



UNRAVEL TOMORROW

FIVE INSIGHTS INTO OUR COPENHAGEN LEARNING
JOURNEY AND THE ART OF CO-CREATING BETTER
FUTURES



THE UNRAVEL TOMORROW PROJECT

Unravel Tomorrow is a dream about a better future and a project to empower Europe's social innovators, entrepreneurs and activists in creating it.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, we supported 15 social innovators from Germany, Latvia, Portugal, UK and Denmark to explore how to co-create better futures in a three day learning journey in Copenhagen.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ programme of
the European Union

LEARNING JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Looking for opportunities and testing ideas with Rie Maktabi and Monika Havnø of Let's Co.

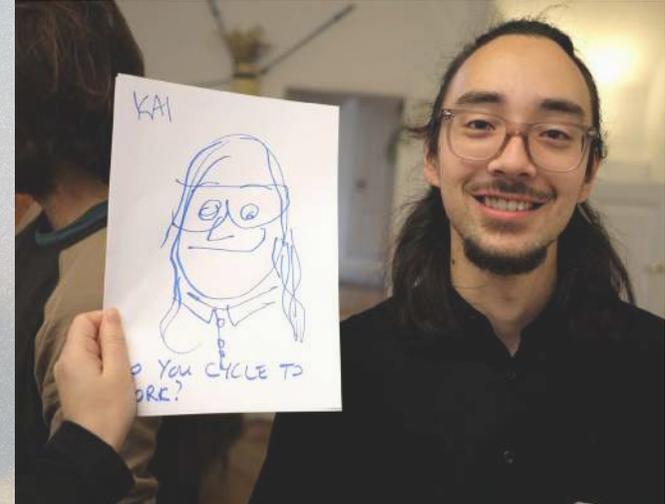
Making interventions for the sustainable transition of politics with Rasmus Nordqvist, MP of The Alternative.

Designing community based approaches to turn trash into treasure with Tommy Lykkefod of Copenhagen Circularity Lab.

Initiating action in rural communities and spurring a pioneer spirit with Malene Lundén of Samsø Energy Academy.

Uncovering the needs of places through social architecture with Niels Ove Kildahl, partner in Hele Landet.

Meeting new friends from across the EU, identifying +50 signals of change related to co-creating, and collectively making the following five insights to shine light on our research question.



RESEARCH QUESTION

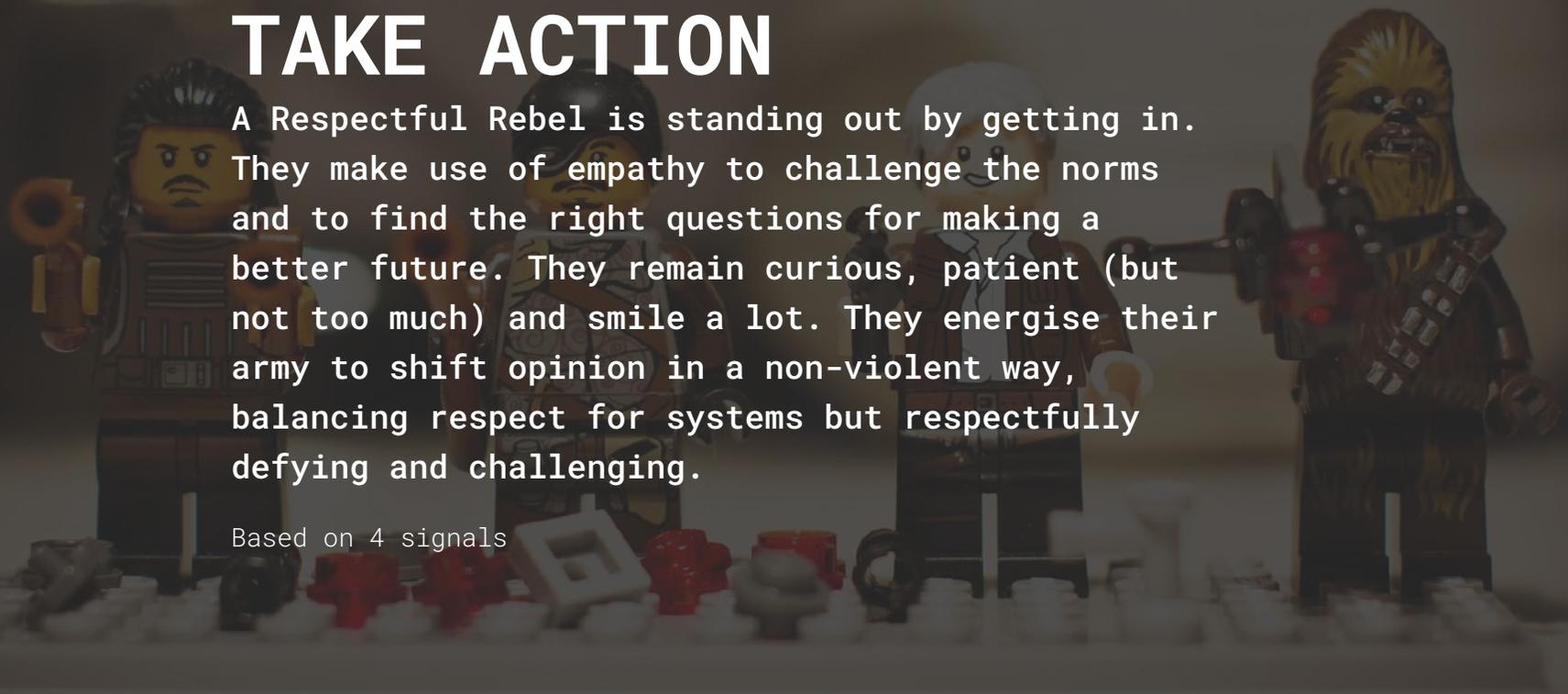
**HOW MIGHT
WE CO-CREATE
BETTER FUTURES?**

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BE A RESPECTFUL REBEL - LISTEN THEN TAKE ACTION

A Respectful Rebel is standing out by getting in. They make use of empathy to challenge the norms and to find the right questions for making a better future. They remain curious, patient (but not too much) and smile a lot. They energise their army to shift opinion in a non-violent way, balancing respect for systems but respectfully defying and challenging.

Based on 4 signals





INFLUENCE

EMPATHY

Empathy is the means for involvement and participation

OVERVIEW

To expect co-creation is to expect participation from multiple persons or groups. The participant is the source of development and the producer of value. In order to really extract this value, the project facilitators need to be able to empathize with the participant's point of view and show respect for it. Real involvement happens when the project can actively give influence to the participant. Empathy is needed to understand the different positions and understand the value the position is in need of or can provide.

RELEVANCE

It is not enough to use co-creation as a list. The real engagement with the participant, understanding their pros and cons is where solutions appear.

How can we formulate codes of practice that creates influence?



BRIDGING CO-CREATION #COMMUNICATION COMPLEX PROBLEMS

BRIDGING NEEDS

Co-creator as a bridge or path maker

OVERVIEW

In order to assure the success of a given solution you must address the needs of all different groups involved in the problem. It requires someone who knows how to use the effective tools that create the path to solve problems. It can be hard for different groups of people participating in a same organisation/service/... to be aware of each different group needs. In the face of a complex problem an outsider can work as an effective observer, questioner, researcher that flows through the context allowing him/herself to feel and get the insights needed for the construction of solutions.

Photo by Michael Shannon on Unsplash

RELEVANCE

Bridges facilitate transition and communication. A co-creator brings together different people, disciplines, needs and ideas. They establish the mindset that allows for team work to function under a common language, fostering effective communication and enabling solutions that need to be addressed from a different/new perspective.



IMAGINATION SOCIAL CHANGE

HOPE, CHANGE AND WORM CHARMING

Helping socially vulnerable youth dare to dream, hope and believe in change

OVERVIEW

In Bootle, UK residents experience high levels of degree of poverty with very little hope, very little ideas. When asking youth about their dream destination, common answers included the shopping mall or the theme park. With the ambition of helping youth to dare dream of more extensive social changes, the Worm Charming Championships in the UK became the destination for the group. Worm Charming is a competition that involves capturing as many worms as possible from the soil in a jar, without the use of digging. Creating vibrations in the ground is effective, as it simulates rain. Common ways of doing this includes shaking pitchforks in, playing music for, or dancing on the soil.

RELEVANCE

As Claire described, Worm Charming is a seemingly silly, maybe even absurd activity. For that exact reason, nobody would have imagined going there. Co-creation requires belief in change, and belief in change requires the capacity to envision an alternative. This is particularly relevant in vulnerable communities that experience little agency to create the conditions for their desired futures.

Verbal account by Claire



EXPERIMENTATION

EXPERIMENTATION

Not all Ideas are good, rehearse future scenarios

OVERVIEW

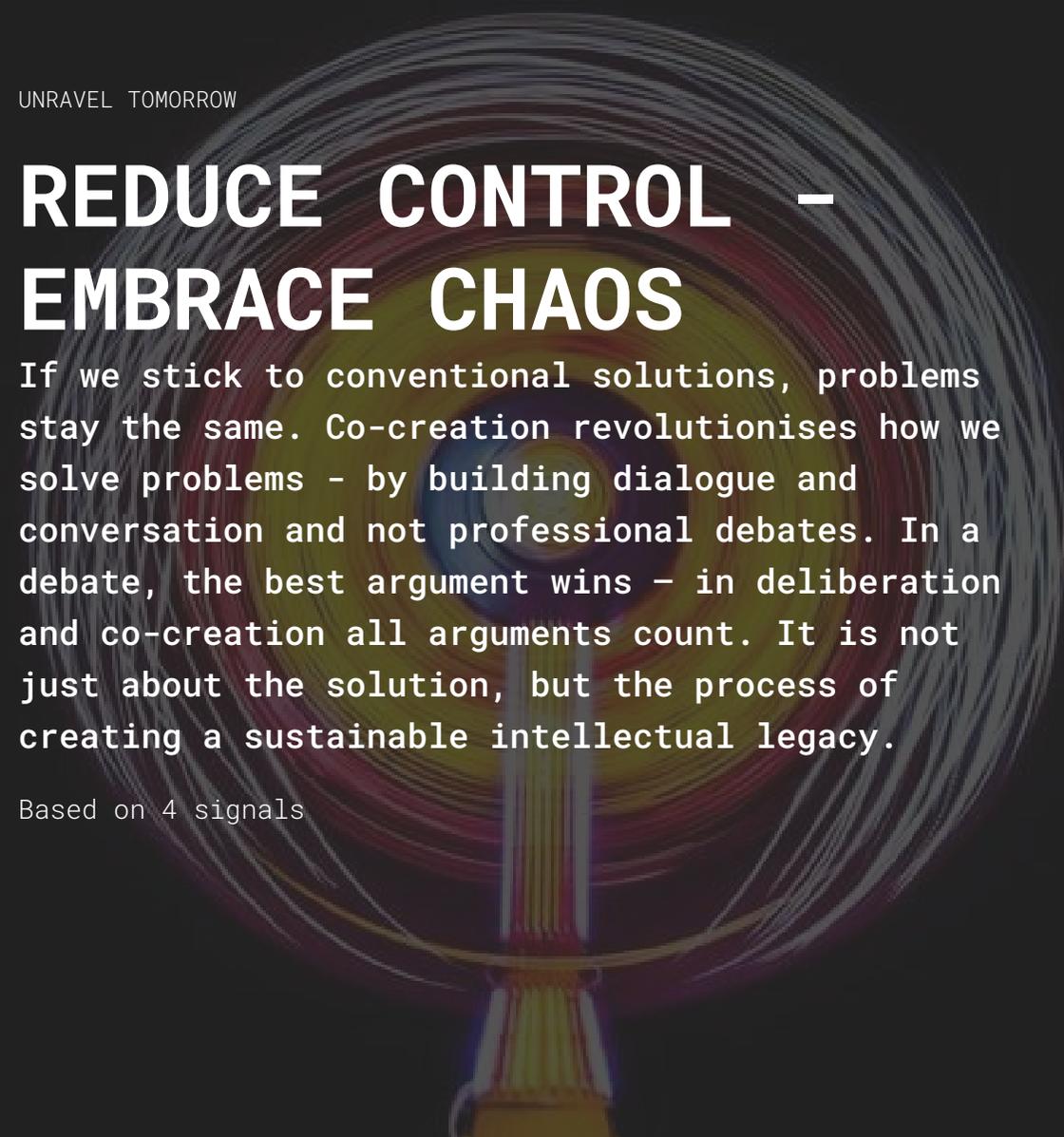
Bringing ideas in play and accepting that the development is open and without a specified outcome, opens up the opportunity for experimentation. Ideas need to be tested as potential future scenarios. How to test is contextual, but testing is important for finding the best ideas among all the good and not so good ideas.

RELEVANCE

Multiple ideas from different perspectives and values mean there is a need for distinctions and categorization of ideas. To avoid enforcing and minimize hierarchical and other social power struggles, testing and experimentation are tools for distinction.

How do we overcome the risk of enforcing old decisionmaking processes in co-creation?

Lets-go



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REDUCE CONTROL – EMBRACE CHAOS

If we stick to conventional solutions, problems stay the same. Co-creation revolutionises how we solve problems - by building dialogue and conversation and not professional debates. In a debate, the best argument wins - in deliberation and co-creation all arguments count. It is not just about the solution, but the process of creating a sustainable intellectual legacy.

Based on 4 signals



COHERENCE VALUES

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Observations at Blox led to a realization of how co-creation can be lost in translation

OVERVIEW

The design and use of the building of Blox that hosts multiple companies that work through ideas of collaboration was an unwelcoming space. The building with its grand structures and beautiful locations was built like a security fortress. Access was overwhelmed with restrictions and unclear boundaries. The atmosphere was of a highly professional character which in the first instance instilled a feeling of astonishment. The atmosphere, on the other hand, lacked openness, involvement, and connectedness. There is a big discrepancy between the values of co-creation and the structural use of the building.

RELEVANCE

It seems that the construction and implementation of co-creation at Blox are lost in translation. The place is enforcing a different set of values, ideas of professionalism that do not match the values embedded in co-creation.

How can we promote the workspace to be coherent with the values?



#COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT #SAVEYOURTRIBE

'CO-CREATE-ACTIVATE-PRESERVE' OUR CULTURAL SPACES & IDENTITIES.

Afraid of having no one to pass your cultural legacy on to? Fear no more! Co-creation is the answer.

OVERVIEW

40 percent of the estimated 6,700 languages spoken around the world are in danger of disappearing. Most of these languages are indigenous languages, which embody complex systems of knowledge developed and accumulated over thousands of years. Can co-creating with the last surviving members of slowly disappearing communities, save their cultural identities?

RELEVANCE

Creating community centres based on co-creation principles - for tribes or dialectal populations, where the senior members of the community can be re-engaged into teaching, documenting and propagating their dialects and local ethos to the younger generations, has the potential to not only preserve cultures but the SELF-WORTH of their ageing population.



MINDSET PARTICIPATION

A MINDSET

Co-creation is not something you do it's a mindset

OVERVIEW

Lets-co is working through deep beliefs in co-creation. They believe co-creation is a better way of creating solutions than traditional innovation processes. For Lets-co co-creation is more than a tool it's a mindset where solutions are produced, rather than they are found. Taking on a job of designing a product means to engage actors from multiple areas that are affected by the product. Involvement is how creation is happening.

RELEVANCE

The idea that co-creation is a mindset shift focus from specific methods that have proven successful in earlier projects, to forming methods in relation to the content. It means that successes are here for inspiration and not repetition. Co-creation is every time formed through participation.

How can we work, organise and dream without knowing the outcome?



SOCIAL CHANGE CO-CREATION

LEARNING CO-CREATION

Teachers can be examples for children/school is the first sense of community for kids

OVERVIEW

We want kids respecting each other and world, we want them to be critical thinkers, being curious, asking questions (and not living on given answers). One can learn best when having a role model, when one can try, experiment, fail and repeat. Unfortunately educational system has a framework, strict goals on what kids have to learn and achieve within each subject (grades, themes, methods). Teachers focusing on subject goals not on kids (future). it works when school management allows and motivates teachers to be more flexible to choose methods, and when teachers shows respect to kids and their curiosity, interests, when they hear children.

RELEVANCE

One have to learn and experience benefits of co-creating //How might we co-create better futures?



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THE RESILIENCE OF THE SUCCESSFUL OF SOCIAL INNOVATOR

Having the courage to step out of the comfort zone and enter the quick sand between your current situation and the ultimate goal are critical qualities of the social innovator. With the vision of creating a better sustainable future social innovators are driven to enter and continue to push for change even in very slow and bureaucratic systems like the political systems. Successful social innovators create milestones that give a sense of achievement and endure hardship with a continued view towards a better tomorrow.

Based on 4 signals



#INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR #GAP #BARRIERS #BRIDGE

BRIDGING THE INTENTION-BEHAVIOUR GAP

People have already good/sustainable intentions but they don't always translate these into action

OVERVIEW

Understanding people and observing barriers is a must when aiming to improve something aka the future...

RELEVANCE

Barriers prevent people with a green or social intention to behave accordingly. What are these barriers to not buying plastic products or engaging in e.g. social/ collaborative actions? How to bridge or close these gaps? We need to understand the consumers and people in societies to provide solutions for them or make it more comfortable for them to act according to their intention!



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BETTER FUTURE CO-CREATION DISCOMFORT

DISCOMFORT AS A CHANGE MAKER

Stepping out of your comfort zone is essential for creating new solutions

OVERVIEW

During the days at the unravel tomorrow meeting we had the chance to speak to different inspirers/changemakers and experience their feelings about the process of co-creation. The need to experience discomfort stood out as a "must have" experience. You feel it in your guts when you first think of stepping into the world of politics, willing to "change the world". Or when you are expected to address people that don't have time for you in order to understand their needs. Or when search out for your place in the world, expecting to discover what kind of community do you belong to.

RELEVANCE

When you stay in your comfort zone you are less likely to come up with something really new. Daring is part of the process of taking action, of finding actual solutions for real problems.



BETTER FUTURE CO-CREATION VALUE #INSPIRATION

"BIG IS SHIT, SMALL IS GREAT"

"Not scaling up, scaling out"

OVERVIEW

When we are focused on scaling up, we lose value.

It is important to make things work close to us, more at the local and community level and engaging in a more creative way to maximize the potential for the idea to work.

It is important to find ways of putting it out and with that show and prove its value.

Keep on trying and keep on working.

RELEVANCE

To not forget the main goal, better future starts at our doorstep

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ENGAGE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES BY UNDERSTANDING WHAT EACH PERSON GIVES AND GAINS

Everyone has different wishes and needs. To engage people, it is necessary to tailor a reason for each stakeholder to engage in the co-creation process. It's a give and take game. Believe in people's value so they can feel motivated, and have a sense ownership and responsibility.

Based on 4 signals



#COMMUNITY CHANGE CO-CREATION BETTER FUTURE SOCIAL CHANGE

CITIZENS ASSEMBLY

Participatory Democracy

OVERVIEW

Creation of Citizens Assemblies to run in parallel with Parliament Assemblies to engage society to be an active participant in the decision-making process, to understand the importance of discussing problems and be a part of the construction of a better future.

It is also an important tool for deputies elected in parliament to listen and be aware of the discussion at this level to learn the concerns and get to check a few ideas that have value to work on and implement.

RELEVANCE

It is such an interesting and intelligent tool to try to implement at the local level. If people understand the importance of discussing ideas and feel they have a voice (it doesn't matter if it is a city assembly, a school assembly, a services provider company) and their opinions and ideas have value, they feel ownership, motivation, and really importantly responsibility. And it becomes a stage for new and good ideas to thrive.

<https://www.thedanishparliament.dk/members/rasmus-nordqvist>



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Photo by Michael Shannon on Unsplash

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Let's co



CO-CREATION

IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE; BUT IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.

Share unfinished ideas, get input and ownership

OVERVIEW

I've always aimed for 'perfection', whatever that means; preferring to work alone and not share my processes until I could show a finished product.

RELEVANCE

Share your unfinished ideas, reap the benefits of different experiences and perspectives.



CO-CREATION INFLUENCE

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

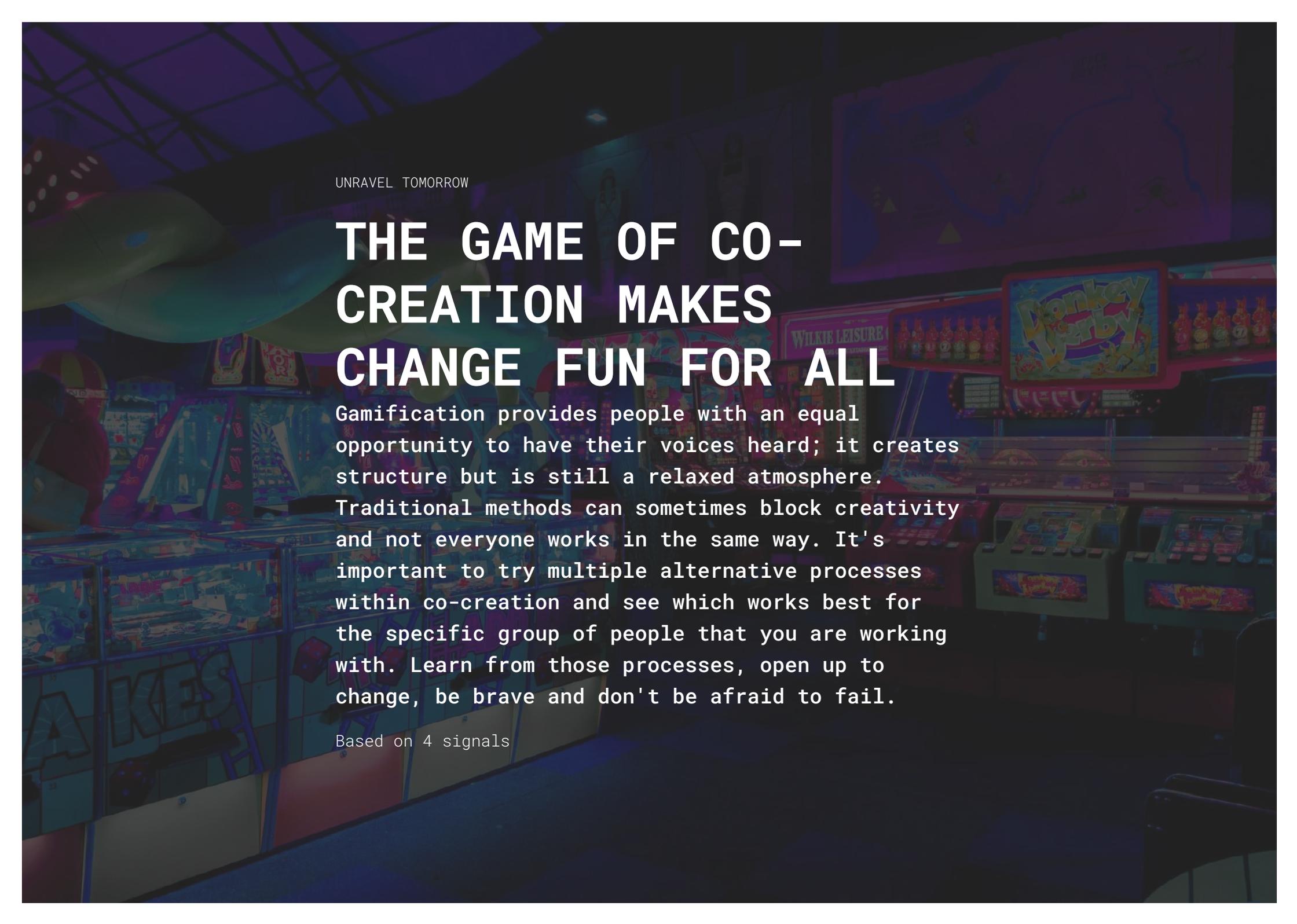
Acknowledging agendas to increase participation in cocreation

OVERVIEW

Using his opening speech in Danish Parliament to praise a policy and politicians from opposing parties, Rasmus Nordqvist showed a new way to engage in politics. Designer turned politician and leader of the Alternative Party, Rasmus is passionate about hearing people's voice in politics. He used his speech to acknowledge what was good about opposing parties and the good work of fellow politicians, and this caught their attention. Valuing the different points of view and understanding that everyone has their own agenda goes a long way towards building trust and cooperation. After 6 years of hard work the Danish parliament has finally brought climate change to the top of the agenda making legislative change and huge investment.

RELEVANCE

A fresh perspective, vision, patience and meeting people where they are at, is key to effective cocreation, building relationships of trust and respect.



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THE GAME OF CO- CREATION MAKES CHANGE FUN FOR ALL

Gamification provides people with an equal opportunity to have their voices heard; it creates structure but is still a relaxed atmosphere.

Traditional methods can sometimes block creativity and not everyone works in the same way. It's important to try multiple alternative processes within co-creation and see which works best for the specific group of people that you are working with. Learn from those processes, open up to change, be brave and don't be afraid to fail.

Based on 4 signals



EXPERIMENTATION

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CHANGEMAKER CO-CREATION IMAGINATION

MOVING TABLES

How redesigning your workspace can improve co-creation

OVERVIEW

Rasmus Nordqvist MP spoke about how he revolutionised parliament's meeting rooms with the simple act of replacing the current furniture with tables on wheels. He explained that by having moveable tables it allows you to rearrange them in accordance with the context of the discussion. For example, arranging them so everyone can see each other, work together and be creative. Rasmus also added flip-charts and whiteboards into the space; this is a more successful way to encourage collaboration and co-creation, as you can all work on a piece together in a large format, rather than individually hunched over your own piece of paper. By changing the space, it can inspire change from within.

RELEVANCE

Being able to manipulate the space to inspire and include, eliminates the idea of an individual at the head of the conversation and instead, creates a collective. This behaviour rouses co-creation when all involved feel like an equal participant.



#CONFLICTMANAGEMENT #PARTICIPATORYRESEARCH

"CO-CREATION MAKES US DISAGREE IN A BETTER WAY" RASMUS NORDQVIST

"Innovation, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void but out of chaos." — Mary Shelly

OVERVIEW

Co-creation on a governance level, generates a variety of opinions and not everyone agrees on the same things. But the journey of disagreeing and finding alternative solutions is what makes Co-creation the ultimate triumph of democracy.

RELEVANCE

Implementing co-creation on a governance level, challenges the very hierarchical nature of most work environments. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) advances the co-creation of knowledge and delves deep into communication challenges co-creation endeavours may face, thereby enabling the development and integration of research findings into practical reality.

doi: 10.1186/s13012-017-0696-3. (For research nerds ;)



PLAYING DESIGN GAMES

ITS A GAME

Co-creation is a playing with ideas

OVERVIEW

When playing the game it can mean removing cultural items to challenge their effect and promote practicalities e.g Lets-co covered all items with cardboard and invited practitioners into a game of "what do you actually need". It can be a game of imaging the futures with "What if questions". The facilitators are to set up the board and rules of the game e.g providing the problem to solve or asking questions that need answers.

RELEVANCE

Involving actors in a game is easier than asking them to be experts. A game provides the freedom and mindset to lose or win, and that is the excitement of playing. It also provides opportunities for participants to acknowledge that others are good at playing the game.

How do we create an atmosphere of playing and remove unnecessary seriousness, when looking for possibilities.

Lets-co

WANT TO EXPLORE FURTHER...?

Unravel Tomorrow <http://www.unravel-tomorrow.eu/>

Bespoke <https://www.bespokecph.com/>

Hele Landet <https://www.helelandet.dk/>

Samsø Energy Academy <https://energiakademiet.dk/en/>

Let's Co <https://www.letsco.dk/>

Copenhagen Circularity Lab <https://kaoslab.dk/>

Absalon <https://absaloncph.dk/en/>

The Alternative <https://alternativet.dk/en>

European Spring Movement <https://europeanspring.net/>



UNRAVEL TOMORROW 2019

