The Beginning of an Affair
Valentine’s Day, 14th February 2020

The kick-off session on Community Led Development/Human Centred Design was held at Partos Offices with 45 participants of 15 different nationalities.

Butterfly Works and The Hunger Project initiated this session in collaboration with The Spindle, the innovation platform of Partos.

Who?
The introduction round was held, one burning match each! A great mix of experiences, nationalities and eagerness to share and learn.

Why?
Evelijne Bruning (of The Hunger Project) introduced the subject with a presentation. The organisers of this meeting want to transform the current top-down development paradigm. A global movement for Community Led Development already exists, with 64 members, and a range of national chapters – more info is HERE. In this session, we wanted to explore what expert-practitioners in NL can learn from each other and do together.

The Agenda:
15:00 WHO ARE YOU?
15:20 WHY ARE WE HERE?
15:45 BEST PRACTICES & BEST FUCK-UPS
16:30 BIO-BREAK (let love flow)
16:40 MARKET PLACE: SHARING THE LOVE
17:20 AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER?
17:30 LIQUID LOVE (drinks)

What is Community Led Development?

- Development happens in communities. It is in communities where women, men and youth can discover their voice, assert their rights, and mobilize action to reach aspirations.

- We believe that every human has a fundamental right to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, and to equal and affordable access to the essential public services through which they can achieve their full potential.

- Working definition: working together to create and achieve locally owned visions and goals.
During the presentation the following highlights and insights came forward:

- The Cynefin framework is a conceptual framework used to aid decision-making. It helps to identify how to perceive situations and make sense of one’s own and other people’s behaviour. It helps in pursuing system change.
- In ending poverty, we can only be ‘sidekicks’, see more in the sidekick manifesto!
- (New) Mental models are needed:
  1) Mutuality - built on humility, respect and available assets. Value what is there!
  2) Power of the collective – for which relationships are fundamental

Points which came up in the discussion:

- Who is ‘we’? Who sets the agenda? What is ‘the community’? Who is responsible? Who is reporting? Who are the stakeholders?
- Question yourself! Do not assume!

Best Practices & Best Fuck-ups

The participants volunteered to share cases from their own experience:

- World Design Capital shared how they use creative design activities to design community solutions in South Africa.
- Icarus Meets The Moon; they used diaries for user led research with inmates in Colombia.
- Youth Lead Egypt on community led interventions in Egypt; giving youth a strong voice.
- Nourish Project,
- 700,000 eucalyptus trees on the need for a clear objective and clear decision making in a co-creation process.
- GetH2O on the need of having a problem owner when co-creating innovations to ensure they are implemented.
- Renewable Energy on supporting start-ups in building trust and taking away customer assumptions.
- A Wash project in India on designing toilets for women and the risk of having assumptions on their needs and wishes.
- Spring on a accelerator in Tanzania with a focus on women and girls and the importance of their engagement.
Marketplace
After the break the participants re-grouped around the tables to exchange on the following topics (which were picked from a menu of choices and in 2 cases added at the suggestion of a participant). Voting with your feet was applied – move on to another discussion at will.

Key insights were shared in the plenary at the end.

- We shared the methods & tools that we are using for community led and human centered processes.
- At the dictionary table we aimed to collect terms and words. This table stayed empty, showing the difficulty in having a common language.
- At the dilemmas table, people shared a dilemma and the group gave their suggestions.
- At the research table several important topics for research were identified.
- The table for action & interaction experimented with a hands on approach of prototyping a solution straight away.

Keywords in the sessions:
Active listening, unlikely allies, context approach, simulations, clear needs, no assumptions, local & external knowledge, demand driven, co-creation, trust, ownership, exploration, fast feedback loops, creative inputs (songs, simulations, role play), commonalities, vulnerability is key.
An affair to remember?
Indeed- the start of a fresh affair!

In the closing round just before the liquid love, the wish was expressed to continue with more sessions on this subject. The participants were very pleased with the safe space and atmosphere, and the many new contacts and ideas already generated. A lot of exchanges had taken place.

Ideas for topics and/or work forms for next sessions:

- Collection of dilemmas and best practices/cases – with feedback loops.
- How to involve the ‘donor community’ and transform the way in which funding is given.
- The importance of this thinking for ‘us’ or for ‘them’.
- Subgroups/working groups to be formed.
- More unlikely allies should attend (so let’s all bring a date).
- Hold a similar session at the same time in some of the countries we work in (for example Kenya where Lisananne (Proportion) will be in April).
- Send out a short survey for feedback and more suggestions.

In conclusion:

The affair will continue!
Mail addresses are allowed to be shared, so cross-dating can start already. Please use the upcoming survey as an opportunity to jointly shape our agenda – fill it in!

Spread the word - new dates will be welcome

Save the date:
The next session will be again on a Friday afternoon, April 17th