Typical users of the service are young families with children. After becoming aware of what they should feed their babies, mothers start to pay attention to what they eat themselves. 'Happy vegetables' are also a solution for allergic people, and consumers who want organic food because of their principles. Consumers also like the service idea where a set of basic food products is brought to their doorsteps.

People over 60 raise vegetables and fruit in town, spend time together, and enjoy the open air.

Italy, Milan
Orti del Parco Nord – Parco Nord Vegetable Gardens

By Consortium Parco Nord
www.parconord.milano.it

Solution

Vegetable Gardens is a service provided by a consortium of six local authorities around the Parco Nord park in the Milanese suburbs. Under the Vegetable Gardens participants can rent an allotment very close to residential areas to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

The service is open to pensioners, housewives and the unemployed over 60, and gives them the chance to socialise and enjoy outdoor activities. Users can grow whatever they wish, but have to maintain their part of the garden and look after common spaces. Once in a while they are asked to participate to meetings and training seminars. Rent, on a six-year renewable contract, includes a storage chest, concrete tiles for paths, water, and disposal of non-compostable waste.

Context

Parco Nord is a big semi-urban park very close to residential areas. As many other parks, it suffers from a lack of maintenance, and has huge unused spaces that could be devoted to many other uses. The consortium that manages the park wanted to both solve the problems of the park and find a solution to the isolation experience by many people, especially pensioners, especially in urban areas which lack public spaces or facilities for children, teenagers and the elderly. A few years ago, parts of the railway embankments had been given to retired people to farm: this inspired the idea of dividing up parts of the park to and giving them to potential urban farmers.

Current situation

The scheme started in 1996 and has stood the test of time. It has incorporated lessons learned from the many similar initiatives in Milan and elsewhere in Italy and the world, under which an estimated 200 million urban farmers cultivate for 700 million people. Although the concept is widespread, Parco Nord's system is unusual in having a public competition to be given an allotment. Once a farmer is in, they pay a very low rate (around 26 euros per year) for use of the garden and dedicated services, but they have to buy seeds and plants themselves.

The benefits

Society. Caring for their own garden gives participants entertainment, improved family finances (thanks to the production of vegetables) and the opportunity to remain active and be useful. The social advantages are re-vitalisation of the city, by introducing new day-to-day activities, and regeneration of public space, by managing the public area of the vegetable gardens. The one limit is that it is only for elderly people.

Environment. It creates a well-kept area of parkland near the city, and by producing some vegetables for local consumption reduces the demand for food from further away. It encourages the use of organic home waste as compost and promotes a culture of natural food.

Economy. It improves and maintains the quality of a green area for low cost, and may stimulate small-scale local enterprise: gardening shops, selling or rental of gardening tools, or co-operatives of professional gardeners.

The experience	Design challenges
The satisfaction of growing fruit and vegetables themselves. Meeting other people with the same passion for gardening. Enjoying open-air activities.	Creating services and tools to support non-professional farmers and gardeners. Creating networks for enthusiasts to share experiences and skills.

Authors
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
German Espinoza, Elvis Meneghel

Quality organic food is guaranteed by a brand.

Poland, Krakow, Warszawa
Slow food in Poland

By Visana Consulting Group
http://vcg.pl

Solution

Working with a group of producers without their own wide-scale distribution network on a wider scale, Visana came up with its own brand 'Soplicowo i okolice', simultaneously creating a logistics and distribution network. Now promoting the idea of 'slow food' Visana trades in organic produce, traditionally farmed. It co-operates with local producers, offering better sales opportunities for their products in exchange for production under the 'Soplicowo i okolice label'. This gives also city consumers access to high-quality products from a trustworthy source.

Context

On one hand, consumer awareness of quality is growing. Visana's target group in Warsaw attaches importance to traditional taste and, with little time for cooking, eats out in restaurants offering regional cuisine or buys ready-made product with 'home-made' associations. On the other hand concern about biodiversity in agriculture is increasing.

Current situation

The scheme, run by Visana Consulting Group, has been going since August 2003. Warsaw is the main market, with Krakow included recently as well, but the target is to cover the whole of Poland. To increase sales, the company may take over co-operative production companies, or investing in new product lines. These would have significant impacts on the profit margin, the prices of raw material purchases, and production quality control. When the company started, shouldered their own investment, which allowed for the basic needs of the company to be paid for. At present, the company is surviving off dividends. Costs include office rental, storehouses, accountancy, staff salaries and transportation (rental costs and petrol). With the opening of the European Union borders and the large interest in Polish food in the West, the company is planning to enter the European market in the space of the next few years.

The benefits

Society. A new lifestyle is created of healthy and traditional food, and consumer awareness and concern for the source and quality of products. In this way Poland is slowly starting to follow the West in supporting small regional food producers, particularly original, traditional and healthy food that are unfortunately threatened with obsolescence.

Environment. Visana's products are made from natural ingredients and grown in environmentally friendly conditions. The soil is fertilised with natural composts, and the fruit and vegetables contain no pesticides. This encourages traditional farming methods with fertilisers that do no harm to the environment.

Economy. There are currently 13 producers, working under the common 'Soplicowo i okolice' brand, and around 40 distributors in Warsaw alone, with all the participants profiting from the co-operative venture. Producers and distributors split the risks and profits evenly. The company is employing more staff, the production firms are expanding, by investing in a machine park, and as confidence grows, new ideas emerge all the time.
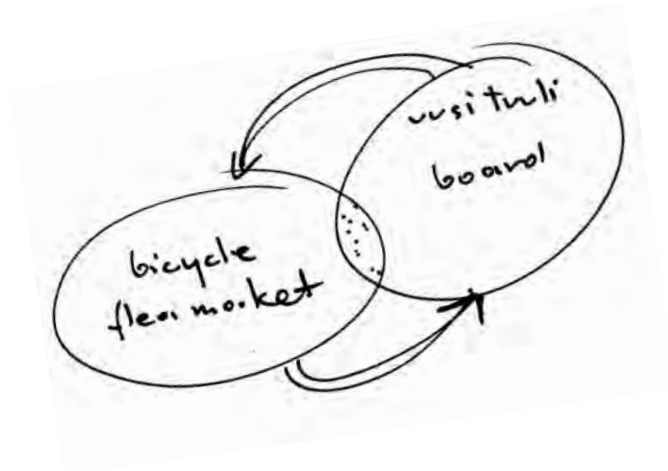
The experience	Design challenges
Rediscovering traditional food.	Creating services, events and places to present and taste local traditional food. Conceiving a platform of technical services to support local small farmers and food producers. Designing a visual identity for the brand which still allows the individual producers their own identity.

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bicycle flea market

uusi tuli board

MEET FRIENDS, SHOPPING ETC

▷ PERCHE'

dal coast to
+ Londra
⟹ usato

+ amore x sp
senza bici boi
mercato usa

+
studio. non ut
↳ licenza
frutto del Go
libri x gent.
— 6 mesi per
ricerca po

commuting
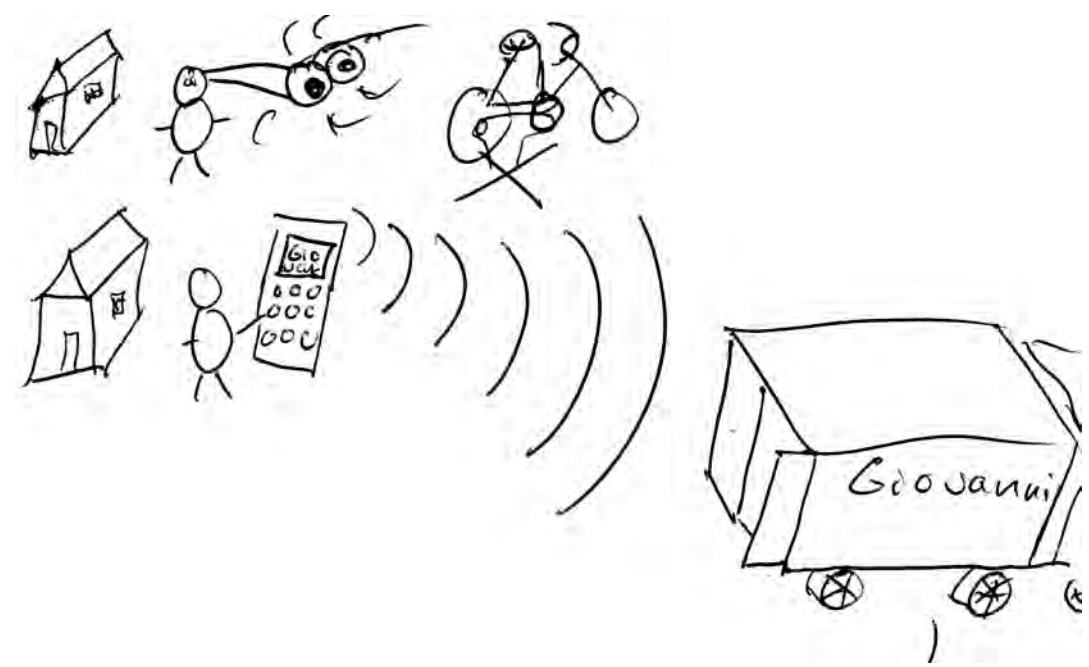
Bikers learn to maintain their own bikes and are helped to commute by bike.

Italy, San Donato Milanese, Milan

+BC Cycling Association

By +BC Association
www.piubici.org

Solution

+BC (standing for the Italian for 'more bicycles') is an association of bicycle experts (supported by the Municipality of San Donato Milanese), inventors and enthusiasts who encourage the culture of cycling in the city by supplying services like hiring second-hand bicycles, technical help, maintenance and creativity workshops, parking facilities and bicycle security. It also organises cultural activities and provides consultancy services on sustainable transport. +BC's services are open to all – there's no system of membership. The +BC workshops are managed by the users, under the supervision of an expert mechanic.

Context

The scheme is concerned with developing and disseminating innovative models of integrated mobility to reduce environmental, economical and social problems in the city. +BC has two main locations: one in downtown Milan, mainly dedicated to maintenance activities; the other one is at the San Donato Milanese metro station to encourage people to use bicycles instead of private cars.

Current situation

+BC has been running since 2003. The idea of a bicycle station with added services has existed in northern Europe for many years, but in Italy the idea of combining a bicycle parking lot with renting, maintenance, repairing, indoor parking and courses and events is a novelty. The scheme is unique to both Milan and Italy.

The benefits

Society. The solution empowers people by helping them to start using bicycles instead of using cars, and teaching them how to repair their own bikes. Cycling contributes to a better environment and healthier lifestyle.

Environment. Integrating transportation – bicycle and subway – can help solve traffic and pollution problems in large cities. +BC also helps to extend the life of old bicycles by repairing (or teaching to repair) and selling them.

Economy. The service enables users to maintain their own bicycles for a low price.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling part of a community with the same passion for sport and lifestyle. Behaving in a sustainable way.	Designing bikes easy to dismantle and re-assemble, and a proper set of standard spare parts. Creating open workshops where people can undertake repairs supervised by experts.

Authors
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Didem Erciyes, Carlo Frisardi
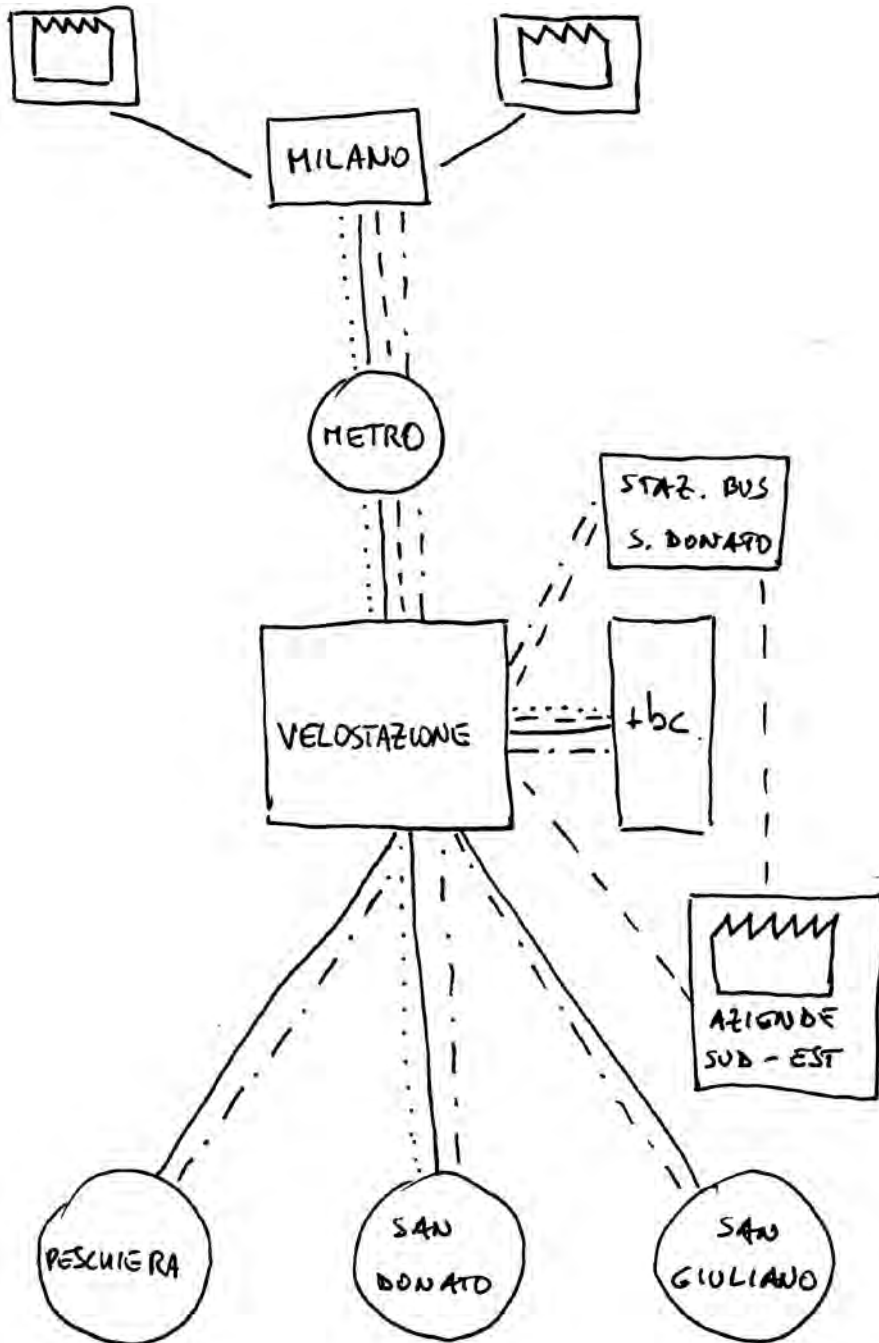
Giuseppe lives in San Donato and takes the subway to his office in the centre of Milan. Before the existence of +BC he used to drive from home to the metro station by car and always had problems parking near the metro station. When +BC was created, he decided to take part in the service: he picked up his old bicycle from the garage and took it to +BC to be repaired.
Now he uses his bicycle instead of using his car, simply leaving the bike in the +BC station.

Children get to school by themselves, enjoyably and safely.

Italy, Milan
Andiamo a scuola da soli – Walking bus

By School of via Bottego, Milan
www.iwalktoschool.org

Solution

The walking bus encourages children to walk to and from school in the safety of a group, under the supervision of one or more adults. Safe routes are created and become a fun part of children's daily routine. They meet their friends, talk and play, and share experiences outside the school. Gradually this builds up the children's autonomy and personalities. It is also good exercise, and frees up time for the parents, who would otherwise have to take the children to school. What's more, it improves children's road safety awareness, improves pedestrian safety, and creates friendlier neighbourhoods as people get out and interact with one another. Finally, it reduces traffic pollution and accidents involving child pedestrians.

Context

Walking bus is an initiative by some teachers at an elementary school in Milan to improve the health and the well-being of children. In Milan, a large part of daily traffic congestion is caused by taking children to and from school by car. However, it's difficult for children to walk on their own, because of unsafe roads and pavements often being blocked by parked cars. The walking bus protects and organises the groups of children.

Current situation

The pilot project began in 2000 and finished in August 2004. Now, the programme continues with volunteers from grandparents, friends and teachers. The system is based on an idea first proposed in the USA and UK, which had the same or other kinds of problems in implementation: little support from the public administration and bad infrastructure. In Milan the solution has been enriched with many activities inside and outside the school, such as cultural and art festivals, board games and art work which have increased the neighbourhood's respect for children and the environment. Nowadays, there are very few costs.

The benefits

Society. Walking to school means that people don't use their cars; this reduces traffic, accidents and pollution, and eases congestion on public transport. On a social level, the system recreates the sense of neighbourhood that existed a long time ago but has been lost in big cities. Developing this system could see schools as promoters of new ways of living, involving the whole community and increasing its responsibility towards children.

Environment. This system reduces traffic jams, air and noise pollution near schools and makes the streets more pleasant to live in. It also reduces fuel consumption, thus improving the environment.

Economy. This solution both gives parents time to do other activities, and saves money on fuel.

The experience	Design challenges
The children have the fun of going to school together on a daily urban adventure. Elderly people who help have the satisfaction of feeling useful in society.	To create communication tools and infrastructures to help children become independent and skilled.

Authors
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Emilia Douka, Luca Peluso

Children are the main users of this scheme, and like it because it gives them the chance to socialise with each other outside school. They would like to adopt the solution permanently, getting more and more autonomy over the five years of school.

Its success is due to the interest from the school's director and teachers and to the curiosity of children about doing new activities with new people. But there are problems: parents are still scared to let children walk to school alone and public administration doesn't support this project.

8:00am
the meeting point in square Constantino

8:08am
the first children arrive and slowly the group increases

8:15am
the 'red' group moves

8:23am
the group arrives at school

People interested in ecological transport get cheap bicycles.

Finland, Turku
Bicycle Flea Market

By Uusi Tuuli ry
http://www.estelle.fi/uusituuli.php

Solution

The Bicycle Flea Market repairs and resells donated bicycles. Funded by Uusi Tuuli ry it is run by volunteers, mostly unemployed, who are willing to work for the common good, and want to maintain their repair skills. The flea market began by selling everything, but was not profitable. Pepe, one of the volunteers, came up with the idea of a bicycle flea market which takes donated bicycles from all over Turku, and stores them in a basement before they are either repaired or dismantled for spare parts. Volunteers work two to four hours every weekday. Sometimes they are joined by people sent by the Unemployment Office, who are taught how to use tools and repair bikes, and leave three months later with a new skill. Repaired bikes are displayed next to the entrance. New owners are given a one-month warranty.

Context

Turku, population 170,000, is the cultural centre of Finland. The many students, who live in the city only during academic term time, want an ecological and cheap method of transport. Meanwhile, there are lots of unemployed people, many of them immigrants, who need work. Voluntary work is sometimes the only way to maintain their skills or keep them in touch with society.
At the moment there is only one Bicycle Flea Market. The scheme solves two problems: it revives bikes that people otherwise discard, believing it cheaper to buy a new one than repair the old one; and helps clear the spare bikes left in communal parts of apartment blocks when their owners move out.

Current situation

The scheme has been working well since 1990. In Finland, where bicycling is popular and bicycle prices high, recycling bicycles is not new now and happens in most cities. However, using voluntary work is unique to Turku. The main aim of Bicycle Flea Market is to make enough profit to maintain the fair trade promotional ship Estelle. The flea market only makes 10,000 to 15,000 euros per year, too little to pay even one person. About 75% of the profit goes to maintain Estelle, with the rest used for buying spare parts, and paying bills.

The benefits

Society. It helps to develop or maintain manual skills and enable workers to feel a valuable part of society. Those who choose to work here are willing to learn and teach others. They also don't pay any tax.

Environment. Uusi Tuuli's philosophy is to make the world better in simple ways, such as bicycle riding, kite flying or sailing. It promotes ecological transport, reduces waste and turns abandoned bikes into valuable products.

Economy. Customers benefit from a cheap bike with a warranty.
It helps Turku students save money on public transport, and commute in an ecological way.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling part of a community with respect for the nature and the environment. Behaving in a sustainable way.	Designing bikes easy to dismantle and re-assemble, and a proper set of standard spare parts. Creating open workshops where people can undertake repairs supervised by experts. Better integrating mobility system with public and private transportation systems.

Authors
University of Art and Design Helsinki, Finland
Ryszard Poniedzialek
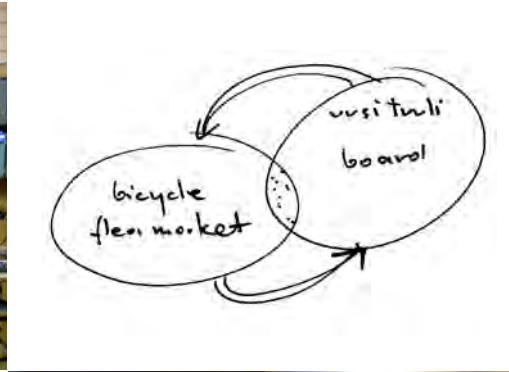
Anyone can come and donate a bicycle.
It will be stored in the basement...
...repaired or dismantled into spare parts...completed and resold to someone in need.
Another sold bicycle will be added to a long list.

How the use of bikes in large towns is encouraged.

France, Paris
Cyclo-Pouce
By Cyclo-Pouce

Solution

Cyclo-Pouce delivers products by bike to disabled people, elderly people and local companies. It offers bike recycling, repair and rental to individuals and local associations, and gives courses in mechanics and traffic codes. Its main purpose is to improve the wellbeing of people in the city: 'La vie est plus belle en vélo'. In collaboration with Jet Handicap Evasion it developed a new bicycle for transporting disabled people.

Context

Today, CP is Paris-based, on what Parisians call the 'Petite Ceinture', an unused railway track running around the outer edge of the city, which was given to the association in 2000 in an agreement with Paris City Hall (19th), SNCF (French railway company) and CPCU (French urban heating). At the time there was no electricity or water available. CP promotes bikes in Paris, seeing them as a way of integrating people in the urban fabric. It employs people who are 'unemployable' who have difficult backgrounds, such as drug addicts.

Current situation

CP was developed 10 years ago by 16 very different people who shared a passion for bikes. The aim was to create an association using bicycles to improve the lives of people with social/physical difficulties. CP took four years to develop, studying existing needs and projects, economic/legal requirements and bureaucratic problems. CP finally started in 2000.
In the future, CP would like to establish itself in other French regions. The Paris site is nice at weekends, but can become quite abandoned in the week or on rainy days (weather is a big factor in this activity). CP expects to create stronger links with disabled associations like APF (Association des Paralysés de France), which would extend client awareness of special services offered. Meanwhile CP has participated in events like 'Championnats du monde d'athhlétisme', 'Descente des Champs-Élysées', 'Défi de l'exploit' and in professional encounters. The number of CP users is gr owing, thanks to the variety of services presented, a professional attitude and an open-minded spirit. CP is already well-organised, with employees, working schedules, timetables, and a growing number of clients. But it wants to grow further and increase its range of services to the handicapped. This will need bigger financial investment, wider promotion, and dissemination to other Parisian areas. Four people work full-time, with five volunteers. The workers come from 'Nouveaux emploi, nouveaux service', supporting 'unemployable' under 30s.

The benefits

Society. CP has developed several activities with schools and social associations, educating and promoting the bike as a complementary method of urban transportation. It employs people with difficult backgrounds, creating new jobs.

Environment. CP has obviously a strong connection with the environment, proposing and facilitating a non-polluting method of city transportation. It recycles old or unused bicycles by repairing them and making them available to everyone, especially schools. It also promotes bicycle use to the young.

Economy. The money earned by the CP is used to buy new materials and bicycles, and to pay for rent, water and electricity. The most profitable activity is bike rental, then bike repair and then product selling. These profits allow CP to offer services to the disabled, which is expensive, mainly because the products offered are prototypes developed in the CP workshops.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling part of a community of people with the same passion for sport and way of life. Behaving sustainably.	Designing bicycle-based vehicles for those with disabilities. Designing multi-use accessories to make biking easier. Creating open workshops where people can undertake repairs while supervised by experts.

Authors
ENSCI Les Ateliers, Paris, France
Ana Maia

'What we need is to go out and enjoy Paris and have fun by taking advantage of the nearby Cyclo-Pouce.
There is one of the most famous cycling tracks in Paris, 20km of beautiful sightseeing on the Seine'

City residents have the use of a car whenever they need it, but without owning one.

Italy, Milan
MCS – Milano Car Sharing

By Legambiente, MCS
www.milanocarsharing.it

Solution

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 problem of urban commuting, based on 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. 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 charges them at the end of the month.

Context

Like many other big cities, Milan has the problems of traffic jams, pollution and lack of parking, especially during rush hours, mainly caused by private cars. Mostly people prefer to own a car rather than use public transportation or alternative transport. In other major cities in Europe, alternative transport solutions such as car sharing have been available for many years and in some cities, such as Berlin, are very popular. Nowadays the costs of owning a car are very high. It would often be cheaper to pay for the car only when you use it, and for the time you use it. Also it can be time-consuming to find parking and maintain the car. The car-sharing concept deals with these issues.

Current situation

Legambiente introduced the car-sharing service to Milan in September 2001. It started with three cars, a garage and a website; by 2005, the MCS had several vehicles in three different categories and 13 parking areas. 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 people's mind-set about private commuting. Annual membership costs 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 benefits

Society. Society gains an innovative, economic and ecological system as an alternative to the traffic problems caused by private care ownership. On an individual basis users save money, time and stress and gain awareness about the costs (money, environment, use of public space) of using cars. Ideologically Car Sharing might remove some of the status aspect of private cars.

Environment. 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.

Economy. 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.

The experience	Design challenges
Being part of an elite of trend-setters, trying to improve city life. Having a range of cars to sample. Behaving in a sustainable way.	Developing technical services to support community sharing. Designing cars suitable for easy and frequent personalisation. Developing low-emission cars.

Authors
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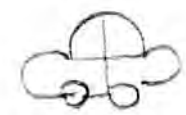
Paths and services for urban cyclists are enhanced.

Germany, Cologne Mühlheim
MFG Mülheimer Fahrrad Gruppe – MFG Cycle Association

By Mülheimer Fahrrad Gruppe
web site: http:// http://www.muelheimer-freiheit.net/mfg

Solution

The goal of MFG (Mülheimer Fahrrad Gruppe) is to increase bicycle traffic in the Mühlheim district of Cologne, where 143,000 people live. Believing that the bicycle is the ideal urban vehicle for short distances, the association wants more acceptance from both the city administration and car drivers, and improved safety and comfort for cyclists. MFG collects reports of broken bike paths, abandoned bikes, etc, sends an email to city officials, and posts the problem on an online forum. It gets one or two phonecalls a week.The City of Cologne is responsible for taking away old bikes and servicing the paths, but is often slow in acting, especially in the outskirts like Mühlheim. MFG both works with the bicycle commissioner of city hall and, sorts out small problems itself. The roughly 10 members of MFG meet once a month to discuss administration and tasks. They spend most of their time inspecting bicycle ways.

Context

Cologne is crowded with cars and public transport, resulting in pollution, danger for children and congestion. One answer to this problem is bicycles. Although there are 550,000 bicycles on the streets of Cologne, cyclists do not get much attention, as they are politically unimportant.

Current situation

The scheme has been running since 2002, based on the concepts of other organisations interested in the environment and cycling: ADFC, VCD and BUND. In the small area it is responsible for, it works very well, but wants to expand to cover more of Cologne. The response from local people is good, and MFG contacts get articles about their projects published in the local press. The members of the MFG work voluntarily, and devote a lot of time to it. Funds come from sponsorship, and advertising by local bicycle dealers on the MFG's website.

The benefits

Society. By involving local people in taking care of the bike paths and infrastructures, the scheme engages people with their district, creates a sense of community and promotes bicycle use.

Environment. The MFG encourages the use of the bikes for commuting, making cycling in town safer and more pleasurable. In addition, taking care of the paths keeps the urban environment nice and clean. With its work, MFG shows how civil action can prevent vandalism.

Economy. The scheme is self-funding, based on sponsorship and advertising on the website. Through their work, members of MFG provide great support to the local municipality in managing the public space, saving public money.

The experience	Design challenges
Pleasure in taking care of the common environment and feeling responsible for it. Pride in improving the neighbourhood.	Creating places where residents can discuss the problems of the community.

Authors
School of Design, University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, Germany

Cologne is really a 'bike city'...

Ben, as it often happens, uses his bike to go to his university.
One day he sees a dangerous hole in the bike lane.
So, he calls the MFG to tell it about this problem.
Someone at MFG takes care of it, calling the mayor's bureau, to convince them to repair the street.
Sometimes it works, and the works begin...

People exchange used sporting goods.

Italy, Milan
Minimo Impatto – Minimum Impact

By Alessandro Galli, Minimo Impatto
www.minimoimpatto.it

Solution

Minimo Impatto is a service for private sellers and buyers of used sporting goods. It provides an exhibition space, a shop, where items are held on consignment for a given period, and supports trading management. Bicycles are the most traded items. The aims are to encourage the use of bicycles, and, to quote the service organiser, 'to learn the real value of money compared to the importance of one's own contemplative time'. The system works like this: sellers, who have to be registered (to prevent the sale of stolen goods), bring what they want to sell; agree a selling price with the shop, and a percentage commission to the shop; sign a year-long contract; and receive the money, minus the agreed percentage, once the item is sold. It's a new way of selling used goods and also acts as a repair shop.

Context

The idea behind the trading of these second-hand goods is about how to extend the lifespan of products, allowing people to enjoy sport without spending a lot of money, and decreasing waste. Minimo Impatto is located in the north of Milan, a quite run-down area not well-served by public transport. The idea came to founder Alessandro Galli while cycling in Australia few years ago. Before this trip he had worked as a manager in a multinational firm, but found this didn't give him the time he wanted for thinking, travelling or cycling. He decided to change his life and do something to improve his quality of life. This project combines his love of bicycles and the idea of recycling, and makes him enough money to go travelling. Buying something second-hand but perfectly good means you have to work less and have more time to enjoy more time off, at the same time as reducing waste and improving the areas where cyclists go.

Current situation

Minimo Impatto started in September 2003. The idea was to replicate the Northern European second-hand model, specialising in sports goods. Before the shop could open, six months of studying laws and bureaucracy were needed, as this system had never been used before in Italy. Selling is seasonal: in summer bikes and rollerblades; in winter skis and snowboarding items. There is no charge to use Minimo Impatto: the selling price is divided between the previous owner of the goods and the provider of the service.

The benefits

Society. As 80% of the buyers are on low incomes, the service means they can enjoy sports and activities without large expenditure, and can sell the items when they do not need them any more. For those concerned with recycling, this kind of service encourages the organisation of groups sharing the same ideas and spreads a deeper consciousness about the quality of life.

Environment. The major benefit to the environment is the extending of a product's lifespan, and consequent use of fewer natural resources. It also increases bicycle use, reducing pollution.

Economy. The service promotes the ability to spend less but experience more. We have more money and technology but less time. If people want to spend time and money experiencing nature, sports and travel, they don't need to spend much money.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling part of a community which respects nature and the environment. Behaving in a sustainable way.	Designing bikes that are easy to dismantle and re-assemble, and a proper set of standard spare parts. Creating open workshops where people can undertake repairs supervised by experts. Better integrating mobility systems with public and private transportation systems.

Authors
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Marta Gianighian, Nelson Issa, Davide Nava

After years of work in the commercial and managerial area, Alessandro Galli decided to leave his usual world a few years ago and go on a coast-to-coast biking trip in Australia. While he was riding bicycle he decided to join together all the ideas he likes.
He loves sport, especially biking; he likes the Northern European way of re-using things in order to have more money to spend on travelling and other ways of experiencing the world around and oneself; he is sensitive to environmental problems like waste and pollution, and to social problems such as the lack of contemplative time.

He thinks that every 10 years it is necessary to stop and deeply think about what we are doing, and how we are spending our life.
And to change something if the answers are not acceptable...

Giving cyclists easier access to bicycle repairs.

The Netherlands, Brunssum
Mobiele Fietsenmaker – Mobile Bicycle Repairman

By Giovanni Putzu mobile bicycle repairman
www.mobielefietsenmaker.nl

Solution

The novelty in this service is that a bicycle repair man visits clients at home and fixes their bike instantly, which is much easier than getting to a repair shop with a broken bike!
Giovanni – the founder and repairman – has kitted out a bus to become a mobile workshop, for about 15,000 euros.

Context

There used to be at least one bike repairman in nearly every Dutch neighbourhood, but as bicycles have got more reliable, their workload reduced and they closed down. Nowadays there are much fewer such handymen, and the market has been taken over by larger companies. It therefore takes longer to get a bike repaired, and it can of course be difficult actually getting to the repair company.

Current situation

The project has been going for three years, and has attracted a lot of interest. At the moment Giovanni is the only provider of the Mobile Bicycle Repairman service, but he is ready to recruit other repairmen and give them busses to work in other districts. At the same time, a franchising company 'Fietsnet' is preparing a full-scale national project to provide this service (with about 150 vans) all over the country.

The benefits

Society. Providing an easy way for people to have their bikes fixed stimulates people to use their bikes more.

Environment. Renovating the bikes prolongs the life cycle of the product.

Economy. Users get their bikes repaired conveniently for a good price. The popularity of the service means the provider fulfills a clear need.

The experience	Design challenges
Meeting and talking to Giovanni. The luxury of a home service.	Designing bikes that are easy to dismantle and re-assemble and a standard set of spare parts. Designing suitably light and green mobile repair vans. Designing software and equipment to optimise the logistics of the service.

Authors
TU Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Teun Heesterbeek, Rick Hölsgens, Marieke Moerman

Henrik is about to leave on his bike when he realises has a flat tyre. Remembering an advertisement for the mobile bike repairman he calls Giovanni, who comes over to Henrik's home.
After discussing the problem, he takes the bike into his van to fix it instantly.
All the tools he needs are in the van. Giovanni shows Henrik the receipt, and gives him some advice and a contact card.
The customer satisfied, Giovanni leaves for his next customer.

motherboards
- sold
then "junk"

30-35 daily

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...es — can be anyone
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...or want equality
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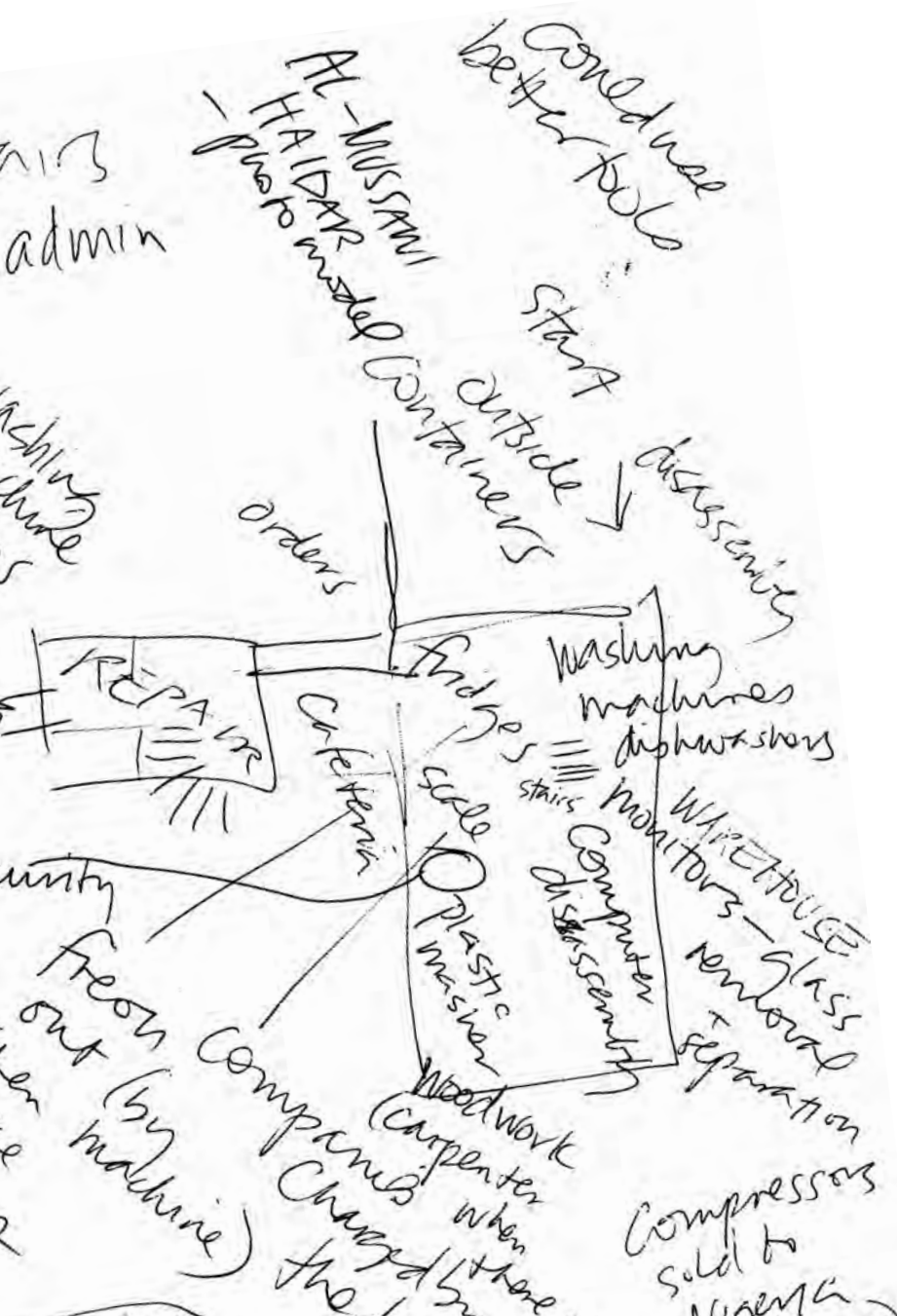...ere are also some mental health groups
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spare parts

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Nie będzie miał k
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Local residents exchange time and skills.

United Kingdom, Ayrshire
Ayrshire LETS (Local Exchange Trading System)
By Ayrshire LETS

Solution

A Local Exchange Trading System is a concept based on the mutual exchange of services and skills among the members of a community. There are currently 40 members from around Ayrshire actively trading anything from catering through to plants and plumbing. The currency is 'thistles', with the standard rate being 30 thistles per hour, which equates to £6. This is a typical LETS scheme of which there are 18 in Scotland. They encourage innovative forms of trading (from gift wrapping to plumbing) and encourage trading between individuals and community businesses, reduce banking and interest charges, and provide community projects with access to low-interest capital.

Context

All over Europe feelings of isolation are increasing, as are the desire to become part of the community. Offering professional and non-professional skills to exchange gives the chance to start meeting people not only for business purposes, but also with the aim of building an atmosphere of mutual trust and exchange.

Current situation

This is a relatively young LETS scheme which is still improving and maturing. The original project started in 1976, when a group of Friends of the Earth members decided to start a LETS scheme in Ayr to counter the increase in non-local trade and consequent declining sense of community, and the associated environmental impact of large-scale business.
Starting up costs and subscriptions are around £20 per member. Other than that, all trading is 'free' in normal monetary terms. Sometimes traders pay for materials etc. LETS schemes suffer from having a 'critical mass': 50 members is optimum, but 150 is too large. Traders cannot get to know each other so are less likely to trade. The LETS model is easy to replicate, and a pack is available explaining how to start up a scheme.

The benefits

Society. Social benefits include an increased sense of community and the illustration of the value of each individual, which are excellent for encouraging inclusive communities, providing internal support and empowering people.

Environment. Sharing skills, products and knowledge reduces (in many cases) material consumption. Products are reused. Environmental benefits also include those associated with localised trading (less travel, fuel etc.).

Economy. A LETS proposes an alternative economy based on time instead of money: it creates a different framework of meaning and value for human activities, which can generate problems in the legal recognition of this scheme of exchange.

The experience	**Design challenges**
Meeting neighbours in exchanging services. Building relationships is more important than saving time. Being part of an inclusive scheme where everybody's contribution is valued and welcomed. Contact with sustainability-minded people interested in innovation through social aggregation. The value of trust.	Developing low-tech and high-tech platforms for managing the exchange of skills and goods among the community. Improving communication in the neighbourhood. Developing regulations for exchanges.

Authors
School of Design, The Glasgow School of Art, Scotland
Florence Andrews, Alex Thomas

users – can be anyone
            unemployed, retired, working
        families, elderly

join because they don't have any money
or want equality
sustainable minded people – environmental aims
recycling – not commercial/industrial
interested in making things inclusive
there are also some mental health groups
who join to

Local residents help each other out through the mutual exchange of skills.

Italy, Milan, Niguarda
Banca del Tempo – Time Bank

By Banca del Tempo Milano Niguarda
www.banchetempo.milano.too.it

Solution

Time Bank manages the exchange of people's spare time and competences, like the northern European LETS (Local Exchange Trade System). Every activity, help or product has a price in hours. People can ask someone for help with a problem and pay back with their own time instead of money. When somebody receives a service or help they have a debt equivalent to the amount of hours spent, which they can repay by offering something that costs the same time or, if more, some hours credit. Members join the association by filling a form saying what they need and what they could offer in exchange. The request is then put in the Time Bank's list of announcements and communicated to all the members through a website, a weekly e-mail and a paper note posted in the main centre for the people without a personal computer.

Context

In big European cities such as Milan, people are no longer surrounded by family and need different kinds of help and assistance in everyday life. People can sometimes find solidarity in their own neighbourhoods, but it's hard to get problems solved in a professional way. Many people are willing to offer their time, but others are too shy to ask for it, or worry about how they'll repay the favour. Barter solutions like the Time Bank are emerging to help out.

Current situation

The Time Bank of Milano Niguarda was founded in 1999 and is in an area rich in local associations and cultural centres. Around the Niguarda Hospital there are also a lot of elderly and socially isolated people. There are many Time Bank-style organisations around the world which operate in different ways. Creating a network between different Time Banks in the same city would enable each centre to use its strengths to solve more problems and link more people. The Niguarda scheme works well, mainly due to the dedication of people who work for the Time Bank, but there is not much organisation of archives or databases, nor is there enough communication about the service. Italian law says that local councils can support and promote Time Banks (for example by paying the rent). Every member of the organisation staff works on a voluntary basis, with office expenses paid for by the 14 euro registration fee.

The benefits

Society. Time Bank gives great benefit to society. People can receive help but, more importantly, everyone can find something to give to others in mutual exchange, with everyone having the same value in terms of what they can offer.

Environment. Time Bank holds sales, where people bring their old stuff and sell it in exchange for hours. In this way, every old and unused object can turn into something positive instead of being thrown away. Products exchanged like this have their lifespan lengthened, and shared tools get much more use.

Economy. Time Bank can improve domestic finances, as no money has to be paid for services. But the money is less important than the feeling of solidarity.

The experience	Design challenges
The improved relationships with neighbours by exchanging services is more important than the saving of time. Being part of an inclusive scheme where everybody's contribution is valued and welcomed. Contact with sustainability-minded people interested in innovation through social aggregation.	Developing low-tech and high-tech platforms for managing the exchange of skills and goods among community members. Improving communication in the neighbourhood. Developing regulations to guarantee the exchanges.

Authors
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Alessandra Ciampalini, Ates Ergin

Luigi Tomasso (coordinator of the service):
'Time Bank is often studied, by
researchers, the press, the TV or the radio,
only for the functional and utilitarian
side of our trade. Or they focus on some
inevitable folk character.
'Unlike them, this analysis captures some
very important ideas about our problematic
relations, our need to manage our
activities better and to communicate the
opportunities we offer.'

Technical, logistical and material help for human rights associations.

France, Paris
CICP Centre International de Culture Populaire – International centre of popular culture

By Centre International de Culture Populaire
www.cicp21ter.org

Solution

The first aim of CICP was to support associations working on international solidarity, but it now supports several other associations. They all work in areas relating to human rights. The CICP rents out to these bodies offices and/or mailboxes, meeting rooms, places to project movies, and tools to organise their activities. The associations share the equipments. Every new association has to be accepted by the other associations in the CICP. Once an association is accepted, the CICP respects its objectives, points of view, political choices and ways of thinking, and doesn't intervene in their work.

Context

The CICP was founded in 1976 by the Centre d'études et d'Initiatives de Solidarité Internationale to enable associations working on international solidarity without any state support, and struggling against all sorts of domination (political, economic or cultural), by giving them the technical, material and logistical support they needed for their work. It is now in a three-floor building in the 11th arrondissement of Paris, adapted by an architect to accommodate various associations in a sort of 'co-housing' system. The CICP provides the space for meetings and events, organises the maintenance of the building, helps communication inside the 'community' and offers audiovisual equipped meeting places.

Current situation

The CICP now has about 80 associations as members: about 30 have their offices in the house and the others have mailboxes. The CICP functions without any state funding. It pays its workers with the rent from the associations. The associations can earn their own money too by renting rooms to other organisations for a short period.

The benefits

Society. Grouping many associations in one place creates a kind of family atmosphere, which encourages deep informal debates. People coming to the CICP are surprised to find so many bodies in the same place, as most of the time they are looking for only one of them. They discover the real meaning of this space.

Environment. It produces all the environmental benefits of 'co-housing': it reduces the transport for meetings and reduces energy consumption by sharing spaces.

Economy. The CICP gives a bit of leeway on rent demands if an association is having a financial problem.

The experience	Design challenges
Motivation from working with people with the same mission in society, and sharing knowledge. Enjoying an animated working environment.	Building or renovating buildings especially for business co-housing

Authors
ENSCI Les Ateliers, Paris, France
Milamem Abderamane-Dillah, Goliath Dyèvre

'This case shows that an interesting system like co-housing can be transposed in an other context. We think it is a good exercise to imagine how a way of working can be used in another context, to verify that it really is a sustainable system and not just a lucky strike that can't be reproduced. We really think that this sort of structure can be reproduced in several different contexts'

Sheep-breeding is revitalised.

Poland, Nowy Sacz
The sheep project
By A group of farmers from Nowy Sacz, local restaurateurs and others

Solution

A Work fund co-finances the purchase of small flocks of sheep, ensuring sufficient meat and wool, with ongoing monitoring, training and program promotion. Its primary goal is to limit the effects of unemployment in village areas through creating shepherding self-employment and places of work in shepherding homesteads. It also wants to create an integrated economic model of shepherd production, increase the social and professional activity of village residents, supply the market with valuable and healthy food, and prevent the mountain landscape from becoming spoilt. The scheme was started by a businessman: he bought the first flocks and gave them to owners of pasture that had become overgrown following a decline in sheep farming. He organised the market for the meat, milk, wool and skin.
A restaurateur from Krakow promotes the mutton dishes. The project revives tradition, encourages eco-lifestyle, produces healthy, nutritious food, preserves the area's scenery, develops tourism and prevents unemployment in the area.

Context

There is a long tradition of sheep breeding in Polish mountains, but following sheep farming control, sheep herds were greatly reduced in number. Pastures once used for herding were invaded by new species of plants. The collapse of sheep herding resulted in an increase in regional unemployment.Nowy Sacz is a quite mountainous region, with high unemployment. The villagers faced long-term unemployment, due to their low qualifications and lack of professional experience. It was essential that steps were taken to give them prospects for social/professional work, to combat their increasing inactivity, unwillingness and apathy. An equally important matter was restoring the Beskidy landscape. The grazing of sheep has a fundamental impact on this, as it allows upkeep of the mountain pastures and meadows, preventing their overgrowth with less desirable plants and the encroachment of the forest, and in this way maintaining the picturesque areas of the Beskidy.

Current situation

The scheme started in May 2003 and should conclude in January 2007. The programme could only be carried out in Nowy Sacz, and not spread to other regions, because of changes to financing rules. Between July 2003 and June 2005 farms were assessed for their suitability for the programme, 36 unemployed people were signed up and accepted the contract for partial refund of costs and sharing of loans from the Work Fund for the activities, sheep were received, and a

programme of monitoring begun.The Work Fund refunds part of the costs of equipping the work stations and part of the costs incurred in carrying out farm activities, and gave loans for the creation of new work areas and for carrying out farm activities.

The benefits

Society. Professional qualifications gained through training, maintaining of cultural traditions connected with breeding and the grazing of sheep. One of the greatest advantages of this project is the reduction in the unemployment rate of about 20%, alomg with enabling local integration, spreading ecological solutions, strengthening the link between city and village, and helping neglected areas and endangered species.

Environment. The Beskidy landscape is maintained, and the region's attractiveness improved, panoramic viewing points are revealed, existing pastures and meadows maintained and the mountain landscape rescued.

Economy. The scheme has created an integrated economic model for sheep goods production and places for self-employment, limits effects of unemployment in village regions, has helped the development of agro-tourism, and supplies the market with nutritious and healthy food.

The experience	Design challenges
For the breeders, the pride of carrying on traditional work, with its rediscovered dignity and importance. Citizens discover traditional products and food.	Designing services, events and places to promote local traditional products. Facilitating communication between breeders and the public administration. Developing place marketing.

Authors
Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Poland
Sabina Francuz

Boguslaw is a young man who recently passed his high school exams and, like his father, wanted to breed sheep. He found out about the Sheep program and received 27 Bergschaft sheep.
A year later he owns a flock of more than 100.
He says that it is the best species for meat and wool.
He likes his work very much, and though it does not bring in the expected profits, he appears to be satisfied with it and looks to the future with optimism.

How the lifespan of consumer products can be extended. Unemployed, disabled and immigrant people find work that is valuable both to them and to society.

Finland, Helsinki

Työ & Toiminta – Job and Action Association

By Työ & Toiminta
www.kierratys.net/ns_index.htm

Solution

The main goal of the association is to provide work for unemployed, rehabilitated, immigrant and/or disabled people. The second goal of the association is to 'promote the policy of sustainable development by increasing the life cycle of consumer goods, by finding new ways of recycling, and by boosting the recycling activities in Helsinki area', and it runs a second-hand store selling the goods. Other benefits: employment is kept local, workers have high motivation, and immigrants are able to adapt to Finnish working culture. 30% of workers find employment after working here. The scheme reduces a large amount of industrial and consumer waste, and provides household goods to the community and disadvantaged countries at reasonable prices. In the future, it hopes to collaborate even more with artists and designers in reusing material that cannot be recycled.

Context

The association was founded by a group of unemployed people in Vuosaari, a multicultural area of the city. At the time, unemployment associations were popular because of the economic recession, and provided somewhere for people (mainly men) to do social activities such as fishing. Honkanen was hired as the leader of one association in 1997/98, and he introduced recycling as a profitable activity. First of all, household goods were sold at a flea market, and then computers became more of the items being dismantled, reused and recycled. Opportunities with the new WEEE laws coming into effect, and collaborations with the Municipality of Helsinki, drove growth of the officially registered association. Companies in Finland must comply with the strict recycling laws, and this solution provides a way for them to recycle at low cost. Consumers also appreciate an outlet that enables them to recycle their goods in a culture where environmental friendliness is important. Workers find this a valuable place to work because it pays better than unemployment, provides a place for them to put their skills to work and be active, and the atmosphere is relaxed and 'like a big family'.

Current situation

A private limited company "social firm" (called Neo-Act Ltd) has recently been registered and activities will move from the non-profit association to the social firm. Its dual mission is to create jobs while making a profit according to legal social firm regulations. This association seems to be well organised and appropriate to its culture and society. The Job and Action Association cooperates with other Finnish social firms (supported by the national 'Elware' project) and is also part of the European-wide network, RReuse, a network of social firms operating in a similar way.

For electric and electronic items like TVs, computers and fridges J&AA charges a very reasonable recycling fee, and will collect equipment and furniture for a small fee. It now employs around 60 people.

The benefits

Society. There are many benefits for individuals working in this sustainable, enthusiastic place. From the consumer's point of view, there is the benefit of recycling unwanted goods, and of buying products at reasonable prices. Putting immigrants to work (currently 35 nationalities) in society alongside Finns helps create a more multicultural and open-minded atmosphere, and allows them to develop skills and contacts not otherwise possible.

Environment. The environmental benefits are clear, with the repair/reuse of products, extending their lifespan, and material recycling. Between 25 and 40 tons of material comes through the operation per month, with about four tons of computers received per week from the government alone. J&A's burning of plastic generates enough energy to heat 17 houses in Finland a year.

Economy. The creation of local jobs (600 since 1999) and new products is obviously good for the economy in Helsinki. By providing employees with new skills, they are then able to go on to find work in other areas of the city, with 30% getting jobs afterwards. Companies appreciate this service which enables them to abide by business practice laws, while also lowering costs through reuse of waste.

| The experience	Design challenges
Reintegration into the world of work and active life. Feeling part of a big-family in a positive working atmosphere.	Designing innovative equipment and tools for recycling materials. Developing and applying disassembling criteria. Spreading the culture of recycling and recovering by designing quality products from recycled material.

Authors
University of Art and Design Helsinki, Finland
Lindsay Kenzig, Cindy Kohtala

Harri is an administrator who deals with
the logistics of getting waste materials from
companies. He sees a need for innovative
equipment and tools in the recycling of glass and
metal; he is looking for designers and artists to
collaborate with in making high quality products
from these materials to be sold.

Ramin likes working here because it is a great
atmosphere, he can do what he likes, he gets to
learn about recycling, he meets many people and
is relearning a 'rhythm in life'.
Al-Mussawi Haidar says he loves working here
because it is 'like a big family'.
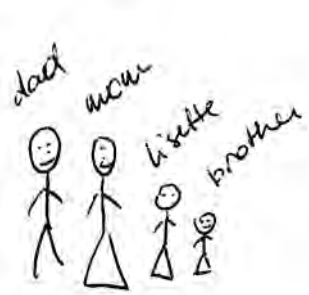
Nidi in code è nato da una convenzione
il Comune e la Cooperativa "Solidarie...
↓
99 studia situazione
→ 60-70 famiglie in
lista d'attesa x
asilo nido
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organizzo un corso di
formazione x operatrici di inpuzio
x donne disoccupate e residenti
e S. Donato → 19 operatrici
(m²) il Comune non riesce a gestire
un progetto così complesso e
abbandona.
Alcune operatrici si rivolgono
alle cooperative

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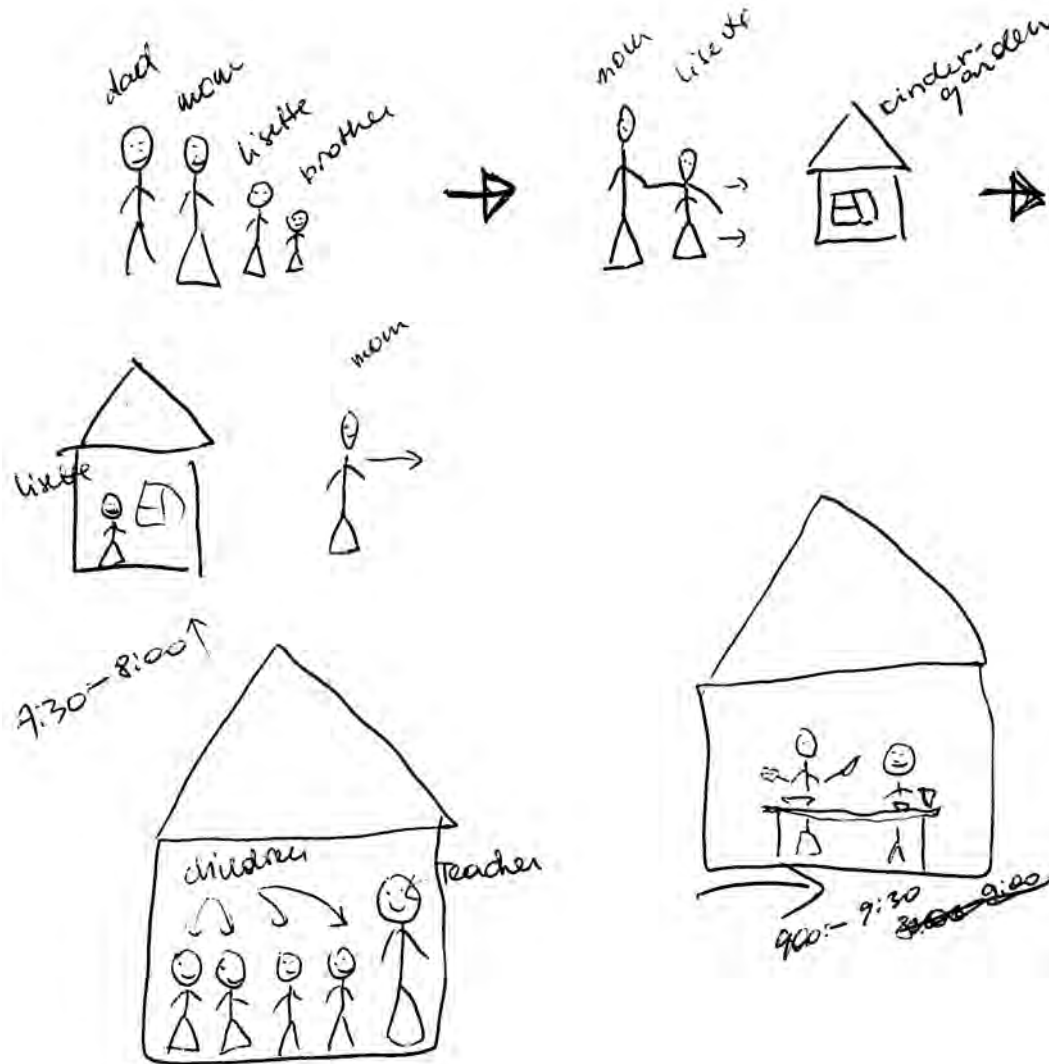
Young people's creativity and resource-awareness is stimulated.

The Netherlands, Eindhoven
Artist involvement in creative education

By Bisk Eindhovhen

Solution

The aim of the scheme is to bring schools and artists together for educational purposes. An organisation called BISK acts as mediating agency between schools and artists, who are invited to the workshops to develop the pupils' creative and artistic skills. The pupils, guided by the artists, create artworks from garbage, discovering the potential of material that is all around them, finding and composing new meanings out of discarded objects. The innovative part of this scheme is that it provides a valuable contribution to the creative development of schoolchildren. Students learn about tools and materials, and ways of expressing themselves.
This solution enhances the creative skills of society as a whole and promotes an open-minded and 'out-of-the-box' approach to life.

Context

The Western world produces enormous amounts of garbage. Although society considers it useless and ugly, there is a growing interest in using garbage in art. These forms of art do not reach young children who are taught to express themselves through techniques such as painting or pottery. Teachers often focus on the quality of the artistic creations themselves rather than the thought that provoked them. Also, teachers are often not artists themselves, being more concerned with educational issues rather than creativity itself. Artists love to share their passion for art and creativity with young people, who are open-minded and enthusiastic to experiment.

Current situation

The solution is now already put into practice, and extending the scheme to other schools would be relatively simple: an organisation structure would be needed to bring schools and artists together. When it works well, a course can provide artists with both teaching insights and practical information.

The benefits

Society. The pupils get a chance of contact with the 'mysterious' profession of the artist and are guided in creative exploration by a real professional. This may spark an impulse to be more creative and promote a more creative attitude in general. On a social level, this solution joins the creative and cultural aspects of education, and could help society evolve with innovation and creativity.

Environment. When the artists are using 'prosperity leftovers' – that is, discarded consumer products and toys – it reduces the amount of paper, paint and clay, etc, used in creative sessions, and may also give the pupils insight into the value of the things we call 'garbage'. Young people become aware of environmental issues in a playful way.

Economy. Although the artists are paid by the schools, they are more motivated by the enjoyment of sharing their passion, and the inspiration they get from working with children. To make the initiative more economically sustainable solutions have to be found for funding the projects, eg. selling the results to a larger public.

| The experience	Design challenges
The stimulation that comes from meeting those in other professions, with different skills and ages. The challenge of transforming the industrial world into something unique and personal.	Creating situations and environments to use discarded objects for new purposes and give them a new beauty. Designing objects with alternative uses for a second life. Developing educational events to stimulate the personalisation of goods and their creative re-definition.

Authors
TU Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Chris Heger, Laurie Scholten, Wouter Widdershoven

Artists need to realise that pupils of different ages
need different approaches.
Adolescents can cope with the task of creating
something using, for instance, keywords.
For young children, it is better to tell them an
open-ended introductory story.
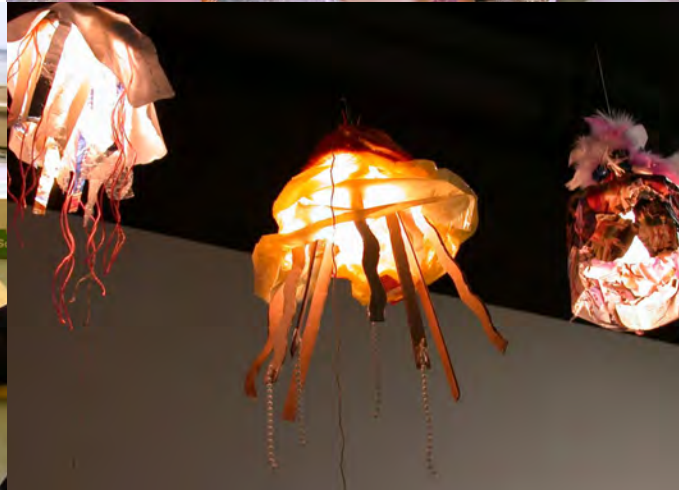
France, Paris

Cafezoïde – Playground café

By Cafezoïde association
www.cafezoide.asso.fr

Solution

Café Zoïde is a combination of a neighbourhood workshop and a café, independent from the school system but providing educational yet liberating surroundings for children. The scheme offers a playground for families, art courses and exhibitions, help for foreign parents and children, a café based on exchange and participation, and a library of information. It is also a dynamic and convivial influence on the neighbourhood.

Context

A group of people decided to create a warm place to go in the winter, where young people could meet and play. They also formed an artists' studio, where they exhibit and promote young people's work, and a place where families can meet and interact. Building a café focusing on a specific target audience, in this case children, is an easy and positive thing to replicate elsewhere – all it needs is a well-functioning team of people that concentrate on the specific needs of the customers. And, of course, giving children of all ages a place where they can play, learn and grow as individuals is always positive and would benefit any community.

Current situation

Started as a unique café in Paris in 1997, Café Zoide is now developing a concept that can replicate the idea in other neighbourhoods. The organisation is financed by subsidies and other small contributions, which could be boosted by selling the children's artwork or promoting the organisation more efficiently.

The benefits

Society. Café Zoïde allows children to develop into individuals in a very open-minded and unconventional way. It treats children as people and helps them to find a way to communicate with adults and children of any age and cultural background in their own way. It is now an essential meeting point for families from the neighbourhood, deeply involved in the everyday life of the community.

Environment. Even though there are no obvious benefits to the environment, the people and children of Café Zoïde try to contribute to saving our planet. They try to use biodegradable materials for their various projects, consume fair-trade products, take care of the green area of Paris and their immediate surroundings and, in particular, try to instil the value of the environment in the children.

Economy. The town-hall of the 19th arrondissement supports the project financially and by donating space. Still, the Café Zoïde-team hopes to be independent soon to be free of conventional bureaucratic rules. Being independent without diminishing the positive image of the association is very important to all involved. They do not want to turn this project into a business for fear of losing the spirit of a community-project.

The experience	Design challenges
For the children, the pleasure of playing in a joyful place with the feeling of being independent	Conceiving multi-service centres to merge complementary functions . Designing furniture, communication items, tools and infrastructures to help children become independent and skilled.

Authors
ENSCI Les Ateliers, Paris, France
Patricia Zapfl

'Creating a children's café is a very interesting business idea and is a win-win situation which addresses important social aspects.
Café Zoïde is different from normal nursery schools. It is most importantly a café for children to which they can come and go, join in the games they want to and learn to be independent individuals.'

Adults are helped to recover from addiction, and find occupational, educational and employment opportunities.

United Kingdom, Glasgow
Coach House Trust

By Coach House Trust
www.thecht.co.uk

Solution

The Coach House Trust is a non-profit organisation that seeks to challenge the economic and social exclusion of adults with mental health problems, recovering from addiction or with learning difficulties who find it difficult to find and keep a job. The Coach House gives them focus and the opportunities to gain skills, and be part of a warm community environment.
The scheme provides personal, social and vocational development in places that can help reintegrate them into the mainstream community. It achieves this through providing indoor and outdoor workshops and activities such as ceramics, woodwork, gardening and recycling compost. Participants work in and with the local community, building mutual trust and respect and achieving integration. Products manufactured – such as fruit and vegetables, woodwork and metalwork sculptures, paintings and silk paintings – are sold in the shop.

Context

Adults recovering from addiction, mental health problems, physical disabilities and learning difficulties are often excluded from society, making it difficult for them to gain valuable practical skills and participate in meaningful work.

Current situation

The trust was set up in 1998, when it bought a derelict building and renovated it to become a centre promoting innovative approaches to education training and employment. Glasgow city council let the trust landscape public areas, starting with the Triangle garden, which used to be a public Victorian drying green. People come to the project through an open referral system and have to be funded by local health boards. The trust now has 100 clients, 70 or 80 or whom are regulars. There is no time limit. It has reached maximum capacity, but does not wish to grow and become a major organisation crippled by bureaucracy. It relies on many sources of funding but makes little profit. The annual turnover is 1 million pounds.

The benefits

Society. People who have experienced addiction or mental illness are regularly ignored in everyday society, but are welcomed in the Coach House. It gives them opportunities to learn new skills, meet new and similar people and help by taking part in sustainable practices, such as woodwork, mosaics, metalwork, slab-making, furniture-making, gardening and recycling. Much of this work benefits the local society. The team renovates public spaces and landscapes local private gardens.

Environment. As the Coach House Trust is both in the city and very close to a river and park/woodland areas, renovation work by the trust has created many pleasant public spaces. It teaches gardening and horticulture to both clients and neighbouring primary and secondary school children. Fruit and vegetables are sold to the public in markets and restaurants. Teaching sustainable solutions is vital today, as the environment is increasingly threatened.

Economy. The non-profit organisation is funded by various bodies, such as the health authority and charities. Regular attendees must have funding, which goes towards training, materials and equipment and staff. It would be hard to find enough funding for the trust to expand, even if it wanted to, meaning that new clients are increasingly unable to join or participate. Any work sold through the shop or restaurants/markets goes towards materials/tools etc.

The experience	Design challenges
There is no pressure on clients to make a profit - the pleasure is all in the teaching. Learning skills and understanding sustainable practices, which can be used in everyday life.	Providing an outlet for the handicrafts produced by non-professional artisans.

Authors
School of Design, The Glasgow School of Art, Scotland
Natalie Lambert, Eric Lemaresquier

Many find that going to the Coach House on a regular basis gives them a reason to get up in the morning. It provides a second home to many of these people, who feel comfortable and welcome in the environment. If they decide they do not enjoy one activity, they can do another, as the Coach House understands that many clients are not comfortable performing certain tasks, or are unable to due to certain mental or physical difficulties.

This freedom makes them feel part of a voluntary group, not forced to participate in anything they are not happy with.

How children benefit from a pre-school education in rural areas where there have been no kindergartens.

Poland, many towns
Comenius Kindergartens

By Comenius Foundation for Child Development
www.frd.org.pl

Solution

The Comenius Foundation for Child Development, given a place in a village, organises a special kindergarten for the local three-to-five-year-olds. Children don't get a sleeping break or meals, but they do get the opportunity to spend the time together playing, and learning from the teachers trained by the foundation. Such kindergartens often become village cultural centres, where parents can meet to discuss new activities or events.The goal of the program is to ensure a space and its upkeep, as well as pay for teachers. The foundation provides educational materials, training and co-ordinator consultation once a month. The teachers, many of whom were previously unemployed, receive experience thanks to the training. Parents actively help by renovating the building for the pre-school club, equipping, organising, and making toys (plastic toys are rarely used). Parents have the opportunity to take part in the classes, in which each child participates as they please. The classes take place for 12 to 16 hours a week, in groups of 10-12, divided by age.

Context

Only 14 % of the rural children in Poland are enrolled in pre-school. This is due both to families' lack of money (there is a high unemployment rate in the country), and the lack of pre-school centres in the nearby area. According to legal statutes, the financial responsibility for education falls to the municipality, which frequently doesn't have enough funds to finance basic education. The foundation implemented an innovative program called 'When There Are No Pre-schools' which provides equal educational opportunities by opening early childhood education centres in areas where pre-school services have never been offered or have been discontinued.

Current situation

The Preschool Club goes year-round, with a break for summer. The popularity and accessibility of the scheme is shown by the numerous new centres opening in the local area and in other communities taking part in this programme, as well as the waiting list to take part.Jastków started with four pre-schools, with five groups of children, and now has seven schools with eight groups.
A total of 37 preschool clubs have been started up in eight towns. The scheme is very flexible, and can be adapted to suit the needs of any area, which differ in the way they run finance and hire teachers. Teaching methods are continuously adapted. The cost of one child is 70 zl. per month – a normal village preschool costs 400 zl. The local authority ensures space and equipment, as well as teachers' salaries. The foundation pays for a quality consultant and teaching assistant. Other costs, such as car rental for field trips, are paid by the parents or sponsors. Parents can also contribute to the cost of materials.

The benefits

Society. Thanks to the centre, a coalition has been established between the parents and the local government, which gives the residents more confidence and increases their participation in the community life. The location of the centres is also an important factor, for example if they are near a library it encourages the parents to check out books. Spending over a dozen hours a week at the clubs and sharing responsibilities, they can also learn from each other.

Environment. Plastic toys are generally not used in the clubs, instead the parents make rag dolls, sock hand puppets etc, which are easy to make at home from scraps or other material frequently available. The paints and pulp the children use can be made from organic ingredients such as salt or papier mache.

Economy. The initiative has an effect on the local job market by hiring unemployed teachers and giving library staff additional hours. Making use of free building space, co-operation with parents, development of cultural centres for the area, and low operating costs are just some of the successes of this undertaking.equipment and staff. It would be hard to find enough funding for the trust to expand, even if it wanted to, meaning that new clients are increasingly unable to join or participate. Any work sold through the shop or restaurants/markets goes towards materials/tools etc.

The experience	Design challenges
Peace of mind of providing your children with access to the school. Pride in contributing effectively to the education of own children.	Developing school services to allow the participation of the parents. Conceiving ways of stimulating children's creativity in inventing and manufacturing the toys.

Authors
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Ela Tluszcz
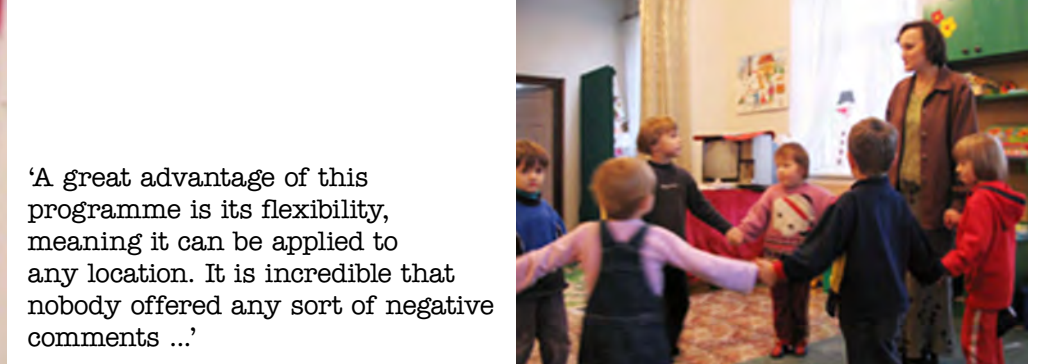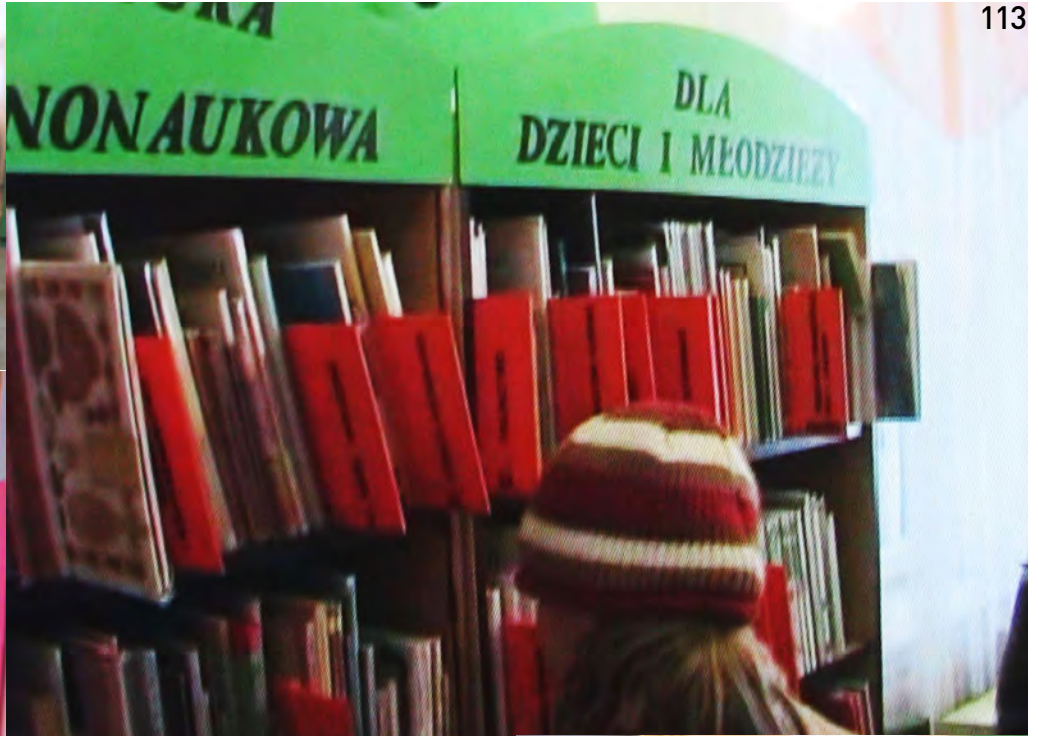
'A great advantage of this programme is its flexibility, meaning it can be applied to any location. It is incredible that nobody offered any sort of negative comments ...'

People are taught about trade without attending a conventional course.

France, Paris
La Boutique Pédagogique – Training Shop

By Association T.E.R.E.M
http://omnibusnet.org

Solution

The training shop gives professional courses about the sales industry and allows students to put theory into practice in the on-site shop. The aim is to enable young people and adults who are either unemployed or of low education to find fulfilment through work. The shop only sells fair trade products. The main motivation of the organisers is both to reintegrate people into society and introduce ethical issues by selling fair trade products only. Students who wish to take part are first assessed by the ANPE then sent to the 'mission locale' which decides the best location for each individual. Training lasts four months with three weeks dedicated to internship. Every day the students come in the morning for their course, one opens the shop, and every two hours they take turns to run the shop. The students follow strict discipline, having to be present on time there and supervised at all times by the team.

Context

The project was founded and run by Marcel Finders and TEREM ('territoire et emploi'), created in 1992 to give young people the opportunity to go on exchange in Europe but later evolving to provide (re)integration into professional life. In Paris the training shops are set up in areas where they are needed. The drivers of the scheme are both social and economic: social because the students regain social and professional confidence; economic because it improves the living standards of both students and the producers of the fair trade products.

Current situation

The project was founded in 2001, and was supported by the European Social Fund for its three first years. As the training shops are recognised as training centres, the Conseil Regional de Paris contributes funds for each student under 26 and the DDTEFP funds for the older students. All money earned through sale of the products goes to the fair trade producers. TEREM runs four shops in Paris and its suburbs and wants to see how they work in a network. It has written a report to help other organisations start their own similar schemes. It has some other projects in the pipeline, including selling fair trade products online (at http://omnibusnet.org).

The benefits

Society. The training shops provide knowledge, experience and skills to empower unemployed people through sales training, with the added advantage of gaining experience in fair trade. At the same time, food producers get to sell their products at the right price and get their work recognised. Human contact is an important part in the reintegration process: by belonging to a group and meeting people the students become more socially confident. Also, being given responsibilities in the shop gives the students necessary self-confidence to succeed.

Environment. The fair trade system supports local agriculture, which allows small farmers to earn a living and to work in harmony with the earth.

Economy. The shop has no commercial aim and is not allowed to compete with the local trade. It gets about 10 customers a day, but this is constantly increasing, thanks to the media, development of customer loyalty and word of mouth. The association's income increased by 60% in 2003, which it reinvested in the structure. It also benefits the producers, who are paid the right price for their work.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling part of a big-family, a group, in a positive working atmosphere. Learning skills by doing and getting self-confidence to succeed in their working and social life.	Developing multi-service centres where complementary functions can be merged.

Authors
ENSCI Les Ateliers, Paris, France
Milamem Abderamane-Dillah, Goliath Dyèvre

A flexible, customised professional day nursery for small groups of infants, at a reasonable price, and with a socialising environment.

Italy, San Donato Milanese, Milan

Nidi in Casa – Nurseries at home

By Cooperativa Sociale Solidarietà è Progresso, Municipalità di San Donato Milanese
http://www.comune.sandonatomilanese.mi.it

Solution

The service is run for the municipality of San Donato Milanese by a cooperative of 80 members. It started in 1999 to organise services for infants and the disabled. It offers professional nursery care to small groups of two or three children under three years old. Children are assigned to a childminder, who looks after them in her own home. The carers look after and educate the children, and also take them to other activities for infants organised by the local authority to help in their social development. The service focuses on two main concepts: having a maximum of three children per house, making it easier for the childminder to take them out on her own, and that the childminders should be well-trained.The scheme offers new job opportunities, especially for immigrants, and a new, flexible and personalised kind of childcare. Parents have to drop off and pick up the baby at the carer's house and provide the baby's food.

Context

Developed as an industrial area back in the 1960s, San Donato Milanese is home to many young professional people and immigrants, all living away from their families and their help in raising their children. The number of children keeps increasing, and the existing nurseries cannot satisfy the community's nursery needs. In 1999 more than 60 families were denied places at nurseries. The local authority developed the service with the cooperative in 2000.

Current situation

At first, the families only used the service because there were no spaces in the existing nurseries. But today, even if places are available, and even though this service is a little bit more expensive, some parents prefer it to nurseries. What's more, families that start using the service for one year usually stick to it until their babies are three. In 2002, the service started being open to foreign residents and using foreign childminders, which was considered an important step in its development. Childminders are paid 3.30 euros an hour per child. The costs are shared between the local authority and the family: 20% is paid by the family, 20% is paid by the local authority and 60% is divided between the two according to the family's income. The cooperative supplies nappies and changing equipment, mattresses, pushchairs, high-chairs and toys. The initiative brings a monthly income for the cooperative of around 35.000 euros, which is partly reinvested in the service.

The benefits

Society. This service both offers parents a flexible solution to the problem of nursery places and supports the children's early socialisation. It provides jobs for otherwise unemployed childminders, which was especially important to immigrant residents who otherwise had had to have their children looked after by relatives living far away due to delays getting their visa. By working for the cooperative they can both take care of their own children and work for the community.

Environment. The solution optimises the use of existing private structures for semi-public and business activities, and reduces the number of journeys between homes and nurseries.

Economy. Using the childminders' own homes is a less costly and quicker solution for the local authority than building and administrating new nurseries. The service provides an income to previously unemployed childminders.

The experience	Design challenges
For parents, being able to have a trusted, homely nursery so nearby. Being able to take part in the education of their own children and making a small home-based business using their own skills.	Creating dedicated spaces for common services (such as small private kindergartens) close to, or inside, residential buildings. Developing methods of allowing teachers and parents to communicate in real time.

Authors
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
Begum Arseven, Chiara Zappalà

An alternative to traditional kindergartens.

Estonia, Tabasalu
NUBLU Minilasteaed – Mini kindergarten

By Ele and Raivo

Solution

Nublu mini kindergarten is a family childcare business. Its main aim is to create a pleasant place for children to visit and stay. The service is offered both by the day and by the hour, and it is open to two age groups: from one to three, and from four to six. It operates like any other kindergarten, with children playing, studying, eating, sleeping and going for walks, etc.
The attitude to children, however, is quite different from a usual kindergarten: children can be picked up from their homes, and they are treated as individuals and according to their individual characters. Unlike a usual kindergarten, which discipline and order, at NUBLU the most important things are children's needs and desires, for example cuddling children if they want it. The kindergarten works around individual children's schedules and routines.

Context

NUBLU is in Tabasalu in the Harku district, and is mostly surrounded by private housing. Tabasalu is a reasonably wealthy suburb just outside of Tallinn with quite well-developed infrastructure; there are food stores, a school, a kindergarten, a clinic, a pharmacy, etc. The waiting list for the existing kindergarten was more than 150 children, with people enrolling their children before they were even born. This problem was seen as a business opportunity. The idea developed from the model of the micro kindergarten, whereby young mothers at home with their babies take in some more children to look after, creating an informal business.

Current situation

Ele and Raivo were confronted with the problem of lack of places in the public kindergarten when they had their own child. To solve the problem, they started a business of their own. They found a suitable house, made any alterations needed, and got all the necessary paperwork for establishing a licensed kindergarten. The kindergarten is still developing. None of the management has formal experience, and are working out problems as they go along. At the present there are 10 staff and 42 children. Fees pay for the salaries, meals and housekeeping.

The benefits

Society. At this kindergarten children get individual attention. Its slogan is: 'You bring your child to a friend', and there is indeed a very friendly atmosphere. There are separate rooms for playing, sleeping, eating and bathing. Parents are kept informed about their children's activities via e-mail, and are so far very positive about the kindergarten.

Environment. Having several small kindergartens spread around the town instead of a few big ones reduces the length of car journeys and saves parents time.

Economy. Being able to use the service on hour or daily basis, whenever it's needed, can save families money.

| The experience	Design challenges
For parents, being able to have a trusted, homely nursery so nearby, and being able to take part in the education of their own children and making a small home-based business using their own skills.	Creating dedicated spaces for common services (such as small private kindergartens) close to, or inside, residential buildings. Developing methods of allowing teachers and parents to communicate in real time.

Authors
Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonia
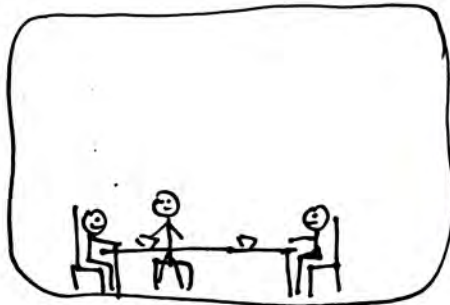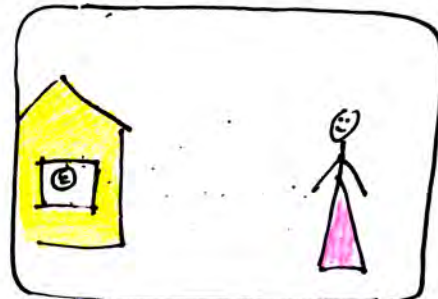Natalia Kotljarova, Liina-Kai Raivet, Lilian Sokolova
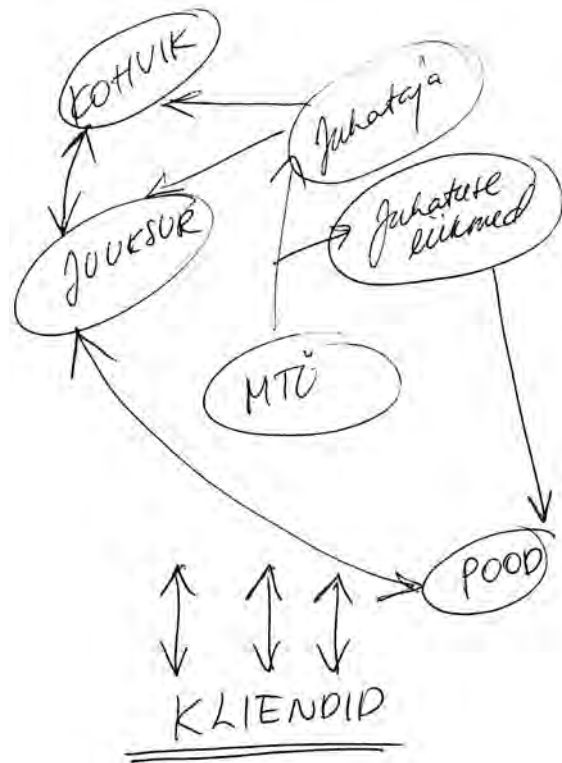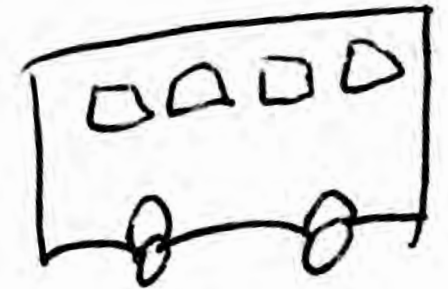
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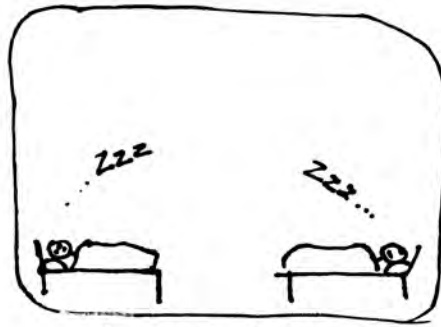
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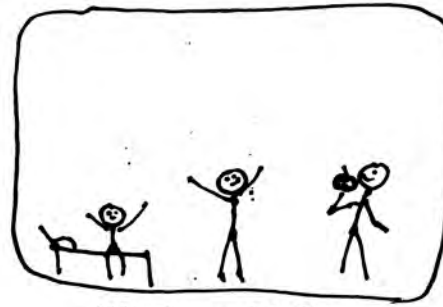
14:50 – 15:15

15:15 – 16:00

16:00 – 16:20

16:20 – 18:00

HOME

HAPPY FAMILY:)

KLIENDID

BOSS

NEW
FRIEN

socialising

Promoting shops, restaurants, galleries in a run-down street.

Poland, Krakow
Bracka Street Festival

By The businesses of Bracka street

Solution

Once a year, in the festival, the owners of the shops of Bracka leave them open a few hours longer. Each year a festival meeting is organised, where people can put themselves forward to participate in the festival and present what they have to offer. People from the outside are also invited if they are directly affiliated with the streets, such as café customers. The festival has a rich artistic program, drawn up by the organisation and presentation of the works of young local artists affiliated with this place. The festival was born spontaneously and has no permanent program. What appears in a given year depends largely on the inventiveness of the participants. A characteristic feature, however, is that some trace remains after every festival, such as the Poetry Postbox.

Context

Bracka and Golebia are small streets located in the centre of Krakow. The owners of the majority of the shops on the latter are women, whose combined interests, passion and desire to work together made them decide to give the street a unified character. There are lots of intimate cafes, restaurants and small shops which, with the pre-war cobblestone streets, large display windows and several-hundred-year-old buildings, create a unique, charmingly tranquil, atmosphere. The idea of the festival sprang from the desire to share the area's extraordinary family atmosphere. The first festival was organised by the Partnership for the Environment Foundation, mainly dealt with ecology and was affiliated with Earth Day. For the past four years it has been organised by three restaurant owners, with the help of participants.

Current situation

The first festival took place in June 1998. It is the only event of this sort in Krakow that happens every year. It requires no formal administration to make it happen. Interest is so great that other streets are going to organise a festival based on it. The festival has the patronage of the mayor and the cultural department of the City of Krakow. It is inscribed into the city's calendar of cultural events, and though it is organised using personal funds and by amateurs, it works very professionally every year. Costs are minimal. Financing and arranging city permission is taken care of by the cultural department, and the city finances the amplification and stage equipment. Artists appear voluntarily, advertising is given for free, and all other costs are covered by one off contributions paid by participants.

The benefits

Society. In an era of social alienation and anonymity, such activities are sorely needed. They counter the mass sales of supermarkets, making shopping a more conscious experience and helps integrate society. Above all it integrates the city with culture, and appeals to a wide spectrum of audiences.

Environment. Only slight connection. The festival started off closely tied with environmental activism, but now the emphasis is more placed on showing off the location and its history.

Economy. The festival brings many economic benefits, both individual and collective, promoting the area and increasing sales. It's an example of how a local initiative can have a positive impact both on those involved and on the entire city, which becomes more prosperous and attractive for tourists.

The experience	Design challenges
Enjoying the undeniable charm of the small shops in the city centre after usual shopping hours. Seeing the one's own town in a new light, and meeting people having fun.	Designing light installations for the streets. Making it easier to get permission from the public administration.

Authors
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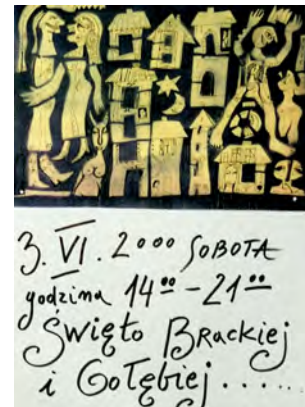
Readers enjoy new books, and exchange them easily, without having to store them at home.

Germany, Cologne
Buchticket – Book Exchange

By Buchticket
www.buchticket.de

Solution

The website Buchticket provides a free service offering thousands of book titles for exchange. Users have to become members of Buchticket. Exchanges are then based on trust and a so-called 'book ticket', like a virtual coupon, which enables users to choose a book. One ticket is worth one book. To get more tickets, members have to contribute books of their own. If somebody is interested in a member's book, Buchticket sends the book-owner an e-mail and they send the book in the post (Germany has a special low price for book postage).

Context

Most books we own are read only once. Afterwards they are mostly stored unused on the shelf. Giving them away as a present is not possible, so what to do with them? The idea of the book exchange was started by a group of five actors as a means of sharing books among themselves. They never imagined it would become such a big success, with a constantly increasing number of members. The technology was organised by a young media agency which organised job searches on the internet.

Current situation

The service has existed since 2002 and it is unique. Other exchange formats exist but not for books, and without the integrated forums and social platforms. The interface works perfectly, and needs very little maintenance. When it started, the providers thought they would have to invent fictional members to attract other users. This was not necessary and by 2005 18,000 members were using the platform actively. This number is still increasing without any marketing or advertising. The solution providers are considering extending the service abroad, and including DVDs, software and media products. A network of friends and supporters provides service and web hosting. The platform earns no money.

The benefits

Society. Society benefits from sharing things and the platform for communicating with each other. Without a technical platform this service would not be possible, and without the community and chat functions people would not use the service. In this way, IT and community tools are spreading sustainable ideas.

Environment. Fewer books need to be produced. Statistically people buy or borrow a new book when they've just finished a previous one, meaning that reading encourages more reading. By offering people easy access to new "used" books, the idea of using instead of owning diffuses into people's minds.

Economy. Book Exchange saves users money, giving them new books to read without having to buy them.

The experience	Design challenges
Talking to other people about books. Meeting people with similar reading habits, who tend to have similar interests in general.	Creating technical platforms to manage the exchange of goods among people. Defining a system of trade not based on money.

Authors
School of Design, University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, Germany

Stefanie has some books that she doesn't need anymore...
..and she finds out about the Buchtiket website.
She subscribes to the website and receives the bookticket.
Now Stefanie can send the books she doesn't need to the people that ask for them on the website...

Where young people meet, and musicians perform.

Finland, Helsinki
Club Liberté

By Libertè
www.clubliberte.fi

Solution

Liberté was founded by the young people themselves, to enrich local culture and give local performers a place to perform. In creating the club, a group of non-professionals work together to create a professional outcome, using 'street democracy', improving the local environment, and promoting grassroots culture. The club offers activities seven days per week, and is already a big part of many people's lives. A small company runs the financial side, but the club's interior and its concept were conceived in collaboration with future customers and performers. The result is that musicians get a space that suits them well, and the city district gets the new music venue that it has been lacking.

Context

Kallio is an old city district of Helsinki that used to be characterised by cheap beer and lots of unemployed middle-aged people. During the 1990s and onwards, the number of students in the area increased, but the number of clubs and venues for them had not. The bars are still targeted mostly to the old customer base, and many young people have adapted to the situation. However, the chance existed for change, and many locals felt motivated enough to take action.

Current situation

The club started in November 2004, and is already running at its fullest capability. There are plans to expand, but the group wants to make sure it can run the club affordably. It is not the only one in Finland, and is part of a growing phenomenon. Many urban districts lack proper cultural services, and this idea, which starts in the grass roots, is based on the actual local needs. This phenomenon is already expanding into the cultural capitals of Europe and the USA.

The benefits

Society. The cultural scene offers young people a place to be involved in society. When a place is built and run more by young people themselves the process is more democratic. When this is also done in a city district that lacks the proper cultural arenas for small band and club activity, the profit is invested in future exhibitions, happenings and possible workspaces. With the new club the musicians get a nice place to perform in and can easily create new fruitful connections. It also encourages marginal musicians and therefore further aspects of culture.

Environment. Only slight connection. There are no direct advantages or disadvantages for the environment, the emphasis is more placed on societal benefits.

Economy. When the work is done as a group it enables a sophisticated result to be produced for a lower budget. To reduce costs, the club staff have had to work on a local level and use recycled material as much as possible, in the most effective way.
The club gives job opportunities for various people, and creates a more democratic work environment through using Tosko Catering.

The experience	Design challenges
Discovering unknown musicians and cutting-edge music. Being part of underground initiatives and culture.	Designing bars and venues with new collaborative patterns of customer-owner relationships.

Authors
University of Art and Design Helsinki, Finland
Tatu Marttila

'Commercial enterprises offer
service based on the biggest
profit...
This has led to low level of
cultural activity.
Club Libertè started recently and
is already enriching the local
cultural scene'

People are helped to exchange second-hand items.
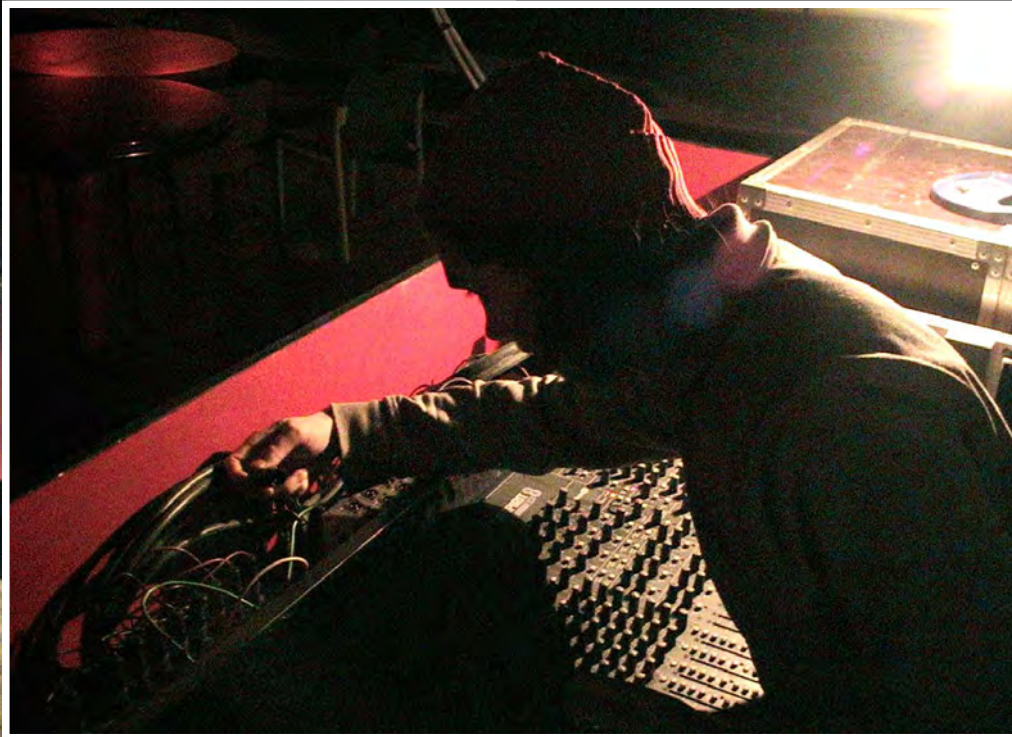
Poland
Exchange corner in radio Krakow

By Radio Krakow
www.radiokrakow.pl

Solution

Exchange Corner is a radio program that enables listeners to get rid of used or unneeded possessions, or exchange them for things or services they do need. For example, an old fridge can be exchanged for a session of window cleaning, piano lessons for food, etc, with services on offer including home painting, tutoring, or building assistance. The program is especially important for old people, and helps listeners make friends. The program is broadcast Saturdays between 10am and 12pm. Krystyna Wojcik reads out the classified ads, which she gathers from the telephone calls, then selects matching offers and puts interested parties in touch. Many of those 'matches' develop into friendships. An essential part of the initiative is the elimination of money from all transactions, so even those with little money can participate. The radio does not oversee the exchange itself, only facilitates it.

Context

Radio has always been a good way of telling a large group of people about an event or social action. Krakow's residents attach a great deal of importance to tradition and history. The intitiative was begun by Ms Wójcik, who saw the need among the less wealthy members of society for a small exchange trade as a way of acquiring necessary but often expensive equipment. This initiative met with great approval, and turned out to be useful for the majority of the local residents. Everyone can get rid of unnecessary items to mutual satisfaction, and in doing so make new friendships.

Current situation

Exchange Corner has been running since 1990, and is the only exchange scheme in the world to make use of radio, and the only one to eliminate money, relying exclusively on an honest, often symbolic exchange. Its many years of operation and the number of exchanges testifies to the huge popularity of this sort of undertaking, and to what degree it has been accepted. Although the service is at an advanced stage of development, after many incarnations and organisational changes, it could be even better, without becoming commercialised, and remaining an intimate and well-operating initiative. The only person paid is an employee of Radio Kraków. Any possible costs associated with exchanges such as transport are not monitored by the radio station, which is solely a go-between.

The benefits

Society. In an urban society with a large population, local radio makes exchange easy, rational and practical. It enables people, also sick and bedridden, for whom listening to the radio may be the only way to receive information, to find out about items to exchange, and acquire often essential objects by phone, as they are unable to leave the house.

Environment. The exchange radio programme gives a second life to unused objects. By offering people easy access to new "used" items, the idea of using instead of owning diffuses into people's minds.

Economy. From a financial and economic perspective, this activity is peerless, as it requires no financing or sponsorship yet facilitates honest exchanges. The cashless nature of the transactions is also, from a financial perspective, an interesting alternative money system. The greatest users of the service are the less wealthy residents, families with many children, or the disabled. We can ascertain this from the great number of requests for cribs, orthopaedic equipment, wheelchairs and pushchairs for children.

The experience	Design challenges
The novelty of the radio providing unexpected answers to personal needs. Enjoying social interaction while solving a problem.	Designing sustainable delivery services from user-to-user.

Authors
Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Poland
Dominika Konieczkowska, Magdalena Misaczek

Mr Waclaw wants to exchange his tape-recorder,
so he calls Radio Krakow on Saturday.

Information about the tape-recorder is broadcasted during Exchange
Corner.
Ms Maria offers her dictionaries in exchange for the tape-recorder...

...Mr Waclaw and Ms Maria Both were contacted via radio and a
meeting arranged.
Finally and easily the exchange take place.

Environmental art and design exhibitions among nature.

Finland, Helsinki
Happihuone – 'Oxygen Room' cultural greenhouse

By O2 Finland
http://o2.nettisivut.fi

Solution

'Happihuone' greenhouse ('oxygen room') and garden in Helsinki city centre serves as a forum for environmental art and design exhibitions, workshops, and lectures. It offers city dwellers rare opportunities to see, learn about and even buy and use vegetables and plants, and to view unusual art and design products not in mainstream shops and galleries. The greenhouse offers the opportunity for various NGOs and grassroots groups to disseminate their work too. Eco-designers and environmental artists use it for exhibitions, and organic retailers and caterers use it to operate a café. NGOs use it for lectures and discussions, and educators use it for workshops.

The aim of the solution is first, to provide a flexible cultural platform 'sustainable' activities; and secondly, to educate the general public on sustainable lifestyles and design, functional plants, and alternative art and artists. It also acts as an urban garden oasis where visitors can relax with a fair trade drinks.

Context

The greenhouse sits in an underdeveloped park region in Helsinki city centre which, controversially, may be built up in the next few years. The project began in 2000 when Helsinki was one of Europe's Cultural Capitals. One well-known painter suggested building a greenhouse out of old windows, use it as an exhibition space and café, with a surrounding garden of allotments. The next year it was not dismantled as planned but instead bought and used by a Winter Light festival, and then by o2 Finland, a non-profit association of sustainability oriented designers, which has continued to organise eco-design and environmental art exhibitions; operate the café; organise lectures and workshops; provide a venue for music, dance and theatre; and sell pick-your-own organic vegetables.

Current situation

The greenhouse and garden began life as part of a large city art garden. The scheme is interesting especially because of its temporality: intended as a half-year project, the greenhouse still stands and continues to motivate artists and cultural actors to exploit its location. It is also difficult for the general public to 'classify': is it a real, functional greenhouse? Or a garden? An art piece? A café? A gallery? This makes it an intriguing place. Each summer of operation it offers different services, as the management and operation depend on the individual/s in charge that particular year.

Certain offerings (such as the café service or the textile workshops) remain relatively consistent, however.

The main source of financing is grants from the city and state cultural funds. Exhibitors must pay rent for exhibition space, and individuals can rent the building and sauna for private functions. Visitors can buy coffee, tea and snacks from the café, which operates at cost.

The benefits

Society. The greenhouse provides the city residents with an unusual place to visit and relax, to learn about and sometimes buy vegetables and plants, and to see exhibitions. Groups such as fair trade associations can promote fair trade products through the café. Artists may display their work. A drawback is that the voluntary work requires a high level of motivation on the part of members.

Environment. There are many educational lessons for visitors on the environmental benefits of functional plants such as flax and plants for natural dyes, on design for sustainability through exhibitions, and on the environmental value of the area, which is a popular nesting site for water birds.

Economy. The café system gives income and publicity to participating partners. Individuals such as students and artists gain summer employment through the employment office's work placement programme. Exhibiting artists may sell their work. A drawback is that the greenhouse must survive on a grant-by-grant basis.

The experience	Design challenges
Contribution to culture, and to taking care of one's own and common environment and feeling responsible for it. Enjoying a lovely place while attending events and debates about nature and environment.	Developing new ways of organising cultural offerings along themes, such as the environmental issue. Developing and enhancing the beauty of unusual places to attract initiatives, visitors and business. Creatively integrating different activities to generate enough people and interest to ensure a venue's survival.

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Cindy Kohtala

In spring the planting at the greenhouse starts: onions, flax fields, flowers, vegetables, herbs, while the peat smoke sauna is heated once or twice a week.

All summer visitors come for a cup of coffee and a game of darts. Exhibition openings throughout the summer are very popular and even educational.

The cultural greenhouse brings gardening and plants, and consumption of art, products, and culture together in an entirely new way, and teaches the urban public unusual lessons on nature.
Its success lies also in its beauty, the aesthetics of the greenhouse and garden.

Elderly people spend time together in a new facility.

The Netherlands, Eindhoven
Meerhoven Senior Club

By Senior Club

Solution

Senior Club is an initiative by and for the elderly, which provides a space and facilities that stimulate social contact between pensioners, and sometimes the unemployed. They can come to the Club have a drink, play games, make crafts, or just talk, thus reducing loneliness among the elderly in this new housing estate. An important fact is that although nothing is compulsory, almost everyone contributes something. The club was started by a small group of senior residents, who collected furniture and materials and looked for a suitable location, ending up with three classrooms in a primary school. They combined two of these rooms by breaking down a wall, creating a cosy place open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The seniors run the club themselves, doing the cleaning, washing the dishes, doing the shopping and taking turns in bar shifts. This keeps the prices low and the feeling of involvement high. There's no membership fee.

Context

As people grow older, their social networks often fall apart. Friends or partners die and it is not easy to build up new friendships? Zandrijk is a new housing estate in Eindhoven build on a former army air base. Like many new housing estates, it now lacks liveliness and facilities, and the atmosphere is still like a building site. The old army barracks covered with graffiti, now being used as a skate bowl, contrasts with the dull terraced houses of the new district. Facilities like super markets, community buildings and sports centres will be not realised immediately. Since everyone is new in this neighbourhood and no one knows each other, a small group of elderly people took the initiative to set up a place to meet and socialize.

Current situation

The Senior Club has been running since February 2004. Although there are similar schemes throughout the Netherlands, as well as abroad, this one is unique for being set up by the users themselves, rather than by an old people's home, for example. Because the district is still growing and not totally occupied yet, the Senior Club will grow in the future, and will need a larger location and more facilities. Participants pay around 50 cents for snacks, which makes a small profit spent on, for example, a free Christmas lunch. Members maintain the location and facilities themselves by turn. Energy, water and rent are paid by the local authority.

The benefits

Society. Running their own club keeps seniors involved and active in society. The advantage to society is increased social interaction and improved atmosphere on the new housing estate. Although this program was originally only for pensioners, exceptions are made for others, such as those incapable of working.

Environment. Although the main purpose is social integration, the club shows environmental benefits, such as re-using a location and materials from previous activities.

Economy. The Senior Club creates an affordable way for seniors to meet other people and get out of their houses for a very few money. Drinks can be bought for cost price and there's no membership fee, allowing even those on a small pension to join in.

The experience	Design challenges
Being able to contribute to society, running a service which supports other people. Meeting other people with the same expectations and needs in terms of leisure time.	Designing buildings which allow social activities in common spaces, not driven by business needs.

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Elderly people support each other, earn extra income and dine out cheaply.

Estonia, Tallinn
Omaabi – Self help community
By A group of elderly people

Solution

The self-help community of elderly retired people runs a shop and a little diner, providing opportunities to socialise, sell home-made handicrafts and eat out for the lowest prices in town. The community began as a few pensioners making handicrafts together, and selling them when they got the current building. It now has 48 pensioner members. Its building, near the city centre, with a ground floor acting as handicraft shop, cafeteria and hairdresser. The cafeteria is where elderly and lonely people meet up, hear live music once or twice a week, and eat very cheaply. The prices in the handicraft shop are also low. Most of the goods are made by members, with some from outside craftsmen, but the shop will only sell beautiful things. Self help was created to give old people a new lease of life and a new sense of 'family'.
Self Help Community is always looking for outside help, because their financial situation is not quite enough to keep going independently.

Context

Estonia is at a political stage when lots of the population feel insecure. Pensioners and widows find it especially difficult to find their place in today's fast-moving society. During the political changes of the past 12 years ago, society has become more focused on the young. The welfare system is not very highly developed – pensions are low and lot of old people have financial problems.

Current situation

The organisation has been going since 1992 and is working well. Whether it can keep going in the future depends on money. If the government could give just a little support the group would have no problems carrying on. Profit is only made in the handicraft shop, which keeps a percentage of the price to pay for electricity and firewood for heating. Every member works in the shop for free, although they might get some food stamps for the cafeteria, and does a shift three or four times a month.

The benefits

Society. Elderly people who feel in good shape rich, in experience, can keep being active and useful in the neighbourhood. They can help others and the others help them. A very important task of the Self Help Community is maintaining Estonian national handicrafts, keeping the tradition going and passing knowledge to younger people. Now it has joined the EU, Estonia, a small nation, needs to keep its own cultural traditions and national character.

Environment. The handicrafts use local and traditional materials and resources, and their manufacture suits the local environment.

Economy. Estonia's cost of living is increasing and most old people in Estonia are very poor. Omaabi enables consumers to buy things for cheaper prices, and the elderly can buy cheap food and services and get benefits from their work.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling useful in the society, running a service which supports other people. Meeting other people with the same expectations and needs in terms of leisure time, though not having to do anything special.	Designing easy-to-use handicraft tools for amateurs. Developing multiservice meeting centres for retired people, integrating different activities and open to the all residents. Designing buildings which allow social activities in common spaces, not driven by business needs.

Authors
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Maris Korrol, Krista Thomson

Everyone in the community has similar problems and outlook and everybody has the will to help and care. Most of the members are well-educated women who have worked as specialists and scientists. Together they have Christmas, birthdays or other celebrations: the attitude is to get over personal problems and give happiness to others.

'There are many things in life that we do not think about. But these things may mean very much to someone.

These things can be like the meaning of life. It was a lovely surprise for us to see old people with a smile in their eyes and positive attitude.

The view from a designer – there are many aspects in life that we do not think about.

Design is not just making life more beautiful – design also includes social, artificial and cultural tasks.

The main task for the designer is to ask himself – is there any way I can help someone?'

Old, sick and disabled people are supported in daily life.

Poland, Krakow
Raciborowice Senior Club

By Senior Club association

Solution

The Senior's Club provides a place for making friends and sharing experiences and memories. The main aim of the initiative is to organise the spare time of elderly and ill people, who after working hard for many years, often on farms, have some free time.

The pensioners and retired people meet every so often in a parish hall made available for them. Over tea and homemade cakes they take part in performances and stage shows, with sketches, songs and dance. The club organisers field trips and even pilgrimages. They also organise care of the lonely and house bound together. This initiative came about thanks to Wiktoria Mysliwiec, a Michalowice regional councillor.

Context

Raciborowice is a small farming community, with a population of 1,000, around 15 km from Krakow. The culture and social life is concentrated mainly around the parish church, which also operates as a small cultural centre. The residents either work as farmers or commute to Krakow, so it is mainly elderly people, or pensioners, who have free time. This is a very small place, so has few opportunities for cultural or social life. The elderly, despite being healthy and potentially active, used to spend most of their time in their homes.

Current situation

The Senior Club has been running since 1993. There are similar schemes all around the world, since it is a natural sort of activity for the elderly, but in Poland they are rare. The pensioners' circle initiative in Raciborowice has so far only been replicated in small towns, even though administrative authorities are happy to support, and even sponsor, such clubs.

The circle in Raciborowice works mainly thanks to the very low but regular contributions of its members (about 12 zl = 3 Euro a year), but it is also supported by the administrative authorities and the parish church, in which it operates. The circle has no full-time staff and nobody makes any money from its activities.

The benefits

Society. This scheme plays a valuable role in society. The attempt to give the elderly, often excluded and considered economically useless, a new lease of life is a great social service. Their families are also glad for them to have a way of spending their time, as it both gives the families a break and saves the elderly from stagnating and feeling useless, which leads to depression and infirmity.

Environment. Only slight connection. There are no direct advantages or disadvantages for the environment, the emphasis is more placed on societal benefits.

Economy. The club is self-sufficient in both organisational and financial terms.

The experience	Design challenges
Feeling useful in the society, running a service which supports other people. Meeting other people with the same expectations and needs in terms of leisure time.	Designing buildings which allow social activities in common spaces, not driven by business needs. Developing services to employ elderly people with long work experience in activities which can even make them money.

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Bronislaw says that he started taking part in the circle because of the desire to help others, as well as to fill in the gap following the death of his wife. Despite the fact that he is so advanced in age, he is healthy enough to devote his time and energy.

People can share thoughts and opinions nationwide in real time.

The Netherlands, Eindhoven, and Worldwide
Weblogs

Solution

A weblog is a site on the internet that is regularly updated. The first weblogs started as a simple website to quickly store information, and sometimes the creators would add a personal opinion. Nowadays they have evolved into a way for many users to express opinions. Postings from users range from stupid or even offensive pictures and movies to serious, even scientific, articles and columns. People can (anonymously) express their opinions, feelings and beliefs to a large audience, thanks to the internet.

Context

Conventional media, such as newspapers and television don't offer users an easy way to express opinions and to engage in discussion with others. Weblogs started because people wanted to share, at first mainly funny, information with friends and a larger audience. The success of these weblogs enables users to reach a large audience with their opinion.

Current situation

Weblogs can be realised with current technology and take minutes to set up. As internet access is becoming more widespread, the number of weblogs is growing quickly. Now conventional media are becoming aware of this previously niche phenomenon and are beginning to see the potential. Because they use open source technology available to everyone with an internet connection, and can be seen by a large audience, weblogs evolve rapidly. Some started only two years ago with a handful of visitors and now receive more than 700,000 visitors a day. This has accelerated the development of the technology behind the weblogs, which in turn improves the weblogs. Starting a weblog costs nothing. If users want a domain they need web hosting, which costs about 5 euros a month. Hosting costs increase when the weblog contains large amounts of information which is downloaded by users. Most weblogs rely on the work of volunteers.

The benefits

Society. Weblogs have had quite an impact on society, and give large numbers of people the chance to be heard by a big and varied audience. The potential for discussion leaves users better informed. Society can benefit because people can start discussions on the internet about things that bother them, and be heard instead of always listening.

Environment. Weblogs are aware of their potential impact, and have considerable power in raising awareness. For instance Dutch weblogs started quite large campaigns to raise money for the Tsunami disaster in Azie, all in their own specific way. And retecool.com lent its strengths to a popular radio station to raise awareness and cash for the problems in Darfur.

Economy. Weblogs are cheap and very effective, with powerful marketing potential. Many have their own merchandise shops. In the near future weblogs might also become commercially self-supportive.

The experience	Design challenges
Having the chance, every day, to freely express opinions on current affairs, reading items of interest, with easy access. Getting to know other people online. For the creators of the weblog, raising awareness of their issue.	Developing a search engine for finding weblogs on particular subjects. Protecting users and privacy while maintaining the freedom of speech. Seeing weblogs as new equally valid way of gathering information as conventional media. Controlling improper use, without restricting freedom of speech.

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* = Also creator
and different
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users as
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evious page

HOSTING
COMPANY

CASH

USER BUYS MERCH

MERCHANDISE

COMMERCIAL

CORPORATION

Small record labels advertise and release their product; people passionate about music have easy access to experimental, non-mainstream music.

Finland, Helsinki

www.foryourears.com – MP3 distribution company

By Symptom Distribution
www.foryourears.com

Solution

The solution is a distribution channel and shop for small record labels to sell their products, enabling underground music to reach a wider audience. Buyers want to hear new kinds of music that the mainstream market does not offer, and sellers want to release their products.
On www.foryourears.com this can be done without spending too much money on the marketing and production of the physical products as they are in data form. The solution works much in the same way as traditional distribution companies. The music label sends their music to www.foryourears.com, which treats it a little to ensure consistent quality of sound, and publishes it on the site.

Context

Everywhere in the world small record labels are experiencing difficulties just as the majors are, but with a much smaller budget. Marketing of electronic music is all about word of mouth, because of low budgets and customers used to hearing about new artists from friends instead of from the radio, etc. Now studio quality is within everyone's reach, due to the lowering of software prices, the market has become saturated with releases of dubious quality. This, alongside piracy, is why vinyl distributors are going out of business, meaning fewer channels for underground music to be released. There are several non-profit players in the market, but they bring no income to the musicians, only get them noticed by the market.

Current situation

The solution was launched in summer 2004, but planning started in summer 2003.
Some companies around the world offer a similar service, but www.foryourears.com is one of the very first. The solution has run smoothly since it started. Customers pay 0.99 euros per track, or less if they buy a whole album. Half of this stays in the company and half goes to the labels.

The benefits

Society. Society becomes more democratic, with recordings available to everyone, not just those first to get to the record store. It gives label owners and musicians, who in electronic music are often the same people, the opportunity to get their music published. Problems include the decrease in social communication between small record store owners, who are often the experts in the field, and the buyers.

Environment. Environmental benefits include a reduction in the oil used to make CDs or vinyl records, and the fuel used in their distribution. Traditionally the label sends the music to a pressing plant, the pressing plant sends the records to the distributor, the distributor stores the records and sends them to shops and smaller, more local distributors, which then send the records to their local shops.

Economy. Traditional logistics both use up natural resources and mean it takes longer for the labels to get paid. This new model of distribution is more profitable for the label owners, and therefore the musicians. Many of the traditional distribution companies have been known to rip-off smaller labels, which are unable to fight back, being in another country with different laws. In Symptom Distribution's scheme, the money gets transferred to the label monthly, so that in the case of fraud, the label can terminate the contract a lot quicker to avoid further damages.

The experience	Design challenges
Discovering unknown musicians and cutting-edge music. Feeling part of underground initiatives and culture.	Developing a technological platform to exchange digital music recordings.

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Utopian by design and/or by coincidence?

This collection of cases highlights a number of different reactions to heavy societal trends in different parts of Europe. The cases cover a very wide definition of the concept of sustainability, where not only environmental matters are highlighted, but social, cultural and economic ones as well. They could be signals of unease among citizens, but not only that. They are also signals of optimism and belief in human potential. People believe that change is possible and they believe in co-operation, in community and creativity. They exemplify emerging user demand for sustainable solutions.

Youthful perspectives: the selection

The cases collected in the book are drawn from a larger pool of cases that young observers from all over Europe; design school students used as "antennas", have found interesting, promising or challenging. Without going into details of procedures and on the number of hurdles and filters each case has had to pass, the common criterion for their inclusion is that they were perceived by the design students to be alternatives to what they hold to be the societal mainstream. The first selection, then, reflects differences of age, national cultures and the personal outlook and ideology of the antennas. Thus, we observe that students from Eastern Europe regard Slow Food as an alternative, while the students from the areas where the Slow Food movement originated, do not. Similarly, the perhaps most obvious example of social enterprise, the car sharing scheme, is almost absent. We do not know if this is because the concept is considered old news, or if it is because car sharing does not answer any widespread needs among students in big cities.
It is probably a little bit of both.
This does not mean that students are only concerned with their own problems, but it probably has something to do with perspectives and paradigms. What you see has something to do with where you sit. The scarcity of car sharing cases is perhaps not more surprising than the scarcity of fair trade initiatives; this is another concept that either is regarded as more or less mainstream or that has failed to capture the imagination of design students.

The type of mobility that tends to dominate the cases is biking. Bicycles are affordable, they are environmentally friendly and they are elements in healthy life styles. Micro enterprises are built around repair, maintenance, bike rental and second hand shops. Different types of collectivism are developed by bike clubs and event races.
When we highlight sustainability, alternatives to mainstream trends, and bottom up initiatives, the bicycle really is the perfect "new urbanism" vehicle; it is reasonably cheap, it is non polluting, and it contributes to the social fabric and to the health of its user. An urban area dominated by bicycles, pedestrians, and collective means of transport is different from an urban area dominated by private cars. Further, the bicycle was an icon of the utopian communities based in Amsterdam in the early seventies.
The strong presence of bicycle related cases does not mean that design students are only interested in their own problems however. This would be an unfair accusation. Design students all over Europe take an interest in problems of the elderly, of small children and of marginalised groups as well. What it does mean is that their approach to information hunting, combined with their more or less age based outlook on the world, gives the selection a certain bias. Some initiatives come into view easier than others. This is not a fault, it is a filter.

Actors' motives

With the focus placed on bottom up initiatives reacting to what is held to be the societal mainstream, we expected to find two main types of motives behind the cases. On the one hand, citizens' initiatives aimed at specific and immediate problems, like the *Nurseries at home (Nidi in Casa)* and the *Walking Bus (Andiamo a scuola da soli)*. On the other, we expected more utopian projects, rather more ideological ones, perhaps anticipating future conditions, like the *Findhorn Eco-village*, the *Group purchasing organisation (GAS Gruppo d'Acquisto Solidale)* and others. These dimensions are present, but they are perhaps less visible than we believed them to be.

To have access to some kind of organised care for your children is actually a precondition for seeking employment, so if you need the income, *Nurseries at home* might be an immediate reaction to an urgent problem. Being a specific answer to a problem in your daily life, this solution might actually be unconnected to your more general ideas and ideals about family, about family and work and about ideal learning and developing conditions for children. In principle you might believe that free kindergartens should be offered to everybody by the community, or – contrarily - you might insist that all children should stay at home with their mothers until they reach school age. Still you could find yourself using the *Nurseries at home* in order to solve the pragmatic and immediate challenge of combining paid work and private matters.

The *Walking Bus* has some rather similar features. You, as a parent, want to make sure that your children are brought safely to and from school. Even if you envision another society and you hold well crafted ideas about urban planning, spatial solutions and traffic patterns, political action only yields results slowly, if ever, and your need for safe transport is here and now.

144 This realisation should not let us underestimate the additional benefits of the "urgent motive" cases. Some of them contribute to cross generational contacts, reduce isolation and strengthen the social fabric in general, result in fewer cars in the vicinity of schools, more physical exercise for children and for retired persons, allow single mothers to earn money and get out of the house and into society, give less inner city pollution and probably less inner city crime as well. But no matter how many added benefits we are able to identify, these initiatives are motivated by some kind of problem solving urgency. If they are utopian, they are so by coincidence. Some other cases seem to be more driven by positive visions and ideas about desirable futures. They are utopian by design. Individuals or smaller groups act as social entrepreneurs and employ resources like time, creativity or money to facilitate something that seems important. Not to solve a problem, but rather to follow a dream. The activities of *Group purchasing organisation* are mainly driven by wants and not by needs. The group is motivated by the members' demand for purchasing products that neither violates human rights nor the environment. We regard this motive as more ideological than the pragmatic drivers mentioned above.

Given this dimension, these two types of motives for taking action, for engaging in societal matters and being an active citizen, we would expect the initiatives to be promoted by different types of actors. Behind the urgent cases we expect to see more or less ordinary middle class persons, responding to a challenge and a situation, while the utopian initiatives would tend to be more dominated by activists.

A lot of the cases will probably not fit into this urgent vs. utopian dimension, however, but more develop out of attempts at doing something interesting and worthwhile that corresponds to your political concerns. Further, the analytical split between needs and wants should not blind us to the potential strengthening of initiatives through a synergy of these two motives.

Participation, inclusion and marginality

A number of cases deal with initiatives to increase participation, empowering citizens and offering welfare solutions that re-introduces different groups into society. Some of the most interesting initiatives try to counteract the isolation of seniors, most notably the *Social elderly community Aquarius in the Netherlands*.

A rich society like the Dutch tends to have a rather large population of retired persons in reasonable good health that is rather well off, economically. Culturally and socially this group often suffers from isolation, loneliness and boredom. The establishment of the *Aquarius* community seems like an adequate answer to this situation; senior citizens (55+) living in separate houses but growing old together in a community with mutual and voluntary help and social support. This enables people to be active and independent into old age, until they need more intensive support and care. It is a fair guess that most young and middle aged observers would consider *Aquarius* to be the kind of place they would like to see their parents in, and eventually a place for themselves to grow old. This is both about empowering or enabling people and about social-cultural participation and about retaining an active life.

In a less affluent society like the Estonian the problems of elderly and retired people are quite different, so the focus of the *Self Help Community Omaabi* is more directed at providing food at the lowest possible price, at distributing free food coupons to elderly people with extremely low income, or no income at all, and at providing a venue for selling handicrafts to improve the economic situation. In addition, old people in Estonia obviously have the same need for communicating and socialising as old people more or less everywhere. So *Aquarius*

and *Omaabi* can be regarded as two specific answers to the problems of elderly people in two different economical and political situations. The Estonian case is perhaps a bit more need driven than the Dutch one, but both have to do with senior citizens that try to define their own problems, their needs and wants and who try to act in their own interest. As actors, they refuse to be marginalised by a society that often makes old people invisible.

Other forms of marginality beside the age related are relevant in a number of cases, like problems of unemployment and of addiction. Prime examples could be the *Job & Action Association* for the long term unemployed and the *Coach House Trust*, dealing with drug addiction and reintegration. It is worth noting that most of these cases are "multi" ideological; like the *Job & Action Association* that works from a primarily social perspective, counteracting negative effects of long term unemployment, but at the same time promotes environmental sustainability through repair and recycling.

In these "social" initiatives, we notice at least three different models of social action and enterprise. In *Aquarius* resourceful persons engage in improving their own living conditions by going beyond what the welfare state normally will be able to offer. In *Omaabi* marginal persons (marginality mainly caused by poverty) organise in order to protect themselves, while the *Coach House Trust* mainly is characterised by resourceful idealists who engage for improving the conditions of others. These three approaches to marginality are all valid reactions to some of the shortcomings of state social security and protection against a runaway and all penetrating economy, even if social and economical conditions are very varied. All of them might be elements in a developing new active concept of welfare through citizen participation.

Alienation

The concept of alienation might mean a lot of different things; many of those meanings are relevant to the cases already commented upon, like powerlessness and isolation. Here, however, we want to focus on alienation from nature.

A major trend in modern societies is defined by the nature-culture split. People living in large urban areas find themselves alienated from natural processes, both as experience with rural landscapes and "free" nature and as familiarity with food production. In the early modern age this break with nature was wanted, nature was threatening and taming nature was conceived as a civilizing process. Originally the links between the farmer and the consumer in the city probably were numerous, but today they apparently have to be re-established. *Les Jardins de Cérès* was founded in order to create such a direct link between producer and consumer of food, and to promote organic production as well.

While *Nomadic Garden (Jardin Nomade)* works the other way, introducing nature and gardening into the urban industrial wasteland, engaging schools, the local community elderly people in beautification of the surroundings, in daily care and cultivation of a garden where social activity, cheap food production and closeness to natural processes go together. A lot of the organic food initiatives might also be seen is this context of a less alienating food provision; whether you subscribe to a home delivery Vegetable Box or you promote markets for organic food.

These reflections are really a set of sociological first impressions of the assembled material. More ambitious clustering and deeper analysis will be provided elsewhere; here we mainly wanted to identify some tentative patterns in and paths through this compendium of citizens' reaction to heavy social trends or to the more negative and frightening aspects of "modernity" and globalisation. Creative, active and resourceful agents try to push or pull society in alternative directions and try out elements of another way of life here and now. Some initiatives are small and rather local, while others are more ambitious, demanding organisation and capital, but all of them are initiatives aimed at generating individual well being, social quality and reduced environmental strain.

The relation between the promising cases and society at large is still rather under theorised, however. On one hand, we might envision a community or even a larger city where a number of these initiatives or social experiments were operating simultaneously, so that the accumulated effects of transport alternatives actually amounted to something. And where the inclusion and participation cases combined with pedagogical and cultural ones. A picture of an alternative future is present already, just by combining them. From such a combined picture we might be able speculate on the potential synergy of the cases. What might further happen in a community that employs a number of these initiatives and solutions?

On the other hand we operate without a clear vision of the development of the cases, and of their relation to the societal mainstream because we do not know if we mean to have alternative distribution of organic food as a permanent feature, or if we want to use the alternative channels to demonstrate sufficient user demand for retail chains to take over. Should the Dutch welfare state make *Aquarius* like solutions available to more or less all healthy retirees, or should such initiatives remain self-organised and bottom up? Is the *Walking Bus* a critique of modern city planning or is it a permanent solution for the good society? Should the difficult combination of parenting as daily care for children and parenting as earning money for the family be left to the individual and his ingenuity or is it a job for larger communities?

By identifying and presenting these cases of social innovation geared towards sustainability we have initiated a debate over these issues; we have highlighted small pieces of alternative realities that question and challenge the apparent inevitability of dominant social trends. At this stage they demonstrate that other solutions are possible. This is an important, but not a sufficient step towards re-orienting society.
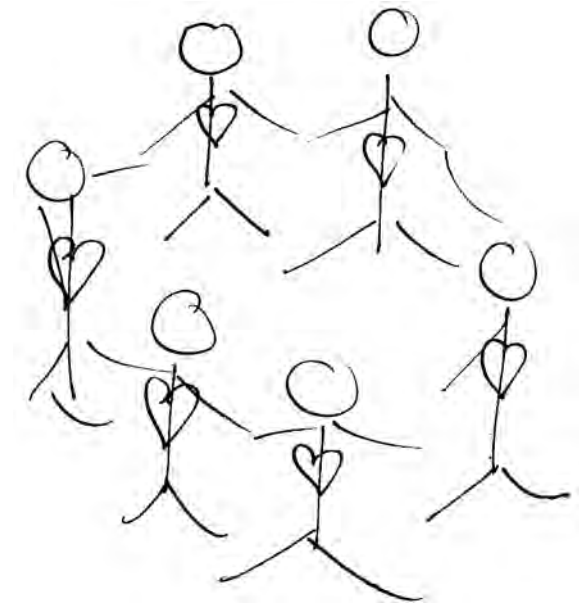
European creative communities and the "Global South"

Are creative communities a global phenomenon? If so, what are their characteristics and where does their "innovation" lie? We observe that resource poor communities need sharing, mutual help and creative solutions often simply to survive, but it is also true that traditional values, social networks and community cohesion allows a natural cooperation, and sharing of resources and social tasks to provide services (eg. community doctors). The motivations of the creative communities observed in Europe are a different mix of values, including economic, environmental and social aspirations.

"Developing countries" can be found in all parts of the world and include a vast number of cultures. Here, one can find a myriad of situations ranging from remote villages, or nomadic people who live in harsh environments, to urban, educated professionals who enjoy middle- and upper class living standards that rival the material intensive lifestyles found elsewhere in the so-called "developed countries". Likewise, some of the harshest conditions of poverty can be seen in countries defined as 'developed'. The concept of "creative responses to emerging needs" to define the solutions produced by the creative communities therefore changes vastly whether we look at the urban middle class in Niamey in Niger or at the nomads living in the desert areas of the same country, to the upper class in Sao Paulo or to the remote rural communities in China.

For this reason, we chose to focus our discussion on the term Global South as it is preferred over "Third World" or "developing" countries. This term allows for an acknowledgement of the diversity between these countries, while accepting that because of common development trajectories, the countries of the Global South face similar challenges with regards to sustainability. When viewed from a strictly economic paradigm, the economically underdeveloped countries of the Southern Hemisphere, mainly in Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America can be considered as an entity with common characteristics. These include a growing middle class, poverty, high birthrates, and economic dependence on the countries of the North (ie predominantly Western countries in the Northern Hemisphere, which includes Europe). For these reasons, adopting a Global South perspective allows one to create a link between sustainability concerns and actions at the grassroots and the macro levels.

A common feature among the European promising cases, and cases evident in the Global South is that they all address, to varying degrees, problems associate with sustainable consumption. These range from consumption of basics such as food and clothing, to mobility and social relationships. Sustainable consumption should be understood as a situation where consumer needs and demands are fulfilled in as efficient and resource lean way as possible resulting in minimized negative environmental, social and economic impact. The ultimate goal of sustainable consumption is improved quality of life for all consumers. For consumers in the Global South, sustainable consumption is also an important strategy for poverty alleviation, where improving access to basic services such as water and energy facilitate economic development. This is evident from cases such as the *Mumbai Grahak Panchayat* (*MGP*) in India (Charkiewicz, Bennekom and Young, 2001). It is an innovative distribution model that uses cooperative purchasing to promote cost savings for the consumer, but also contribute poverty alleviation through sustainable consumption choices. For example, the *MGP* purchases from Tugi, a company that buys fruits from forest dwellers – a socially marginalized group - and makes them into preserves, thereby ensuring that they do not have to use slash and burn agriculture to survive economically, but can use forests in a sustainable manner. Care is also taken to avoid excessive packaging and deliveries are packed in reusable cloth bags. Due to the membership size (almost 17,000 families) it makes a considerable impact.

The promising cases of social innovation in Europe and the Global South evidence that creative communities do exist and moreover that they are re-orienting their spatial, temporal and human relationships toward increased sustainability measured from social, economic and environmental aspects. Some cases do address all three dimensions of sustainability such as the eco-housing examples, such as *Findhorn eco-village* (UK) and *Sustainable Housing and Living De Kersentuin* (The Netherlands). At the same time, cases such as the *Milan Car Sharing*, while at first glance appear to support environmental goals of reduced pollution etc, do not necessarily translate to a sustainable solution from a macro perspective. In this instance, improvements to existing public transport infrastructure and additional financial and convenience incentives for consumers could have a much larger impact on the environment. Of course car sharing, as all the other cases, is not the only solution, but is a possibility to reduce traffic-related pollution and, most of all, to break the culture of mobility that is tied to single-user car ownership. In addition, most of the promising case solutions appear to be highly localized and mostly occur on a small scale. Self-organization and bottom-up innovation are also key commonalities between the cases. In this respect, European consumers appear to mainly be motivated by predominantly ethical concerns, striving for a balance between material and physical well-being, civic duty and social reconnection. Therefore, it was important to question whether creative communities in the Global South are motivated for similar reasons when they engage in developing solutions for their own problems. We can observe that the European cases might be applicable to Global South communities that are urban, educated and have similar consumption patterns to consumers in the North. However, this is not necessarily the case for resource poor communities in the Global South. To reflect on this question, we now consider the interaction of creative communities in Europe and the Global south based on the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Motivations for sustainable innovation that focus solely on social engagement do not translate equally in the Global South context. This is because, collective identities are still prevalent to a high degree in many societies outside Europe. Despite the challenges posed to such collective identities in the wake of increased urbanization and loosening of traditional gender and kinship roles, non-Western societies are generally far more rooted in a strong human infrastructure. This human infrastructure alleviates problems associated with child-care and care for the elderly that are experienced in Europe as highlighted by the *Playground café Cafezoïde, Self Help Community Omaabi, Social elderly community Aquarius in the Netherlands and Senior Club (Raciborowice and Meerhoven)* cases. For instance, in many cultures the concept of family extends beyond the concept of the nuclear family and encompasses a much wider set of relationships.

Urban communities in the Global South, started developing the features and relative "illnesses" of the so-called modern industrial societies rather recently. These features find a rather strong resistance in the traditional way of living of the majority of the populations and in the traditional values of family and community. Even the most cosmopolitan upper/middle class in the Global South still live in a mix of the two models and integrates the traditional structures with the newly adopted modern lifestyle. This is evident for example in the "joint-family" systems of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This is a reason why urban societies in developing countries do not (yet) have the same feeling of alienation and individualism that seems to be the major driver for the creative communities in Europe. Creative communities have created something new; they have organized their time, their days sometimes, or their leisure around the idea of sharing and extending the individual sphere to a community one. Other examples also include the "paying guest" concept in many parts of South and South-East Asia, where students pay a small subsidy to reside with families in exchange for a room. Cultures of hospitality are also strong in the Global South and European cases such as the *Lodge a student at home (Italy)* and the *Living Room Restaurant (the Netherlands)* are areas where developing an information flow from the Global South to the consumers in the North could be useful. Without idealizing the social situation in developing countries, one can certainly observe a higher level of mutual help and communitiy structure.

The Environmental Pillar

Similarly, while European consumers appear to engage in creative communities out of a genuine desire to consume sustainable and environmentally friendly products, these desires are not as evident among consumers in resource poor communities of the Global South. These poor communities are necessarily engaged in a daily effort to meet basic needs, and primary drivers in meeting these needs are oriented towards price affordability and safety, rather than environmental concerns. In addition, many of the daily practices of resource poor communities are already sustainable (such as high levels of re-use and recycling of plastic products) despite the fact that such actions are not branded as being sustainable.

Another pertinent point is that, the level of environmental and consumer education infrastructure is far less available to resource poor communities and this is a significant barrier to consumers having the awareness and self-organization capacity to reorient their consumption to patterns based on ethical or environmental criteria. Affluent consumers, who are aware of environmental problems, sometimes consider these issues as an obstacle to economic growth

in their own societies. Moreover, where sustainable collective responses are in place, these are more needs based than ethically based solutions. A clear example here is the situation of purchasing clubs. European cases such as the *Group purchasing organisation (GAS Gruppo d'Acquisto Solidale)* and *Local Food Link Van Group* cite concerns over food safety (health) and environmental pressures as key motivations for collective action, but also were encouraged since this sustainable behaviour offered practical economic advantages as well. Whereas, comparable initiatives such as the Zimbabwe purchasing club, cite product affordability as the main driver for action. Such examples highlight the limits of translating Western motivations on ethical consumption in the Global South where the paradox of poverty amidst plenty is evident. This not to suggest that consumers in the Global South are not motivated by ethical/environmental values, but rather that the scale of this motivation as it relates to sustainable consumption choices appears to be much more detectable in the European cases of social innovation. This could be due to a variety of reasons such as the use of different technologies and information platforms. It also highlights why more in-depth research on creative communities in resource poor communities is very much warranted. These cases also highlight the unique pitfalls associated with consumer choice and access where resource poor communities co-exist beside affluent communities. Another important factor is the widening gap between a middle class that is more and more oriented towards a more individualistic consumption and functionality oriented society model on one hand, and urban poor and rural communities that are still - out of necessity and cultural values- linked to intra-solidarity models on the other. In the latter case can we speak of creative solutions? The poorer levels of society, whether in urban slums or in rural areas, need sharing, mutual help and creative solutions sometimes simply to survive rather than for a "morally-driven" ideal as is the case in many of the European cases.

The Economic Pillar

The promising factor evident in the creative communities cases is that they are often embedded in local systems of production and consumption. Examples include those cases that have a tangible contribution to make to poverty alleviation through the promotion of sustainable consumption and production systems. In Europe, such cases include the traditional food markets, the *Sheep project (Poland)* and the *Cultural Greenhouse Happihoune (Finland)* In India, a relevant example is that of the dabbawallas explained in detail in Box 1. As these cases indicate, successful examples offer localized solutions that help create the opportunity to develop skilled workers and generate employment, while reducing the material intensity of consumption. Economic and environmental benefits are to be gained from creating and supplying markets for sustainable consumer products. For the Global South, excellent economic opportunities exist to expand organic food production and pro-local sustainable production of cultural products, as well as traditional food products, not necessarily on a scale that will feed the ever-increasing desires of the affluent consumer, but rather for the needs of the local consumer. In this respect, building networks with creative communities evident in the *Cream o'Galloway Farm* and the *Training Shop (La Boutique Pédagogique)* could be very beneficial. Another persistent character in the middle class urban context in the Global South is the strong persistence of the so-called informal economy. Many of the needs that are addressed by creative communities are satisfied without the conscious and deliberated positive action of a group of people. For example, repairing, taking care of children, preparing food, keeping the streets clean etc. are often functions filled by groups of self organized people that would

be hardly visible in any social research exercise. A clear example here would be the rubbish pickers of Rio De Janeiro, Mexico City, Manila or Dhaka. They sort through garbage piles, often sorting materials that can be re-used or recycled not as an ethically motivated exercise, but rather out of a need for economic gains from selling such items. Future work on creative communities at the global level, should involve as much as possible, participants of such informal sectors.

From a wider context, in the Global South there are a number of examples of how creative communities are endeavoring to sustain themselves despite the new demands and pressures of globalization. Among the examples of efforts to sustain and propogate the value of local economies is Gandhi's concept of non-exploitative 'moral economies' and the village self-sufficency he advocated in promoting the principles of swadeshi (interiority) and sarvodaya (improving everyone's living conditions) (Charkiewicz, Bennekom and Young. 2001). At the same time, the history of coping with pressures of development includes more recent experiences of creating local urban markets to generate a means of livelihood and reduce poverty and environmental stress in local communities. Among such responses are also mixed systems, a combination of international and local production, with local distribution, which still exists in many countries in the South. A case in point here would be the Coopa Roca Women's sewing cooperative in Brazil. Women from poor communities used materials that are either donated or recycled to create new textile products using traditional quilting techniques. These products are sold both nationally and internationally and have been a remarkably sustainable economic enterprise.

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) identifies the benefits of such systems as having lower energy input, lower mobility of products and consumers, sustaining local jobs and preservation of sustainable production and consumption at the local level. Certainly such systems should not be romanticized, and many could be improved with an eye for instance on gender equity (Charkiewicz, Bennekom and Young. 2001). Such local consumption-production systems have not yet received prominent attention in the debate on changing consumption and production partners. Focusing on the contributions of creative communities could be a vital pathway in drawing attention to these systems.

Conclusions

Despite the obvious differences in motivations, there are many opportunities for creative communities in the Global South and in Europe to build synergies and exchange experiences. Such exchanges would be vital in moving the isolated cases of social creativity to a larger scale where they would be more visible on the global sustainability discourse. It should be noted that in facilitating synergies between creative communities, the aim would be not to replicate the models of civic action on consumption in the European creative communities, – which in any case cannot answer the problems encountered by those living in poverty in the South. The aim would be to overcome the more visible causes of poverty, and in doing so embrace the idea that a different form of consumption and production is possible and can form a basis of a consumption policy geared to promoting local production as a permanent dimension of the larger struggle against poverty. It translates to the generation of jobs and income for the poor who produce for the poor. Local products and services of the people's economy provide the basis for an alternative form of consumption, not only at low prices, but also engaging local resources and invention (Hagaye 1998).

To conclude, in the Global South, priorities in lifestyle differ from those of the North, including Europe's developed economies. Environmental impacts due to over-consumption or unsustainable-consumption are less understood and taken into account (although it is also true that the environmental impacts are smaller). Creative communities, as we choose to refer to them, certainly exist and create initiatives in accordance with local needs. However, the motivations and the direction of these solutions are very different from the examples found with the research and are less easily traceable. Moreover, though consumers in Europe and the Global South are becoming interested in ethical consumption, this in itself is not enough as it provides options to a limited segment of society and would not provide options to alleviate and prevent poverty by way of enabling sustainable production systems on a wider scale. Creative communities in Europe are inspiring cases and examples of the great value of a community and appear to be a search to re-build social cohesion. Therefore, they could be seen as well as a reminder to the Global South; like a whisper to keep their existing collectiveness as they go forward in their own economic development process.

BOX 1
Home-Food Logistics in Mumbai, India

What: Dabba translates as lunch box or tiffin carrier; wallah means a man. Middle-class suburban housewives prepare 3-tiered lunch boxes known as dabbas for their husbands, hard at work in the city's offices. The meal is delivered direct to the workplace by one of the city's devoted dabbawallahs. This system is one of the oldest basic-life services in town (dating almost 100 years of activity). This lunch-time home to office food delivery by dabbawallahs was originated by the military efficiency system of the British Raj.

Where: Mumbai, India. There are no dabbawallahs anywhere else in India (or the world), and they are extremely proud of their work.

How: every day, a crew of about 5.000 dabbawallahs, disseminated from the suburbs to the centre of Mumbay, deal with more than 150.000 lunch boxes. The meal includes a main dish, a side dish, rice or chappatis, and pickles. The dabbawallahs can't read but use an ingenious system of codes, colours and symbols to distinguish between the 30 dabbas they deliver on a daily basis. The task is completed in just two hours, from midday to 2pm, and at 2 o'clock the whole process is reversed and each box is returned to its rightful home, making no mistakes. It's a miracle of organisation and efficiency.

Price: a dabbawallah charges 200 rupees ($4) per client per month and earns about 2,000 rupees ($40) per month.

Special features: This is a very good example of keeping alive local cultures and food traditions. The success of the service is granted by the high-level vs. low-tech organisational structure and the ensuing satisfaction of customers. It represents an excellent alternative solution to the on-going increase of fast food and western-tendency restaurants in town, which threaten local food habits and the many different eating cultures of India.

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Emerging creative and sustainable solutions in Central Eastern Europe

We first reflect on the recent past and political change that took place in Central Eastern Europe in the late 1980s – early 1990s to better understand the circumstances in which creative communities started to appear and the reasons for their appearance. We then move on to commenting on the groups of cases presented in the book through examining them from the point of view of wider scale application to the CEE region based on cultural issues, consumer trends and recent political change.

Some background

Central Eastern Europe (CEE) is a region that can be defined in different ways; however, in this book this term refers to the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia - eight of the ten countries that joined the European Union in 2004. Apart from their common accession though, what is similar about these countries that made us group them together?

Most importantly, they all belonged to the so-called socialist block, which means that they all had centrally-planned economic and political systems that did not encourage local creativity, and kept choices (thus household consumption) at a relatively low level. At the same time, although initiative taking outside the communist party was not welcome, participation in the various activity and voluntary groups organised by the party was greatly encouraged - in a way often semi-compulsory. As a result, people were involved in youth groups, took part in local clean-ups, tree-plantings, party festivals, helped their children to collect waste separately, attended clubs for seniors and participated in neighbourhood watch schemes and in a variety of other collective activities. So, we can say that the communist party tried its best to include everyone in some kind of a group, each of which had quite a full and varied schedule of activities. Thus, unless you were someone with individual creative ideas, you felt integrated into society and properly taken care of.

In the background, however, there was mounting pressure on the environment as it was viewed as a resource freely available for exploitation, and neither material nor energy efficiency of production were priority issues. Additionally, full employment, free education for all, well-planned and cheap public transport systems as well as a very good social and health care system were very expensive to maintain. These, together with the increasing number of people demanding more political freedom, the freedom of speech and the freedom to self-organise, necessitated a change that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Creative communities in CEE

People in the CEE region, just as much as in Western Europe, have been active in finding and constructing their own solutions to their needs unsatisfied by mainstream society and/or the state. This is true in the countries of the CEE region, especially since the above-mentioned

change of regime. The variety of creative community solutions can be exemplified by the fact that a quarter of the cases presented in this book were collected from Estonia and Poland, two of the countries in the region. Now we will examine them following the logic behind the presentation of the cases in the book, and point out similarities as well as differences between the Western and Eastern European aspect of creative communities in the sections that we find most interesting.

Housing

There is a diverse selection of cases included in the book under this heading, some of them catering for the needs of the growing number of elderly, others focusing on improving the quality of neighbourhoods through gardening, still others promoting the extension of the life-cycle of building materials or furniture, and an important group of cases is about people searching for a completely new way of life in the form of eco-villages. Some of these groups of cases are more relevant to the CEE region than others as they cater for emerging needs or are part of the specific culture of consumption there.

For example, recycling and reuse on the household scale has a long and strong tradition in CEE. People are reluctant to throw their things away; they can always find a new use for old objects, give them to their neighbours or get rid of them at the annual junk-clearance organized by municipal governments. On the junk-clearance days, people put their unwanted objects, furniture, clothes, bicycles, etc. on the street and before the municipal government collects them anyone can come and take them away for free. This practice and the strong tradition of reuse can explain why initiatives teaching people new ways of reuse and recycling such as the *Furniture re-designing studio (Mööblikom)* or *Used construction material recycling (Materjalid.net)* are widespread.

Eco-villages appear to be very popular in the CEE region, too. In the book they are exemplified by the *Model Eco-friendly Hamlet in Poland*, but we can find a great number of similar projects in CEE countries. In Hungary alone we have information about more than ten eco-village initiatives. What is common to them is that they promote an environmentally friendly lifestyle including housing, work and food while attempting to overcome social problems. They offer complex solutions to various challenges present in the countryside: environmental degradation (organic agriculture and utilisation of alternative energy sources), depopulation

of villages (creating local jobs and attracting people from the cities), and lack of local jobs (reviving local crafts and traditions, as for example in *The Sheep Project*). The popularity of such initiatives in the region can be explained by these characteristics and the fact that they are often promoted by very devoted people who would like to find alternatives to capitalism and the market economy, the only options presented in the late 1980s – early 1990s.

At the same time, initiatives aiming at solving housing problems and taking care of the elderly, such as the *Social elderly community Aquarius*, at least to our knowledge, cannot yet be found in the region. Similarly to the Global South, the elderly are usually taken care of by members of their own family in CEE countries. Another consideration is that in this region people most often own the house or flat they live in and are less likely to rent than in Western Europe. The elderly are very reluctant to sell their houses unless it is because they want to move closer to their families. Renting a flat in a communal place such as the one described in *Aquarius* is unlikely at the moment in CEE.

Eating

Reflecting on the cases relating to gardening and family-scale food production led us to the next group of cases collected under the title of 'eating'. There are various traditions and trends that need to be mentioned here. First of all, quite a few people in CEE countries have gardens (often loan gardens) where they grow food for themselves and for sale in the local market.

In the very recent past, most towns held regular local markets where these people could sell their produce and generate extra income for themselves. However, with the change of economic system and more stringent EU legislation for markets (regarding food safety, hygiene and market operation), a great number of the markets needed to be closed down. This way, small growers were forced out of the market or now need to travel long distances to be able to sell their produce. Thus, initiatives such as the *Little Organic Market (Biomercatino)*, *Alfred Food and Drink Delivery (Chmielnik Zdroj Ltd), the Eco-pantry (Ökoshaver)*, the *Natural Food System near the Roads*, aiming to assist small growers and connect them with consumers in urban areas are very important, popular in the region, and can greatly contribute to nurturing local traditions, livelihoods and diversity.

Secondly, a trend that is just taking root is socially responsible purchasing, or fair-trade. At the moment, creative communities like the *Group purchasing organisation (GAS Gruppo d'Acquisto Solidale)* cannot be found in the region. If one would like to find fair-trade products he/she would run into enormous difficulties, as certified fair-trade products are very rare even in the largest cities. This, however, is likely to change thanks to the work of NGOs promoting conscious consumption and people's growing awareness of environmental and social exploitation.

Commuting

When discussing the recent past of CEE, we mentioned that all of these countries had very effective public transportation systems reaching even the most remote settlements. At the same time, it was quite rare for families to possess cars. Even if families could afford to buy a car, they had to wait on an official waiting list for years before they could get one. These factors naturally promoted the use of public transport and encouraged car sharing among friends and the extended family. With the change of the political and economic system both of these trends started changing rather dramatically. Families now often own more than one car, are very eager to use them, and - following a reduction of subsidies - the public transport system is deteriorating. Furthermore, an increasing number of parents drive their children to school causing traffic jams and air pollution.

Thus, the time is not yet ripe for initiatives such as in the *Milan Car Sharing* example, or the *Walking Bus (Andiamo a scuola da soli)*, but trends are definitely pointing towards times when they will be badly needed. As CEE countries are now part of the European Union, it would be advantageous for them to learn about such successful sustainably-orientated alternatives from Western countries, not only the examples of consumption-driven policy and practice that are so often aped.

It is important to note that cycling is increasingly popular in the region; however, the lack of good quality bicycle roads is a big obstacle to widespread use and further development.

Conclusions

In this section, we tried to draw attention to certain characteristics of the CEE region, but our analysis was far from comprehensive. As a conclusion, we would like to emphasize two messages that thinking about creative communities in CEE countries conveys. In the first place, a great number of creative initiatives exist in the region, some of them because they have been part of life there for a long time. However, with the advancement of consumerism, there is a danger that they may get lost and may not enjoy priority status when funds are distributed, as is in the case with building new roads over preserving and upgrading existing public transport networks, or erecting large shopping centres over keeping small town markets. For this reason, it is of vital importance that the contribution of these initiatives to more sustainable forms of living is valued and their more widespread use is promoted.

Then, learning as well as the exchange of ideas and creative solutions between the Eastern and Western part of the European Union should become general practice and facilitate a transition to more sustainable everyday solutions. Both the East and the West have a great number of examples to offer, and what has already been learnt in one region should speed up learning in the other, with attention to local needs and skills, and without endangering diversity, vital to the resilience and survival of any system.

Replication of the cases: environmental considerations and technological demands

These cases show creative people. People who socialize, who are innovative and whose behaviour creates an impact on society. We would like to see the cases being replicated by followers so as to increase the overall impact. What are the environmental lessons we learnt and want to take into account when we support such replication? And is it possible to support the cases by technologies and innovations in order to be attractive to a larger audience of followers?

Environmental lessons

All cases have been qualitatively evaluated on their impact on the environment. Both the intended positive contributions to the environment as the unintended effects on the environment are considered.

Housing

The cases within this category show:
_ people living together and sharing (parts of) their life, living in one house, a building or separate houses within a small area.
_ people organizing local activities for safety and/or a nice living environment and by doing so increasing the social fabric
_ people that individually or within a group apply environmental friendly energy systems, building material, reuse furniture, etc.

The main environmental advantage of (new kind of grouping of) people living together is the reduction of energy use for heating because of shared use of living space. Heating is the main environmental impact factor of households. The smaller an average household becomes the more energy is used in total for heating because of inefficient use of spaces.
Another environmental advantage of sharing housing is that it reduces building waste from old buildings and reduces the need for new building material. Some of the cases show initiatives that intentionally rebuild old buildings for co-housing purposes. And also the co-housing of students within private houses of elderly reduces the need for new houses.
Moreover, living together, people experience less need to commute: they relate to, live nearby, like the case of the *Social elderly community Aquarius*.
Finally living together also induces the sharing of products, like washing machines, lawn mowers, cars, bikes, as for example can be seen in the case of *Sustainable Housing and Living De Kersentuin*.

Some of the cases within the category of Housing show people that organize themselves and others to get a pleasant living environment, by inducing the safety in the neighbourhood, maintaining green parts, etc. By doing so, these people increase the social fabric.

The case contributes to the environmental by increase of natural environment in the neighbourhood (for example neighbourhood public green of the *Loan gardens*) or reduction of material damage. But, these initiatives contribute mainly to social cohesion, pushing people to do things together with a common aim.

The cases that show people applying environmental technologies are promising from an environmental point of view. In general centralised power generation seems to be efficient because of scale advantages; centralisation, though, induces transportation of energy.
From an environmental point of view it is advisable to produce alternative energy on a local scale. It limits the need for transportation but is at the same time more efficient than production on an individual level.
What is interesting to see in a few of the cases is the motivation to organize on a local scale and to organize among a group of people. These forms of distributed power generation is a promising concept for environmental sustainability.

Considerations for replication
When thinking of replication the optimum of the amount of attendees to one initiative should be looked for. The more attendants to one initiative, the more there is to share. But a large group of users can induce the feeling of irresponsibility and as a consequence result in bad maintenance.
For social cohesion benefits it is preferable to limit the amount of attendees too. It is better to try to multiply initiatives and thus to facilitate starting up of new creative communities than to enlarge a creative community with more attendees.
A group of people that co-operate on a local level seems a promising concept. And a lot of cases can obtain a higher environmental benefit from incorporating environmental friendly systems.

Eating

The cases that deal with food and eating are almost all focussed on organic food and/or local produced food. The environmental advantages of this kind of food are less toxic substances (specifically for organic food), a contribution to biodiversity, reduction of energy use for

cooling, because of consumption of seasonal products, and for transportation, because of the local base supply chain.

The most negative impact to the environment is the land use. Especially for the production of organic food more land is needed, compared to the industrialised production of food.

Transportation has an important impact on the total food chain. The way the logistics are organized determines the environmental impact of the food chain. The cases around food show closer interaction between consumer and producer: this will imply a new way the logistics are organised, but the way it is organised within the cases is probably not always more efficient

There are other interesting environmental beneficial mechanisms to be seen within the cases:
_ reduction of choice but increase of the discovery of the seasonal food: the vegetable boxes offer customers organic or local food by subscription. People can not choose themselves, but have, every week, the availability of the seasonal food.
_ increase the access to organic and or local food. Many cases are about offering people the opportunity to buy the food they want, by increasing the accessibility. The accessibility is increased by a market in the neighbourhood, near the road, delivery at home, etc.
_ transportation of the local production in co-operation: the cases show good examples of co-operative providers making efficient transportation chains.
_ people search for alternatives they want (see for example the people within the *Group purchasing organisation G.A.S.* that together buy food from local producers) according to various principles. The power of the group is again an important enabler .
_ people take part in the production. The added value for them is that they know what they get, where it comes from, etc. And this induces the social cohesion and the sense of responsibility towards the environment too, as the cases show.
_ people eating and cooking together. This results in more efficient use of energy for cooking, less food waste, etc.

Considerations for replication
A closer relationship between the producer and the consumer of food have several environmental advantages. At the same time the way the transportation is organised should be well thought through: co-operation for efficient logistics seems important as also covering a limited area for one service.

Commuting

The initiatives within the field of commuting cover varied parts of the transportation system: walking, bicycling, facilitation to public transportation, infrastructure and car sharing.
The main environmental contribution is similar: the substitution of car kilometres by alternative means of transportation.
Cases act both on the means of transportation and on the infrastructures.
On one side, because of the car chaos in Milan, the *Car Sharing* seems to become a serious and attractive alternative to users. Especially as an alternative for people that feel the need for buying a car (and did not have one before) or want to purchase a second car.
On the other side, the same car crowdedness is a reason for the Milanese walking-bus *(Andiamo a scuola da soli)* initiative to fail to really succeed: the school is located between two very busy streets and sidewalks are often parked by cars, so that some parents of the children, although they think it is healthy for them to walk to school, do not think it is safe enough to let

their children walk by this special school-bus. This situation resulted in a minimum of attendees in this specific example.
With the aim to improve the condition of the public space, in Germany the *Cycle Association MFG Fahrrad Gruppe* was initiated in order to report the local government parts of the infrastructure that needs to be improved.

Considerations for replication
The commuting cases show that a system approach is needed and that small creative communities can offer dedicated solutions for a (small) part of this total system. Anyway it is needed to have initiatives acting on three factors:
_ the means of transportation
_ the amount of passengers and the optimisation of the journeys
_ the infrastructures

Working

The cases that show alternative platforms of time and disposed goods (that also induces socialization among people) offer the opportunity to save on material use (as the *Time Bank* and the *LETS Local Exchange Trading System,* for example): product reusing becomes an option again. It can also reduce the need for time-efficient products (that often contain high toxicity or use a lot of energy during use) because mobilizing time of people seems to reduce consequently the need for "time efficiency".

Some cases benefit mainly from the multiple use of products, services and spaces. Sharing of spaces induces efficient use of energy and building space: the example of the sharing office of *CICP (Centre International de Culture Populaire)* shows an association that facilitates small organizations to practice their work: a small organizations can rent an office and a meeting room and makes use of all kinds of equipment

Considerations for replication
The alternative trading platforms can introduce more individual transportation to transports people's quality and products. In order to reduce this consequence the distance that is covered by one platform should be limited. And professional ways of transportation and/or environmental sound ways of transportation should be incorporated.
The cases that benefit from multiple users should search for the optimum of attendees. In case it gets too big responsibility and maintainability gets a problem.

Learning

In the category of 'learning', one is the factor impacting on the environmental issue: the use of communal spaces or the share of the space. This leads, for instance, to the reduction of energy for heating and induces a more efficient use of the living space.

Social care and helping people back to work by teaching new skills (*Coach House Trust*) can have an (indirect) effect on the (material) damage done to society, by drug addicts, criminals, etc.
The environmental impact of cases that focus on child care is not significant: the advantages will

lay mainly in the social field.

Considerations for replication
These initiatives, as in other cases, do well when the service covers a limited area. This will namely minimise mobility.

Socializing

The cases within this category show examples of initiatives that induce the social fabric of people. A few of the cases show alternative trading platforms (like *Book Exchange – Buchticket –* in Germany and *Exchange corner in radio Krakow*). Their benefit is similar to the one described under the category of working. But all cases in this category mainly benefit on social aspects and this will contribute to a better quality of life.
The long term environmental benefit of a better quality of life can be a reduction of illnesses and consequently hospitalisation (with a high environmental impact). This becomes specifically interesting for cases that focus on elderly. But it is still uncertain whether these initiatives actually will keep people healthier during their lifetime. Research needs to be done on this subject: what are the new life patterns of (elderly) people and what will be the impact on health?

Considerations for replication
Again, it is recommended to limit the area that is covered by cases that specifically deal with the socializing issue: this limits the distance the people live from each other and make lively interaction more possible.

Technological research issues

The cases in the current situation contain only minor technological support. The people that initiated the service concepts of the cases are people with strong motivation and, sometimes, strong ideologies. These "heroes" sometimes act from a need and sometimes because they want to. Both these groups of people show behaviour that will not become mainstream easily. We believe that technology is one way to support "followers" to apply to a service the "heroes" initiated. Or to support a follower to initiate a corresponding service himself. Where the heroes were willing to invest time and money to get what they wanted, technology can support the followers to get the same without what some of the followers will consider as "inconvenience".

There are two ways to look at support from technology:
_ technology can be added to an initiative to support the initiative as it is right now
_ technology can be added to make it more easier for followers to become participant of the service and technology that can support the starting up of corresponding services.
They are much interrelated because technology that supports the initiative as it is right now, can make the difference for a follower to attend the service. However, the technological evaluation focussed on adding technology to support the multiplication of services.

What can be seen is that a lot of cases show similar technological opportunities, which are:

Co-operating
All cases face the problem of how to find and connect people with similar interests and aims. This issue is about how to find these people, build mutual trust, shared visions and, finally, a solid result-oriented partnership.

Synchronizing
A lot of cases face the problem of how to facilitate practical co-operation between people with different time organizations and how to facilitate product exchanges between people. Synchronization is therefore about how to tune people to people, people to products and even products to products. Fluidity is an important element of the need for synchronization: the need for fluid booking facilities, easy check of availability, etc.

Sharing
This issue is about organizing and maintaining the sharing of products and spaces by a group of associated people.
Who is going to maintain a product that is not owned by one owner? Who is responsible? How can products be made "robust", because people are less careful with products that are not ones own? How can a product be made accessible without someone personally handing over "the keys" or something?

Personalising
Personalising can play an important role in the acceptance of sharing of products and spaces. How to achieve communal products and spaces that are able to recognize the different potential users and adapt themselves consequently? Can products be adapted to multiple users in a way that they are personalized for a specific user?

Ranking
Because the services offered by the creative communities are often small and have an amateurish character potential attendees will probably feel the need to know more about other people's experiences and the perceived quality of a certain service. Technology can support the sharing of experiences people have with a specific service. This would offer the possibility of a bottom up quality evaluation.

Quality assurance
Linked to the former issues there will in some cases also be an opportunity for a more objective quality assurance. Technology can be used to assure the reliability of a variety of different entities (like people, places, services, products...). In some cases people will need a well-founded quality assurance for these entities. In comparison to the former technology demand, this demand has a more top-down approach.

Sheltering
A suitable place where a social enterprise can perform its service can be an important precondition for the arising of a new initiative. Sometimes the house itself will be the starting point, but often other spaces are needed. Can technology be of a support for achieving (finding) open, flexible places? And can technology support the managing of it in such a way that individuals and communities can give life to different initiatives and different forms of organisations?

Tracking and tracing

Tracking and tracing technology can support people in knowing where somebody and/or products are and what people are doing. How is it possible to localize and follow them/it? How to do it in real time and for a large number of people and/or products? This technology is probably also needed when technology is implemented for synchronization purposes and in a certain degree also for co-operation purposes.

Moving

The cases show examples of people getting together, most of the time physically and in a much lesser degree "virtually" by internet(-like) services. This can probably induce the mobility of people. People go for example directly to the farmer. How can we get people but also things from one place to another and how to do it in the most efficient way? Potential threat of direct relationship between producers and users and between users themselves is the increase of the transportation: these logistics are more difficult to streamline compared to large scale organized distribution.

Privacy-guaranteeing

This issue arises actually when technology is introduced and people are getting more and more connected to each other and to the products and spaces they share. When technology for co-operation, for synchronization, personalization and tracking and tracing is used, personal information of people is needed. How can people and products or spaces be connected to each other, traceable and be guaranteed of ones privacy in all other events of life, at the same time?

Payment

A lot of cases will face the problem of payment. Think of how to deal with payment for the use of a product. How can payment exchanges be facilitated? Especially for cases where there is not a clearly defined provider there is a need for support on this. How can this be done fluidly without for example the burden of continuously dealing with payment?

Environmental friendly technologies

Apart from these technological issues it has to be mentioned that the cases can also be supported by sustainable technologies like alternative energy systems, water systems, etc. New living forms like *Aquarius* could rather easily be 'upgraded' by environmental technologies. These new life forms offer possibilities for example distributed power generation. This would improve the environmental performance of these cases enormously.

Conclusions on the environmental effects and technological opportunities

The environmental analyses show some key-mechanisms that are interesting for the replication of the cases and can lead us towards environmental sustainability.
We can distinguish:
1_ New forms of group life
The cases show examples of new forms of group life that clearly add value to the users. Life of these people is quite interwoven among each other, but people also seem to keep their own space. These modern ways of communal living show interesting potentials for sustainability because of:
_ more sharing of products,

_ intensive use of (communal) space (and consequently efficient use of energy for heating) and
_ possibilities to (relative) easily add technological solutions for energy/ water saving and other environmental friendly solutions, etc.

2_ The power of the group
Consumers that group together in order to be able to make a sustainable choice (this does not necessarily mean living together). This would not be possible when people act on their own and often it would not be sustainable on an individual basis.

3_ Mutual help, organised in group form
People exchange time and skills in order to help each other out and to create a safe and enjoyable living environment. "People for people". This solidarity induces the life extension of products, but more over enlarges the quality of life. This mutual help is organised in a group form in order to enlarge the exchange of help.

Behind this, we can recognise in the cases some positive actions in terms of environmental sustainability as:
_ to enhance the solidarity between people: mobilize time of people to help each other out;
_ to intensify the use of space;
_ to organise on a local scale: to enhance the social interaction and minimise mobility;
_ to enhance using and sharing in stead of owning;
_ to induce life extension of products;
_ to enable customers to make a sustainable choice (by offering sustainable alternatives);
_ to offer a Customized solution (by offering a solution that fits to the situation);
_ to reduce the choice (in order to create a high volume and efficiency and to avoid "wrong" choices);
_ to co-operate for efficiency reasons (on a local scale);
_ to add technology for saving energy use, water use, etc. if possible.

So far, some conclusion can be discussed.
First, the technological evaluation clearly shows points of connection for technological support: the opportunities per case differ, but on a general level, they are transversal.
Second, to support the co-operation of people could be of great help to enhance the replication of the initiatives and we see a lot of technological demands in that direction. How to find people with the same interests, how to form a group of people, how to communicate? This grouping of people, the co-operation and consequently the solidarity between them, seems to be a strong mechanism in the initiatives.
Finally, a lot of the technological opportunities seem to point towards ICT-solutions: on the other hand, also building construction technology and technologies for energy-efficiency seem to be of interest, next to design oriented technologies to adjust products to multiple users.

It is stressed that all the technological opportunities that are described here are merely suggestions.
It does not mean that technology is the answer for the replication of the initiatives and/or for the initiatives to grow. In interaction with the service providers and participants of the current cases, government and other actors it should be discussed what technological support really adds value. Also policy recommendations and new organizational forms can play an important role in the fulfilment of these demands.

annex

The network of schools. New ways for bottom up design driven innovation

Luisa Collina (Politecnico di Milano)

What lies behind a group of young designers from eight different universities roaming around European cities, armed with pen, paper and camera, on the look out for new creative solutions for everyday life?
What new idea of innovation, research, creativity and design is hidden behind the operation?
And why should a university like the Politecnico di Milano get involved in the creation of such a researcher network?

The hidden mechanisms

Behind the cases presented in the previous pages, behind the bright, even cheerful, coloured pictures of everyday life, lies a less attractive and more complex engine. This mainly consists of four largely intangible elements, which have together enabled us to build up an interesting and original body of knowledge:
_ a survey network
_ a codified process
_ a tutoring service
_ a technological platform

The survey network is made up of eight European design schools: Politecnico di Milano (Italy); The Glasgow School of Art - School of Design (Scotland); University of Art and Design Helsinki (Finland); ENSCI Les Ateliers, Paris (France); University of Applied Sciences, Cologne - School of Design (Germany); Department of Industrial Design - Eindhoven University of Technology (Netherlands); Innovation Center of Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn; Academy of Fine Arts, Krakow (Poland).

The selection of these schools as "antennas" was based on four main factors:
_ pre-existing relationships (five of these schools form part of a network – MEDes Master of European Design – started up in 2001);
_ geographical dislocation (in order to obtain a representative sample of European realities in a highly heterogeneous context);
_ their proximity to presumably lively, dynamic and innovative urban contexts;
_ their interest in acting as local project catalysers in this kind of unusual experimental activity.

Each of these centres called on a number of design students to carry out field surveys. The decision to use design students as researchers was made for several disciplinary and didactic reasons. These range:
_ from their predisposition for non-neutral observation, since this is already orientated towards identifying future design potential, to their skill in transforming what they have observed into visual forms that are easily transferable to other subjects;

_ from the opportunity to exercise their sensibility for observation and enquiry in an experimental activity of this kind, to the need to train their ability to synthesise and interpret;
_ from the general relational "freshness" of young people, to the importance of bringing them in direct contact with different, untested, more sustainable lifestyles.
This experience and its results, both in terms of didactics and research, is the subject of contributions by Ian Grout for The Glasgow School of Art, Simone Maase for the Department of Industrial Design, Eindhoven University of Technology, Liz Davis for ENSCI Les Ateliers di Parigi and Cindy Kohtala for the University of Art and Design Helsinki, university teachers who co-ordinated and supervised the experimental activities in four of these European design schools.

To undertake the survey the university teachers and tutors were supplied with a kit (cf. essay by Meroni and Jegou) that was later distributed to the students themselves. This contained, among other things, ways of selecting potentially interesting cases (what do we look at?), kinds of survey data (what information do we collect?; in what format?) and the timing required (what is the deadline?).
The Politecnico di Milano gave back-up at critical moments (such as the start up of activities, the selection of cases for examination etc.) by taking part in presentation workshops and creating a helpdesk to answer questions from students and assess material as it was collected.

Lastly, a technological platform was the place for interaction between network co-ordinators and their "sensors", for exchanging experiences between the "antenna" communities, and for storing the wealth of knowledge being acquired (cf. the essay by Ciuccarelli).
A complex, articulated, structured research process emerges from this brief backstage description of the project, which took almost a year of energy and hard work by a considerable number of people to bring to its conclusion. Far from chance, on-the-spot, survey methods this was a demanding way of researching, with aims that go well beyond the case collection presented.

annex

Research hypotheses

Recognition is growing that as well as the purely technological innovation involved, the project contains other forms of significant innovation among which the creation of new organisational and managerial modes, new distributional processes, new social models, new projects and services.
One of the principles behind this project takes its inspiration from such recognition and, more precisely, from the idea that design is not limited to styling operations. Rather, it operates as a real innovation driver: so called "design driven" innovation, meaning a kind of innovation that is not necessarily (or exclusively) technological, but is hybrid, combining technology with social, relational, organisational, productive and market type components.
Design-driven innovation refers to the reconfiguration processes of value creation that are the result of the generative (i.e. capable of giving birth to unexpected solutions) interface between technical potential (the "field of what is technically possible") and social potential (the "field of what is socially possible"). This principle has been made evident by the success of many small firms producing "Made in Italy" that have made formal, cultural, symbolic research, rather than advanced technology, the basis of their success.

If this is a shared principle then it follows that design research exists (EMUDE, which triggered the case collection presented here, is an example) and is exploring these ambits of innovation, the nature of which is very different from purely scientific and technological type research.
This kind of research is fed by social and cultural phenomena, as well as by technology, and by the organisational modes working in different international contexts, on different scales from mass to community down to the individual level.
Work in these ambits does not therefore limit itself to desk study but consists mainly of field research: a detailed examination of whatever is under observation in its usual context (focusing attention on context-artefact relationships, be they material or intangible-user phenomena) and in some cases even going to the point of involving the people concerned in self-observation and co-designing activities. In such activities there is a prevailing bottom up flow of information (from single individuals operating in their usual everyday contexts, to the researchers) rather than top down (where everything takes place inside laboratory walls and research centres) and the core activity is carried out by project workers, able to

observe, analyse, interpret, map out and visualise what is happening now and at the same time foresee potential future scenarios. In other words, the research here is mediated by the sensibility of designers called both to observe existing reality, picking up on its innovative features, and to outline possible visions for the future.

In this kind of research, analysis, interpretation and design merge, recognising the special nature of the information gathered through direct observation: information thought by some academics to be "sticky", i.e. difficult to transfer if not in visual, qualitative, rarely quantitative terms, and capable of generating new design solutions already at the observation stage.

This is a kind of research that, as we said, supports an idea of design that is a long way from what can be seen on glossy magazine pages exalting the pure whim of the designer of the day. It is an innovative rather than inventive approach to design, where innovation is increasingly associated with discovering what already exists; with improving, transferring, hybridising, structuring, globalising and/or industrialising existing, but little known and as yet unvalued solutions that are at times homemade and localised in distant contexts; where creative processes are grafted onto such mines of knowledge as to generate visions and future scenarios.
We have been highlighting an idea of design that is certainly not new, but that is extraordinarily more important than the purely stylistic exercises ascribable to the specific tradition of Italian design (suffice it to think of the work of prominent figures in Italian design such as Ettore Sottsass, Alessandro Mendini, Massimo Morozzi, Andrea Branzi e Clino Trini Castelli). The prevailing design, or rather metadesign, research approach here is not limited only to the formal aspects; here the outcome of designers' work does not only include products, but also design tools able to generate new visions and scenarios for the future.

What significance does this kind of activity have for a university?

It is by looking at this experience that one of the possible roles for a design university, rather than the institutions and the entrepreneurial fabric concerned, emerges: to provide research services, support tools able to sustain, activate and catalyse design driven innovation processes. This is a particularly important role in situations characterised by a web of small

enterprises that do not have an internal research and development unit at their disposal and where innovation processes have, up until now, been limited mainly to optimising production processes and emulating their competitors offers.

This is one of the purposes of the present collection of cases. It does not seek only to talk about innovative cases or enhance and clarify positive visions present in our contemporary society. More than this, it seeks to stimulate the birth of new solutions on a wider scale that are less amateurish and more structured; new service enterprises (both profit and non-profit) able to improve our quality of life.

The aims of the relational information system (the technological platform) and the network of antennas are even more ambitious: the intention is to set up a genuine research infrastructure able to pick up on innovation signals in various international contexts, to gather and file such information and, on the basis of this, to bring project design products into being (in the shape, for example, of cognitive maps, trend books, visualisations of future scenarios, etc.). In other words we seek to produce a sort of meta-tool able to support studies that differ widely, both in terms of theme and sector and in terms of geographical extension, sample size, depth and mode of analysis.

This will be a huge scanner called, for example, to reveal the diffuse creativity existing in a local area and in the everyday life of each one of us, by identifying and examining cases of excellence that stand out in current practice (whether of a social, cultural, organisational, technological or other kind). However, it will at the same time be capable of wide angle scanning, in order, for example, to map out lifestyles and contemporary habits, highlight existing general trends, or track progress and advanced scenarios for sectors with a high level of design content.

It will be an interactive platform, able to link researchers and project addressees – whether we call them clients, users, or beneficiaries – at times involving them actively in co-designing.

It will provide research infrastructure that can be set to give detailed, in-depth readings of exceptional cases and wide-ranging studies of diffuse practices; that can dialogue with possible interlocutors, privileged knowledge holders; that files this wealth of knowledge according to formalised protocol, making it available to designers and researchers.

On the basis of this mine of information researchers and designers are called to elaborate visual products of synthesis, interpretation and strategic orientation for the use of companies and institutions. This is one of the tasks that the Politecnico di Milano, in its capacity as design research centre at the service of companies and industrial districts operating in the reference sectors, has appointed itself and on which it has started working through this and other projects.

DIAGRAM

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annex

The Glasgow Experience

Ian Grout, Professor, Department of Product Design, The Glasgow School of Art.

I remember going to Brussels for the first meeting of EMUDE thinking that there was no time to fit another project into the programme and returning thinking that there was no way that we were not going to do this. It presented an interesting problem. So we simply ran that project as a parallel activity, giving an additional experience to our students. This approach also allowed us to attract participants from all year groups and especially those with a committed or growing interest in sustainability. It also enabled us to be inclusive of our visiting international students. In preparation we sent out a general invitation and started from an initial interest from some 30 students. Eventually, 20 were involved in the light cases search with 12 completing the in depth studies. We also took the strategic choice to extend our antenna activities beyond the city of Glasgow. Our rationale for this was to reflect more holistically the true nature of the Scottish culture where it can be observed that a significant proportion of communities leave the urban environment to live and act differently. Our intention from the outset was to be as inclusive as possible within the research framework.

We found working with the EMUDE methodology complimentary to our educational approach in Glasgow. Our courses are concerned with human centred design drawing influence from culture and society, working from a sociological perspective, to form new approaches and roles for design education and practice.

In undertaking the project we found that we were able to interact with our communities in a natural way and the experience was involving and rich, engendering an awakening realisation in the students of the value of being hands on and feet on the ground in their research approach. Likewise, we found that the communities were afforded and took the opportunity to reflect on and communicate what they were doing, why they were doing it and what value this had to their interaction with the wider world. One of the enduring memories is of being with people who, being driven by passion and vision make their own sense of an increasingly complex society. Another experience is watching the realisation within the students of the possibilities of researching and potentially designing from a different perspective, for a different set of values and a different kind of client. The project generated great commanderie amongst all the students helping them to grow in confidence, maturity and perspective as they develop towards the new designers of the future.

In Glasgow the value of this project can be seen as part of a wider initiative, a new piece of the jigsaw puzzle of sustainable design if you will. The project occurred in Glasgow at an important time of experimental change enabling us to, in a concrete and physical sense, take theory further into action. Building on the EMUDE framework we have started creating projects more able to reflect the needs of society. Overlapping the project and running on to its conclusion some months later was a Green Mapping project looking at the extent and sustainable value of Charity Shops in Glasgow. It was informed and enhanced by our experience. This project encouraged our students to be more attached to the wider issues of design for society through active participation in the process of understanding people, their actions, needs and desires more clearly. It involved students being out in the environment and working with the users and stakeholders in a very direct way. Through this project we have begun to develop a new methodology for design, production, distribution and consumption being more clearly centred in an inclusive ethical framework. This will be taken forwards and developed in further projects.

We see these types of projects as neither top down, bottom up, conclusive or definitive but rather part of an evolving learning process. We can see that in this way we can encourage our students to participate in and reflect on the needs of the various stakeholders, both in the process and also the extended value of the activity of co-designing.

As we all know, the role of design is changing and as we continue to increase our knowledge we can, with a more certain assurance, project forwards to a new designer and way of designing. This future will be one in which it is essential to construct new methodologies, opportunities and meanings for design and to aid this we will need to develop new models of holistic, flexible co participation through which we may be able to give deep and meaningful sustainable design solutions for our emerging ecologically aware society. In this context EMUDE has been an important part of that development within the Glasgow School of Art.

The Eindhoven Experience

Simone Maase, Assistant Professor, Department of Industrial Design, Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands

"This was the first time I had to analyse a product service system. Before I only worked on single products."

"...by doing the interview we discovered that the most important part of the system are the inhabitants themselves and their mutual approach to each other."

"I've learned that sustainability is more than long-lasting products or eco-design. It is about developing alternative and sustainable solutions that fulfil people's needs."

Contrary to the Scottish way of involving students in the EMUDE programme, we integrated the research activities in the bachelor phase of the Industrial Design curriculum at the Eindhoven University of Technology. We aim to train our students to become designers of intelligent products, services and systems. To develop their design competencies, students have to choose from a set of assignments. The gathering and analysis of promising cases is part of one of the assignments dealing with the competency "socio-cultural awareness". In this research programme our students had the opportunity to work in a real life scientific setting. Simultaneously the close interaction with people in society, gave them new openings for involving "users" in the design process, and, even more important, how to design with, instead of for people. As can be read in the students' quotes at the top, their view on design has widened. Presenting the cases to each other, created a platform for discussion among the students, which gave them valuable insights for their future design profession and the integration of sustainability in design.

The first round of gathering cases delivered 17 cases. Eleven of these cases are described in this book. Outside this research scope, students started to elaborate and analyse these cases further. The exchange between the creative communities and students was valuable for both. Students experienced a new kind of interaction with the people of the creative communities, making them more aware of the communities' motivators, needs and wants. Students also got the assignment to design an intervention for the case they analysed. This intervention could be at a systemic or product level and should increase the level of sustainability of a case. Asking for feedback from stakeholders in a promising case, created an even more profound understanding of the importance of stakeholder involvement in the design process. For the stakeholders of a case, the interventions created new insights in the way they set up the initiative, they got fresh ideas on how to improve the level of sustainability of their solution, and sometimes the design intervention even influenced the further development of a case.

In October 2005 we organized the symposium "Creative Communities and Design". The aim of this symposium was to disseminate the EMUDE results and create the opportunity for interaction between the creative communities, designers, members of the EMUDE consortium and students. Around 90 people took part in this event. The discussions taking place at the round table sessions revealed that co-operating with communities in the design process is relatively new for designers and manufacturers. Designers expressed the wish to integrate sustainability more in their work, expanding from eco-design to sustainability on a more systemic level. The latter is experienced as complicated and new.

From 2004 up till now over 75 students in the bachelor phase at the department of Industrial Design at the Eindhoven University of Technology, were involved in gathering and analysing promising cases. The Promising Cases Internet Repository is a still growing and valuable database for further research. As both assistant professor and school co-ordinator for this research programme, I had the opportunity to study the promising cases from new perspectives. Studying the development of the Dutch promising cases closer, made us aware of the presence of bottom-up co-design processes. Co-design in the design field is defined as a collaborative design process in which the "user" becomes the designer. Due to the fact that in a promising case often a lot of different stakeholders are involved, co-design methods and tools become of major importance for the successful development of a case. Any designed solution is only as good as the amount of stakeholder support, and the quality of the stakeholder involvement. Therefore, it is interesting to explore the tools and methods that are described in budding literature on co-creation, and see how these could be used in the context of the creation of sustainable innovations.

The Paris Experience

Liz Davis, Head Studio International at Ensci/Les Ateliers, Paris, France

It's easy to forget that the real experts of a problem are the people dealing with it in their everyday lives. In this sense, EMUDE has been a lesson in humility. The creativity demonstrated in the communities we worked with proved that the act of design is not exclusive.
Les Ateliers was founded in 1982 to educate designers to be partners in social and economic development. One of the school's early project groups (Richard Neill, Jean-François Archieri) dealt exclusively with socio-cultural cooperation and the studio international ran a design for development studio. Creative engagement was seen as essential in a society looking for feasible, sustainable, alternatives. We wanted to educate "responsible" designers.
It's not that easy to find project platforms which satisfy educational ambitions and offer useful results. It's a long journey from explaining the potential of design to non-designers and gaining the trust to create co-design partnerships. This research offered us the perfect chance for a human-led project, in situ. After a pilot study in 2004, EMUDE was launched and programmed as an optional activity under the auspices of Studio international (Tutor: Liz Davis with the support of Licia Bottura, expert in sustainability). Working as a trans-European team was stimulating. It also justified the nocturnal sessions writing up cases in English on the website! Our own (small) team was also multi-cultural: French students led the interviewing and English-speakers were responsible for summaries. It was fascinating to discover which cases were "missing" in Paris or how certain dynamics were universal (*Cyclo-pouce* for example)
The case research and collection activity offered a valuable exercise in understanding context. Students learnt the value of non-directive questioning. They sensed the influences and interactions at play in a complex system and tried to break the codes. They learnt to be apprentice ethnologists without losing their design skills. It's all a matter of how to talk to people, to explain your skills, to build bridges of understanding. Finally, being invested with a task and a role within a consortium of experts demonstrated how important interaction is between professions. Many insights were gained from face to face contact which we would like to have shared. However, seeing the efforts of the schools taken seriously was hugely rewarding. It wasn't easy to unearth "bottom-up" cases in a society used to state-led initiatives. However, many actions were created under the umbrella of "Associations 1901", deep-rooted in French culture since the invention of legislation supporting non-profit making alliances. Success-stories were those which inspired new frames for further action. Recognition is the major reward for huge personal investment. The opportunity to share experience and knowledge and to inspire other groups to create their own projects is in itself an empowerment. The AQSB association (The Saint Bernard Quartier neighbourhood Association) spent years persuading City Hall to "lend" an abandoned plot to local residents for a community garden. The resulting *Jardin Nomade* finally inspired a green charter for Paris, leading to a multitude of similar projects.
Although design follow-up was not part of our brief, we wanted to extend our relationships with the communities. Students Milamem Abderamane-Dillah and Goliath Dyeres worked to improve internal/external communication with the CICP community of associations (corporate identity, signage, organisational supports...). They then joined Solutioning-design in Brussels as interns working on the following phase of the research: the scenario building.
In 2005, EMUDE cases were presented as part of the Solutioning Design contribution to "D-Day" at the Pompidou Centre. D-Day demonstrated how design has matured into a creative process at the service of sustainability. A conference with Ezio Manzini and François Jégou allowed a design-related public to understand the EMUDE project and challenges. Subsequently, a meeting was organised for people interested in hearing our stories and visiting the Paris communities involved in the project. This was my chance to witness interaction between "the public" and our communities. Around an autumnal picnic in the *Jardin Nomade*, the mood was uplifting. People were inspired to action and a civil servant from a suburban city hall decided to look for similar cases in her town to offer financial support. Such weekend encounters, a personal initiative of Pompidou staff are a success-story in themselves. Paris city dwellers, often singles, sign up to learn more about a subject presented at the museum, meeting the people involved and visiting related sites. Friends are made, addresses exchanged.
Did our project coincide with increasing political frustration in France or a wave of new energy ? It seems we were witness to an upsurge in community initiative, followed by an explosion of media interest in «good news» endeavours (see, for example "Le tour du monde en 80 hommes": meeting the pioneers of sustainable development. www.80hommes.com). The actors of the communities seemed delighted to share their stories. Possibly the very "telling" makes their achievement more tangible.

On behalf of the French team we would like to fondly remember Thierry Kazazian, o2 France, who for twenty years worked for the development of sustainable design in France and who was a constant support to our students. Thierry was lost to illness in February 2006.

The Helsinki Experience

Cindy Kohtala, lecturer, University of Art and Design Helsinki

From the outset of the EMUDE project it became clear to us – the Helsinki Antenna – that Finland is a very organised society indeed. Even the smallest grassroots group tends to organise itself and list itself with the Trade Register as a non-profit association, despite the rules and bureaucracy this entails. As with groups such as *Housing Oranssi - Housing company* and o2 Finland this is often for reasons of financial governance, societal recognition and greater ease in applying for grants and sponsorship funding.

Finland as a Nordic country also enjoys the benefits of a welfare state, but is experiencing the growing pressures on government expenditure and tax levels that most or all of the developed world is now undergoing. Complaints are common: people are increasingly dissatisfied with public health care (i.e. long queues for surgery and dental services) and are for the first time in decades unsure about what faces them after retirement. Generations of womb-to-tomb services have however rendered the general populace somewhat paralyzed: 'we pay high taxes – we thus deserve high quality medical care and security for the elderly. We should not need to create our own solutions.'

The issue to which this attitude does not apply as strongly is unemployment. Finland experienced a deep recession in the early 1990s and while unemployment has finally dropped to single digit figures, structural unemployment in particular remains a significant factor. Jobless numbers in the immigrant communities is also of growing concern, especially as it relates to assimilation or integration into an otherwise extremely homogenous Finnish society. In a country where the work ethic and social cohesion are valued highly, this has meant the development of many work creation initiatives, both bottom-up and top-down.

Another key observation that can be drawn from the Helsinki cases is that creativity and culture are extremely valued and deemed worthy of protection in Finland. Finnish arts funding is among the highest in the world, but, as with the decline of the Welfare State since the recession, governmental bodies (state and municipalities) have less of a role as the direct financiers of cultural services and arts activities. At the same time influential studies such as the ones conducted by Richard Florida have stimulated the discussion on cultural competence and the importance of attracting and retaining a creative, innovative workforce. It is thus important to business people, policymakers, and private citizens that Helsinki maintains its vibrant, creative milieu, and that Helsinki as an urban space acts as a platform for diverse cultural activities, large and small. Throughout the course of the EMUDE research, this topic came up again and again in our discussions, and indeed several of the Finnish students signed up for the course, attracted by its subtitle Creative Society.

In my view, this research project as a whole carries important lessons for designers, authorities, and entrepreneurs. Where we truly see systemic innovation in the promising cases are the many that seem to transcend generally understood categories of societal organisation and the boundaries between professional and amateur. For example, *Liberté* is a traditional bar and music venue from the outside, but *Liberté* patrons and musicians are much more involved in the club's operations and environment: this completely blurs the border between service provider and customer. The *Happihuone* run by o2 Finland is also a multifaceted project: on their first visit visitors have been inclined to ask if it were a greenhouse, or a gallery, or a café, or an interactive sculpture of some kind, insisting on a categorisation that is in the end irrelevant. *Housing Oranssi – Housing company* too would not exist in its present state without the innovative, progressive approach of Helsinki city authorities. One suspects that a more orthodox municipal decision maker would clear space in an existing student- or council house, thus sweeping the long-haired troublemakers – and the problem – under the carpet, as it were. Thanks to the collaborative effort *Housing Oranssi – Housing company* is now a viable economic concern, a cultural service provider and an employer to boot.

annex

An ethnographic designer view

Anna Meroni and François Jégou* (Politecnico di Milano and Strategic Design Scenarios)

Eight design schools, a couple of hundred students, a collection of 140 cases, three years of work: these are some of the numbers characterising the collection of case studies on creative communities that forms the essence of this book. An enterprise distinguished by the fact that each case was the fruit of personal, direct contact between the designer-researcher and the main actors in the case itself. An absorbing encounter on the verge of ethnography.

Young designers as researchers

The cases presented emerged from a programme of research activities called EMUDE, funded by the European Commission as part of its 6th framework programme. The key element in the EMUDE programme was its partner group of 8 European design schools, co-ordinated by the Politecnico di Milano, whose task was to carry out a field search for creative communities. These "Antennas" worked through their students in the role of researchers: young university students from different backgrounds in the thick of their formative years as future designers.

In our role as co-ordinators for a substantial number of researchers (planned at around 200 but in fact more) and in order to obtain comparable results, we set ourselves a series of operational and didactic objectives.
The operational aims, those concerned with case identification and analysis, were:
_ initially, to communicate and share the research criteria to be used in identifying possible cases for study;
_ later on, to collect the first cycle of proposed cases for screening, in order to select the most relevant and interesting for in-depth analysis;
_ to end up with a consistent collection of cases, carefully described so as to make them comparable both in terms of crucial content and visual material;
_ to gather firsthand information on the phenomena observed, unfiltered by third party interpretation, and a sizeable portfolio of "authentic" images;
_ to develop a case description model peculiar to a designer approach: peculiar because it is marked by a somehow characteristically "designer" ability to look at phenomena, and because it contains information of significance to designers.

Among the didactic aims were:
_ to develop sensitivity towards the issues of innovation and social creativity, and more generally towards sustainability in socio-technical systems;
_ to stimulate the curiosity of researchers and enhance their personal creativity in research;
_ to feed enthusiasm and foster the young designers' empathy with the situations observed
_ to provide students with, and at the same time experiment, an observation and work method that will be usable in subsequent activities and in their future profession.

These were ambitious aims directing us towards a "field observation" approach that led researchers along a structured path into direct contact with the situations analysed.
The reasons behind this choice of approach appear particularly evident in relation to the didactic aims:
_ field research leads researchers to a direct acquaintance with the facts and therefore, potentially, to feeling they are discoverers taking part in what is observed;
_ being in the thick of situations with strong emotional connotations (cases of social creativity where the protagonists will presumably have mainly positive emotions) generally provokes some kind of mirroring empathy (in our case, of enthusiasm);
_ the experimental nature of the work method is more involving when it draws students out of the classroom and into the street to meet people: the more knowledge researchers acquire and the more their know-how develops the more incisive what they are doing becomes.
However, the decision to use the field observation technique also seemed advantageous from an operational point of view: it is in fact the only way to gather original visual documentation and eye witness accounts of the phenomena observed.

The need to apply common criteria and produce consistent, comparable results led us to create itemised case observation formats rooted in a centralised collection system. This system, the *Promising Cases Repository*, was set up as a website able to gather research contributions directly from the various Antennas (cf. essay by Ciuccarelli).
The desire to create a description structure peculiar to a designer approach gave rise to a reading and reproduction format that is particularly sensitive to factors like actor motivation, interaction mode between subjects observed, visual evidence and quality of experience.

Participant observation and quasi-ethnographic method

How can we distinguish the "field observation" developed in this research project from what in anthropology and ethnography is known as "participant observation"?
The expression "participant observation" is used to mean a situation where the observer is part of the context under observation. More specifically, it is a situation characterised by:
_ the presence of a field observer inside and actively involved in the phenomenon being observed
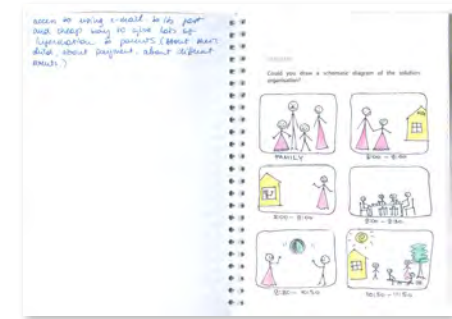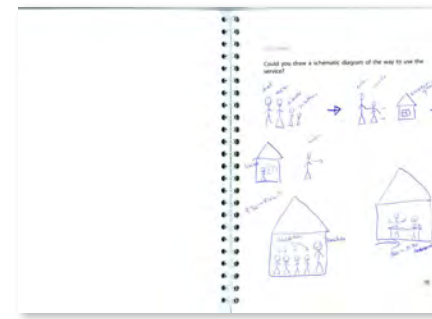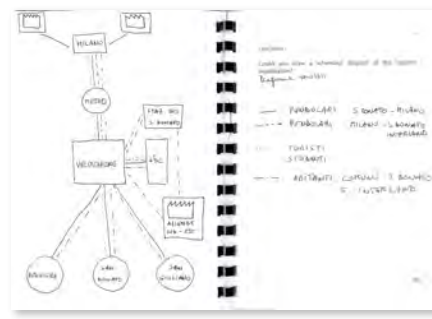
to the point where he identifies with the other actors;
_ the possibility of gathering data on the non verbal behaviour of the social actors in particular contexts (instead of or to complete an interview);
_ the possibility of gathering data in the observed setting without asking people to participate;
_ the use of a prearranged grid of descriptive categories containing the factors for study, to direct attention.

Participant observation leads to documents characterised by:
_ accurate viewing and the use of descriptive language to report what is observed;
_ the absolute abolition of valuation adjectives and the exclusion of any emotional aspect from the list of objective information concerning the observed phenomenon;
_ the absence, as far as possible, of "distortions" and interpretations caused by the observer and/or by the observed person (e.g. due to a desire to please or contradict the researcher).
Participant observation is one of the research techniques used by the ethnographer (along with interviews) to gather data on the culture of a people.

Can we call the work that generated this collection "participant observation"? We must first of all point out that although many of the elements that distinguish the participant observation technique are consistent with the objectives we declared previously, a designer works with aims and with skills that are substantially different from those of an ethnographer. However, we wanted to use this technique for all the useful, creative and at the same time methodical aspects it could contribute to the way a designer identifies and analyses emerging phenomena. So, let's call this special form of "participant observation" a *quasi-ethnographic* approach, to underline its connection with this discipline, but seeking also to note the differences.

annex

The designer and the quasi-ethnographic method

A designer can exercise a capacity for observation and understanding of a case study that is particularly attentive to the way it works and to the aspects of sense and quality of experience. A guided, structured immersion in a phenomena leads to an overall vision, but

also requires a sharpened capacity for selective observation. There are numerous advantages for designers in applying a *quasi-ethnographic* technique, which derive particularly from a direct, firsthand vision of the problems that they will then be called on to deal with in their designing role.
When a designer observes and analyses a situation firsthand he/she is able to elaborate a personal definition of the problem (*problem setting*) that is crucial to its subsequent "re-solution"; an activity that is otherwise left to theory and literature.
We hold that the ability to identify problems and go right to the heart of their definition rather than just seeking to solve them (*problem solving*) is the distinguishing mark of a strategic designer.

In addition to the descriptive categories chosen to guide case observation, the main differences in the approach we use compared to the participant observation method are:
_ the degree of participation in the observed phenomena, which may be more or less intense, and the relatively brief observation period;
_ the importance of emotional and experiential aspects both in case observation and its documentation: the emotions of the actors involved, including those of the observer, are, for the designer, symptoms of well or badly functioning relationship mechanisms among individuals and with the service;
_ the non-problematical nature of observer interpretation: here the observer actually sets out on the design path by interpreting what he/she observes.
On this point we should make two aspects clear: on the one hand, we positively encouraged the "passing" of emotion between observed and observer (and there was a fair quantity of enthusiasm among the researchers), on the other, quite apart from observer interpretation, we organised the analysis in such a way as to gather all the practical information required to make a subsequent objective appraisal of certain aspects of cases observed.
When choosing categories and description tools we tried more than elsewhere to exercise design specifics.

Work tools and methods

From the process point of view, case collection was carried out in four main stages using a

centralised repository with internet access (cf. essays by Collina and by Ciuccarelli).
The four operational stages, taking about 8 months to complete, were as follows:
1_ communicating and sharing criteria, aims and research tools;
2_ gathering an initial cycle of proposals for possible case studies;
3_ the assessment of these proposals and selection of cases for analysis;
4_ further, homogeneous analysis of the selected cases and assembling the collection.
Stages 1 and 3 were carried out "centrally" by the research group. The others were carried out locally by the various Antennas, with back up for technical problems and theory issues from a central helpdesk. In this account we wish briefly to outline a description of the formats used, some of the specific research and reproduction tools, and the kit created to help teachers and students in the Antenna schools to carry out the field research.

Let's start with the *training kit*: this consisted in a set of documents of different kinds prepared and distributed during the initial stages of research to share work criteria, description formats and "rules of the game", i.e. relationship norms and deadlines, with the whole researcher community. The kit was presented, discussed and distributed directly to the heads of each school who found in it a set of tools (multimedia presentations, examples and brochures) for presenting the research project to their students (in a locally organised workshop)and to equip them in turn with the support tools for on-the-field observation. So, each kit (downloadable from the research website) contained the various formats for use at different stages of case study collection, examples of previously analysed cases, general suggestions for description rhetoric (visual and narrative) and an original, observation guidance tool, the *Reporter's book*.

For stage 2, where the Antennas proposed cases for analysis, a very light description format called the case study "identity card", was set up. Here, researchers were asked for a brief description of the solution indicating: how it worked and how it was innovative; the problematic context; the actors involved; and a set of key words and functions chosen from a list of possibilities provided to aid cataloguing. They were also asked for an initial assessment of the environmental and social benefits afforded by the case and a meaningful visual image; from the outset we insisted on aspects of visual description that were to become still more important in the later stages of work. Lastly, we asked that case studies be looked for in the immediate vicinity of the researcher so they could be analysed by firsthand observation.

Antenna researchers themselves, via the internet, then uploaded the cases they found to the special Repository that had been structured to mirror the case description model perfectly, so facilitating collection and organisation operations. At this point (stage 3), the project co-ordinator was able to view the cases and give the Antennas feedback on the ones selected for in-depth analysis.

The last stage in collection (stage 4) was the longest and most complex.
The in-depth, uniform analysis of selected cases required the setting up of an articulated format that standardised some of the description items to obtain comparable results, but did not penalise the researchers' creativity in reporting (by word and picture) what they had seen. A special notebook for researchers to use during field activities, the *Reporter's book*, was created to make the format easier to use. We shall talk further about it later on. In it the various description categories were turned into suggestions to orient the observer's attention. The *Promising Cases Repository* was in turn adapted to match this format, so that uploading information to the website became a perfectly smooth operation.

The in-depth description format organised the work of analysis into a sequence of steps, alternating more technical descriptions with narrative parts where the observers (working in small groups) were free to transfer extracts from their interviews with the protagonists, or their personal comments on what was done.
The format integrates the case "identity card" required in the previous stages with more detailed analyses, namely:
_ an accurate description of the actors, their motivations, their roles and their viewpoints;
_ a list of elements (services and products) making up the solution and technology employed;
_ an intuitive evaluation of the benefits the initiative offers to environment, society, economy;
However, the most original part of this descriptive model, the aspect closest to the sensitivity and critical ability of a designer, is all that concerns the pictorial case description and the collection of visual documentation. This is also the part where our researchers produced the most interesting and original results. To document the case study under observation, interpreting it at the same time, the researcher was asked to produce two kinds of visualisation: *moodboard* and *storyboard*. A *moodboard* is a synthetic visualisation: a composition of photographs aiming to reflect an image that evokes the characteristic atmosphere of the situation observed: people's moods, the silent language of objects and

spaces, gestures and activities. Researchers could create *moodboards* using images of their own choice, which they were free to compose and produce as they wished within a series of geometric grids.

A *storyboard* is an analytic visualisation: a sequence of images describing the course of an action peculiar to the observed situation. Researchers were free to decide the time sequence, screenplay and framing of the pictures according to their own judgement.

Together with the written texts, these two kinds of visualisation enabled us to obtain an effective, original description of the cases analysed, and like the written texts the pictures were catalogued in the Repository by standardised criteria and are mutually comparable.

The Reporter's book

Among the various work tools developed and used in this research project the *Reporter's book* deserves a little further comment. As we said, the highly positive aspect of case observation undertaken firsthand by designers is that from the outset it directs them to thinking about the development and improvement of what they see. On the other hand, its weaker aspect is that in their role as observers, designers often lack habit and method. The *Reporter's book* was thought up to help them overcome this difficulty without limiting their individual personalities. A *quasi-ethnographic* approach would logically require an empty notebook where the researcher can freely jot down his observations as they occur during ongoing contact with the case. However, lack of experience in investigation and the short time available called for support to conduct interviews effectively. Therefore a "semi-instruction" guide, similar to those used in structuring focus group discussion, was included at the beginning of the *Reporter's book*: this enabled us to ensure that interviews covered the minimum number of stages essential to compiling the required format and to the subsequent phases of analysis. The same is true in collecting visual images: the designer's photographic eye is naturally geared to pick up the characterising dimensions of a solution, from technical-organisational details to the quality of atmosphere. However, it is not systematic enough for full documentation or for observations that are useful in a wider, interdisciplinary analysis. So, the *Reporter's book* included a step-by-step "photo check-list" of the minimum shots required to describe the context and for the sequence of actions in the storyboard.

Results

The material published in this book is only a small selection from that collected; a selection of both cases and information.

The *Promising Cases Repository* contains over 140 cases, largely described using the in-depth format: hundreds of pictures, scores of *moodboards* and *storyboards*, of reports and stories from those involved. In addition, the *Reporter's books*, compiled by researchers with notes and drawings, constitute in themselves an impressive collection of original material.

What lies before our eyes tells us that the work method experimented has on the whole been successful: there have been setbacks and difficulties, some stages were unnecessarily laborious, and some of the information asked for has probably been of little use in the end. However, we think everything has been useful, at least for didactic purposes: the narrative originality of the written texts, the curiosity and charm even to the point of tenderness of many of the pictures, catching the enthusiasm in the eyes of the protagonists (evidently reflecting the light in the eyes of the observers) lead us to think of success.

The rhetoric is often laboured, the English (obviously) imperfect, the photos at times blurred, the technical understanding of the services in some cases dubious, the observations naïve … but, overall, it is a collection of stories that communicate the amazement of discovery, the enthusiasm of encounter and a little of the spirit of our "hero" protagonists. In our opinion, this is possible, thanks to the experience lived by our researchers on the field: the *quasi-ethnographic* approach has not left them indifferent. Observing, they have caught what we can describe as the genius loci of creative communities, the spirit that animates them and that animates the situations they have been capable of engendering. At the same time they have begun to exercise the critical eye of the designer, imagining that what they saw could become even more beautiful, work better and spread…

* Anna Meroni has written the paragraphs: Young designers as researchers; Participant observation and quasi-ethnographic method; The designer and the quasi-ethnographic method; Results. François Jégou has written the paragraphs: Work tools and methods; The Reporter's book.

The Promising Cases Repository: using ICT for supporting research activities

Paolo Ciuccarelli (Politecnico di Milano)

It may appear frustrating and restrictive for design students to use a rigid, standardized, digital format to describe a phenomenon as complex and rich as Creative Communities are. However, we have to admit that this is the only way to create a consistent and sharable knowledge base that could also be expanded and re-used. The existence of a *Promising Cases Repository* is a necessary base for any strategy aiming to disseminate the values behind Creative Communities.

The premises

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and research activities is becoming more and more common, specially when these activities involve different actors in different countries. In brief we can say that - when ICT in themselves are not the topic of these research activities - they are used with four principal aims, other than connecting people:

1_ to build a common knowledge background through the gathering, organizing and sharing of information and documents produced by others (*fertilization*);
2_ to collect and share information and knowledge produced during - and specifically for - the research/teaching activity (*stabilization*);
3_ to codify a methodology - a specific know-how - into a software procedure and allow participants to produce standard outputs that can be compared for analysis purposes (*production*);
4_ to boost comments and feedback - discussions - about information and documents gathered and produced, or about the activity itself, in order to build a further level of participated knowledge (*exploitation*).

The use of ICT to support EMUDE (the EU funded Specific Support Actions which generated the collection of cases here presented) was restricted, at the beginning, to the fulfilment of the management need of a common space for information and documents to be used by the participants and for collecting the documents they produced: in other words, aims 1 and 2, according to the categories defined above.

Closing the preparation of the "in-depth format" for analysing the promising cases (cf. the essay by Meroni and Jégou), we decided to build up a repository (a collection of records describing resources) and a web application, to enable researchers from each school of the network to upload via Internet all the information required about the cases.

In fact there were no technical reasons for this choice: we knew from the beginning that the number of cases would not be large enough to justify a similar investment. More than this, Internet itself can be an opportunity, but also a barrier for those who are not familiar with on-line fill-in procedures and/or haven't a broadband connection. So the decision was taken more as a result of the strategic approach and the "mood" of openness that characterized all the activities than as a consequence of practical requirements. We wanted to build up

something that would help the contents and assumptions of this action to survive their given timeframe.

By creating an open collection of cases (contents) and a web interface to allow the implementation of the collection (know-how) we expect to reach a deeper diffusion and understanding of the "creative communities'" principles.

The solution: some technical features

From the technical point of view, we developed a php-based website, connected to a standard SQL database*. The architecture of the database is strictly linked to the case-format, with the aim of making the fill-in process easy and so to collect and organize as much as possible of the information gathered by the researchers.

The description of the records has been divided into two phases: in the first one, the schools upload a synthetic description and some pictures of the selected cases (the "identity card"). The scientific coordinator of the program uses this description to evaluate and select cases that are coherent with the idea and the definition of "promising cases"; we defined this process as "validation". The selected cases are shown in the website as "validated", and from this moment on it's possible, for the authors, to continue with the second phase, the description of the cases, following the steps defined in the "in-depth format". The centralization of the validation process, led by Politecnico di Milano, guarantees the consistency of the database.

In this process, the repository recognises various typologies of user, with different profiles:
_ the "administrator" profile allows users to read, modify and eliminate all the records (all the cases). This is also the only profile enabled to "validate" cases;
_ the "author" profile allows users to read, modify and eliminate records inserted with a specific username and password (personal records), while the other records can only be read.
_ the "school" profile enables users to create new "authors"; they can also read all the records.
_ the "guest" profile only enables users to read all the records

Fig. 1

(Fig. 1: The web interface of the Promising Cases Repository)
This repository enabled the schools of the network to be actively involved in the process of collecting and describing promising cases: more than 200 students and teachers accessed the website and used the proposed features, often giving useful feedback and suggestions on how to improve the repository's effectiveness.

One of the considerations arising from this experience is the strengthening of the role of email as the main communication tool and working tool for distant partners: as the dimension of attachments is no longer a problem, and the power of email software in organizing and managing messages is growing continuously (all these characteristics are well represented by the Gmail web-service provided by Google), working in research and didactic networks is becoming easier and easier. Furthermore, the availability of open source or freeware webtools for communication activities is rapidly growing. The possibility of using email and/or freeware tools to meet a wide range of communication needs (from sharing information to collecting documents), liberates resources that can be utilized to develop more complex tools for advanced or very specific functions, as we did with the Promising Cases Repository.

Some short notes must be made on the interface of the Promising Cases Repository:
_ the website has been designed using a simple, flexible grid with one head-line, a dynamic menu on the left, filters and other operational tools on the right, and the contents in the centre;
_ the menu shows all the available folders - named "case collections" - and a number of other functions depending on the user profile;
_ each case is shown with the title and a picture: this is a first step towards giving a visual impression of the cases at every phase of the description, unlike-other web-based repositories (i.e. http://www.globalideasbank.org/site/home). The prominence of the visual approach is also evident in the so called *moodboards* that come with each case.

Centralize or delegate?

In the first version of the Repository, the process of publication was heavily controlled by the "central administration": all the proposed cases (briefly described by an "identity card") have been validated by the Politecnico di Milano.
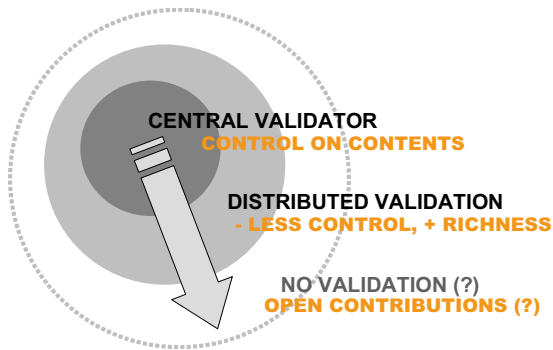In particular, during the fill-in process, information control was guaranteed by:
1_ giving a closed list of options to choose among, in order to describe the solutions: i.e. keywords, values, functions addressed …;
2_ giving a base-list of options, with the possibility of "candidating" new ones to be evaluated by the scientific coordinator before being added to the base-list;
3_ showing the list of the previous new entry options, in order to guide the free data-entry process and avoid repetition.

Such a centralized approach gave rise to some criticism, but indubitably offers at least one advantage: it ensures the consistency of the database, by standardising the meaning of keywords and the criteria for case validation. On the other hand , it can be argued that for the same reasons we lose something in terms of richness and variety of the descriptions. Furthermore, the validating activity itself is a cost in terms of resources, and also a possible bottle-neck in the process of populating the repository.

A similar debate – standard vs open description - is currently growing within the development of the web, particularly in the evolution towards the idea of a "semantic web", as described in Wikipedia: "The Semantic Web is a project that intends to create a universal medium for information exchange by putting documents with computer-processable meaning (semantics) on the World Wide Web. Currently under the direction of the Web's creator, Tim Berners-Lee of the World Wide Web Consortium, the Semantic Web extends the Web through the use of standards, markup languages and related processing tools". In other words, to really extract value from the use of a variety of web-sites, the pages of these web-sites have to be described in a standard way. A similar problem is also emerging in the fast-growing phenomenon of open, web-based digital archives (i.e. Flickr for digital pictures): as anybody is allowed to use personal keywords (tags) to describe the digital documents they want to share with other users, there are no guarantees that a specific keyword will be used with a similar meaning. So, if you search for a specific keyword, the larger the archive the larger the possibility of finding results that are not pertinent; documents that have been indexed using a different meaning for the same keyword.

annex

Fig. 2

CENTRAL VALIDATOR
CONTROL ON CONTENTS

DISTRIBUTED VALIDATION
- LESS CONTROL, + RICHNESS

NO VALIDATION (?)
OPEN CONTRIBUTIONS (?)

There are a number of possible ways and tools for cataloguing and indexing digital documents, from thesauri and dictionaries to tags and folksonomies. The choice of tools and methodologies to be used for indexing documents is strictly related to the purposes of the process, and to the level of expected authority of the document ensemble. The possibility of browsing consistently through different archives or through an archive fed by users from different countries, cultures and languages can be guaranteed only by a controlled system of keywords, shared by all users.
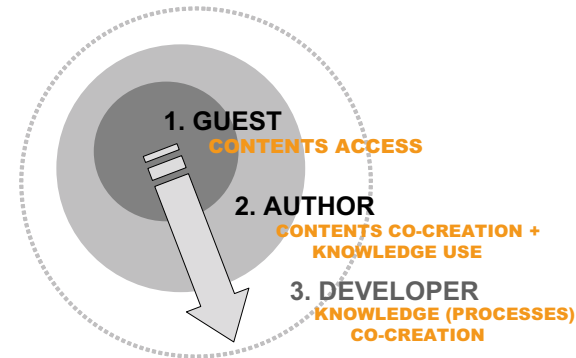
From a more general point of view, even if a strong set of rules is provided, opening the possibility of contributing to the construction of a common database to a wide user group, always represents a risk: Wikipedia, for example - despite the indubitable richness created by open participation – sometimes, and especially in specific, historically important moments, , suffers problems linked to the possibility of easily manipulating information: the definitions of some terms are often "polluted" by personal opinions and/or unreliable information or lack a clear reference to a valid author. Moreover, there are a lot of software agents that are programmed to put information (typically advertising) automatically onto open websites, such as blogs, forums etc.

For these reasons, in the current and latest second version of the Promising Cases Repository, we decided to maintain the validation process, but, at the same time, to give schools a certain level of autonomy, we also hold the validation process to be necessary because the repository is conceived as a supporting tool for teaching activities with a primary one-to-many learning relationship (professor-to-students). The possibility of many-to-many relations comes later, with a second level of information (information about information). An example is the creation of a blog about the case collection on the Sustainable Everyday Project website, to collect comments and discussions on published promising cases (http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/EMUDE).
To support schools in their autonomous validation process, we created a specific profile (the "professor" profile), which enables each single participating school to create a new folder (a new case collection) and a list of authors allowed to upload information onto this folder; each school can also validate the cases produced by the authors on the list.

(Fig. 2: Typologies of validation process and possibilities for contents-control)

Fig. 3

1. GUEST
CONTENTS ACCESS

2. AUTHOR
CONTENTS CO-CREATION +
KNOWLEDGE USE

3. DEVELOPER
KNOWLEDGE (PROCESSES)
CO-CREATION

Knowledge as an open (re)source

At the current stage, every school (or analogous institution) can be enabled, as a delegate, to use the Web Repository, and - as a consequence - the methodology and the knowledge about how to describe a promising case, condensed into the so called "in-depth description format ". Schools willing to contribute have to apply for a 'professor' account and, if not yet familiar with this activity, download the instructions and case description format from the website. .

This possibility of re-using the methodology autonomously in fact represents the second step towards "opening the knowledge" generated in the making of the kind of EU funded Specific Support Actions which generated this collection of cases.
The first step in this process is offering free access to the repository using the "guest" profile, for people not involved in the research activity, and to the identity cards of all the cases published by the schools, visible on the homepage (anybody can access the www. promisingcases.org).
We also identified – symmetrically with the validation process - the third and final step in the knowledge-opening process: the transformation of the web-based application into an open source software. This means that conditions should exist to enable other developers to access and modify the source code of the web application, in order – for example – to modify or add new data fields to the original analysis format. Or, better, to add new functions to the original web tool.

(Fig. 3: Access profiles and possible activities)

Open source doesn't mean "no rules", there are at least two necessary tasks we should complete: first, choose a licence from the huge number of existing open licences (from Creative Commons to General Public Licenses); and second, write a set of documents enabling developers to understand how the web application has been produced, and so make their contributions autonomously.

The transformation of each application into an open source one typically requires a considerable amount of time if not planned from the beginning of the development process: the code should be written according to standards that make it easily understandable to

developers with minimum skills. But as the development of the Promising Cases Repository was an experimental project, with a fluid feedback process and without an a priori planning document, it was not possible to define all the requirements from the beginning. Nevertheless the possibility to transform the web application into an open source one can be considered as one of the possible ways to exploit the knowledge generated with this action. According to the rules provided by the EU to guide funded projects, exploitable results are defined as "...knowledge having a potential for industrial or commercial application in research activities or for developing, creating or marketing a product or process or for creating or providing a service." (from Appendix 1 "Project reporting in FP6- Guidance notes") . Starting from that, we can reasonably say that the web application behind the Promising Cases Repository – its software code - can be seen as "knowledge having a potential (...) for developing, creating a process or for creating or providing a service", if enough resources are put on the table.

More in detail, the exploitable results relating to the development of the Repository are:
1_ A relational database, generated by the transformation of the "case description format" into an E-R (Entity-Relations) standard structure.
The transformation of the "case description format" into a relational database enables: (a) organization of contents (b) collaboration in using the format (c) growth of the knowledge base on Promising Cases (d) export of information to other database/applications;
2_ The Web interface, which determines user experience, the way in which different actors participate in the collaborative activity of collecting Promising Cases (i.e. access profiles, validate and candidate functions...)

These products can be used in design didactics / design research / research and didactics in other domains / institutions.
For these products we chose not to have a patent or a protection strategy: it seems coherent to use public funding to create open platforms – such as the Promising Cases Repository could be – that can be used and even modified, up to a point , by everybody. The Repository web tool enables the diffusion of a way of doing research, a research know-how, that can be easily transferred to other research institutions and design schools. These new actors can then activate a virtuous process, enlarging the knowledge base about promising cases and creative communities.

The Promising Cases Repository plays a role in the dissemination of the results (a phase specifically requested by the Specific Support Actions program). In fact, it also works as a communication tool: the Promising Cases Collections have been public since the 13th of December 2005, and everyone can read a brief description of each promising case on the website www.promisingcases.org, without any specific authorization. The first experiment has been made in collecting information and knowledge about the published promising cases using other web sites. This is the case of the previously mentioned blog, Sustainable Everyday Project (SEP), which aims to collect comments about the published promising cases.
The Promising Cases Repository and the SEP blog are both addressed to any recipient interested in deepening knowledge about the "creative communities" phenomenon.
Both dissemination and exploitation of knowledge relating to this research are complicated by copyright and privacy legislation. For information in the database, from on-line descriptions of promising cases, we chose to apply the Creative Commons open licence, which can also be applied – by using the Science Commons agreement – to the database itself (for more information about Creative Commons and Science Commons licences, go to http://www.creativecommons.org, and http://sciencecommons.org).
Again, the idea behind this choice was to open the information and knowledge generated through all the activities as far as possible so as to spread and heighten awareness of "creative communities".
* The Promising Case Repository has been developed by Daniele Galiffa, (www.mentegrafica.it) within the DesignNet research unit.

Bas de Leeuw

Bas de Leeuw is an economist, with a master's degree in macro-economic policy from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

He is head, Strategy Unit, of the Production and Consumption Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme. His current responsibilities include supervising UNEP's work on a ten-year framework on sustainable consumption and production and on developing policies and tools for governments, business and civil society to achieve tangible results in areas such as industrial development, emergency preparedness, sustainable lifestyles, human development through the market and resource and waste management.

Anna Meroni

Anna Meroni, architect and designer, has a PhD in Industrial Design. She works as researcher in the research unit DIS, Design and Innovation for Sustainability of the Department INDACO (Industrial Design) of Politecnico di Milano, where she is Assistant Professor in Service and Strategic Design and co-director of the international Master in Strategic Design, organised by the consortium POLI.design.

Her topic is strategic system innovation: she is involved in several international research activities, in the organisation of symposiums and events, and writes for design journals about strategic innovation.

Ezio Manzini

Ezio Manzini is full professor of Design at the Politecnico di Milano. He deals with strategic design and design for sustainability, with a focus on the scenario building and solution development.

Some results of his recent works have been edited in the books: Manzini E. Jegou F., *Sustainable everyday*, Edizioni Ambiente, Milano 2003; Leong B.D., Manzini E. *Design Vision: a Sustainable Way of Living in China*, Ningnan Publishing House Ltd. 2006 China; and in several papers (some of them can be found in: http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/manzini/

Pål Strandbakken

Pål Strandbakken gained a Mag. art. in sociology from the University of Oslo in 1987. He worked at the Alternative Future project until 1992, when he joined SIFO (National Institute for Consumer Research) as research fellow, focussing mainly on consumption and sustainability, eco-labelling and product durability.

Eivind Stø

Eivind Stø, born in 1945, holds a graduate (mag. art.) degree in political science from University of Oslo in 1972. He is director of research at SIFO (National Institute for Consumer Research) and has been working with consumer policy and interests, consumer complaining, sustainable consumption and eco labelling. He was the first editor of the Norwegian Journal of Political Science 1985 – 1988 (co-editor). He is the Coordinator of the European project ToolSust, 2000-2003, member of the advisory board of CRIC, Manchester University and 2001 Chair of the "Sociology of Consumption" Working group under the European Sociology Association, 2001 –2006.

Isabella Marras

Isabella Marras, programme officer at UNEP DTIE since 1997, is specialised in consumption issues concerning governments and young people. Both governments and youth have a huge market power and could make a contribution to the shift to more sustainable lifestyles. Her youth programme is carried out in co-operation with UNESCO and youth and consumer organisations: it started in 1999 with a survey reaching 10 000 youth in 24 countries about their aspirations, attitudes as consumers and sense of empowerment. As a follow up to this survey, UNEP and UNESCO produced *YOUTHXCANGE*, a web-based resource kit to support Youth and Consumer NGOs in communications with young adults about responsible lifestyles.

Priya Bala

Priya Bala has worked on issues of sustainable development at the international and grassroots level. As a policy officer at CI, she has been involved in coordinating international projects on sustainable consumption. In 2005 she authored the CI publication *Streetwise: A snapshot of the street food sector in Asia and Africa*, which considers the role of the informal economy in supporting food security and food safety in resource poor communities. Having lived in South Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America, she strives to bring a global perspective to current development challenges.

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Edina Vadovics is currently a PhD student at the Environmental Sciences and Policy Department of Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. Her research focuses on sustainable consumption and sustainable communities. Prior to her studies and research at CEU, she worked in environmental and sustainability management, and delivered training courses in the field both for companies and students in higher education. As a volunteer, she has been involved with creative communities both in the Eastern and Western part of Europe. She is also president of GreenDependent Sustainable Solutions Association.

Helma Luiten

Helma Luiten works at the Dutch research institute TNO and studied Industrial Design at the Delft University of Technology. She is currently involved in a number of sustainable innovation projects. She is developing a method for doing experiments within a transition trajectory. This method is based on pilot projects from the TNO Sustainable System Innovation Initiative, in co-operation with companies, organizations and government (2003-2006). She also worked on future foresight studies in the area of food, households and on client needs of textile care companies.

Ian Grout

Ian Grout For the past ten years Ian has been researching and teaching in Product Design at The Glasgow School of Art. He travels and teaches throughout the departments international exchange network and has also been the External Examiner for Goldsmiths in London and Les Ateliers in Paris. He is the o2, the global network for sustainable design, representative for Scotland. He is co author, with ICIS Denmark, of a pan global project on ritual connected to ICOGRADA and also teaches on masters programmes at the Centre for Human Ecology. His research interests involve developing new creative methodologies by which to design more ethically, ecologically and sustainably.

Liz Davis

Following Education and Art & Design studies in London, Liz Davis joined the founding team at Les Ateliers/Ensci in 1982 where she is now academic advisor and Head of Studio International, running the school's programme of cross-cultural projects and activities. She has worked and taught in many regions of the world, particularly focussing on the challenges of design within local development. In 2002 she completed an urban studies degree at the University of Aix-Marseille. She is the Paris leader of the Master of European Design (MEDes.) programme.

François Jégou

François Jégou is a Strategic Design consultant with a degree in industrial design: he is visiting professor at the Faculty of Design of the Politecnico in Milan and La Cambre School of Visual Art in Brussels. Since he runs the consultancy DALT-SDS based in Paris and Brussels, specialising in co-designing scenarios and new product-service system definition. He is active in various fields including: sustainable design, interaction design, cognitive ergonomics, senior friendly design, security of pharmaceutical products, innovation in food products. He is involved in several EU research projects, promotes the www. sustainable-everyday.net platform and the www.solutioning-design.net network.

Ruben Mnatsakanian

Ruben Mnatsakanian since 2000 is head of Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy at Central European University, Budapest. He has specialised in analysis of information on the state of the environment in the former socialist countries, including the former USSR: he published a book and a number of articles on the issue.
He is part of the group that prepared the GEO report series for the UNEP; he was working as a consultant in environmental policy issues for WHO, UNEP, IFEN (French National Institute for the Environment).

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Luisa Collina is full professor of Design at Politecnico di Milano. Since 2000 she co-ordinates the international relations and projects of the Design Faculty and Design Department.
She collaborates with universities, research centres and companies in international research and strategic innovation projects in the design field. She has been project coordinator of some of these international projects. The results of her research and didactic activity have been presented through various international conferences and publications.
Since 2000 she is member of the PhD board in "Industrial Design and Multimedia Communication".

Simone Maase

Simone Maase works as researcher and teacher at the department of Industrial Design in the Designed Intelligence group, Eindhoven University of Technology. Originally trained and working as an industrial design engineer, her focus shifted from product development "pur sang" to sustainable development in the field of industrial design. She studies how and to what extent co-design tools and methods contribute to the development of sustainable solutions. A new role for industrial design profession is about to emerge.

Cindy Kohtala

Cindy Kohtala received her BFA degree in Industrial Design from the University of Alberta, Canada, in 1991 and an MA degree in Craft Design from the University of Art & Design Helsinki in 1999. She currently lives and works in Helsinki, Finland, as a researcher concentrating on design-for-sustainability and strategic foresight. She also works in communications and dabbles in craft design, especially working with recycled materials. She is Vice President of o2 Finland, an NGO for designers interested in sustainable solutions.

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Paolo Ciuccarelli is associate professor at the Industrial Design, Arts, Communication and Fashion Department at Politecnico di Milano, where he teaches Communication Design. Research and publishing activities are focused on knowledge transfer mechanisms in design processes and information/knowledge visualization. He's responsible of the DesignNet project (Tools and Methods for Information and Knowledge Management in Design Processes) and coordinator of the POLI.teca Design Knowledge Centre, both at Politecnico di Milano. He coordinates the participation of the Design Faculty in the Master of European Design.

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The End

This book is about social innovation as a driver for sustainable technological and production innovation. Adopting a design perspective, it presents several case studies and their providers, the creative communities, where individuals and communities use existing resources in a creative, original way to bring about system innovation.

This book does not set out to give yet another theoretical definition of creativity. Instead it seeks to define creativity through a series of innovative responses to the various problems that crop up in everyday life. So it talks about on-the-field creativity (and therefore innovation) triggered by the real context of needs, resources, principles and capabilities.

The cases and the people presented in this book are not only interesting because they are innovative, but they are also aesthetically "beautiful": there is something in the way they appear that invokes positive emotions and recalls the straightforward aesthetics of the useful. They are beautiful because they are colourful and authentically and surprisingly creative. They express vitality and spirit of initiative: they are the unthinkable made possible, the alternative getting itself into working order. And they are also "good": whether intentionally or by coincidence they propose solutions in which individual interests converge with those of society and the environment, creating conditions for a more satisfying use of resources. Because this restores meaning and value to everyday activities they look promising as a transition towards sustainability.