

Setting Up Your Co-Design Team

4. Phase 1 – Planning

This is the most important aspect of co-design. Your co-design team is the group of local experts who will support your project to get the right outcomes for your community and project/initiative. The team should include a diversity of local people with real life experience and knowledge of the situation/problem, as well as professional/technical experts. This mix of team members is most likely to identify solutions that suit the needs of your community and are most likely to work.

Mapping stakeholders

Which community members do you need involved with this project?

Identify:

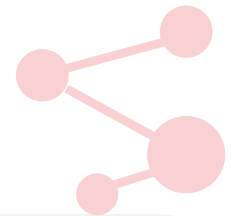
- Who are the end users, who are you designing for?
- Who will be impacted?
- Who has direct experience?
- Who is an expert?
- Who will bring a different perspective?

To fully understand an issue, you need multiple and differing perspectives, so it's important to think carefully about the group diversity and membership.

Approaching and engaging team members

Use various means to promote membership in the team and to recruitment members. You may know of a number of suitable candidates, but it pays to reach out beyond your usual networks to ensure new voices are included. This may mean putting out calls through various media platforms or approaching specific groups you have identified.

Keep in mind that engaging in a team like this will be daunting for almost everyone, so be sure to provide additional support to make people feel comfortable and valued.



Example: Safeguarding Volunteering Project

Local Volunteer Network Group membership includes:

- Small community groups and larger/statewide organisations.
- Volunteer managers.
- New volunteers and lifetime volunteers.
- Local council staff (Executive Managers/Community Development Officers).
- Elected members.
- Various sectors such as sports, health, community services, emergencies services, and arts.
- Diverse membership crossing age, social/cultural backgrounds, geographical reach and physical abilities.



Team structure and roles

A smaller team of key people will be most effective. Keep membership at about 12-15 people by including key representatives of the stakeholder groups you identify. Other community stakeholders you identify can be engaged for their expertise and knowledge throughout the following project phases.

Be clear about the **expectations and commitment required** from the team at the start.

Make sure you're clear on the role of each team member: Are they leading and making key decisions or are they consulting with stakeholders? Are they undertaking activities or providing advice? Being clear on this from the beginning will establish trust and understanding.

Also consider the following:

- What time commitment is expected? How many meetings will there be? How long is the overall timeline? What activities will they need to be involved in outside of meetings?
- What is the role of the team as a whole and what are you asking them to do?
- What expertise are you asking members to bring to the team?
- What level of decision-making power will they have?

While you may not have all the answers to these questions, be as transparent as possible and share as much information as you can upfront.

Co-design team principles

Each of the five key co-design principles relate strongly to the co-design team. It's important to remember these when working with and supporting the group.



1. **Shared power:** Ensuring all members of the team have the same level of power, influence and responsibility (this can be difficult to manage based on 'roles' / 'positions' outside of the group but is very important to maintain the balance).
2. **Prioritising relationships:** Take the time to get the team 'warmed up'. Some people will find this setting daunting. Taking time in the beginning to build relationships and trust will go a long way.
3. **Use participatory means:** Make sure that the team structure is considerate of people's needs (meetings need to be easy to get to and in a safe/welcoming space).
4. **Build capability:** Make the experience meaningful and useful for team members. This is as much about the end results as the learning and development process.

"[I] felt there was a safe environment. We can express an opinion and not be challenged. It's great to have alternative views and expand on a view."

Co-design team members, Huon Valley

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