IaSDR07
INTERNATIONAL ASSOC
IATION OF SOCIETIES OF
DESIGN RESEARCH THE
HONG KONG POLYTECH
NIC UNIVERSITY 12TH TO
15TH NOVEMBER 2007

RESHAPING URBAN LIVES - DESIGN AS SOCIAL INTERVENTION TOWARDS COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Teresa Franqueira[1]

[1]Politecnico di Milano, Milano, Italy

teresa.franqueira@polimi.it

KEYWORDS: **social networks, sustainable behaviours, strategic design, co-participatory design**

ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to show some cases of creative communities based on collaborative services as a way to promote sustainable development.

This scenario (creative communities and their services) offers design a different approach and a new opportunity to develop and enhance a sustainable future.

The transition from the industrial age to the age of knowledge brings about diverse changes in the way we live. The collapse of the Welfare state and the globalisation have created new problems and, thus, new needs (Beck, 1999; Giddens, 1999; McLaughlin and Davidson, 1990). The urgency in finding new solutions to the problems arisen by this new world is bolstering a phenomenon of rebirth of the idea of alternative or intentional communities (McLaughlin &

Davidson, 1985), that can be defined as "user-driven communities of innovation"[1] or "creative communities"[2].

These communities have at their core the participation and the democratisation of innovation, meaning that innovation in products or services is no longer the remit of established organizations (Leadbeater , 2006).

These changes give us an opportunity to reinforce these type of behaviours through the design discipline.

The role of design and designers is changing. As users get involved with designers in the creation of products and services (Leadbeater , 2006), new territories for the discipline are opened. It is possible that from now on design will be a co-participatory activity in which users become part of the entire project, not only as references or recipients but as real resources that shape the all project.

Throughout this paper we will envisage to highlight the potential of collaboration between design and creative communities as a way to create social cohesion, environmental sustainable development and reinforcement of local economies.

In order to do so, a number of cases that are being developed in some European cities will be presented.

The structural differences between them will be demonstrated. These differences arising mainly from the fact that some of them are top-down initiatives with the direct participation of design; and others are bottom-up, more spontaneous, un-designed ones.

In this framework design should act as an interface between these two levels, for top-down initiatives are strategic whilst bottom-up ones are more tactical or operative. If Design has the

---

1 (Leadbeater, 2006)

2 Creative community - groups of innovative citizens organising themselves to solve a problem or to open new possibilities, and doing so as a positive step in the social learning process towards social and environmental sustainability (EMUDE, 2006; Meroni, 2007). This concept has been focalised in the framework of the EMUDE research - a Special Support Action promoted in the ambits of the 6th Framework Program (priority 3-NMP) of the European Commission. www.sustainable-everyday.net/EMUDE/

capacity of being both strategic and tactical, this means that it can potentiate people's and government's visions, creating scenarios according to those same visions.

Design is about culture and creativity, is about problem solving, and these projects are solving problems arisen from everyday activities that people have to carry out in this complex society.

Ultimately we aim to show that design as a strategic and tactical element is, alongside other disciplines, a critical element in the promotion, implementation and dissemination of these cases and its best-practices.

The contents of this paper are part of an on-going research at the Research Unit DIS – Design and Innovation for Sustainability - of the Politecnico di Milano.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is part of an ongoing research focused on the thematic of collaborative communities in creative cities and in design as a strategic project to promote sustainable lifestyles[3] through a co-participatory design project.

The core of the research is a shared proposal, which makes possible on one hand to potentiate and enhance people's visions through Design, and on the other, allows for the designer's vision to be potentiated by people's needs - i.e., work with local communities and local authorities on creative projects that can benefit city life in meaningful ways.

Amongst the possible approaches to sustainable development, we give a special focus to the design of services oriented towards new social models, in order to develop and strengthen cultural identities and sustainable lifestyles. In this sense, the innovation driven by design operates within an integrated system, with multidisciplinary teams that can help to build new social scenarios. These scenarios presuppose new attitudes towards the unsustainable patterns we adopted, implying new business strategies and new ways of promoting quality of life and well being.

2. CONTEXT

More than half of the world's population now lives in cities. The social, cultural and economic problems and opportunities that are generated by this concentration of people have become symbolic of the contemporary human condition.

---

3 According to UNESCO, Sustainable lifestyles and ways of working are central to overcoming poverty and conserving and protecting the natural resource base for all forms of life. Sustainable methods of production are needed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing. Use of resources need to be minimized, and pollution and waste reduced.

Indeed there is a need to reduce the impacts of lifestyle consumption habits on society and resources to ensure equitable availability of resources for all around the world. Education and training for sustainable production and consumption play an important role in achieving this by creating a more critical and responsible attitude towards consumerism in our everyday lives.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-url_id=27555&url_do=do_topic&url_section=201.html

The essence of cities is that they have always contained a myriad of diverse and intense connections and activities; where people live, work, shop and play, meeting the needs of economic production and social reproduction (Jenks & Dempsey, 2005).

As our society has become more technological, with increased wealth and urban growth and transient patterns, people have lost touch with a strong community consciousness. They have greater individual freedom, but the cost has been social isolation (McLaughlin and Davidson, 1985), even if urban space has always been a place for the community rather than the individual (Jenks and Dempsey, 2005).

The transition from the industrial age to the age of knowledge brings about diverse changes in the way we live. Considering that Design has played a big role in shaping the prevalent system of consumption, it now should raise to the challenge of re-shaping it according to more sustainable patterns. This can be done either by making use of bottom-up social innovations and the services produced at a grassroots level to answer specific needs, or by enhancing top-down initiatives that in its original format fail to respond to existing demands. In this paper both top-down and bottom-up initiatives will be analysed, in order to highlight the opportunities they represent in terms of Design activity; which should be able to offer a third way of responding by functioning as a middle-up and middle-down filter catalyst.

To introduce the topic under analysis, it is necessary to clarify some working concepts such as creativity, social innovations, creative communities, and the opportunities that "creative destruction", as defined by Schumpeter, applied to social change offer to Design.

2. 1. CREATIVITY

Creativity has always been regarded as a privilege of artists, architects, designers, and the like (Howkins, 2001). However, there has been a growing attention to the mass creativity phenomenon, in books such as "The wisdom of crowds" (Surowiecki, 2005) , "The creative city" (Landry, 2000) or "the rise of the creative class" (Florida, 2002) and in processes like crowdsourcing (companies that invite the masses to contribute ideas, which can be worked up into fully fledged business propositions, with the creators being paid in royalty fees).

Many problem solving strategies are centred in the professional activities that those problems involve, and they are often solved in traditional ways. But, according to Landry, creativity is also

the ability to surpass the boundaries of each professional activity and in that way surpassing as well the conventional forms of thought of each profession.

However, the problems contemporary society faces, do not seem to be solvable in a linear form or by traditional processes. The collapse of the Welfare state and the globalisation have created new problems and, thus, new needs. The urgency in finding new solutions to the problems arisen by this new world is bolstering a phenomenon of rebirth of the idea of alternative or intentional communities. The demand for solutions and the failure to produce them solely through government action (welfare state, housing policies, town planning, etc.) leeds people organize themselves and with themselves to find the solutions for their problems and the answers to their needs, more often than not, in unconventional and innovative ways.

This process of innovation fosters the birth and growth of a diffuse creativity from the part of non-specialised individuals, that is, a non-professional creativity: common people who, for several diverse reasons, do (or have to) face their daily life with creative attitudes and capacities (Manzini, 2005).

This creativity is expressed in many different forms (for example, new models of public health, open source software or organic food, fair trade, pedagogical models of childcare, microcredit and magazines for the homeless), and appears as a result of a new social order. As Saint-Simon phrased it, history consists of a succession of social orders and the movement from one order to the next is triggered by the rise of a new class. Different ideas fit different periods of history. The first of the leading peculiarities of the present age is that it is an age of accelerated transition. Mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones. What we are seeing is that society is in fact trying to acquire new ones, and this is possible through the rise of new ways of doing things.

In this sense, Florida refers the rise of the creative class, and in addition Leadbeater introduces the rise of the social entrepreneur[4].

2. 2. SOCIAL INNOVATIONS AND CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

"To be meaningful, social innovation has to engage with the different stakeholders from the beginning through a collaborative and co-creative process, given that the ultimate relevancy and

---

4Leadbeater, Charles, (1997) - The rise of the social entrepreneur, Demos, London

success is dependent on their experience and their participation, especially of the users, themselves."[5]

These social entrepreneurs[6] can be seen as a single person or, in a different way, as a group of people that will be called hereafter Creative communities: groups of people who cooperatively invent, enhance and manage innovative solutions for new ways of living[7].

What social entrepreneurs and creative communities have in common is that they are ordinary people that invent new ways of overcoming everyday problems and of participating in public and social life in an active way.

This activity, not so common in a society mostly characterized by passivity, derives from the will to promote change and not to seat back and wait for the traditional institutions to solve all everyday problems. And they are put in practice by creative people that persist and invest in their own ideas and are able to convert them into innovative services, responding to everyday needs. These ideas are social innovations, that is, new ideas that work to meet pressing unmet needs and improve peoples' lives (Young Foundation, 2007).

These social innovations and services are, for instances, sharing spaces and common services (as in co-housing); productive activities based on local resources and skills (as is the case of certain traditional products); initiatives aimed at promoting a healthy and natural diet (international slow-food movement to a new generation of urban farmers' markets); self-managed services for the care of the very young (small kindergartens or nursery schools promoted and managed by parents), etc (see http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/EMUDE/ website).

According to the Young Foundation Report[8,] social innovations have been moving from the margins to the mainstream. And this can be a major opportunity for the intervention of the Design

---

5 http://trex.id.iit.edu/events/strategyconference/2007/community/presentations/josephine_green.pdf

6 Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They are ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change. Rather than leaving societal needs to the government or business sectors, social entrepreneurs find what is not working and solve the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution, and persuading entire societies to take new leaps.
http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/social_entrepreneur.cfm

7 This concept has been focalised in the framework of the EMUDE research. EMUDE was a Special Support Action promoted in the ambits of the 6th Framework Program (priority 3-NMP) of the European Commission. Ezio Manzini paper Design, ethics and sustainability Guidelines for a transition phase 2006

community that is interested in developing sustainable solutions for everyday problems and that wishes to promote, diffuse and eventually replicate these innovative ideas.

2. 3. PROMOTION, ENHANCEMENT AND REPRODUCTION OF BEST PRACTICES

To further analyse this issue, a parallel was made between Joseph Schumpeter's economic theory, particularly on innovation and the desirable "creative destruction" and the waves of social innovations occurring.

The term "Creative Destruction" was introduced in 1942 by the economist Joseph Schumpeter and describes the process of transformation that accompanies radical innovation. In Schumpeter's vision of capitalism, innovative entry by entrepreneurs was the force that sustained long-term economic growth, even as it destroyed the value of established companies that enjoyed some degree of monopoly power.

As Schumpeter points out in several of his writings combinatorial innovation is one of the important reasons why ideas appear in waves, or "clusters," as he calls them:

"As soon as the various kinds of social resistance to something that is fundamentally new and untried have been overcome, it is much easier not only to do the same thing again but also to do similar things in different directions, so that a first success will always produce a cluster".[9]

Schumpeter emphasizes a "demand-side" explanation for such clustering of innovation, which is the result of the entrepreneurial activity of a vanguard disseminated afterwards through the whole of the economy, in the aforementioned process of "creative destruction". That is, when a social innovation is put into practice by a social entrepreneur, who is afterwards followed by a myriad of others, the original social entrepreneur acts as an attractor in a complex dynamic system, destroying the existing status quo and creating a new one.

 In addition to this "demand-side", Varian, Farrell and Shapiro (2004) also consider a complementary "supply-side" explanation, "since innovators are, in many cases, working with the same components, it is not surprising to see simultaneous innovation, with several innovators

---

8 social innovation - what it is, why it matters and how it can be accelerated

9 Schumpeter,J. ,(1947) The Creative Response in Economic History, Journal of Economic History

coming up with essentially the same ideas at almost the same time". As referred in "The Economics of Information Technology"[10], in economic terms each of the periods of combinatorial innovation was accompanied by financial speculation, with new technologies that captured the public imagination inevitably leading to an investment boom.

Given the right amount of promotion and diffusion, the same might hold true for well succeeded social innovations. And this should be the designer's sphere of action, in the sense that, as Bornstein says "What business entrepreneurs are to the economy, social entrepreneurs are to social change". This presents designers with the opportunity to develop new approaches to the activity of Design, namely, as an instrument that gives visibility and enhances the role of these social innovation "attractors", thus attracting others to emulate and extend these innovations. In this scenario, the opportunities for Design to intervene are located at three levels: attractor's promotion and diffusion; attractor's enhancement; and facilitation of the attractor's reproduction process.

Promotion and diffusion

At this level, Design can work as a communication tool, promoting the cases attractively and facilitating the communication between the different knots of the network, i.e., raising the profile of these innovation forms and the services they provide.

Enhancement

Design can work as a mediator between the diverse actors (government entities, communities, and society at large) and as an enhancer of processes, being also responsible for designing possible scenarios bridging creative people's visions and the visions of government entities that could help fulfill their ideas with material support.

In this context, Design is the interface not between the object and the user, but between the service and its users/promotors, stimulating a continuous up & down movement.

Reproduction

This is the level that represents the biggest challenge, as it entails the design of tools necessary to make social innovations reproducible. According to Ezio Manzini, this process consists in the

10 Varian, Hal R.; Farrell, Joseph V., and Shapiro, Carl, (2004) - The Economics of Information Technology, An Introduction; Raffaele Mattioli Lectures, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

conception of an enabling solution, that is, "a system that provides cognitive, technical and organisational instruments so as to enable individuals and/or communities to achieve a result, using their skills and abilities to the best advantage and, at the same time, to regenerate the quality of living contexts, in which they happen to live." (2004)

2.4 DESIGN & THE ROLE OF DESIGNERS

As mentioned by Morello (1995: 73),

"The need of design in services is more and more a reality; but which designer could, until today, design services? The professional figure of the designer has to be renewed to face the job; and this renewal will impose a deep revisitation of design´s conceptions".

Strategies involving new forms of knowledge and thought in design with a more user centred approach, promoting sustainable solutions for the creation of new scenarios are undeniably required. That is the statement underlying the design debate, and the role of design must be updated to achieve this goal.

The system of people, needs and artefacts is the arena where Design evolves. And the instance of being subject to judgments, to the client's satisfaction, and not to the scientific proof (Bonsiepe, 1995) makes it a discipline vulnerable to the changes in society, but also in an social agent whose responsibility is rather high.

The designer's capacity to understand (and foresee) what is new, to recognize the signals emitted by emerging ideas and behaviours, makes him a particularly well placed ally to help society to create a new way of living and a new relation with the material culture. By observing these communities and promoting and spreading their ideas of social innovation, design should work simultaneously like a filter and a catalyst, building scenarios of potential futures, conceiving and developing systems of products, services and the information to improve their efficiency and accessibility. That is, in this social context, design must work as a strategic instrument, and designers as "solution providers".

By definition (ICSID) design refers to the entire social sphere, but nowadays we are confronted with a highly fragmented social tissue, rendering present times in a deeply complex system (Pizzocaro, 2004). This is the field where Design evolves, thus it also renders the design activity into a very complex one.

A new role for the designer emerges from this new reality. A role that can emerge from social innovations and that can create interesting spin-offs of these ideas promoting services or product-services systems innovations.

As referred by Manzini (2005) designers must consider themselves part of the community they are collaborating with. To be and act as experts participating peer-to-peer with the other members of the community in the generation of the promising cases they are working on.

Another aspect is the different actors involved in these new scenarios, where designers must work with a government, a non-profit organization, a local entity, a community or a social entrepreneur.

Design is an activity whose results are not verifiable through equations and formula,one in which it is not possible to create an axiom, because the variables are always unstable and diverse. If we focus on the design project directed to human relations in which users co-design with the designer, its field of action is composed by numerous micro-systems composed by numerous knots that build a huge network.

Design therefore acts as a membrane and a filter through which it is possible to disseminate these type of micro-systems, making it possible to create a macro-system that is not a sum of the various parts, but a whole constituted by multiple systems and networks.

3. CASES

Next, some selected cases will be presented, and some conclusions will be drawn from their analysis under a Design perspective.

Some of these cases are part of a database of a previous research (EMUDE) and some of them are part of the ongoing research.

The criteria for their selection was based on their positioning in one or more of the following axis of activity: social, economical and artistic. The case studies presented are in the intersection of these three axis, being for that reason, specially interesting.

3.1 GROTE PYR

Location: Den Haag, Netherlands

Context. Grtote Pyr is a type of cohousing and starts with a squatting experience in an abandoned school. This school dates from the beginning of 1900 and was recovered with ecological criteria. In this place, people cook and eat together in the old school kitchen and each dwelling is a classroom. There are some activities and small firms, concession spaces for young artists for exhibitions, events and lessons; and the school hall is a restaurant open to the public.

Grote Pyr represents, for the city, a place of social sustainability and a link between the centre and other zones.

Grote Pyr stands in an 1900 school that was abandoned for years. The Grote Pyr is the "offspring" from the Blauwe Aanslag, a former tax office squatted in 1980, which was (forcefully) evicted in October 2003. The City of Den Haag offered what is now the Grote Pyr for sale to the former inhabitants of the Blauwe. Since 2002, the inhabitants and user-groups have been busy with the renovation of this monumental school building from 1907 into an ecological freespace. The majority of the classrooms and the enormous attic are being modified into living and working spaces

In this place, people cook and eat together in the old school kitchen. the tenants of this special condominium do not share an address, they share small and large pieces of life.

They meet together once a month to discuss practical problems, to divide tasks and to monitor the works in the roof and the management of the garden, among others.

Activities. There are different activities in Grote Pyr, from cultural ones, to economic ones, like a studio of a blacksmith, another one that constructs bicycles, a society of biologic catering, a bar, a museum where children can play with materials and science, exhibitions, events and lessons and a restaurant open to the public.
Grote Pyr has also the DigiCare Foundation that is part of this ecological community. DigiCare Foundation is a Dutch nonprofit organization established to promote 'the art of social change' through (cross-)media productions, education and art. They are partly funded by the city of The Hague. Together with a group of engaged and social advertisement and communication specialists, designers, artists and media and filmmakers, DigiCare Foundation is a pool of

knowledge, creativity and inspiration for social and cultural art projects. (for more information about DigiCare Foundation: http://www.digicarefoundation.org/en/contact.html)
For more information http://www.grotepyr.nl/

Figure 1: Grote Pyr.

3.2 MILANO CAR SHARING

Location: Milano, Italy

Context. MCS is a self-service car rental system which enables residents to use a car without the expense and hassles of owning one, and saving money. It is an alternative solution to the urban commuting, based on the easy access to a car whenever it is needed. The concept could be an intelligent solution for such cities, as Milan, with lots of problems caused by traffic. Legambiente introduced the car-sharing service in September 2001. It started with three cars, a garage in and a website. by 2005, the MCS had several vehicles in three different categories and 13 parking areas.

The first objective of car sharing is to teach people that the car is not a status symbol and that it can be used only when you really need it. Once users have subscribed, they get an MCS card with a personal code on it that allows them to make reservations via the call centre or the website. They can choose the car and the garage to collect and deliver the car. The garage records the kilometers driven by each client, and chargers them at the end of the month.

Activities. There are more than 200 members using the service each month. The scheme is working well, in the opinion of the users and organisers, but the system could work even better on a larger scale. What is missing, on the practical side, is some technological investment to optimise the service and some support from the public administration; on the communication side it needs more promotion which could really change peoples' mind-set about private commuting. The annual membership cost between 70 and 100 euros, the hourly rate is 1.80 euros from 7:00 to 24:00 (it is free between 24:00 and 7:00) and the cost per km is 0, 32 euros per km, including the fuel.

The cars chosen for the MCS system are low-emission and fuel-efficient, so are less likely to pollute the environment. They are also compact to take up less parking space and avoid obstructing roads and sidewalks. MCS parking areas are strategically located near public transport hubs to encourage commuters to use the existing public transport infrastructure, and thus reduce pollution. For people driving fewer than 10,000 kilometres in a year, using the MCS system works out as 4,000 euros cheaper per year than owning a car.
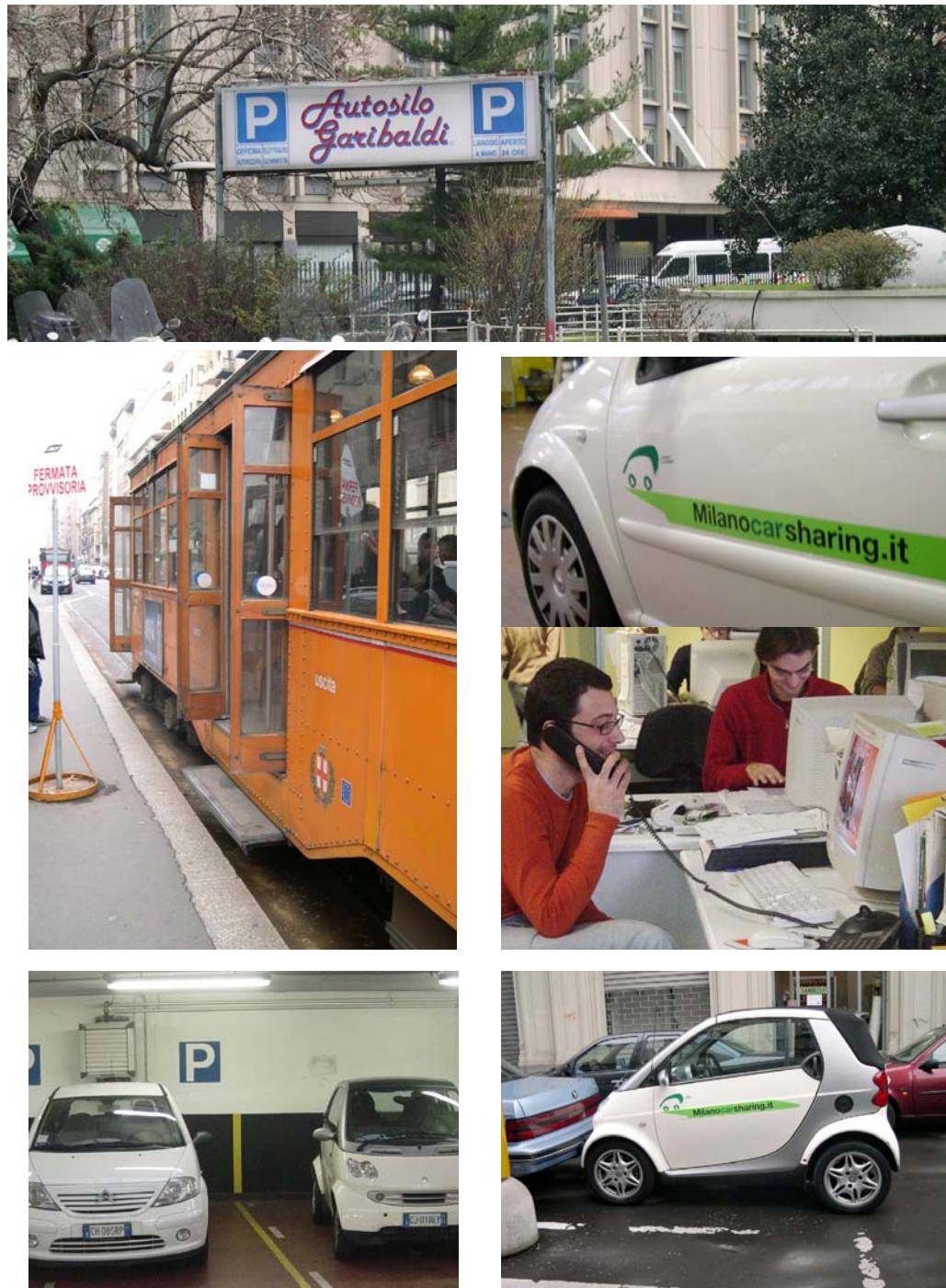
Figure 2: Milano CarSharing.

3.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD SHARES

Location: The Hague, Netherlands

By The International Institute for the Urban Environment (IIUE), NV Woningbeheer and the department of Nature an Environmental Education of the City of The Hague

Context. The idea of resident involvement emerged from a discussion group called the Denktank (thinktank). This panel of resident and local authority representatives continue to have monthly meetings where they share ideas about how to improve the neighbourhood.

Activities. Residents have taken over responsibility from the local authority for certain maintenance tasks for their neighbourhood. A residents' association decides, with the local authority, what work needs doing, then organises it among local residents. Although the local authority pays for the work, responsibility is devolved to the residents' association. The local authority and environmental organisations give the residents practical advice, and environmental awareness.

Figure 3: Neighbourhood Shares.

3.4 LOCAL FOOD LINK VAN GROUP

Location: Skye, Scotland, UK

By Skye & Lochalsh Food Link Van Group

www.foodlinkvan.co.uk

Context. Local Food Van Link, in association with other groups, helps increase local food production by distributing produce around local community. Skye and Lochalsh Food Link is a voluntary association of local producers, caterers, retailers and consumers with an interest in promoting fresh, locally produced food. A shared van links the network and distributes local produce all over the island. The group was initiated in April 2000 by a couple of local producers who decided that rather than delivering every product themselves, they would use a van to drive a set route twice a week, picking up the orders from the producer and delivering them to their customers. By doing so, not only one could save on petrol but also ensure the delivery of local produce all over the island, creating a more sustainable community. The solution both ensures the future of local food producers by distributing their goods, and promotes important aspects of economic and environmental community life and the health benefits of locally grown fresh produce.

Food distribution was made difficult by the large distances between producers, retailers and consumers, decreasing the availability of local food produce on the island. To improve this situation, the food link van was initiated on a voluntary basis in 2000, with a try out period of six months. Following its success, Food Link Skye and Lochalch was incorporated in 2003 as a non-profit making company to manage the award-winning foodlink van and secure its future as a viable local distribution service.

Activities. Within the last five years the food link has vastly increased the amount of local produce staying within Skye and Lochalch from £8,500 to over £60,000. The van group comprises approximately 15 producers and 40 customers spread all over the island. The funding it received in 2003, allowed the group to buy a larger van which enabled them to deliver even more produce and help the van to become self-sufficient. At present, the van runs on Tuesday and Friday, normally between March and October. The customers pay the price of the produce they order, and a 10% levy is paid by the producer to the company. This money is used for petrol, van maintenance and pays the wages of the van driver and the marketing co-ordinator.

Figure 4: Local Food Link Van Group.

3.5 FABBRICA DEL VAPORE

Location: Milano, Italy

Context. Fabbrica del vapore can be characterized as a lab for experiences and ideas, a place for gathering and confrontation between the diffuse youth culture and those who propose it.

Fabbrica del Vapore stands in an old train tracks factory building and it aims to be a place open to creativity, but also connected with the city and its productive working force.

There are activities available to young people that empower them to further their initiatives and skills in areas like: new media, theatre, dance, architecture, design, graphics, photography, arts, new materials and re-proposal of traditional games.

For more information http://www.fabbricadelvapore.org/index_flash.html

Fabbrica del vapore stands in the old milan factory Ditta Carminati, Toselli & C. In the begining of 1900, this factory is replaced by another one, Società Italiana Carminati Toselli dedicated to transport amterial.

La Fabbrica has 7000 sq mt dedicated to a macroarea for lab activities and 7000 sq mt for exhibitions, events and services.

Activities. There are activities available to young people that empower them to further their initiatives and skills in areas like: new media, theatre, dance, architecture, design, graphics, photography, arts, new materials and re-proposal of traditional games.

This project was proposed by the Milan City Hall, that has also defined the objectives, activities and the management system.
According to the Milan City Hall, La Fabbrica del Vapore is:

a youth cultural production centre, a reference pole to organize collect the cultural, artistic and productive capacity;

a large laboratory of ideas and of activities turn to the experimentation, research, development and exploration of new languages and new technologies; a place where the young people are protagonists of cultural production and users of the events; an open space to the proposals of the national and international stage.
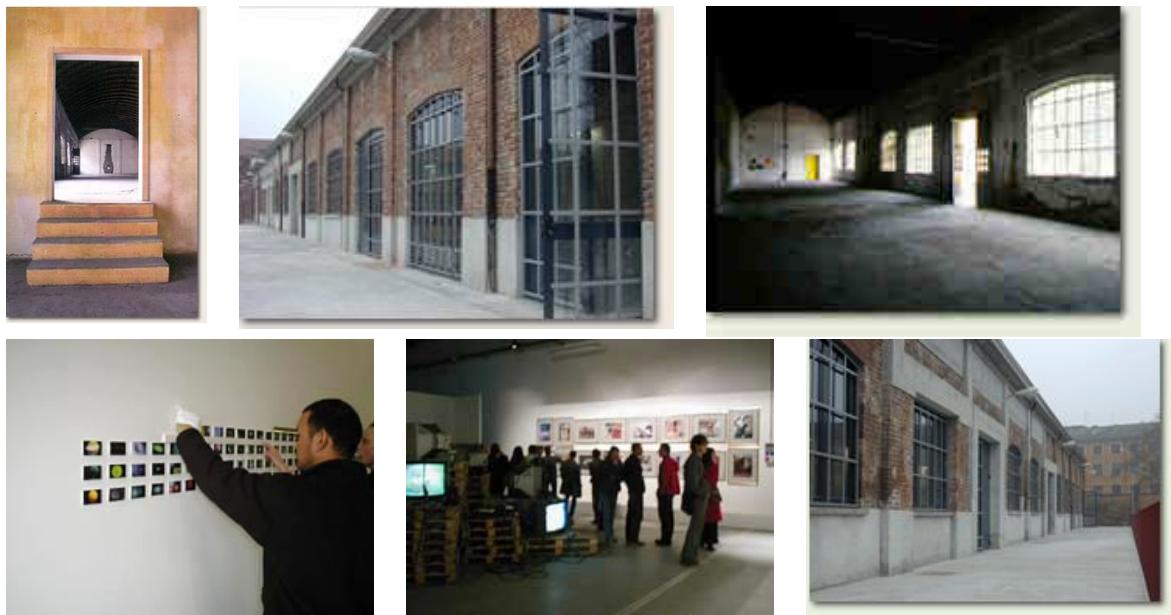

Figure 5: Fabbrica del Vapore.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The shift to an environmentally sustainable scenario requires the envolvement and participation of all citizens, and that can only be achieved if, through wide promotion and diffusion of new forms of consumption, civil society takes ownership of these problems and acts upon them. The cases presented, in their differences as much as in their similarities, show that it is possible to develop new responses to the problems the contemporary society faces. Social entrepreneuship, the cooperation between multiple actors and the economic activity that creates it and fosters its survival must be diffused and supported by design.

From the analysis of the above cases it is possible to verify that attractors can be a government entity, a social entrepreneur or a creative community. Whichever the case, it is always envisaged to operate a desirable social change in tune with sustainability concerns, be it environmental, economic or social sustainability. The first 4 cases, rather different amongst themselves, typify a bottom-up approach to tackle specific problems, while the last one was the result of a top-down initiative.

In the Grote Pyr and Neighbourhood Shares cases design plays a mediator role between the community and the government, making the project accomplishment more efficient. The services produced by these communities respond to needs felt by the community itself, and serve in addition a larger group of citizens in the same city, but not integrated in the original communities.

In the Neighbourhood Shares, residents learn how to take care of their surroundings by themselves, and become motivated to complete maintenance tasks. By having citizens involved in the maintenance of their own neighbourhoods and learning how to value and take care of its own environment, The Hague could become a good example for other cities.

In this case, the local authority has also transferred the municipal budget reserved for these tasks to the residents' association. A neighbourhood maintenance fund has been created which is managed by the residents; shareholder meetings decide how to invest the money in upgrading the neighbourhood. Here, Design role could be to help create a technological platform for sharing tasks and managing activities in a more structured and professional way.

In such cases, it becomes apparent that Design is simultaneously strategic (scenario's building) and tactical (operational tools conception).

In the Carsharing case, the initiative was taken by an entrepreneur, or a group of entrepreneurs, aiming at offering a service to communities outside the organisation.

Here Design can work as a facilitator in the implementation and diffusion of the service to a wider audience, but can also develop technical services to support community carsharing, designing cars suitable for easy and frequent personalization, and developing low-emission cars. We can see that society gains an innovative, economic and ecological system as an alternative to the traffic problems caused by private care ownership. On individual basis users save money, time and stress and get awareness about the costs (money, environment, use of public space) of using cars. Socially, Car Sharing might also help to counter the idea of status still associated with car ownership.

In the fourth case, Local Food Link Van Group, the scheme's aim is to both reinforce the notion of self-sufficiency through local produce and increase cooperation between producer and customer on the other. Making such high-quality food available to local people and visitors encourages aspects of local and family economy and ensures the future of sustainable agriculture on Skye.

The use of a shared vehicle by a group of 40 farmers clearly minimises congestion and pollution. Detrimental environmental impacts of conventional agribusinesses can be avoided through the promotion of small-scale local production that underpins the notion of healthy and communal living on the island. The consumption of fresh and seasonable food reduces the need of energy for cooling and freezing. Design could help creating multi-channel and multi-media communication platforms to connect producers and consumers directly to each other; creating technical services to support farmers and food producers; designing dedicated packaging and logistics to be used in the network by small producers; developing place marketing; facilitating the group's creation process.

Finally, in the case of Fabbrica del Vapore, Design can have the same bivalency as in Grote Pyr, i.e., can create the scenario and facilitate its implementation. Can design the strategy and after, using the instruments it has developed, be tactical in the implementation of the service, as well as all the "hard" and "soft" structures.

Designing lives and lifestyles is not Design's mandate, nor it is a desirable option. To renew and revitalise social networks through creative approaches needs the involvement of local people in a variety of design projects as active participants. The designer's role is to work with people and their needs and aspirations to create new answers to pressing problems, which are not dealt with

efficiently in traditional and conventional ways. If we believe that today everybody designs their life to some extent, then the professional designer should work together with these army of spontaneous and intuitive designers in order to structure and potentiate their creative, and often innovative, solutions. And this should result in a most fertile process, as the user has a more accurate idea of his needs, and the professional designer a more objective approach to problem solving – merging the two is the key to develop sustainable and groundbreaking solutions, which might even be reproduced.

5. REFERENCES

Beck, Ulrich (1999) - La società del rischio, Urbino, Carocci Editore, 2004

Bonsiepe, Gui (1995) - Del Diseño a la Interfase, Mutaciones del diseño, Buenos Aires, Ediciones Infinito, 1999

Bornstein, David (2004), How to change the world – social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas, Oxford University Press, New York

Brown, Lester (2000) - Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth, New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 2000

Delanty, Gerard (2003) – Community, Routledge, London

Florida, Richard (2002), The rise of the creative class, Basic Books, New York

Fromm, Dorit (1991) - Collaborative communities - cohousing, central living and other new forms of housing with shared facilities, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York

Giddens, Anthony (1999) – O Mundo na Era da Globalização, 3ª Edição, Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 2001

Hill, Tony (2006) – Civil Society and the Urban Agenda in: State of the world's cities 2006/2007 – The Milllennium Development Goals and Urban Sustainability: 30 years of shaping the habitat, UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Sterling

Howkins, John (2001) – The Creative Economy – How people make money from ideas, Penguin Books, London

Jenks, Mike; Dempsey, Nicola (2005) – Future forms and design for sustainable cities, Architectural Press, Oxford

Keith, Michael (2005) - After the Cosmopolitan?: Multicultural Cities and the Future of Racism, Routledg, New York

Landry, Charles (2000) - The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators, Earthscan Publications

Leadbeater, Charles, (1997) - The rise of the social entrepreneur, Demos, London

Leadbeater , Charles (2006) - The User Innovation Revolution - How Business Can Unlock the Value of Customers' Ideas, National Consumer Council, London

Manzini, E. (2005), Creative communities and enabling platforms. An introduction to a promising line of research and actions on sustainable production and consumption. In D. DoyleTaking responsibility, Hedmark University College Publishing, Allkopi, Norvegia

Manzini, E.; Jegou, F. (2003), Sustainable everyday. Scenarios of Urban life. Edizioni Ambiente, Milano

Manzini, Ezio (2006) - Creative communities, collaborative networks and distributed economies. Promising signals for a sustainable development in http://sustainable-everyday.net/manzini/?p=9

Manzini, Ezio (1992) - "Prometheus of the Everyday - The ecology of the Artificial and the Designer's Responsability" in Discovering Design, The university of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995

McLaughlin, Corinne; Davidson, Gordon (1985) - Builders of the Dawn : Community Lifestyles in a Changing World, Book Publishing Company, 1990

Meroni (editied by), Creative Communities. People Inventing new ways living, Polidesign, Milano, 2007.

Morello, Augusto (1995) - "Discovering Design" Means [Re] Discovering Users and Projects, in: Discovering Design, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press

Parker, Sophia; Heapy, Joe (2006) - The Journey to the Interface - How public service design can connect users to reform, DEMOS, London

Pizzocaro, Silvia (2004) - Design e complessità, in: Design Multiverso, Milano, POLI.Design•

Ray, P.H., Anderson, S.R., 2000, The Cultural Creatives, How 50 Million People Are Changing the World, Three Rivers Press, New York, USA.

Rifkin, Jeremy (2000) - A Era do Acesso, A Revolução da Nova Economia, Lisboa, Editorial Presença, 2001

Samuels, Robert (1996) - Lifestyle at the Edge of Chaos, Evolving Environmental Ideals - Changing Way of Life, Values and Design Practices (IAPS 14 Conference Proceedings), 30 July - 3 August 1996, pp. 71-81 http://iaps.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Show?1202bm1011

Surowiecki, James (2005) – The Wisdom of Crowds, Anchor

Torres-Antonini, Maruja (2001) – Our Common House: Using the built environment do develop supportive communities, PhD dissertation, University of Florida, Florida

Varian, Hal R.; Farrell, Joseph V., and Shapiro, Carl, (2004) - The Economics of Information Technology, An Introduction; Raffaele Mattioli Lectures, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Whiteley, Nigel (1993) - Design for Society, London, Reaktion Books, Reprint 1998