

News item on Co-production methodologies: Opportunities and challenges event 15 October 2024

The Leeds Social Sciences Institute teamed up with the Social Research Methods Centre (SRMC) to explore the real-world application of Co-production research methodologies. This event, built on the momentum of the university's Co-production Network, highlights the growing interest in and demand for this evolving field.

Professors [Gehan Selim](#), Deputy Director of LSSI and Hoffman Wood Professor of Architecture in the School of Civil Engineering, and [Ruth Swanwick](#), Professor of Deaf Education in the School of Education and Co-Director of SRMC, were thrilled with the event's high attendance.

The guest speakers shared diverse experiences from various research projects, emphasizing how Co-production techniques have become crucial in the research process and are a key consideration for securing funding.

The event featured insights from research colleagues at different stages of their academic careers, who spoke candidly about the opportunities and challenges they encountered while implementing these innovative methods.

We would like to thank the following people for their input:

- [Dr Evangelina Papavasileiou](#) from the Leeds Institute of Medical Education – who discussed Co-production Methodologies in Complex Intervention Systematic Reviews: Enhancing Collaboration and Relevance.
- [Dr Amanda Keeling](#) from the School of Law – who discussed Co-production with people with learning difficulties and legal professionals: Reflections on the [COALITION](#) project.
- [Dr Ajay Bhawe](#) from the School of Earth and Environment – who presented Model Co-production: Two case studies and reflections.
- [Dr Peter Hart](#) from the School of Education – Peter explored the messy space between 'participation' and 'Co-production' with his talk entitled 'From Hermeneutics to Toolkits'.
- [Dr Melissa Kirby](#) from the School of Music – looked at balancing equity and ethics in Co-produced research with people with learning disabilities
- [Johanna Quina Fustillos](#) from the School of Education discussed the considerations in participatory research and Co-production of knowledge with young people.
- [Dr Rosie Fox](#) and [Dr James Greenwood-Reeves](#) from the School of Law told us about the queer collaborative research network '[Law's a Drag](#)'.

Key take home findings included:

- The importance of identifying key stakeholders in the project.
- Identifying what is Co-production and what is participatory research.
- Sharing decision making throughout and letting go of control of the direction (but also knowing when to reassert control).
- Drawing on the diverse expertise, experiences and perspectives of participants.
- Understanding that Co-production is not a single moment of collaboration – it is a continuous process throughout all stages of research.
- Emphasizing the importance of building trust between stakeholders and fostering lasting networks and relationships highlights the social aspect of co-production.
- Challenge knowledge hierarchies.
- Look for alternative ways of participation (games, theatre, informal chats, skilled facilitation)

- Look for the gaps in research and you will find vulnerable and unprotected groups of people
- Look at recruiting peers to do the research and develop a methodology with peer researchers – different groups of people look at things differently to each other
- When conducting research with young people or individuals with learning difficulties, make sure that the protective guidelines aren't inadvertently excluding them from participating
- Shift your focus – think not just about vulnerability but also about those who abuse power

Challenges were identified as:

- Conflicts of interest between stakeholders.
- Negotiation of required compromises can be challenging.
- How to manage different stakeholder priorities.
- Managing different power dynamics and facilitating equal participation.
- Recognise that the researcher is an outsider – so ethics and safeguarding are crucial.

Participants and speakers were fully engaged during the Q&A sessions, and networking flourished over lunch. We are thrilled by the popularity of this event. Find out more about the [Co-production Research Toolkit](#), an online resource containing information, videos and podcasts. Join the University's [Co-production Network](#) which sits in its own channel in the Engaged Research Team, and [subscribe](#) to the Leeds Social Sciences Institute news bulletin, where you can find out about future events such as this one.

Thanks to Elliot Payne and Natalie Jackson from LSSI for organising this event.