

Expectations and realisations of user contributions in multi-actor innovative healthcare initiatives: perspectives from Estonia

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Abstract

User engagement has adopted an increasingly prominent role within public management and innovation literature. Users have been seen as the solution for the increasing complexity of societal challenges and the limited resources the public sector possesses. Whilst there is a significant amount of literature on the level of engagement, there is limited information about how it develops throughout an initiative - what are the initial expectations, how does it develop during the initiative and what is the role of governance configuration in shaping them. The aim of this study is to study the different governance configurations and user engagement from resource perspective that is highlighted within the academic literature and analyse them with three healthcare innovation cases in Estonia. The author gathered the data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis and analysed the themes through key phrase occurrence. The cases highlighted the role of governance configuration - formal structure, goal-setting, interaction arenas - and its effect on user contribution from expectations to realisation throughout the initiative. The findings demonstrate the role of governance configuration in shaping the initial expectations and managing later deviations of contributions. There is a tendency to define expectations from a minimal perspective and the subsequent deviations in user contribution is affected by the flexibility in formal structure and interaction arenas and the openness towards changing goals. The ability to perceive the affecting factors remains key in limiting possible disillusionment about their role from users.

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