

Teaching Unit 6: Co-Creation, Co-Production, and Community-Driven Neighbourhood Development

PART I: TEACHING TARGETS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Introduction

Civic engagement can take various forms, each contributing uniquely to the development and resilience of neighbourhoods. This teaching unit will explore the different ways in which community members can participate in shaping their environments through co-creation and co-production processes. By examining the diverse roles and functions of involved stakeholders, including local government entities, citizen initiatives, and community organizations, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of how collaborative efforts can lead to transformative change in urban settings. This unit emphasizes the importance of recognizing multiple participation opportunities and mechanisms that foster effective partnerships between public authorities and citizens.

Teaching Targets and Learning Outcomes

The primary aim is to cultivate an understanding of various forms of involvement, cooperation, and co-production within the context of neighbourhood development. Students will explore:

- » The significance of civic engagement as a driving force behind resilient neighbourhoods.
- » Different models of participation that enable community members to influence decision-making processes.
- » The distinction between different concepts such as information, participation, and co-operation, but also between co-production and tactical urbanism
- » Mechanisms for collaboration between public agencies and citizen initiatives that promote resilient neighbourhoods.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- a. Analyse the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders involved in co-creation processes.
- b. Evaluate case studies demonstrating successful co-production initiatives within communities.
- c. Articulate the theoretical concepts underpinning co-creation and co-production as an essential component for fostering resilient neighbourhoods.

Teaching Format and Approaches

Teaching Unit 5 will employ a variety of innovative pedagogical approaches designed to enhance student engagement and facilitate deeper learning about co-creation, co-production, and community-driven neighbourhood development. The selected formats – flipped classroom techniques, problem-based learning scenarios, and interactive discussions – create a dynamic learning experience that empowers students to critically engage

with the material while developing practical skills applicable to community-driven neighbourhood development efforts:

Flipped Classroom

In this approach, students will engage with course materials, such as readings, videos, or case-study insights, prior to attending the unit. This allows them to familiarize themselves with key concepts related to participation and co-production at their own pace. During class time, students can focus on applying their knowledge through discussions and collaborative activities rather than passive listening. This format encourages active participation and prepares students for more meaningful interactions during in-class sessions.

Problem-Based Learning

This unit will integrate problem-based learning (PBL) by presenting real-world challenges faced by communities regarding urban development. The use of case studies from the database will be instrumental in this process; students can examine successful co-production initiatives while identifying best practices and potential pitfalls. By connecting theory with practice, students will develop critical thinking skills and gain insights into how civic engagement can effectively address local challenges.

Interactive Discussions

Students will be encouraged to share their perspectives on the case studies through guided questions or theses developed prior to or during the unit. Engaging in dialogue about different stakeholder roles and the mechanisms of participation highlighted in the case studies will deepen students' understanding of co-creation processes.

PART II: PREPARATION FOR CONDUCTING THE TEACHING UNIT

As you prepare to lead the teaching unit focused on co-production, co-creation, public-civic partnerships, and community-driven neighbourhood development, please follow these steps to ensure a comprehensive and engaging experience for your students:

Step 1: Selection of Appropriate Case Studies

Begin by selecting suitable case studies that highlight various forms, manifestations, and levels of cooperation in the context of co-production and co-creation. You can access a database at <https://learning.resilient-neighborhoods.eu>. Aim to identify 4-5 relevant case studies from the database that exemplify key themes discussed in the unit, but feel free to incorporate additional examples from your own context that resonate with the themes of the course. The final selection should be made by you based on regional focus, student interests, and specific learning objectives.

The following case studies from the UPRUN database (in alphabetical order) could be suitable for illustrating the different objectives, impacts, and mechanisms of cooperation, co-production, co-creation, and public-civic partnerships on community-driven neighbourhood development:

- » CH_02 Gundeldinger Feld
- » CY_04_Street for Citizens

- » DE_01 Berlin Rathausblock
- » DE_04 Stadtmensch Altenburg
- » GR_04 Navarinou Park
- » LT_04 Miesto Laboratorija

Step 2: Preparation of Materials for Students

Approximately one week before the event, distribute relevant information and materials related to the chosen case studies to your students. Organize them into groups of 3-5 individuals who will engage deeply with one specific case study. Each group should analyse the provided materials and conduct further research as needed. They will then prepare a brief presentation (no more than 5 minutes) consisting of up to 5 key slides that summarize their findings. To guide their analysis and reflection, consider providing them with specific questions that facilitate their preparation

The following questions are designed to assist students in analysing and reflecting on the case study as they prepare their presentations:

- » What is the context, objectives, and intentions of the case study in relation to community-driven neighbourhood development?
- » Who are the key stakeholders involved in the case study? What goals or interests does each stakeholder pursue?
- » How would you describe the level of interaction among the stakeholders? In what ways is collaboration organized among them, and who is responsible for which tasks?
- » How did community members engage with the project, and what role did they play in its development? How did municipal departments engage with the project, and what was their role in the project?
- » What challenges did the stakeholders face during the implementation of the project? How were these challenges addressed, and what lessons can be learned from them?
- » To what extent was the project successfully implemented? What factors contributed to its success (or lack thereof)?

Step 3: Review Relevant Literature

Conduct a thorough review of pertinent literature to gain an overview of current discourse surrounding these topics at both national and international levels. Familiarize yourself with key texts in this field. Decide whether you want to focus primarily on international or national perspectives, then select 4-5 central texts that will serve as foundational readings for both the teaching unit and the analysis/reflection of case studies. The following list provides potential articles and publications relevant to cooperation, co-creation, co-production, public-civic partnerships, and community-driven neighbourhood development:

- » Abt, J. (2022). Koproduzieren – eine lebenswerte Stadt gemeinschaftlich entwickeln, umsetzen und bewahren. In: Abt, J., Blecken, L., Bock, S., Diringer, J., Fahrenkrug, K. (eds) Von Beteiligung zur Koproduktion. Stadtforschung aktuell. Springer VS, 251-268.
- » Alford, J. (2014). The multiple facets of co-production: Building on the work of Elinor Ostrom. Public Management Review, 16, 3, 299-316.

- » Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35, 4, 216–224.
- » Bovaird, T. (2007). Beyond engagement and participation: User and community co-production of public services. *Public Administration Review*, 67(5), 846–860.
- » Bovaird, T. and Loeffler, E. (2012). From engagement to co-production: The contribution of users and communities to outcomes and public value. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 23, 1119–1138
- » Brandsen, T. and Honingh, M. (2018). Definitions of co-production and co-creation. In Brandsen, T., Stehen, T. and Verschuere, B (Eds.). *Co-production and co-creation: Engaging citizens in public services* (pp. 9–17). Routledge.
- » Bulkeley, H., Marvin, S., Voytenko Palgan, Y., McCormick, C., Breitfuss-Loidl, M., Mai, L., von Wirth, T., and Frantzeskaki, N. (2019). Urban living laboratories: Conducting the experimental city? *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 26, 4, 317–335.
- » Castán Broto, V., Ortiz, C., Lipietz, B., Osuteye, E., Johnson, C., Kombe, W., Limbumba, T. M., Macías, J. C., Shrivastav, S. K., Hadny, A., Kisembo, T., Koroma, B., Macarthy, J. M., Mbabazi, J., Lwasa, S., Pérez-Castro, B., Díaz, J. P., Rivero, L. R., & Levy, C. (2022). Co-production outcomes for urban equality: Learning from different trajectories of citizens' involvement in urban change. *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability*, 4, Article 100179.
- » Chilvers, J. and Kearnes, M. (Eds.). (2019). *Remaking participation: Science, environment and emergent publics*. Routledge.
- » Ellery, P. L. and Ellery, J. (2019). Strengthening community sense of place through placemaking. *Urban Planning*, 4, 2, 237–248.
- » Frantzeskaki, N., Collier, M., Hölscher, K. *et al.* Premises, practices and politics of co-creation for urban sustainability transitions. *Urban Transformations*, 7, 7 (2025).
- » Healey, P. (2015). Citizen-generated local development initiative: Recent English experience. *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 19, 2, 109–118.
- » Lee, D., Feiertag, P. and Unger, L. (2024). Co-production, co-creation or co-design of public space? A systematic review, *Cities*, 154, 105372.
- » Leino, H. and Puumala, E. (2020). What can co-creation do for the citizens? Applying co-creation for the promotion of participation in cities. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 39, 4, 781–799.
- » Mahmoud, I. H., Morello, E., Ludlow, D. and Salvia, G (2021). Cocreation Pathways to Inform Shared Governance of Urban Living Labs in Practice: Lessons From Three European Projects, *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, 3, Article 690458.
- » Mitlin, D. (2008). With and beyond the state—Co-production as a route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations. *Environment and Urbanization*, 20, 2, 339–360.
- » Nabatchi, T., Sancino, A. and Sicilia, M. (2017). Varieties of participation in public services: The who, when, and what of co-production. *Public Administration Review*, 77, 5, 766–776.
- » Oetken, K. J. (2025). Unravelling the why: exploring the increasing recognition and adoption of co-creation in contemporary urban design, *Sustainable Communities*, 2, 1, Article 2477788

- » Osborne, S. P., Radnor, Z. and Strokosch, K. (2016). Co-production and the co-creation of value in public services: A suitable case for treatment? *Public Management Review*, 18, 5, 639–653.
- » Ostrom, E. (1996). Crossing the great divide: Coproduction, synergy, and development. *World Development*, 24, 6, 1073–1087.
- » Pestoff, V. (2006). Citizens and co-production of welfare services. *Public Management Review*, 8, 4, 503–519.
- » Rosen, J. and Painter, G. (2019). From citizen control to co-production. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85, 3, 335–347.
- » Sorrentino, M., Sicilia, M. and Howlett, M. (2018). Understanding co-production as a new public governance tool. *Policy and Society*, 37, 3, 277–293.
- » Turnhout, E., Metze, T., Wyborn, C., Klenk, N. and Louder, E. (2020). The politics of co-production: participation, power, and transformation, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 42, 15–21,
- » Voorberg, W. H., Bekkers, V. J. and Tummers, L. G. (2015). A systematic review of co-creation and co-production: Embarking on the social innovation journey. *Public Management Review*, 17, 9, 1333–1357.
- » Watson, V. (2014). Co-production and collaboration in planning—The difference. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 15, 1, 62–76
- » Ziehl, M. (2020). *Koproduktion urbaner Resilienz. Das Gängeviertel in Hamburg als Reallabor für eine zukunftsfähige Stadtentwicklung mittels Kooperation von Zivilgesellschaft, Politik und Verwaltung*. Berlin: Jovis Verlag.

Step 4: Prepare Presentation Materials

Develop a PowerPoint presentation (or similar teaching materials) for the day of the event. This presentation should primarily introduce the theoretical concepts underpinning co-creation and co-production while facilitating discussions around selected case studies through these theoretical lenses. Additionally, it should identify mechanisms for collaboration between public agencies and citizen initiatives that promote resilient neighbourhoods.

Prepare a slide deck consisting of approx. 15–25 slides that summarizes central aspects from the selected texts and additional literature. A foundational slide deck is available within the provided materials for this teaching unit; however, you should tailor it according to your specific focus areas based on insights from core texts.

The provided presentation foundation for the event includes:

- » An exploration of the differences between civic engagement, tactical urbanism, participation and cooperation, as well as co-creation, co-production, and community-driven neighbourhood development.
- » An approach to various definitions and mechanisms associated with these different concepts.
- » Utilization of the ladder of participation and other developments that incorporate aspects of empowerment and co-creation.
- » A mix of visual elements and textual components (excerpts from the central texts) to enhance understanding.

The slide deck primarily incorporates key insights from the following texts. Depending on the focus, intention, and context of the event, additional texts and references should be considered, and the slide deck should be adjusted accordingly.

- » Abt, J. (2022). Koproduzieren – eine lebenswerte Stadt gemeinschaftlich entwickeln, umsetzen und bewahren. In: Abt, J., Blecken, L., Bock, S., Diringer, J., Fahrenkrug, K. (eds) Von Beteiligung zur Koproduktion. Stadtforschung aktuell. Springer VS, 251–268.
- » Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35, 4, 216–224.
- » Ellery, P. L. and Ellery, J. (2019). Strengthening community sense of place through placemaking. Urban Planning, 4, 2, 237–248.
- » Lee, D., Feiertag, P. and Unger, L. (2024). Co-production, co-creation or co-design of public space? A systematic review, Cities, 154, 105372.
- » Leino, H. and Puumala, E. (2020). What can co-creation do for the citizens? Applying co-creation for the promotion of participation in cities. Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space, 39, 4, 781–799.
- » Rosen, J. and Painter, G. (2019). From citizen control to co-production. Journal of the American Planning Association, 85, 3, 335–347.
- » Watson, V. (2014). Co-production and collaboration in planning—The difference. Planning Theory & Practice, 15, 1, 62–76

Step 5: Formulate Reflective Questions or Hypotheses for the Interactive Discussion

Consider formulating appropriate questions aimed at reflecting on case studies while deepening understanding or highlighting distinctions among cooperation types—co-creation, co-production, public-civic partnerships—and community-driven neighbourhood development. These questions can be integrated into your presentation materials from Step 4.

Possible questions may include:

- » How did community members engage with the project, and what role did they play in its development? How did municipal departments engage with the project, and what was their role in the project? Were there any notable instances of co-production or co-creation in this context?
- » What theoretical concepts related to co-production or co-creation can be identified within your case study? How do these concepts manifest in practice?
- » What are the distinctions between civic engagement, tactical urbanism, participation, and co-production?
- » In what ways did public-civic partnerships influence the outcomes of the project? Can you identify specific examples of successful collaboration between public agencies and citizen initiatives?
- » What implications does this case study have for future projects focused on community-driven neighbourhood development? How might similar approaches be adapted or improved upon based on your analysis?

Another idea could be to have students engage in discussions based on hypotheses to identify the differences among various concepts and gain a deeper understanding of co-production. Possible theses for discussion include:

- » **Hypothesis 1:** Co-production can lead to innovative solutions for urban challenges. By harnessing the collective knowledge and creativity of diverse stakeholders, co-produced projects often result in novel approaches that address complex urban issues more effectively than traditional top-down methods.
- » **Hypothesis 2:** Co-production enhances inclusion and diversity in urban planning. By involving various stakeholders—including citizens, NGOs, and local communities—co-production creates a space for diverse perspectives and needs. This leads to more equitable planning processes as different voices are heard. Strengthening underrepresented groups can help reduce social inequalities and promote more inclusive urban development.
- » **Hypothesis 3:** Co-production can challenge existing power dynamics but carries the risk of *tokenism*. While co-production theoretically strengthens democratic processes by actively involving citizens in decision-making, there is a danger that this participation remains merely symbolic (tokenism). If citizens are consulted but their opinions do not genuinely influence the planning process, or if only certain groups have access, it may lead to frustration and undermine trust in democratic processes.
- » **Hypothesis 4:** The success of co-production depends on resources and institutional support. To enable more equitable urban planning through co-production, adequate resources (financial and personnel) as well as an open attitude from municipal authorities are essential. Without this support, co-productive approaches may fail or be ineffective. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the potential of co-production to promote justice and democracy can also be limited by structural barriers.
- » **Hypothesis 5:** Tactical urbanism can serve as an initial step to mobilize civic engagement and spark interest in urban issues. Through temporary projects, citizens can make their ideas and needs visible, leading to a stronger demand for formal co-production processes. These initiatives create a foundation for long-term collaboration between citizens and municipal authorities.
- » **Hypothesis 6:** While tactical urbanism is often informal and unbureaucratic, co-production typically requires more complex procedures and formal structures. This can create tension: while tactical urbanism aims for broader participation, formalized co-production may exclude or overwhelm certain groups, thereby reinforcing existing inequalities.
- » **Hypothesis 7:** Although tactical urbanism provides space for creative civic engagement, it also carries the risk of ignoring deeper structural issues in urban development. When citizens focus on short-term solutions, they may exert less pressure on institutions to bring about sustainable changes through co-production. In this sense, temporary measures could undermine the necessity for serious co-productive approaches.

For an interactive discussion with students, consider bringing posters (DIN A1 size) to facilitate engagement. Students can either work on specific questions assigned to their groups by the teacher or engage in a discussion centred around a particular hypothesis. In both scenarios, they will be required to summarize their findings and share the outcomes with other student groups. The outcomes can then be presented to the entire class for reflection and collective learning.

Step 6: Provide Follow-Up Resources

After the event concludes, share your presentation slides along with any literature utilized during discussions for further review by students. Additionally, provide a selection of key texts covering fundamental concepts related to co-creation, co-production, and community-driven neighbourhood development. These texts will offer a strong theoretical foundation essential for their learning journey. To enhance comprehension and direct their focus, outline specific questions or themes that students should consider while reading the selected texts in preparation for the unit. This approach will help deepen their understanding of the subjects at hand.

PART III: STRUCTURE AND SEQUENCE OF THE TEACHING UNIT

You might use the following outline to structure the 90-minute teaching unit, combining input, interactive discussions, and problem-based learning. The plan can be adjusted based on group size and the desired level of interaction:

1. Introduction (Approx. 5 Minutes)

Begin with an introduction to the topic of the session, emphasizing its importance through examples and real-life applications. Engage participants by asking for their perceptions of participation, cooperation, co-production, or co-creation, as well as any experiences they may have had in these areas. Clearly outline the learning objectives for the session, using either oral presentation or 2-3 slides to facilitate understanding.

2. Student Presentations on Selected Case Studies (20-30 Minutes)

Each student group will present their findings from selected case studies within a time frame of 5 minutes per group (student groups have to prepare this in advance as outlined in step 2 above). Encourage students to refer to previously established questions for their presentations (as outlined in step 2 above). Allow time for brief follow-up or clarification questions after each presentation. Consider organizing presentations so that groups focusing on participation and cooperation are presented first, followed by those concentrating on co-production and co-creation. Conclude this segment with a brief summary that highlights similarities and differences across the case studies.

3. Input on Cooperation, Co-Production, and Co-Creation (Approx. 20-30 Minutes)

Integrate the results from student presentations into a theoretical framework that explains different concepts and mechanisms related to participation, cooperation, co-production, and co-creation. Differentiate these terms from related concepts such as tactical urbanism and civic engagement. Utilize the provided slide deck to support your explanations (see steps 3 and 4 outlined above).

4. Group and/or Plenary Discussion: Distinctions Among Engagement Concepts (20-30 Minutes)

Form small groups to discuss 2-3 central questions regarding distinctions between civic engagement, tactical urbanism, participation, and co-production (see potential questions outlined in step 5 above). Have each group record their insights on posters or use digital tools like Miro Board for online sessions. Facilitate a presentation of findings followed by

a discussion that highlights similarities and differences among concepts explored in relation to the case studies presented earlier (see outline in step 5 above). Depending on class size, consider conducting a collective discussion in plenary format to deepen understanding through interactive dialogue.

5. Conclusion/Wrap-Up (Approx. 5 Minutes)

Summarise key points from the session while referencing the initial learning objectives outlined at the beginning. Provide additional literature recommendations for further exploration of topics covered during the unit. Optionally, offer a preview of what participants can expect in subsequent sessions.

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