



3rd Annual POVERTY INNOVATION SUMMIT

Solutions Circle Recap Center People's Lived Experience as We Develop Solutions

Too often, solutions are developed without input and participation from those directly experiencing the problem and who are most impacted by the solution. In this session, Andrey Veintimilla from Smart Columbus and Diane Dagefoerde with the Community Information Exchange (CIE) shared how they are co-designing the CIE initiative with residents and service providers (the intended end-users). They outlined key approaches and tools, including designing for equity, journey mapping, and objectives and key results (OKRs).

Smart Columbus

Smart Columbus is working together to create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous Columbus. They focus on integrating technology to benefit the community by ensuring solutions are created with the involvement of those directly affected.

Community Information Exchange (CIE)

The goal of the CIE initiative is to make it easier for residents to get the resources and services they need to get back on their feet when they are in crisis or struggling to make ends meet. Ultimately, the CIE will prevent more families from falling into crisis by getting them the resources they need sooner.

"Co-design is designing with, not for"

Smart Columbus outlined several models for engaging different stakeholders. They discussed the importance of meeting people where they are and involving various stakeholders in the design process, including residents and service providers. The session highlighted human-centered design and co-design as engagement strategies to learn from the people who will be affected by the solutions. ***Human-Centered Design*** places insights about people at the center. ***Co-design*** invites people to play an active role throughout the design process.

Resources for further learning about co-design: Co-design involves centering care, working with the people closest to the solutions, sharing power, prioritizing relationships, being honest, being welcoming, using creative tools, balancing idealism and realism, building and sharing skills. ***[This page outlines the principles, process, and mindsets of co-design.](#)***

CIE Experience Councils and the Co-Design Process

Smart Columbus established Experience Councils, which consists of residents and service providers. The residents and service providers all bring critical lived experiences to inform the development of the CIE. Residents bring firsthand experience with social support services (food, housing, childcare, health care, unemployment, immigration, or some other type of assistance). The service providers all bring one or more years of experience supporting residents. The Experience Councils are crucial in ensuring the solutions address real problems effectively.

Smart Columbus invited Experience Council members to two 2-hour sessions each month (one in person and one virtually) between December 2023 and June 2024. The co-design process with the Experience Councils involved several phases:

1. **Building conditions for co-design:** Focused on recruitment, trust-building, and creating a shared understanding of racial equity and systemic issues.
2. **Journey Mapping:** Created narrative storylines of personal experiences with services, identifying pain points and opportunities for improvement.
3. **Root Cause Analysis:** Synthesized insights from journey mapping to understand the underlying causes of current experiences.
4. **Setting Objectives and Key Results:** Developed objectives based on journey map insights to guide the design and development of the CIE.

Resources for further learning: Journey maps are essential tools in human-centered design because they provide insights into user experiences, facilitate better communication and collaboration, and can drive innovation and strategic planning. Smart Columbus shared a "[Journey Map Template](#)" to think about a journey or an experience within your organization.

Key insights from Experience Council members

Residents and caseworkers shared feedback on their involvement with the Experience Councils. One member highlighted the uniqueness of having service providers and recipients in the same room, sharing concerns and opportunities. Another member shared gratitude for having the opportunity to voice her concerns and emphasized the shared goal of making a difference for the future. One resident praised the dedication and patience of the staff in facilitating meaningful collaboration, and another resident emphasized the safe space provided for discussing common struggles and brainstorming future solutions.

Some other initial insights from the process include:

- o **The Importance of Shared Learning and Decision Making:** Involving stakeholders ensures solutions are relevant and effective.
- o **Change Moves at the Speed of Trust:** Establishing trust and fostering relationships are crucial for successful co-design.
- o **Use Participatory Methods:** Employing various methods allows for inclusive participation.
- o **Professional Development:** The Experience Councils provide a learning experience, enhancing participants' skills and knowledge.

What's Next?

Presenters outlined the some of the next phases of the CIE initiative and emphasized the importance of co-design in the software development process. The goal is to avoid costly mistakes and ensure the solutions developed genuinely address the community's needs.

- **Co-design process:** Engaging with the Experience Councils to gather detailed requirements.
- **Pilots:** Testing feasibility, issuing requests for proposals, and starting the development phase.
- **Continuous Testing and Development:** Ensuring solutions are effective and adjusting based on feedback.
- **Engaging Technology and AI:** The CIE plans to leverage existing technology and AI to match individuals with the right resources and services based on their unique situation.
- **Change Management:** Incorporating change management throughout the development process to avoid surprises upon release.

Conclusion

The presentation underscored that centering lived experiences in developing solutions is crucial. The CIE's approach promises a more accurate, efficient, and impactful way to serve the community by leveraging co-design, advanced technology, and continuous engagement with stakeholders. This iterative and collaborative process lays a strong foundation for the CIE, ensuring it meets the community's needs effectively.

Solution Circle Resources

Link to resources: 1) Co-design definitions, methodologies, tools, and resources; 2) Racial Equity and Design; 3) Trauma-Informed Design and Research; and 4) Experience Journey Mapping

The 3rd Annual Poverty Innovation Summit hosted by RISE Together Innovation Institute took place on Thursday, June 20th, 2024 in Columbus, OH. Learn more about RISE Together at rtiico.org.