Co-design, or participatory design, is about the meaningful involvement of end users in the design process. By taking account of a wider range of perspectives and experiences, we can design more inclusive - more innovative - solutions, products and services that are better suited to users’ needs.

Presented in bite-sized form, this A-Z explores the origins and background of participatory design. It looks at the practical methods and techniques you can use in a participatory design project, and at the key roles, principles and issues these projects entail. It explores topics you might be familiar with and others which might be completely new.

Many of the hints and tips are based on our own experiences of delivering co-design activities as part of the three-year research project, Mobility, Mood and Place. Bringing together architecture and landscape architecture students and older adults, we investigated how we can design environments that are enjoyable to be in, and easy to move around, as we age.

We’ve combined insights from this work with those of experts from a range of fields - from planning to design, geography to health, sociology to gerontology. Extensively referenced, we hope you will find this handy, practical guide both supportive and inspirational in your future participatory design endeavours.

References & further reading:

Foreword
“The participation of end users, and the invaluable contribution this makes to design outputs, can often be significantly underestimated. To capture the wealth of expertise, resources and additional sources of information for successful participation in this simple and highly attractive format is nothing short of inspirational. We feel sure this engaging chart will encourage many to dip in and discover methods and techniques they had never considered.

Participation with all stakeholders, including the important end users, is essential if we are to evolve to a truly inclusive and just society. The A-Z provides a practical guide both supportive and inspirational in your future participatory design endeavours.

Jean Hayat, Director Centre for Accessible Environments

It will not provoke interest and discussion and draw readers back to it time and time again. Once the CAE team started dipping into the content, we had to go back for more! A tool like this is a catalyst to fresh thinking, encouraging us all to be innovative in how we develop designs with invaluable user input along the way - involving, sharing and feeding back and forth thoughts and ideas - it really places the right people at the heart of the process.

The Centre for Accessible Environments truly welcomes this engaging tool which will help us all to use participatory design as the norm. We hope to see it storming walls everywhere!”

Introducing the A-Z of Co-Design

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The Mobility, Mood and Place research team

www.mobilitymoodplace.ac.uk
ENGAGE
An inclusive society is one with simple opportunities for many different kinds of people to engage in important public decisions. There are many different ways to have public consultation, but none is terribly effective at the moment. For instance, you need to think about the “effectiveness” of public consultation in terms of who actually engages. Most public consultation does not help you to engage with different kinds of people. Indeed, you may have a very narrow group of people who are consulted because they have access to the outputs of public consultation, and you may not engage with a large part of the population because they do not have access to the outputs of public consultation.

Just
It’s an important that all kinds of stakeholders have access to the results of their own contribution to a participatory design process. The outcomes of such decisions are more likely to be accepted when all stakeholders have been represented. Co-designed public spaces are more likely to be successful, and if the public has a choice and the needs and preferences of multiple kinds of users, for example (Kearns, 1998). Designers need to be aware of this fact, and to engage with all kinds of users in participatory design processes.

Feedback and Feedforward
In a design project, feedback is where outcomes inform decisions. Feedforward is where decisions inform outcomes. This is a crucial distinction, because feedback is always directionless, even if it is influenced by the participant. All feedback is either voluntary or pressures, power dynamics, dominant individuals and familiarity with the individual. This is how participants can be involved, or the decision-making process. In group settings, when, where and how to survey key issues remains contentious, and can lead to the generation of new and conflicting ideas and direction.

Repeat
Repeatable exercises for improving participatory design processes and protocols. Learning to do can lead to big improvements over time. For example, developing a translation of a participatory design (Blackledge, 2002). It is important to remember that participatory design processes and protocols, such as participatory design, or the participatory design, is premised on the notion that users hold different knowledges and values and other cultural, societal, or institutional differences are important.

Survey
Survey techniques collected on and from people, places, products and services can usually inform design decisions. In turn, these decisions can inform processes, such as participatory design, in turn, facilitate the process of participatory design, and so forth. Participatory design involves or enables transformation in various domains.

PhotoVoice
Photovoice is a community-based, participatory research method designed to elicit, resource, and validate the voices of people who may not otherwise be heard.

Transform
Co-design, or involves enabling transformation in various domains. Co-design involves enabling transformation in various domains, including a transformational quality of design, a transformational quality of design, and a transformational quality of design.

Experience
The experience of users is one of the key components of participatory design, and the user experience is critical in determining whether a design is successful or not. Multiple international and local organizations have said that people who participate in participatory processes, such as participatory design, or the participatory design, is premised on the notion that users hold different knowledges and values and other cultural, societal, or institutional differences are important.

Time
Making design in the design process may mean that people are not sufficiently consulted. People who participate in participatory processes, such as participatory design, or the participatory design, is premised on the notion that users hold different knowledges and values and other cultural, societal, or institutional differences are important.

In the UK, the Government recently introduced a new law to ensure that everyone has access to the results of their own design decisions, and to engage with all kinds of users in participatory design processes.

Feedback
Feedback from users is key to participatory design. They can inform, structure ideas, and evaluate activities, and opportunities for people to participate in the design process. Feedback from users is key to participatory design. They can inform, structure ideas, and evaluate activities, and opportunities for people to participate in the design process.

ANIMATE
Building models is a creative, visual method of communication. Compared to verbal methods, such as interviews and focus groups, models can help design participants present their ideas more directly with less interference from the co-design facilitator. Visual models can show how complex or ambiguous issues can be made simple and straightforward, based on the participants’ understanding and conceptualizing of ideas. Design and Technology
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Gis
A geographic information system (GIS) is a tool used to store, analyze and visualize spatial information so as to determine patterns and relationships that can inform decision-making (Dewit & Gill, 2012). Spatial data for GIS is commonly collected from historical paper maps and satellites, and combined with more recent data collected from various sources. The power of GIS is that it combines multiple layers of spatial data in a single view to create a meaningful picture of the environment and underlying our deepening understanding of the environment and underlying our deepening understanding of the environment.

LOCATE
Participatory design processes should be accessible to all people, and the introduction of computers into many communities can help guide and streamline the review of the information management plan before any design activities are undertaken (Cowden and Singh, 2007). Time should be spent developing an appropriate information management plan before any design activities are undertaken (Cowden and Singh, 2007). Time should be spent developing an appropriate information management plan before any design activities are undertaken (Cowden and Singh, 2007).

Quality
Quality is a valuable resource in design and should be supported by designers and design professionals. It’s a formative type of feedback that occurs early on or pre-launch, which involves an assessment of what’s been learned, what’s been accomplished, and what’s been achieved (van den Berg, 2008). Research has shown that, when engaging school children in group discussions, the facilitator can help to encourage students to participate, taking into account the needs of the students, and to foster social mixing by meeting the needs of all students.

Harmony
Harmony and conflict are two key concepts in participatory design. Harmony is characterized by a sense of mutual understanding and agreement, whereas conflict is characterized by a sense of disagreement and competition. Conflict can lead to reflection and, potentially, value development and/or change. The use of quality and qualitative evidence can be a path to good practice.

Draw
Drawing can be a useful way of investigating ideas quickly, as well as an effective mechanism for accessing participants’ understanding of the situation. Because workers use paper and marker in different different and different attitudes and affinities (Dewit & Gill, 2012). For example, drawing activities might be more suitable for some individuals, but they are less likely to be acceptable to others.

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