
Participatory Innovations With Disabled Citizens in Higher Education Institutions

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Résumé

The concept of participatory innovation means that disabled persons become self-determined actors in innovation processes that concern their lives. It can be described as essential both for the development of public services and the creation of products and services in the for-profit sector (Buur & Matthews 2008). It's primarily relevant, because it helps to focus on the needs of users and through this, it can result in products and services that truly reflect on the real challenges that disabled people face. The concept is also important, because it emphasizes the role of higher education institutions in quadruple helix ecosystems (Castiaux, 2016).

In the field of Disability Studies, participatory innovation has not been in the centre of attention yet (Cserti-Szauer et al, 2022). More typical research topics include the exploration of co-productive processes in the field of public services (Bonfils & Askheim, 2014) or co-creation in product development (Osborne et al, 2016).

In 2019, we founded the Disability / Studies / and Social / Innovation Lab at the ELTE University, Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Needs Education. The DSSI Lab is an inclusive community of disabled and non-disabled researchers and developers. It facilitates innovative participatory projects from fundraising, through joint planning and implementation to evaluation. From 2022-2023, we conduct two research projects that focus on the role of the DSSI Lab, as well as the mapping of the participatory innovation methodology in Hungary.

Therefore the aim of our case study is two-fold. Qualitative, expert interviews with members of the DSSI Lab analyze how a Living Lab can function as a catalyst in development (van Geenhuizen, 2016, Liedtke et al 2011). On the other hand, we present the results of a qualitative field study with two service development projects that implement the participatory approach. Based on these experiences, we describe the advantages and obstacles that can characterize participatory innovation processes in practice.

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