

Methods for Change

Designs for Addressing Racial inEqualities (DARE)

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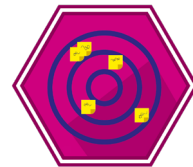
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Designs for Addressing Racial InEqualities (DARE) is a process through which policymakers and public services providers can co-create racially equitable services in a place. DARE focuses on the identification of interventions that highlight racially minoritised groups who are most in need to which power and resources should be distributed. Place could be a variety of spatial levels from the neighbourhood to city-regions. It involves four phases that are iterative, rather than a linear process. Critical to the DARE methodology is co-creation with a variety of stakeholders, a merging of lived experience, technical and bureaucratic knowledge to identify possible policy and service designs that seek to achieve racial equity.

DARE comprises four phases. The first phase is exploration, and it is about fact finding through involving communities, policymakers, service practitioners and relevant organisations within a place to understand how racial inequalities are produced and reproduced. Then the next phase is creation, which focuses on generating alternative options for policies and service design based on the ideas of those who are most affected by racial inequalities (ideas on what the problem is and what the potential interventions are). After that is the practice phase where stakeholders are brought together to reflect on the feasibility of the potential interventions, to identify challenges and risks including how these could be addressed and mitigated. The aim of this phase is to understand how to support successful implementation.

Lastly, the final phase is a pilot to allow for experimentation in the implementation of the new policy or the new service design. In this phase, bureaucratic processes are altered, and new ways of working are drafted to try and embed this alternative policy or service design. Evaluation of this pilot is essential to establish whether it works and what needs to change.



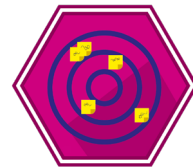
How does DARE create or contribute to change?

Change can occur at multiple levels including the individual level, organizational level, neighbourhood level and societal level. On an individual level, this methodology is designed to empower participants to share their lived experiences, to create spaces they feel able to share and to avoid extractive/exploitative practices. For example, an exploitative practice will have an exclusive focus on lack of access to wealth, resources and opportunities without also engaging participants in discussions of how racial equity can be achieved. Change can take place at any stage in this methodology but particularly during the exploration and creation phases that welcome people's ideas. This methodology has received positive feedback over the years. For example, a young man with a disability, who came to a session with young people in a project using DARE, told his key worker that that was the first time he felt listened to.

At an organizational level, policymakers and service practitioners get access to knowledge on requirements for service and policy design they might not have previously had access to. In the instances where services have been changed to incorporate lived experiences as a result of this methodology, policymakers and service practitioners spoke about their services being more effective in reaching desired populations. One service said young people are more aware of their services because they established a social media presence on TikTok. At this level, change can occur in the practice and pilot phases as this is where knowledge gained through this methodology can be acted upon. As the level of change spans outwards, it is more difficult to establish what causes change. However, where there are different organisations within a place working towards racial equity, the hope is that racially minoritised groups benefit from these efforts.

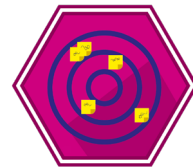
What ideas or concepts influence DARE?

Design experiments have influenced the blueprint of this methodology, which seeks to integrate social science research with practical knowledge in a way that is usable to solving real-world problems. Design experiments typically involve strong collaboration with stakeholders to design an intervention to a problem, using intense and repeated data collection to support the tracing of causal processes and links between outcomes and the intervention. Typically, in design experiments, there will be two groups, group 1 will experience the intervention and group 2 will not. Having these two groups help to isolate how the intervention may have benefitted group 1. Design experiments originated largely within educational research and this approach has been used in other fields. It is increasingly used within the public policy and administration such as the creation of innovation laboratories in public sector, but it is not yet commonplace. Public policy and administration are complex sites to study, consequently, it is hard to make claims about the reasons for the success or otherwise of interventions because of the difficulty in isolating outcomes of the intervention to the intervention itself. There are also ethical considerations about why one group should receive an intervention and the other group does not. An equity principle for design experiments is that the design of the interventions should draw on different forms of knowledge, expertise and experience (lived, bureaucratic and technical) with a particular focus on those who are most marginalised. In using this equity principle, the aim is to understand the possibilities and practical limits of interventions which seek to achieve racial equity in public services.



Why might I want to use DARE?

- DARE is a useful methodology for inquiry because it provides space(s) to discuss the inherent complexities of the causes of racial inequalities and interventions for racial equity. DARE asks participants to reflect on why past and current policy and service provision does not meet the needs of racially minoritised groups. Most importantly, DARE encourages the identification of ideas and action that can be taken to achieve racial equity.
- Through co-production, DARE centres the experiential knowledge of racially minoritised groups to identify how interventions to achieve racial equity ought to be designed. A variety of data collection tools including creative methods such as [participatory film making](#), [walk-along interviews](#) and [Ketso](#) can be incorporated into how experiential knowledge is accessed. This methodology ensures that the voices of racially minoritised groups are amplified in policymaking processes and service provision.
- DARE provides a systematic but highly adaptable approach to understanding the issues of racial inequalities and corresponding potential options for policy and service design that could promote racial equity. This methodology provides clear phases of activities, but it is not descriptive about how these activities should be carried out because it understands that situational contexts such as place, budget, and participants will vary. DARE is intentionally made to be highly adaptable to allow it to be transferable to multiple contexts. The different phases of DARE can be small where budgets are limited, but the methodology can also be used in larger scale projects. It can take a variety of formats from workshops to focus groups or individual interviews. DARE can also be conducted face-to-face, online only or as a hybrid.
- This method can be used to reveal stories which might help to break down assumptions or stereotypes about certain groups of people or places. For example, in relation to the experiences of mental ill-health, institutionalisation, and incarceration.
- The policy and service design options produced through DARE are usually an amalgamation of the experience and expertise of racially minoritised groups, policymakers, service practitioners and other stakeholders such as third sector organisations. This is likely to improve the effectiveness of policy and service provision to address issues of racial inequalities.



Step by step guide to using DARE:

1. Conversations around focus

The first step to using DARE is to have conversations with public services providers and policymakers in a place to agree the area of focus (such as employment) and a commitment to act upon the outcomes of the co-creation process. For this process to work at its best, it is important that providers and policymakers have an open agenda so there is ongoing learning and adaptation as the process progresses. It is also important to have regular meetings with the commissioner(s) of DARE e.g., policymakers and service providers, keeping them updated of progress and sharing interim findings. The ideal length of time for DARE is 3 - 6 months to allow for collective dialogue, reflection, and iterative piloting. However, the first three phases of DARE can run in 4 – 6 weeks.

2. Recruit participants

Once agreement is reached, recruitment for people who will participate in DARE can begin. A minimum of two weeks for recruitment should be given. Recruitment should include a wide range of stakeholders involving lay members of the public, service providers (public, third sector and private), policymakers and politicians. Recruitment strategies that focus only on expert administrators, elected representatives and professional stakeholders are unlikely to include marginalised groups who are most in need. Therefore, it is important to utilise inclusive recruitment strategies such as random selection, open invites to participate and targeted/purposeful recruitment so that marginalised groups are included in all the DARE phases.

Examples of Inclusive Participant Recruitment Strategies

Open, self-selection:

recruitment flyers, using social media and partnership networks

Random selection:

randomly select a group of citizens that are proportionally representative of demographics in a geographic location

Lay Stakeholders:

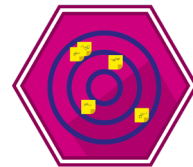
selecting from pools of individuals who volunteer time to be part of decision-making processes such as advisory panels and youth councils

Targeted/purposeful recruitment:

using third sector organisations with access to demographic(s) of interest, recruiting from programmes specifically for demographic(s) of interest and going to places where demographic(s) of interest are.

3. Consider methods and resources

Before launching the exploration, creation and practice phases, think about the research methods that are most appropriate for your context. You could use interviews, focus groups and/or creative methods to explore root causes of racial inequalities and to create potential interventions to address racial inequalities. The resources you will need for DARE will depend on the methods that are most appropriate to the context.



4. Consider positionality

Consider your positionality (how your values and views are shaped by your life experience and how it might influence the process). Also, it is important to reflect on how power dynamics throughout the process can be mitigated. For example, in group-based methods, pay attention to who is speaking the most and who is silent, and what knowledge is being shared or not shared. Establishing ground rules that group participants sign up to can help with this.

5. Exploration

In the exploration phase, questions explored with participants should focus on the current status of employment policy and services, for example, including open questions about what is working well or what is not working well. It is important to dig deeper to understand why certain things are not working well to understand whether there are structural issues outside of the control of the individual that also need addressing. Diagnostic tools such as mapping the journey of service users to identify where the service is not working well can also be used. If using group-based methods in this phase, you may wish to have discussions with members of the public separate to other stakeholders to allow for open and frank conversations. The exploration phase should identify points for intervention that the creation phase will build on.

6. Creation

The creation phase is about brainstorming what interventions for racially equitable services ought to look like. In this phase, it is important to encourage participants' imaginations so they can think about innovative and creative interventions that could make policies or services more racially equitable. This phase might include questions that encourage blue sky thinking such as 'what if we had an unlimited budget?' The objective here is to support the visioning of policies and services that people want to see.

7. Practice

In the practice phase, the interventions are fully discussed by stakeholders for feasibility. Here, the focus is on what the challenges and barriers for implementation are and whether these challenges can be overcome. Ideally, all stakeholders are involved in a collective dialogue about what interventions can be taken forward and implemented. There are likely to be many interventions suggested, so a democratic ranking process should be used to prioritise interventions. At the end of this phase, there is a clear idea of what interventions should be piloted.

8. Pilot

Finally, the pilot sees the implementation of at least one intervention. Public service providers and policymakers need to agree the length of time for a pilot and suspend the usual ways of working that could hamper testing of the new intervention. It is important to view the pilot as a learning opportunity. Where the intervention(s) does not seem to have the desired effect, it should not be viewed as a failure, but rather as an opportunity to adapt. The iterative nature of this phase allows for the messiness and non-linearity of the real work of policymaking and service provision.

Exploration and creation can run concurrently if necessary to reduce the time commitment for participants



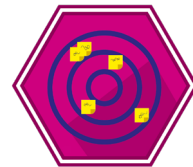
Supported by the researcher, participants undertook a prioritisation process with red markers as important and yellow markers as the top three service design changes. For example, location of services so that young people did not have to spend money on transport and use of online tools to determine eligibility to reduce time spent in appointments.

In the practice phase, the researcher organised a 'collaboration day' for stakeholders living and working in the geographical location to take part.

The initial plan was to invite young people to this collaboration day, but some young people expressed discomfort about coming to these types of spaces, one with adults who were viewed to 'hold power'. To attempt to overcome these challenges, a short video was made to collate the interventions that the young people wanted to see in terms of a service re-design.

The discussions on the day centred around two questions. The first question posed to participants (policymakers and service providers) was, 'what are some ways your service can amend its delivery/design model?' And the second question was, 'what challenges/barriers do you think the service would face in trying to change its model of delivery?' Sub-questions were then asked about whether these barriers were immovable or whether they could be overcome.

In this research, DARE identified small and practical changes as well as the systemic changes that were required to achieve a racially equitable service. Practical suggestions included increasing awareness of the service by using the correct social media channel and engaging better with sixth forms and colleges. After the DARE process was completed, small and practical changes such as creating a TikTok account to better engage with young people in their local area was implemented. However, as expected from the discussions on the collaboration day in the practice phase, implementing systemic changes were more difficult to achieve. One of the key systemic changes that were identified was to tackle discriminatory behaviour by employers in the labour market.



Where else could DARE be used?

DARE was developed in an employment service in a local government setting, but it can also be applied in a variety of settings where services are delivered, or where racial equity is the goal. DARE could be used in other policy fields such as education, health and housing. Other public sector settings such as combined authorities or central government departments can apply this process. Outside of the public sector, higher education institutions and businesses can also use this to interrogate and address racial inequalities experienced by their students and employees respectively. DARE is adaptable to different contexts because the design element of the methodology requires careful consideration and planning on how to implement in any specific context. DARE is not intended to be a prescriptive methodology and could work different across multiple settings.

DARE serves as a guide for a systematic approach to involving groups who are racially minoritised in a co-creation process for racially equitable services alongside other stakeholders (policymakers, service providers, third sector organisations, academia where applicable). DARE is likely to become more complex where there are large teams, multiple teams and services in different geographical locations. However, with good organisation and management, DARE can still be used.

DARE could also potentially be used as an evaluation tool after the intervention(s) has been piloted. DARE is not envisioned as a linear process so the exploration, creation and practice phases can be repeated to check if the intervention(s) has been successful in achieving desired outcomes.

Tips

- Before using DARE, seek commitment from policymakers/ service providers to genuinely respond to the options for interventions that are suggested by the participants. This is important as you do not want to contribute to distrust between participants and policymakers/service providers.
- Keep an open-mind and be flexible throughout the process. It is crucial that the agenda that is prioritized is that of the participants. While as a researcher using DARE you might have your own agenda, it is important this does not override those who are in the process with you. Take care to understand and minimise power dynamics within the process, and to compensate people for their time (financial or non-financial). Pay attention to who is speaking in the space(s) and which stories are missing or being overlooked.
- Be aware of how language is used in DARE. Working with racially minoritised groups and different stakeholders, there will be different ways of speaking, writing and thinking. Remain aware of how to ensure that these groups are speaking and listening to each other.



Further reading

To find out more about co-creating with seldomly heard communities, here are some useful publications:

- Eseonu, T. (2020). Building back inclusively, *Involve*, 12 November. Available at: <https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/blog/opinion/building-back-inclusively>
- Eseonu, T. (2020). Co-production: Strategies for Being More Inclusive. In Gains, F., Culhane, L., Eseonu, T. & Sanders, A., (Eds.). *Mind the Gap: Getting women's Voices into Policy Making*, p.29 - 33. Available at: <https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=48993>
- Falanga, R. (2022). Whose and what right to the city? Participation in Lisbon. *Deliberativehub*, 13 June. Available at: <https://deliberativehub.wordpress.com/2022/06/13/whose-and-what-right-to-the-city-participation-in-lisbon/>
- McGann, M., Blomkamp, E. and Lewis, J.M. (2018). The rise of public sector innovation labs: experiments in design thinking for policy. *Policy Sciences*, 51(1). Available at: <https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/13026/1/MM-Innovation-2018.pdf>

To reference:

Eseonu, T. (2023) 'Designs for Addressing Racial InEqualities (DARE)' in Rodekirchen, M., Pottinger, L. Briggs, A., Barron, A., Eseonu, T., Hall, S. and Browne, A.L. (eds.) *Methods for Change Volume 2: Impactful social science methodologies for 21st century problems*. Manchester: Aspect and The University of Manchester



To read about more exciting social science methods, the full range of Methods for Change 'how-to' guides can be found here.