed that 83% of participants were 'Very satisfied' with the level of interaction among workshop participants. However, there was less satisfaction with the quality of the co-created ideas that emerged during the workshop, with 44% being 'very satisfied'. While participants derived satisfaction from the interaction with other people who share similar concerns and experiences, satisfaction with co-created ideas is more difficult to achieve, especially without the prior planning and framing of the problem. In the qualitative comments, participants stated that the aspects they had enjoyed the most, included 'interaction with stakeholders from all aspects of care, mixing with care staff, public health nurses, social workers, managers and getting different perspectives' (Consortium Meeting Dublin, 2018).

Co-creation workshops with the platform prototype took place in September 2019. Evaluation questionnaires were circulated after the face-to-face co-creation session (see D5.2). Again, results show that participants were very satisfied with the workshop organization and the interaction amongst workshop participants. People enjoyed talking to each other and exchanging experiences about social care issues. However, across all pilots the lowest level of satisfaction (at the stage of testing out the platform) was with the *ideas* co-created, showing

that while the platform might serve the purpose of connecting stakeholders, its potential as a site for co-creation is more challenging to realise (Figure 1). While the potential of co-creation exercises to bring together people who are normally removed from each other cannot be underestimated, this on its own falls short of the full promise of co-creation to generate new service concepts.

Figure 1: Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire.



* with 10 indicating very satisfied and 0 unsatisfied

Source: D5.2: 52

Measuring the success of co-creation by co-creators manifesting ownership and responsibility for the process

It is important that co-creators feel committed to the process; this can be achieved by a sense of ownership of the process and its outcome. Ownership is the state, right or act of possessing something (Leask et al., 2019: 6). As ownership arises from self-investment, co-creators need to feel the responsibility to invest themselves in the process, something that can be aimed at for example by continuously encouraging inputs from all, at each stage (Leask et al., 2019). Research shows that ownership may improve creativity (Harwood & Garry, 2014)

and knowledge production (Cook, 2012) by providing co-creators with a sense of belonging. Once co-creators perceive a state and right of ownership, they can feel the responsibility to act upon that ownership. Ownership also comes through having an experiential knowledge of the problem (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2001) which allows co-creators to feel in control and capable of providing their contributions (O'Hern & Rindfleisch, 2008) to deliver a useful outcome. Clearly agreeing, stating and identifying the role and responsibility of each co-creator before initiating the co-creation process is conducive to this sense of ownership and control.

In the case of SoCaTel the sense and right of ownership over the process and its outcome was incomplete for some co-creators. An illustrative comment is: 'There are no real incentives to contribute - discussing things is easy, implementing changes in the real world is much more difficult' (D5.2). Some older people in the co-creation process were reserved, dismissive or disengaged (D5.1), indicating the active involvement of older stakeholders is particularly challenging. These are valuable insights that will help future co-creation endeavours to work particularly hard on the seemingly intangible, yet extremely important sense of ownership and control in co-creation. Again, the importance of skilful facilitation comes to the fore; instilling a sense of ownership could be assisted through small tangible and intangible rewards, from something as simple as certificates of involvement to 'early access' rights to any newly co-created services.

Measuring success of the co-creation process by assessing the scalability of the proposed solution

Purposive sampling for a reasonably representative group of co-creators is key to the success of a co-creation process. In order for a solution to be scaled to population level, it is important to ensure a representative sample of end-users and a representation of all necessary expertise from relevant stakeholder groups. The criteria for the evaluation of the best co-created ideas are also an important

aspect of successful co-creation. Research has shown that the public does not necessarily use the same normative criteria for assessing health and social care services as professional communities of practice. Criteria used to determine winning ideas by the lay public in co-creation platforms might not lead to selection of services that adhere to legal or ethical requirements (Guth, & Brabham, 2017).

During the SoCaTel workshops it was apparent that this was a key challenge. As stated in D5.2, there is no way of knowing if the co-created services will be better than previous services, or how, where and by whom these new services will be evaluated. One participant commented: ‘Co-creation with older people is a good idea, but I’m not sure whether it works digitally with a platform. How are co-creation processes on the platform integrated with the political decision-making processes?’ Here we come back to the earlier parts of this White Paper and the argument that from the very beginning, the scale and scope of co-creation must be realistic, with an actionable pathway to development of better or different services, so as to ensure that the full pathway from ideas to implementation can be completed, in accordance with the diagram below. Forming new connections to organisations and service providers must be kept open as an option in case of entirely novel and innovative service concepts, and SoCaTel has demonstrated this approach in practice through its Twinning initiative (See <https://digitalhealtheuropa.eu/twinnings/dhe-twinning-results/socatel-co-creation-platform/>).

Figure 2: The Five Steps of Co-Creation on the SoCaTel Platform



Source: <http://platform.socatel.eu>

4 CONCLUSIONS

Co-creation is an approach to address the dearth of person-centred approaches and user experience in the development health and social care services. In this White Paper, we have identified four success factors, namely:

- (1) a well-defined problem of high concern to all stakeholders. This problem will not emerge organically, but through research and consultations with key stakeholders;
- (2) working with a (reasonably) representative group of co-creators;
- (3) using skilled and dedicated facilitation; and
- (4) linking in with actors and organisations 'on the ground' from the beginning, or at least as soon as novel and workable ideas for change emerge.

While co-creation can be cost-effective in comparison with 'traditional' methods of consultation such as written submissions to government departments or focus groups, it is not an easy solution to inadequate public funding of actual service provision. To do it properly, resources need to be allocated to the process and for implementing and scaling the co-created idea. Co-creators need to be recruited carefully, upskilled and educated on the problem at hand, co-creation methodologies and (where relevant) ICT skills. Furthermore, the services of a skilled facilitator - who ideally is external to the process - are required to instil the process with impartiality and trust. Utilising a co-creation methodology is no guarantee for success on its own; it is not a fail-safe method. Co-creation is a complex multi-task and multi-stakeholder process, that carries high potential rewards but those should not be taken for granted.

It is not easy to meet these requirements in times of a mismatch between the many needs for public social services and low public budgets. Due to the openness and flexibility inherent in any co-creation process, providing guidelines and recommendations for such a challenging task cannot take the form of micro-managerial advice, which would not in any case be applicable across the vast diversity of service contexts. Nevertheless, the lessons learned in SoCaTel, laid down in this White Paper, illuminate the path to better and more person-centred

co-creation practices, and highlight the most serious pitfalls that must be avoided in successful co-creation. The era marked by the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the many advantages of digital co-creation, a practice that is enabled by the SoCaTel platform for continuous improvement and innovation in services.

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