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Peer Research Approaches

A Mechanism to Engage Societal Actors in Open Science

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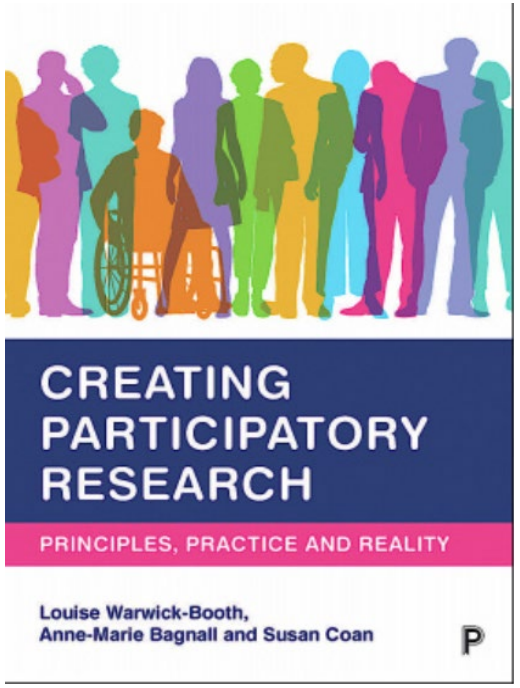
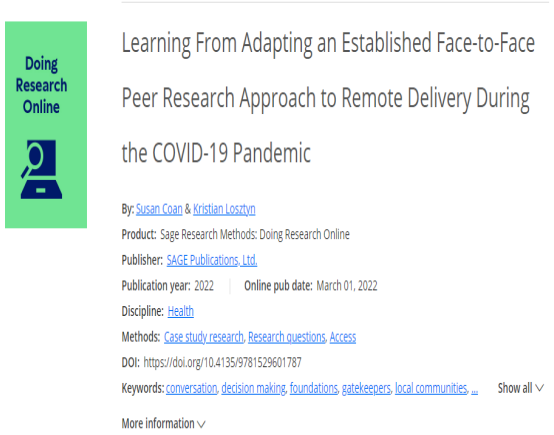
Today

- Outlining our peer research practice
- Detailing 3 peer research projects with different societal actors
- Discussing these models, and their principles as a form of open science







Remote Peer Research in the Pandemic



Volunteer Listeners 2017-2019

National Lottery £££ evaluation (peer research was small spin off project)

Designed with/by an older community member – he was a professional prior to retiring, but not a researcher.

'Pilot' – recruitment listeners & support via voluntary organization

10 Volunteer Listeners gathered data from 26 older people

Analysis, reporting and article writing led by Louise



VOLUNTEER LISTENER

- Contribute to project evaluation
- Meet participants to hear about aging
- One leads conversation, one takes notes

STORYWRITER

- Write stories from conversation notes
- Identify key themes
- Anonymise

International students lived experiences of higher education –October 2022-February 2023

Internal £££ -study in its own right

Recruitment via email from Course Leader

3 MSc students at session 1 (2 male, 1 female)

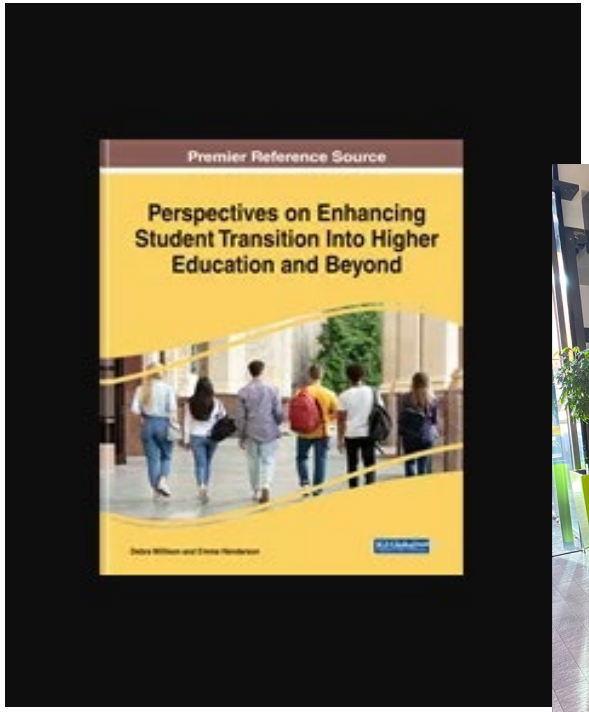
2 more MSc students joined at session 2 (both female)

Interviews and Focus groups chosen (same schedule) – some conducted in person, some online

Data collection n=26 students, mostly from our own MSc

Data analysed by staff, based on some initial coding and reflections from 2 peer researchers

Book chapter published – writing led by Louise





Community members: Leeds and Cambridgeshire

Study about the current and potential role of food retailers in supporting community wellbeing (peer research = small project within it)

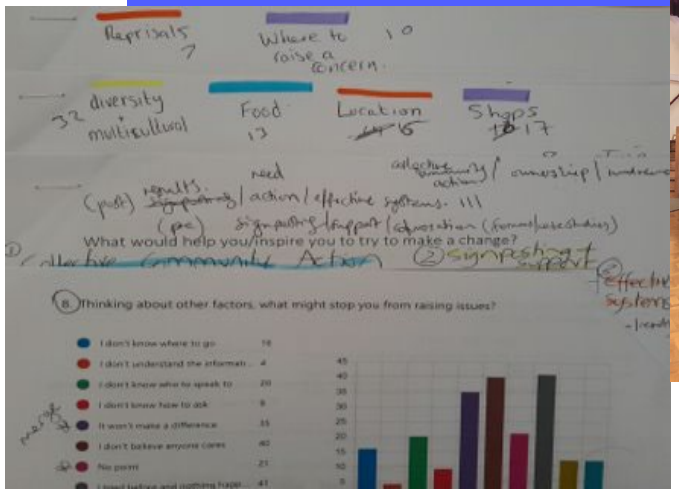
2 areas: Leeds (n=5 peers) and Cambridgeshire (n=7) - residents supported to work as peer researchers, investigating local concerns, priorities for wellbeing in their community

Leeds – 12 question survey (n=95)
Cambridge 14 interviews and 1 focus group resulting in a sample of 19

Analysis involved peer researchers

Paper (in development) by academics – 5 community members will be co-authors







Peer research as a pathway to open science

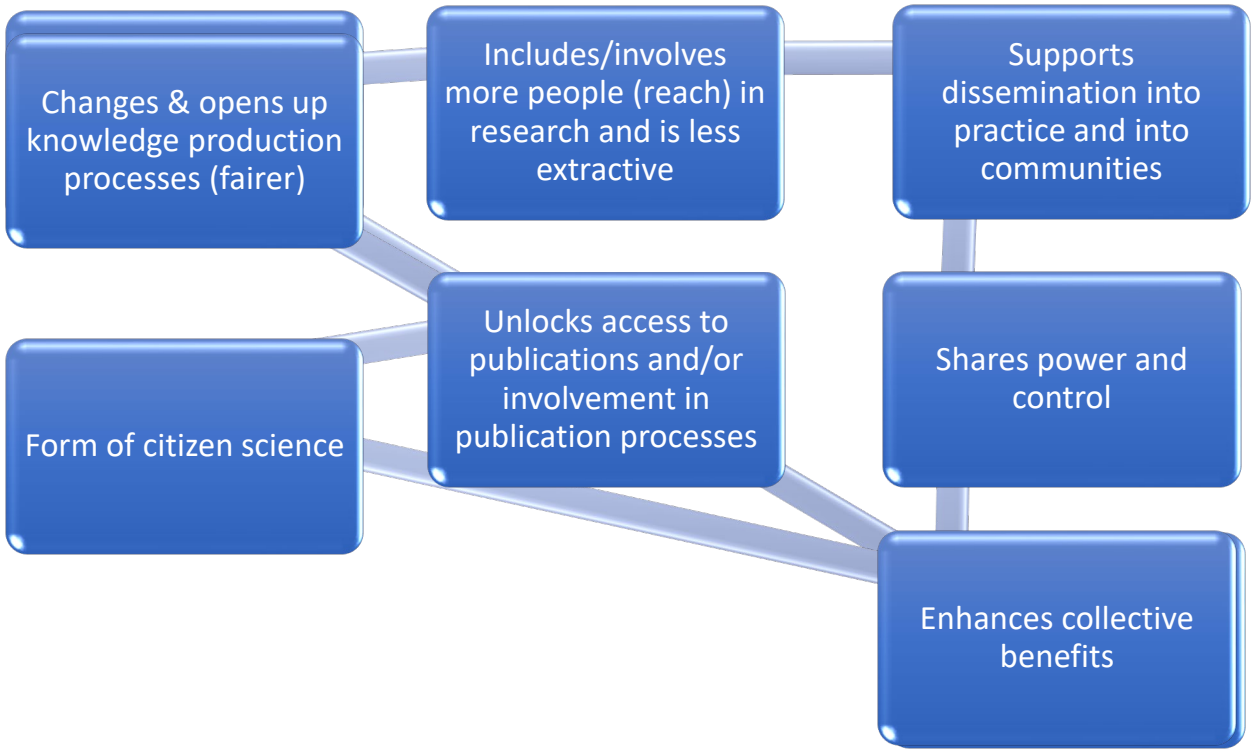




Image: UNESCO Model of Open Science, © UNESCO, 2024,
CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO [14029] https://doi.org/10.54677/MNMH8546

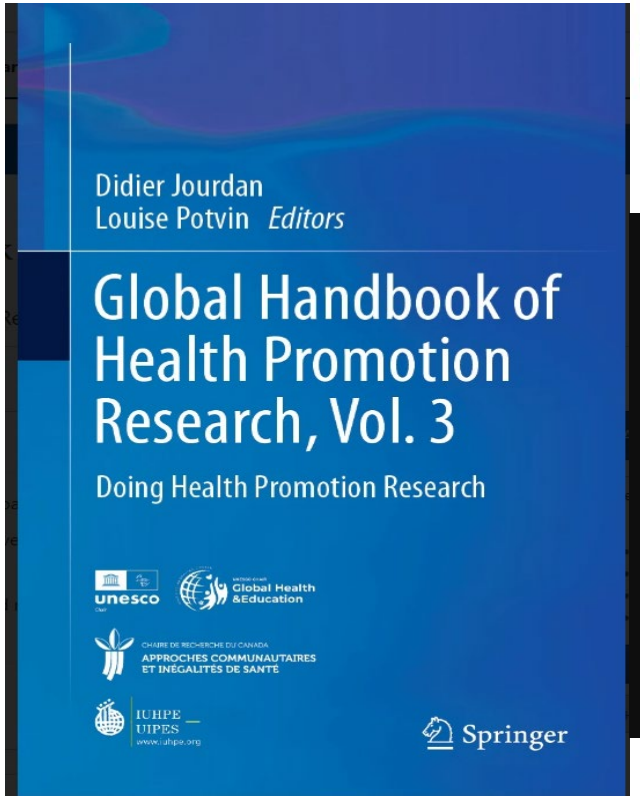
Limitations and challenges

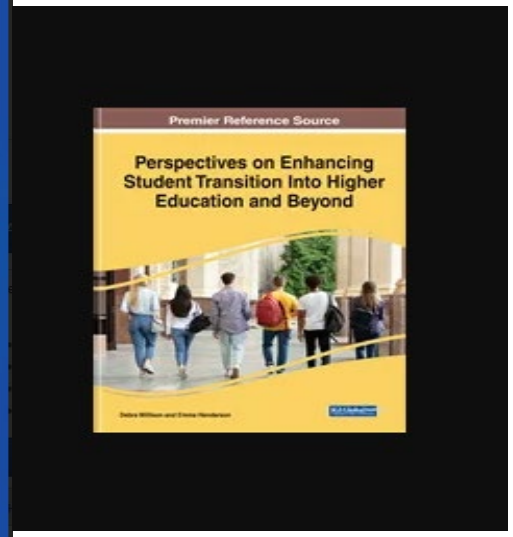
Do all communities and peers want to be involved? Can they be involved?

Emotional impacts on researchers – under considered?

Ethical challenges *in context*

Power dynamics/vested institutional interests – universities, partner organisations





Obstacles to co-producing evaluation knowledge: power, control and voluntary sector dynamics

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Keywords: co-production; evaluation; voluntary sector; power; politics; emotions

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SAGE journals

Peer Review

'You're not going to give a monkey's chuff': exploring co-production in the design of services for women who have experienced sexual violence

L Warwick-Booth [1], R Cross [2], S Coan [3], and P Fisher [4]

Summary

- Success on many levels – It can be done!
- We have principles underpinning our practice
- We have developed models to support both implementation and learning
- We continue to reflect and refine our work

BUT a note of caution:

- Participation in the peer research process may not always lead to open science!



A Toolkit for Co-Production

Developed by Leeds Beckett University on behalf of Rape Crisis England and Wales, October 2017

Researchers: Pamela Fisher, Louise Warwick Booth, Susan Coan, Ruth Cross, Katrina Kinsella

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Thank you.

Any questions?