



## HISTORY OF CO-PRODUCTION

Co-production isn't new. In this short guide, we consider some of key figures in its development.

Read this alongside our animation - [What is co-production?](#)

### Sherry Arnstein

Much of the academic work that underpins contemporary approaches to co-production was initiated by Sherry Arnstein in the USA in the 1960s and '70s. Arnstein worked in the US Government's Department of Health, Education and Welfare and, amongst other things, led work to desegregate hospitals, and later, to design guidelines to involve communities in local planning and policy making activity. People may also associate the name with academic work such as: *"A Ladder of Citizen Participation"* (1969), *"Maximum Feasible Manipulation"* (1972), and *"A Working Model for Public Participation"* (1975).

### Elinor Ostrom

Most likely the first person to use the term "co-production", Elinor Ostrom was an American political economist and the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize in economics. Ostrom's early work in the 1960s focussed on the relationship between communities, resource management and the role of citizen choice in the production of public goods and services. Ostrom used co-production to define the reciprocal relationship between communities and the police service in Chicago, where the exchange of informal information was crucial in preventing and solving crimes.

### Edgar Cahn

Another US academic, and contributor to the Kennedy administration, Edgar Cahn went on to establish the [Citizens Advocate Centre](#) as a watchdog organisation to "monitor governmental programs and assure equitable treatment of all community organisations in their dealing with the Government." Cahn also further developed the concept of co-production to reform the youth justice system in Washington DC. He impacted crime rates and rates of reoffending by involving both young people and their families in the judicial process. Cahn contributed to publications on co-production, such as editing *Citizen Participation: Effecting Community Change* in the early 1970s and authoring *No More Throw-away People: The Co-production Imperative* in 2000.

### Peter Beresford OBE

While most of the academics listed so far were active in the USA, co-production and citizen participation are also topics that have been expanded on by UK academics. One such example is Peter Beresford OBE, starting with the publication; *A Say In The Future: Planning, participation and meeting social need* (1978) and more recently; *Participatory Ideology: From exclusion to involvement* (2021). Beresford has been a member of various government advisory groups and committees, and co-founded the national service user led group "Shaping Our Lives".

With reference to: [Where did co-production come from? - Think Local Act Personal](#)