

International Social Innovation Research Conference (ISIRC) 2016

Paper submission for the Design Thinking and Social Innovation stream

Using personas and scenarios in co-creating stakeholder involvement in organisational governance

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Abstract

Stakeholder involvement in the governance of organisations that work for social value is seen as crucial in enabling their needs and wishes to be fully represented. However, finding the right governance arrangements to promote this stakeholder involvement has proved difficult, particularly when the organisation is forming or undergoing major change. Mintzberg highlights the role of design in management, including designing strategies for organisational development together with organisational structures to implement these strategies. Taking a design approach could thus offer a way for an organisation to create governance structures that promote appropriate stakeholder involvement. Personas are a valuable design technique in human-computer interaction, where they can represent the users of a software system. Personas have also been used in management, for example creating profiles of typical customers in service design. Personas can be based on knowledge of the behaviour of users gained from data, or created by designers to explore future possibilities in design. This paper explores the potential for a third approach to using personas, to promote critical reflection, in particular as a tool for reflection on values and stakeholders in a social enterprise. The initial findings in this paper are drawn from working with a small social enterprise in the North West of England. The findings are that the use of personas was helpful in stimulating reflection on the organisation's relationship with its external stakeholders. There is also some evidence that the use of personas helped to stimulate critical reflection, a re-structuring of how participants viewed the organisation's stakeholder relationships.

1. Introduction

1.1 Stakeholder involvement in the governance of social enterprise

The concept of stakeholders in a business originated in publications from the Stanford Research Institute in the 1970s (Vartiainen 2003, p. 7), then came to prominence in the 1980s when Freeman (1984, p. 25) defined a stakeholder as 'any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives'. Later work by Freeman (1994) and Donald and Preston (1995) builds on property rights to identify a normative core to stakeholder theory, which focuses on the obligations the corporations have to those who are 'materially affected' by their activities. Morris et al. (2002) develops these arguments further using social contracts theory to highlight that, since society allows the business to be formed, it should offer a net social benefit.

There is a history of enterprise going beyond taking stakeholders into account to create primarily social value. Moulaert and Ailenei (2005, p. 2038) point out that the 'social economy' has had a long history since the Egyptian corporations and Roman 'colleges of craftsmen'. More recently, the concept of social entrepreneurship emerged in the late 20th century as a potential solution to the problems with welfare provision throughout Europe (Galera and Borzaga 2009). In the UK, social enterprise developed in the 1970s initially as co-operatives, then through initiatives such as the Intermediate Labour Markets in the 1980s, with the term social enterprise coined in 1991 (Pearce 2003, p. 60). Teasdale (2012) highlights the differences between the UK's more co-operative approach and the US's more market-based approach to tackling social problems through enterprise. Social enterprise has proved difficult to define, with Peredo and McLean (2005, p. 64) considering it in terms of creating social value, innovation in doing so, being prepared to undertake a high degree of risk and being 'unusually resourceful in being relatively undaunted by scarce assets'.

Monks and Minow (1995) defined governance in terms of who determines the direction and performance of the corporation, where shareholders have legal rights and duties as owners. This

perspective leads to a stewardship approach to corporate governance, focusing on the expertise of directors to act on behalf of shareholders (Low 2006). However, a social enterprise is asset locked for community benefit (Dunn and Riley 2004), implying that its stakeholders are the owners rather than shareholders. This ownership by stakeholders leads to a more democratic model of governance where stakeholder involvement is key, and the directors act on behalf of stakeholders rather than shareholders. Previous work with social enterprises in the UK by Larner and Mason (2014) highlights that social enterprises need to adopt appropriate mechanisms to involve their stakeholders in governance oversight.

These stakeholders will bring their own values, originating in their cultural background, about what is good or bad for the organisation, where Rokeach (1973, p. 5), defined a value held by an individual as ‘an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence’. However, the values of stakeholders may clash with those of the founders of the organisation, which could cause problems when deciding on its future development. Reconciling this values clash is an example of a ‘wicked problem’ where there is no definitive solution (Rittel and Webber 1973, p. 155), but potential solutions can be explored together with gaining a deeper appreciation of the problem through taking a design approach (Buchanan 1992).

1.2 The potential for taking a design approach in stakeholder involvement

Mintzberg (2011) highlights the role that design can play in management, including designing strategies for organisational development together with organisational structures to implement these strategies. Nelson and Stolterman (2012) point out that design is an ‘inquiry into the ideal’ focusing on what is desirable but does not yet exist. Considering design in the context of critical theory leads to critical design, introduced by Dunne and Raby (2001) and developed further by Bowen (2007, p. 1) as ‘critical design practices’ that can enable ‘stakeholders to engage with novel situations and consequently engage in creative thinking about future possibilities’. Stanford (2007, p.15) sets the components of product and services in the context of organisational design, highlighting the importance of working with stakeholders to develop ‘a clear vision of the look and feel of the company in the future (the “to-be state”), assessing where it is now (the “as-is state”) and then determining how to close the gap between the two’. Designing for potential change in an organisational context can also potentially promote the critical management approach advocated by Alvesson and Deetz (2000, p. 17) of insight, critique and transformational redefinition, where the research process can contribute to the processes of insight into the ‘lives of real people in real situations’. Taking a critical design approach could thus offer a way for a social enterprise to gain a new perspective on their stakeholder involvement and governance mechanisms.

Service design focuses on the customer experience, where successful service design requires integrating stakeholders as early as possible in the project development process (Stickdorn and Schneider 2010, p. 65). Thus service design could be a useful starting point for developing a methodology to investigate how stakeholders can interact with a social enterprise. Considering specific methods, Koskinen et al. (2011, p. 131) point out that designers can ‘stage organizational structures and processes’ by ‘thinging’ them, making them concrete using low fidelity materials such as paper, cardboard and Lego. Curedale (2013) offers 250 methods that can be used in service design, of which stakeholder maps, actor maps, personas, persona brainstorming and scenarios could be useful for designing mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in social enterprise. The technique of personas could be particularly relevant, as personas can be a tool to promote critical reflection on the stakeholders in a design process. Scenarios are also relevant as personas can be actors in scenarios of how they interact with the organisation.

2. Personas and scenarios as tools for critical reflection

2.1 The development of personas as a design technique

Personas were introduced by Cooper as fictional individuals who can represent users in the design of human-computer interaction (Cooper 1999). Grudin and Pruitt (2002) developed the concept of personas further, where they advocated using detailed ethnographic data to create personas that represent groups of consumers in product design. Norman (2004) proposed an alternative approach where personas are created from the designer's intuition, background and experience rather than from extensive data gathering, while Blythe and Wright (2006) offer personas based on fiction to help designers reflect and gain deeper insights. The concept of personas has now expanded further to include quantitative data driven personas, marketing personas, and user archetypes, which are more like stereotypes of user group characteristics (Floyd et al. 2008). Miaskiewicz and Kozar (2011) undertook a comprehensive study on using personas, identifying potential benefits including focusing on the goals of users rather than the technology available, prioritising the requirements of products and challenging assumptions about the users of the product.

However, there has been relatively little work with personas in a management or governance context. Kronqvist and Salmi (2011) explored organisational culture by creating personas representing each role in the organisation with participants in workshops which were then refined in later workshops. Bodker et al. (2012, p. 94) explored the use of personas in participatory design in the context of local government, where they found personas to be useful to present data about the 'experiences and attitudes' of users in the design process. However, in the end, they preferred to work with real users rather than abstract them using personas, finding that their application of personas couldn't really support participatory design. Pellicciaro (2014) used personas to represent stakeholders in the development of collaborative local food projects. However, recent work by Marsden and Haag (2016) and others offer the potential for using personas for critical reflection, which could be helpful to explore an organisation's relationship with its stakeholders.

2.2 Personas as a tool for critical reflection

Mezirow (1990, p. 1) defines critical reflection in an adult learning context as 'a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built', where Schön (1983, p. 241) refers to a 'reflective conversation' between a practitioner and their design that can allow for re-structuring of how a particular problem is understood. However, Argyris (1991) highlights that it can be difficult to challenge or change existing ways of thinking in a community of practice, or their theory-in-use (Argyris and Schön 1978). Organisational governance arrangements are frequently taken for granted as the framework within which an organisation interacts with its stakeholders. However, as the author's previous work has highlighted, taking stakeholder involvement in social enterprise for granted can cause problems (Larner 2012, Larner and Mason 2014). It would thus be helpful to have a technique that could prompt critical reflection on stakeholders in a social enterprise context.

Nilsson et al. (2010, p. 296) offer personas as being 'valuable for starting a discussion' in the context of design but without having to discuss individuals, where personas can help focus on concerns shared by all involved. Welsh and Dehler (2012) found that personas could be helpful in reflection with design students. More relevant to the context of this paper, later work by Källhammer and Nilsson (2012) found that the use of personas could be a tool for critical reflection on the social aspects of gender issues in entrepreneurship. Marsden and Haag (2016) highlight that

personas have the potential to promote critical reflection on the assumptions that go into creating them, however in a human-computer interaction context the focus has been creating personas based on detailed empirical evidence of the users of a computer system. The dilemma here is that:

1. If personas are created using detailed data on users, the problem is that the data can never be detailed enough and that the personas are still no substitute for working with actual users in a participatory design process (Bødker et al. 2012).
2. If personas are created by designers without using data, the problem is that the personas then reflect the attitudes and goals of the designers rather than users (Marsden and Haag 2016).

In either case, the personas risk being stereotyped (Chapman and Milham 2006, Turner and Turner 2010), with user or designer characteristics. However, the work of Nilsson et al. (2010) and Källhammer and Nilsson (2012) offers the potential for a third perspective on personas, where they can prompt critical reflection on attitudes and beliefs. In this third perspective, stereotyping can be an advantage, as the stereotyped personas can represent stakeholder characteristics but not particular individuals.

This paper explores the potential of value-led personas (Larner 2014) to promote critical reflection in a social enterprise context. It reports on the outcomes of facilitating the directors and stakeholders of a social enterprise to create personas that allow for critical reflection on their values, stakeholders and governance. These specifically value-led personas can:

1. Express a value that is relevant to the organisation.
2. Represent stakeholders in the organisation.
3. Be presented in the form of a cartoon and quotation.

The value-led personas can then be actors in scenarios of the organisation's future strategic development.

2.3 Scenarios in governance design

Scenarios include a setting and agents or actors, each of whom have goals or objectives (Carroll 2000), taking the form of stories with personas as the focal point (Nielsen 2012). Stanford (2007) highlights how scenarios can be used in business, including as part of an organisational design process. Nilsson and Falholm (2011) explored how scenarios could be used in a participatory design process to create utopian or dystopian visions of what factory work could be like. Scenarios can involve personas as actors, a technique for representing users within scenarios and creating meaning together (Nielsen, 2014).

The next section presents the methods used to explore value-led personas and scenarios and the research findings from facilitating a workshop with Shared Future CIC in Manchester. The workshop was documented by the author taking notes and photographs, with additional photos taken by participants. Video or audio recording was not used, as this can be inhibiting to participants (Stringer 2007, p. 73).

3. Research methods and findings

Shared Future was established in 2009, constituted as a Community Interest Company based in Manchester. Major successes include Participatory Budgeting and Citizen Juries, where Shared

Future and its network of associates are leaders in these fields. Other projects include Latticeworks Social Enterprise Development, a methodology for developing successful social enterprises. Shared Future is developing as a mechanism for associates to get and deliver work that they couldn't do by themselves. However, some associates have expressed confusion about what Shared Future is and what it can offer both to them and to potential funders.

3.1 Creating and presenting value-led personas

In preparation for the workshop with Shared Future, the author first established the values held by the organisation. These values were derived from analysis of organisational documents using NVivo 10, an example of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Hutchison et al. 2010). This software enabled coding of the text from each document that corresponded to a particular value. The starting point for coding was based on the values and motivations frameworks offered by Schwartz (1992), Ryan and Deci (2000), Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2002) and Hoggett et al. (2009), with other values being identified as coding progressed. Table 1 below shows the results.

Values or motivations framework	Value	Number of times coded
Schwartz (1992)	Achievement	9
	Benevolence	3
	Conformity	1
	Hedonism	0
	Power	4
	Security	0
	Self-Direction	2
	Stimulation	1
	Tradition	0
	Universalism	3
Ryan and Deci (2000)	Autonomy	4
	Competence	17
	Relatedness	13
Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2002)	Flow	0
Hoggett et al. (2009)	Honesty	2
	Repatriation	2
	Transparency	0
Other	Authority	2
	Community	33
	Confidence	5
	Effectiveness	12
	Empowerment	20
	Enterprise	22
	Learning	28
	Participation	29
	Resilience	2
	Sharing	15
Sustainability	10	

Table 1: Values coding in Shared Future's documents

Although this coding was only undertaken by the author, it does show some clear trends in the values espoused by Shared Future in their internal and external literature. The values that were coded most often were represented by six initial value-led personas created by the author, where each value is presented in the form of a stakeholder in Shared Future identified from the organisational documents.

Community Claire

“I like working in a network of people who share my values”

Competent Charles

“I’ve developed my business skills tremendously - but I still don’t know what Shared Future is”

Empowered Edward

“I realised I could make a difference”

Enterprising Emily

“The support from Shared Future enabled me to develop my idea of young people and gardening into reality”

Learning Larry

“Academic papers are all very well, but the real knowledge comes from working with practitioners”

Participation Petra

“I feel I can make a real difference in my neighbourhood”

As well as the six personas, the author also created an anti-persona, which represented a value not held by the organisation (Pruitt and Adlin 2006):

Obstructive Oricana

“Could I speak to your HR department, please?”

The personas are clearly stereotyped, with their cartoon drawing, brief quotation and alliterative name, each one representing a particular value that is part of their name. The author then presented these initial personas to Shared Future workshop participants. With some amusement, they created 25 other personas in a similar style that are shown in Table 2. Two of them are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

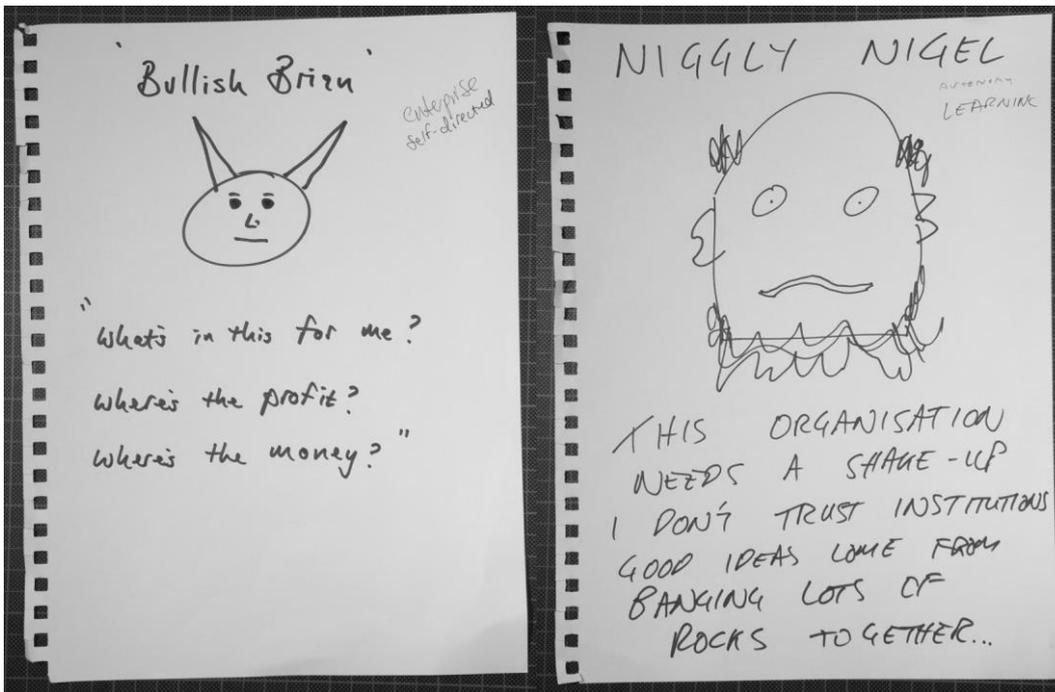


Figure 1: Value-led personas created during the workshop

3.2 Discussion of values and stakeholder relationships

The author presented the internal and external stakeholders identified during initial analysis of Shared Future's documents, then participants added further stakeholders:

Internal Stakeholders

- Directors
- Associates
- Staff

External Stakeholders

- Partners
- Grant funders
- Public sector commissioners
- Community members
- Young people
- Existing local infrastructure organisations
- Universities
- Local government
- National government
- Social enterprises
- Prospective associates

Additional stakeholders:

- Suppliers

- Neighbours of people working within Shared Future seeking advice on how to become involved in their community
- Commissioners, they have the power to put Shared Future out of business by denying contracts. They need stories of success.

The key points that emerged from the following discussion were:

- Participants added the value of accountability, to commissioners and funders.
- Dependency, people approach Shared Future when they are not sure what to do, they are looking for competency, looking for empowerment.
- There is an expectation in the charity sector that workers are unpaid.
- Voice, having a voice is fundamental to participation.
- Power, Obstructive Oricana has the power to be disruptive, having a different perception of the organisation.

Using the list of values that had been identified beforehand from analysis of documents (see Table 1 above), participants then annotated each persona with the values they felt were appropriate. These values are shown in Table 2 below with the name and quotation for each persona.

Name	Values	Quotation
Action Annie	competence	<i>“Ideas without action are useless”</i>
Bullish Brian	enterprise self-direction	<i>“What’s in this for me? Where’s the profit? Where’s the money?”</i>
Clueless Kevin	empowerment learning power	<i>“I need help with my work but I don’t know what help I need”</i>
Commissioning Colin	power	<i>“I don’t like change so what’s so good about Shared Future?”</i>
Committed Commissioner Kevin	enterprise	<i>“I really want to work with you, but you need to show me how you can help my organisation meet its financial targets”</i>
Community Claire	community	<i>“I like working in a network of people who share my values”</i>
Competent Charles	achievement competence	<i>“I’ve developed my business skills tremendously - but I’m still don’t know what Shared Future is”</i>
Confused Clara	sharing	<i>“I’d like to be more involved but don’t know how”</i>
Councillor Cuthbert	power	<i>“I was elected to make decisions, let’s get on with it!”</i>
Cynical Susan	enterprise	<i>“‘Social’ enterprise? It’s just money in brown envelopes with another name”</i>
Disconnected	community	<i>“I came to something organised by ‘SFCIC’. I stood, spoke in</i>

Dorothy	learning participation power relatedness	<i>public and got given money... Don't know much but it was terrifying and magnificent... who are Shared Future?"</i>
Efficient Eric	competence effectiveness	<i>"I want to commission a service with clear outcomes, with policies in place and verifiable evaluations"</i>
Empowered Edward	community participation achievement self-direction	<i>"I realised I could make a difference"</i>
Enterprising Emily	achievement enterprise learning relatedness	<i>"The support from Shared Future enabled me to develop my idea of young people and gardening into reality"</i>
Excited Ella	community participation empowerment	<i>"It's so great to talk to everyone and have a chance to make a difference. I've never been involved in anything like this before."</i>
Financial Frank	competence accountability	<i>"I hold us accountable for how we spend our money"</i>
Innovative Imogen	effectiveness enterprise learning relatedness self-direction	<i>"I think of whacky creative ideas and work out how we can do something with them"</i>
Juggling Jim	enterprise	<i>"So much that's good to do... I haven't got time to sort what matters but I'm having a great time trying..."</i>
Learning Larry	learning	<i>"Academic papers are all very well, but the real knowledge comes from working with practitioners"</i>
Managing Molly	achievement	<i>"I make sure we are well organised to deliver what we commit to"</i>
Niggly Nigel	autonomy learning	<i>"This organisation needs a shake-up. I don't trust institutions, good ideas come from banging lots of rocks together"</i>
Not on your Nelly	power	<i>"I'm the competition, I don't want to 'give it all away' to you!!"</i>
Obstructive Oricana	power	<i>"Could I speak to your HR department, please?"</i>
Participation Petra	autonomy achievement enterprise participation	<i>"I feel I can make a real difference in my neighbourhood"</i>

Potential Polly	enterprise	<i>“I want to build my portfolio. How do I work with these guys? I hear they like getting stuff for nothing.”</i>
Revolutionary Rhianna	community power	<i>“This community engagement stuff is all very nice, but it’s tokenistic and doesn’t lead to real change and actually can do the opposite”</i>
Sceptical Sarah	enterprise	<i>“Social enterprises are simply capitalism with a Guardian-friendly facade”</i>
Sceptical Simon	power voice	<i>“I am not sure anyone is really going to listen to us!”</i>
Thankful Theodora	learning relatedness empowerment	<i>“Thank you so much for helping me set up as a CIC - I couldn’t have done it without you!”</i>
Truthful Tiara	confidence power participation voice	<i>“SFCIC seem to do some good things, but they look very blokey, white and middle class”</i>
Unsure Ursula	learning participation power	<i>“I like the idea, the atmosphere and the people but I don’t know how I can continue”</i>
Worky Wendy	enterprise	<i>“I need an income so am looking to improve contacts”</i>

Table 2: Values and quotation for each persona

3.3 Scenario planning using the value-led personnas

Scenario planning was undertaken using Post-It notes, where each persona was represented by a green note for their present position in relation to Shared Future’s boundary and an orange one for their future position. See Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Scenario planning exercise

The movements of the personas were:

Persona	Movement
Action Annie	moves from just outside the organisation's boundary to just within the boundary
Bullish Brian	moves from outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Clueless Kevin	now far away from the organisation
Commissioning Colin	stays at the boundary of the organisation
Committed Commissioner Kevin	moves from outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Community Claire	now within the organisation's boundary
Competent Charles	moves from outside the organisation to within it
Confused Clara	moves from outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Councillor Cuthbert	at edge of organisation in the future
Cynical Susan	moves from outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Disconnected Dorothy	stays within the organisation
Efficient Eric	moves from on the organisation's boundary to within the boundary

Empowered Edward	now at centre of the organisation
Enterprising Emily	now within the organisation
Excited Ella	now near the boundary of the organisation
Financial Frank	moves from the boundary of the organisation to its centre
Innovative Imogen	from within the organisation but near the boundary to outside the organisation
Juggling Jim	now at the centre of the organisation
Learning Larry	stays just within the boundary of the organisation
Managing Molly	stays within the organisation
Niggly Nigel	stays at the boundary of the organisation
Not on your Nelly	moves from outside the organisation to within it
Obstructive Oricana	moves from within the organisation but near the boundary to as far as possible away from the organisation
Participation Petra	in the centre of organisation in the future
Potential Polly	moves from outside the organisation to on its boundary
Revolutionary Rhianna	moves from outside the organisation to near its centre
Sceptical Simon	now outside the organisation
Sceptical Sarah	moves from outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Thankful Theodora	moves from just outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Truthful Tiara	moves from just outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Unsure Ursula	moves from just outside the organisation's boundary to within the boundary
Worky Wendy	stays within the boundary of the organisation

Table 3: Scenarios of the persona's relationships to the organisation

This process took place with lively discussion. Some of this discussion was about the sustainability of the organisation, it was started by "white middle class blokes", it needs to involve young people to continue long term. Mentoring could be one way of involving them. Communication is an issue, "where is the Shared Future community?", where good stories could help build a community. Shared Future could be analogous to a theatre flat, which is a painted backdrop that can be a focus for a range of activity. These activities could be represented by stories about Shared Future, about a set of values on the website, each linked to a face (or persona?), as shown below.

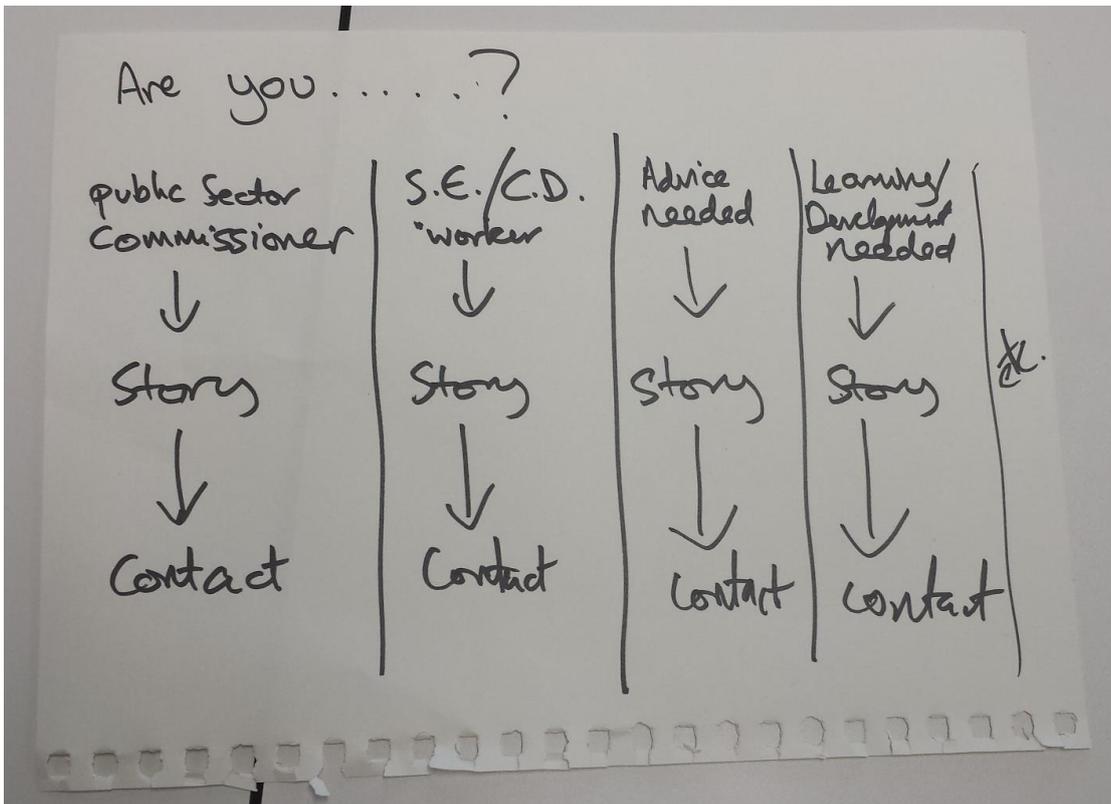


Figure 3: Organisational stories

3.4 Persona and values ranking

Company storytelling emerged as a potentially significant method of communication with major stakeholders as discussions continued. This led to participants wishing to identify which personas were most significant, which stories needed to be told. Several tables were placed together in the room and participants experimented with ranking the personas. In the end, a voting system proved most effective. As each persona had been previously annotated with their associated values, this process also revealed the values that participants saw as most significant to Shared Future's stakeholders. The most significant personas were Bullish Brian, Committed Commissioner Kevin, Enterprise Emily, Niggly Nigel, Participation Petra and Unsure Ursula, with the most significant values as enterprise (x4), learning (x3), participation (x2), achievement (x2), autonomy (x2), power (x1), relatedness (x1) and self-direction (x1).

3.5 Potential organisation design

The author then led some discussion about guild-like structures which have a central core of masters (which could correspond to the CIC directors in Shared Future), journeymen (associates) and apprentices. In Shared Future at present there are no apprentices, they come fully trained from other organisations. Participants seemed intrigued by the concept of masters, but less so when the author suggested that Shared Future had a hard centre of the CIC which is what the commissioners interact with, which is about numbers, budgets, policies, outcomes. This hard centre has a fuzzier boundary which is what stakeholders interact with, this is where the stories are useful. While this discussion was going on one participant was drawing their interpretation of how Shared Future could work, which is shown below.

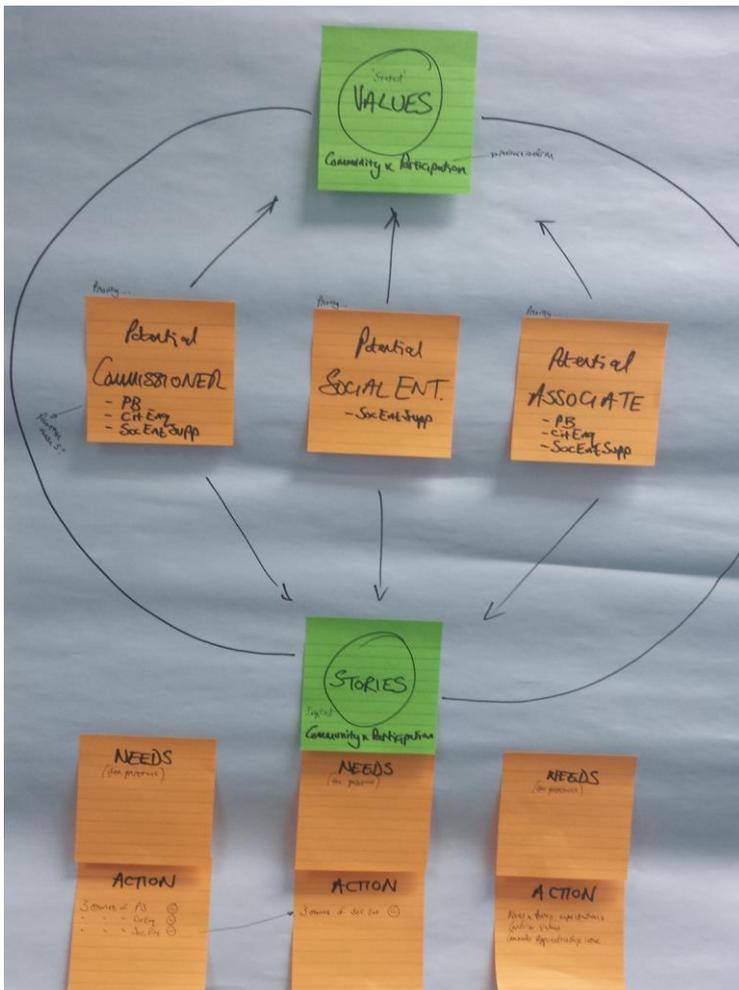


Figure 4: Diagram of interactions between values, stakeholders and stories

The diagram above shows values at the top, three priorities of commissioners, social enterprises and associates on the next level, then the (implied) stories of community participation, then needs (represented by personas). The lowest level is about actions including creating stories, confirming values and considering the issue of apprenticeship.

The author invited all participants to give feedback at the end of the workshop and three key individuals to reflect further on how the methods used had contributed to the event. These multiple perspectives can potentially help deal with the single researcher bias that could otherwise occur. These reflections are presented below.

3.6 Reflections on the workshop

All but one of the workshop participants felt that the personas were a useful technique, offering a chance for reflection. Ranking of the importance of the personas to the organisation was useful to participants, but that this process went on too long. Several participants commented on how using personas led to the idea of stories told by stakeholders. Personas can draw out aspects of the people creating them, including unconscious aspects. Personas helped identify people known to the organisation, that corresponded to each persona. Participants found the scenario exercise using the Post-It notes less useful, however. The exploration of guild-like structures was also less successful, with time running out and participants wishing to know more about them.

The author noted that the phrase “..terrifying and magnificent” from the Disconnected Dorothy persona came up a number of times during the workshop, it seemed to be significant to participants.

The author's role changed throughout the day where in the scenario exercise, the participants became co-designers, substituting Post-It notes for the actual personas on the diagram of Shared Future. Their involvement as designers of the process continued with ranking of personas on the long table. This and adding values to personas was something that emerged during the session, they weren't planned beforehand.

The author held short semi-structured interviews with three key individuals a few weeks after the workshop, which allowed time for further reflection. The responses reinforced that value-led personas had been a very useful technique, that it "gave us quite a few ideas about how we communicate with stakeholders" also that using personas can also give insight into culture. The personas "really made us stop and think", considering issues from a different perspective, "drawing stuff out and focusing us on the matter in hand". There is a level of anonymity in the personas that was very helpful, enabling participants to express issues that they might not have done otherwise.

At a subsequent board meeting, the topic of the role of associates in governance came up, also the role of the admin function and its benefit to associates. In its outward face, Shared Future presents as social benefit organisation, but in its internal working they operate more to a private sector model like a solicitors practice. The issues are about governance and ownership, "who owns the organisation?". The outcomes of the workshop highlighted the "need for various courses of action some of which we will begin to implement" but that there was "a step before influencing the strategic direction such as story collection and case studies, this event brought it home how important it was to do, it will influence strategic direction in due course but too early to say at the moment".

Two participants are now using personas in their own consultancy and facilitation work to capture values, where personas can work with value creation stories. Personas can be actors in organisational narratives, which can start from the past, highlighting values and the purpose of the organisation, move into the present (including any problems) then go into an imagined (but wished for) future.

4. Discussion

Shared Future CIC is a social enterprise that delivers a range of projects through a network of associates. As a social enterprise, it needs to reconcile the demands for stakeholder involvement in its governance (Larner and Mason 2014) and ownership of the organisation (Dunn and Riley 2004) with having a governing board that is competent to manage the organisation (Low 2006). These issues are further complicated in Shared Future as it has a board of directors and a network of associates as internal stakeholders, together with external stakeholders including commissioners, partner organisations and the general public.

The author held a workshop with Shared Future to investigate their relationships with these stakeholders. Taking a design approach enabled potential solutions to be explored together with gaining a deeper appreciation of the problem (Buchanan 1992). In particular, personas are a design technique that can offer the potential to stimulate critical reflection (Källhammer and Nilsson 2012, Marsden and Haag 2016), in this case on the values held by the organisation and its stakeholders, expressed through value-led personas. The workshop also used scenarios, where personas can be actors (Nielsen 2014).

Participants engaged with creating value-led personas, commenting that they offered a chance for reflection. This included reflection on who the external stakeholders were and the values held by those stakeholders, particularly when participants annotated each stakeholder with values (see section 3.2). However, this reflection wasn't critical reflection, as there wasn't a transformative aspect (Mezirow 1990, Alvesson and Deetz 2000) at this stage.

The scenario planning exercise was useful in stimulating discussion about the sustainability of the organisation, where the potential for organisational storytelling emerged. These stories could be aimed at specific stakeholders, which had been identified using the value-led personas. Discussion about organisational storytelling inspired participants to prioritise stakeholders, ending up with a form of actors map (Curedale 2013, p. 93). This part of the workshop was moving more towards critical reflection, where a new way of communicating with stakeholders emerged during the discussion. The author offered a guild-like model (Larner 2013) to participants as a potential starting point for discussion about how the stakeholders (as represented by value-led personas) could interact with the organisation. This discussion was inconclusive, but one participant drew their own interpretation of how Shared Future could reconcile stakeholders and values. This model was potentially transformative, but did not seem to be accepted by other participants.

Feedback from participants at the end of the workshop highlighted the potential usefulness of the personas technique in promoting reflection. Personas also could draw out aspects of the of the people creating them, including unconscious aspects, which relates to the author's previous ISIRC paper (Larner 2012) and also to the work of Cowan and Todorovic (2000), who identified that values could be consciously held, hidden or deep, where deep unconsciously held values underpin all a person or organisation's behaviour.

It wasn't clear from the workshop if there was critical reflection on stakeholders and values, but subsequent interviews with key participants revealed that the workshop was instrumental in Shared Future's subsequent moving towards a transformation in their thinking about how the organisation relates to its stakeholders. In particular, they are considering at board level how to reconcile their private sector model where the CIC works with a network of associates with the stakeholder involvement demanded of them as a social enterprise. In particular, they have identified the issue of who owns the organisation.

5. Conclusion

This paper presents the outcomes of a small research project that aimed to explore how the design techniques of personas and scenarios could enable a social enterprise to critically reflect on its relationships with stakeholders and hence its governance arrangements. The author worked with Shared Future, a small consultancy-based social enterprise operating in the North West of England. Following initial analysis of organisational documents to elicit the values held by the organisation, the author facilitated a day workshop with directors and associates of Shared Future in summer 2016. The workshop was followed a few weeks later by reflective interviews with key participants.

Although this project was limited in scope, with the potential for researcher bias in that the same person both facilitated the workshop and gathered data, its findings indicate that a simplified, even stereotyped form of persona can be a useful tool in stimulating reflection on the organisation's relationship with its external stakeholders. There is also some evidence that the use of personas helped to stimulate critical reflection, a re-structuring of how participants viewed the organisation's stakeholder relationships.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all the participants in the workshop for their time, enthusiasm and input into this project. This research is partially funded by the UK Digital Economy Programme (RCUK Grant EP/G037582/1), which supports the HighWire Centre for Doctoral Training.

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