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Collaborative cities

Social innovation and design for a regenerative city making.
Introductory notes.

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The following text is an up-dated version of an initial document (30.03. 2018). This Draft 5 has been written on the basis of formal and informal discussions and seminars on this topic that took place inside DESIS Network, in the period January 2018 – May 2109. This text will be progressively up-dated and up-graded following the evolution of the whole Thematic Cluster project.

Cities can be seen and described by different points of view. The most frequently adopted has been the bird's-eye view: the city observed from the high and from outside. The city you can see in this way is what, traditionally, has been the city of the planners.
But a city can be seen and described from inside too. That is, as it is seen by who lives in it: the city of people and communities. And the city made of places, roads and square, but also of products, services and communication. This city of people and communities is, or should be, the city of design.

There are good reasons to say that this second point of view has become, and is becoming, more and more important. Of course, it doesn't substitute, the other one. But for sure, it offers new insights and opens new possibilities for action. In fact, it introduces us to a city-making process moving from the citizens and the place where they live and the actions they do. An urban planning done by triggering and coordinating several self-standing projects that become, by all means, *city-making projects*: initiatives with different aims and scale that, interacting with their context and with other projects, impact on the whole city functioning and identity.

City-making projects have different social and political motivations and implications. That is, they can produce inequalities, segregation and commodification of the urban commons, or move in the opposite direction, reducing inequalities, creating a diversified and vibrant urban fabric. The projects moving in the first direction – that presently is the dominant one – are driven by the interests of who considers the city, in all its aspects, as a marketable good. The second direction is proposed by several cases of social innovation. They are driven by who see the city as a complex living entity, made of people, communities and places, the existence of which is based on a mesh of collaborative projects.

The document is organized in three parts: the first introduces the concept of city making, its motivations and its main characters. The second presents the lessons we can learn from social innovation in the city and, on this basis, outlines the emerging Scenario of Collaborative Cities. The third introduces what is and what could be the expert design role in improving this scenario.

1. City-making

In a world that is changing fast, traditional city planning has progressively been paralleled by more flexible processes: city-making projects, thanks to which different parts of cities are conceived and developed, considering both their physical and social dimensions. This entails paralleling the traditional city planning tools with new ways of planning that include a strong contribution from the design disciplines, as they have evolved in the past two decades (see **Annex 1** Notes on contemporary design).

This first paragraph aims at investigating the nature and the possibilities of these city-making projects and, moving from there, at verifying their role in generating, or regenerating, urban fabric.

Historically, cities have emerged from the interaction between three structurally correlated systems: the natural one (the bioregion where the city is situated), the material man-made one (the city as a collection of buildings, products and infrastructure) and the social one (the city as a mesh of encounters, conversations, projects and social forms). In the past, the material man-made and the social cities evolved slowly, interacting and mutually influencing each other, where the natural one was, or appeared at the human temporal scale, stable.

Given that, up to few years ago, the theory and the practice of city planning focused their attention on the material man-made city. The idea was that, as anticipated, the nautal one was stable, and the social one (including in this term the city economic and cultural components) would have adapted to the material city changes, regenerating itself in a quasi-natural fashion. For centuries this way of doing seemed to work. However, something happened in the last century that forces us to look at cities in a different way. In particular, in the past decades, the speed and dimension of the changes broke with that age-old mechanism of quasi-natural mutual adaptation, producing an unprecedented crisis and, entering in the athropocene[1] period, it appears that the natural system, i.e. the bioregions where cities are situated, as the whole Planet, are heavily influenced by human activities. Facing all that, the role of the social city and the one of its natural components have been progressively recognized and considered in the city planning processes.

In parallel to that, in this fast changing world, given the turbulence and the difficulty to foreseen the future, the traditional long term planning appears too rigid and it has been progressively substituted by forms of planning implemented via a series of light, flexible, quickly implementable projects involving both the physical (natural and man-made) and the social sides of the city: the city-making projects.

The result is a *planning by projects* in which several self-standing initiatives, the *city-making projects,* interact being loosely coordinated by horizontal *framework projects*[2].
This way of doing permits to adopt an experimental and dialogic approach in urban planning. That is, prototyping innovative solutions and reacting in a flexible way to the changes that, in the meanwhile, will take place in the society and in the city.

City-making projects characteristics. At the core of the planning by projects proposal there is the notion of city-making projects. This expression stands for result-oriented initiatives that, aiming at different goals and operating at different scales, impact on the whole city functionalities and identity. Their goals nature can be mainly physical (as a square or park), or social (as a program for elderly care or for migrant inclusion), or economic (as commercial or manufacturing activities), or cultural (as schools, theatres, festivals). Or, as it usually happens, a blend of all these dimensions. Their potentiality as city-making agents can be evaluated using different characters, such as: multidimensionality, interconnection, openness, legacy.

[1] The *anthropocene* is a proposed epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth's geologyand ecosystems, including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change.
On this subject too the literature is unlimited. For the fundamental questions, it is useful to read the works of the Stockholm Resilience Centre on the question of the Anthropocene and its limits.
http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2017-02-16-wef-2017-beyond-the-anthropocene.html.
Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Overheating: An Anthropology of Accelerated Change*, Pluto Press, 2016

[2] Some authors, adopting traditional Chinese medicine as a metaphor, call this form of planning *acupunctural planning*: a kind of planning that generates changes in large and complex systems by operating on some of their "sensitive nodes" with well-defined initiatives. Lou, Valsecchi, and Diaz, *Design Harvest*; François Jégou, "Design, Social Innovation and Regional Acupuncture toward Sustainability," proceedings of the Nordic Design Research Conference, 30 May–1 June 2011, Helsinki; Chris Ryan, "Eco-Acupuncture: Designing and Facilitating Pathways for Urban Transformation, for a Resilient Low-Carbon Future," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 50 (2013) 189–199.

Multidimensionality, that is: how a project blends its physical, social, economic, cultural dimensions.
When all the different dimensions are well developed, the project itself becomes, at its own scale, a building block in the city making process (for instance: a neighbourhood garden can be conceived from the beginning as a place where different communities meet, a social enterprise of gardeners works, and kids have lessons on plants and gardening).

Interconnection, that is: how a project is connected with other projects and with a neighbourhood and/or the city in general.
When different projects collaborate and synergize, being rooted in a place, the system they generate becomes a larger building component of the city making process (for instance: different projects related to a garden, to migrant inclusion and to renewing school programs can be connected and coordinated by a framework project at the neighbourhood scale).

Openness, that is: how a project makes possible unforeseen events and initiatives to happen.
When the project leaves space to activities that are not, strictly speaking, included in its main goal, it contributes to the (social, cultural, and economic) dynamism of the city and, therefore, to its city-making processes (for instance: a neighbourhood garden is conceived – also- as a platform permitting and supporting different social and socioeconomic activities from open air schools, to spaces for cultural events).

Legacy, that is: what a temporary project leaves to the city after its end.
This heritage could be in continuity with the project original aims or not. This possibility to evolve in new, and initially unforeseen, initiatives can be seen as a special form of openness, contributing in time to the city dynamism (for instance, a neighbourhood festival, can create the interests and the energy to transform an empty lot in a garden, and/or its organiser can create a social enterprise to start and manage similar initiatives in other neighbourhoods).

It can be noted that these characters, and in particular the last two (openness and legacy), indicate also the project infrastructuring role. That is, its contribution to the creation of the physical, social, cultural and economic conditions that permit to other projects and activities to emerge and to thrive. Of course, every project, taking place in a city, presents a certain degree of multidimensionality, interconnection, openness and legacy. And, therefore, in some ways, every project can be considered as a city-maker. But it can do that with *different degrees* of intensity and bringing the city evolution in *different directions*.

City making directions. As it has been anticipated, today, mainstream city-making projects very often end up in increasing inequalities, segregation and the commodification of the urban commons. In fact, today, dominant ideas and economic forces tend to orient city-making projects towards initiatives resulting in reduction of public spaces; displacement of poor, middle class, small businesses outside the city; self-segregation of the rich in protected zones; and historical neighbourhoods transformed in tourist attraction and theme parks. The main driver of these processes is the idea of *city-as-a-commodity*. And its consequent commodification, intended as the transformation in marketable goods of everything in the city has been public and common.

But city-making projects can also move in the opposite direction. That is: to solve practical problems and, at the same time, to improve the physical environment and regenerate the social fabric and the urban commons. In other terms, city-making projects can be conceived and developed to revitalise a neighbourhood, integrate migrants and new comers in the social fabric, reintroduce farms and production activities in the urban contexts, and imagine and implement new economic models. Even though this direction is not the main one, several cases of *social innovation* show that it is viable. In other words, they tell us how city-making projects can become agents of city regeneration strategies[3].

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[3] See for instance: Marcelline Bonneau, François Jégou, *Social Innovation in Cities* (Brussels: Urbact 2015)

Projects moving in this direction are driven by those who see the city as a complex living entity, made of people, communities and places, the existence of which is based on a mesh of collaborative projects[4].

2. Collaborative cities

More than ten years of *transformative social innovation[5]* has given us a series of practical examples of what a collaborative city could be like. Bottom up initiatives have been paralleled by top-down ones and new coalitions have been created (between local administrations, active citizens, civil society associations, social and market-oriented enterprises, research centres and universities).

Adopting this approach, some cites redesigned their transportation systems adopting a pedestrian and bike-cantered mobility approach[6]; others are rethinking the food security, developing urban and peri-urban farming[7]; others are introducing the concept of city re-indistrialization, giving space to networks of small enterprises and traditional and digital artisans[8]. Finally, there are cities that have conceived and developed program that integrates different projects bottom-up projects creating large articulated programs of urban regeneration[9].

Considered as a whole, all the cases of transformative social innovation teach us something highly meaningful. In fact, it offers us: (1) a *design approach* (how to look at the city to promote and support city making projects); (2) some *design guidelines* (how to to orient the projects towards sustainability); (3) an *emerging scenario* (a vision to give different projects a common narrative).

Design approach

The first teaching we can learn from social innovation relates to how to look at the city when promoting and supporting city making projects.

The city seen, and built, from inside. The city made by citizens, and by their projects

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[4] This way of looking a the city has a long history. Some of the books we can consider here as main bibliographic references are: Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la ville, (*Paris: Anthropos,1968) ; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of the Great American City* (New York: Vintage, 1992; first ed. 1961); Jan Gehl, *Cities for People* (Washington: Island Press, 2010); Charles Landry, The Art of City Making (London, Earthscan, 2006); David Harvey, Rebel Cities: *From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London, Verso Books, 2012)

[5] The expression 'transformative social innovation' refers to social innovations generating systemic changes towards environmental and social sustainability.It was introduced in the ambits of the European research project, Transit, which ended in 2017. The task was to investigate 'transformative social network initiatives and networks in an attempt to understand the process of societal transformation' in Transit, *Doing Things Differently*. Transit Brief #1, 2017) http://www.transitsocialinnovation.eu

[6] The Copenhagenize*, Bicycle-friendly City Idex 201*7 http://copenhagenize.eu/index/
Michelle Colville –Andersen, The 20 Most Bike-Friendly Cities in the World, From Malmö to Montreal, 6.14.17 https://www.wired.com/story/world-best-cycling-cities-copenhagenize/

[7] FAO, *Greener Cities: Food and Nutrition Security*,
http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/greenercities/en/whyuph/foodsecurity.html
URBACT, *Food for cities. Urban food policy for an inclusive, integrated and sustainable development of cities* http://urbact.eu/food-cities

[8] Fab Lab Project, http://fab.city/about/http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/greenercities/en/whyuph/foodsecurity.html
Manifattura Milano. "*rendere Milano un ecosistema abilitante per la nascita, l'insediamento e la crescita di imprese operanti nel campo della manifattura digitale e del nuovo artigianato.*"
http://forges.forumpa.it/assets/Speeches/22313/co_03_d_elia.pdf

[9] The European research URBACT Good Pratices, presents 97 examples of cities which are moving in this drection. Peter Ramsden, *Experimenting with governance,* 12 December 2017, http://urbact.eu/experimenting-governance.

Cities can be seen and described by different points of view. Social innovation teach us to see it, and operate in it, from inside. That is, as it is perceived, and used and transformed, by who lives it: the city of people and communities. The city made of places, roads, square, products and infrastructures, and, the more and more, of services and communication.

The city as an environment where a variety of projects thrives. The city as enabling ecosystem. Cities can be seen as meshes of projects of different nature and scale: from the individual life projects, to the community's ones, to the one driven by coalitions including different institutional actors. The environment in which these projects live can be more or less favourable. It comes that to regenerate the city, enabling ecosystems must be realized.

Citizens and their different ways to be active. The city as ecosystem for a variety of active citizens. Citizens are not city-users, but also co-designers and co-producers. The way they can and will do it can be quite diverse (on the base of different factors, first of all the maturity of the social innovation in which they are involved): from social inventors to participants to new forms of transformative normality. And with different roles: from social activism to active participants. This implies different demands in terms of required enabling systems.

Criteria and guidelines

The second teaching we can learn from social innovation relates to how judge and how to orient the city making projects towards sustainability.

- *Collaborating: producing results and social values.*

Moving in this direction means to regenerate the city by developing collaborative projects. That is, by projects driven by collaboration between citizens, and between them and other social actors (as public administration, companies, non profit enterprises, associations, universities). It implies different forms of collaborations (blending horizontal and vertical collaborations), different motivations (blending economic and cultural motivations), and different positions in the innovation trajectory (from initial activism to different forms of normality).
Collaborating (i.e. producing at the same time practical results and social value) gives life to unprecedented economic and organizational models. At the same time, and for the same reasons, collaborating is a strategy to build the power for systemic changes and to produce and regenerate social commons.

- *Bridging: connecting diversities.*

Moving in this direction means to cultivate and connect diversities. That is, to develop projects capable to bridge elderly and young people; residents and migrants; rich and poor. And capable to integrate working and living spaces (as: residences, schools, offices, factories and workshops, farming and gardening, commerce, entertainment, sport, meeting spaces) creating more diverse and dynamic activities.
Bridging (i.e. connecting diversities) is an antidote to the on-going main trend towards gentrification, segregation and creation of communication bubbles. And, in positive, it is a way to improve the social and environmental resilience of the city.

- *Commoning: weaving people and places.*

Moving in this direction means creating spaces cared by communities. That is, to produce "third spaces", between the private and the public ones. It also means regenerate social commons, as mutual trust, empathy, collaboration and shared knowledge and expertise. All of them can be the result of renewed traditions, or of unprecedented collaborative projects.

Commoning (i.e. the process of building commons) is antidote to main trends of city commodification and marketization. It implies to keep in account the different nature of commons and of the commoning processes.

- *Democratizing: supporting active participation.*

Moving in this direction means to develop a project-centred democracy. That is, a environment where individuals and communities can develop at best their life projects: an enabling ecosystem that is *also* a democratic ecosystem where citizens can take decisions and to make them real.
Democratizing (i.e. the process of improving the participative ecosystem) is an antidote to the on-going crisis of participative democracy (and of democracy in general). It implies a power shift towards citizens and communities

Emerging scenario

The third teaching we can learn from social innovation relates to a vision on the city and the way to implement it (to give different projects a common narrative) .

In fact, connecting the different experiences of social innovation, and assuming the proposed approach and guidelines, what appears is a new scenario: *the Scenario of the Collaborative City.* That is, *the city where, promoting and cultivating different forms of collaboration, collective intelligence thrives and becomes collective design capability.*

This scenario can be described by four urban qualities corresponding to the four previously proposed guidelines (where the first of them, to the degree of collaboration, gives the name to the whole scenario because collaboration is the quality on which the whole scenario and the other qualities are based):
- The city of collaborative projects
- The city of connected diversities
- The city of commons
- The city of project-centred democracy

By its nature, the *scenario of the collaborative city* outlines a city generated and regenerated by collaborative projects, thanks to which diversities are cultivated and connected, and social commons are produced. To be implemented, this scenario asks for:

- developing a material and immaterial infrastructure (sustaining a multiplicity of projects)
- enabling both social activism and transformative normality (scaling and regenerating)
- supporting *and* orienting collaborative projects (keeping in account both qualitative and quantitative criteria)
- creating *designing coalitions* in which active citizens collaborate with other social actors (as public authority, companies, non profit enterprises, associations, universities) giving life to unprecedented economic and organizational models.

3. Design and Collaborative Cities

In the collaborative cities scenario, public spaces, urban commons and collaborative services have a crucial role to play if we are to advance towards this vision, along with the positive loop that these can generate: more collaborative services and more public spaces generate better urban commons where collective design capabilities can emerge and thrive. In short, these cities, that we can name as *collaborative cities,* are conceived as a *broad enabling ecosystem* aiming at triggering and supporting initiatives of different nature and scale.

Considering the experiences done in several design for social innovation activities, and for what these notes are concerned, the ones done in the framework of the DESIS Labs projects dealing with this theme[10], the following sub-themes have been defined clustering different proposed projects and, in this way, offering a more precise expression of what design experts are really doing and thinking. In this moment we can recognize 4 main sub-areas: (1) Design for social cohesion, (2) Design for regenerating commons, (3) Design for urban production, (4) Design for urban infrastructure.

1. Design for social cohesion. Connecting people and generating public spaces: a city making based on its social dimension, via light projects capable to reweave the social fabric

These projects move from the concern for the crisis of social cohesion and propose collaborative activities in order to re-build the social links (or to build them from zero, when migrants are concerned). The urban scale and the space where these activities take place is, normally, the neighbourhood. Therefore, these projects can also be seen as initiatives for the neighbourhood rebuilding, moving from strategies to use at best existing physical and social infrastructures.
As a whole, the idea these projects propose is the one of a city making mainly based on its social dimension, via light projects capable to reweave the social fabric.

Kind of project. Projects capable of building social links between different citizens (migrants and tourists included). Bridging, social differences, they overcome preconceptions and break communication bubbles. Being staged in public spaces, they help to bring them to life.
The expert design contribution is mainly a form of design activism, based on communication and service design.

Open questions

- *How can design help in connecting people who are both different and unknown to each other? In other words, how can it co-produce the cosmopolitan fabric of a fluid society?*
- *How can extreme individualism be counteracted and the huge diversities found in contemporary urban spaces bridged? How can public spaces be generated where this can happen?*

2. Design for regenerating commons. Building place-related and place-caring communities: a city making based on communities-in-place: communities the existence of which is motivated by a specific space.

These projects relate with a physical space and they aim at creating a community that, in different ways are related to it. Therefore, these communities-in-place are social forms the existence of which is motivated by the existence of that specific space.
In this framework the project role is to connect a well-defined space with the building process of an equally well-defined community.
Doing so, these projects contribute to enrich the scenario of the city as commons.

Kind of project. Projects linking physical spaces to networks of people willing and able to take care of them. Doing so, they collaborate in generating, or regenerating, urban commons (meaning relational goods that improve the quality of life, being produced and enjoyed in common).

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[10] The DESIS Lab projects we refer to here are part of two main DESIS actions (the Thematic Area TA and the Thematic Cluster TC) including those DESIS Labs' projects the keywords of which are: City, Social Innovation and Design. The TA and TC goal is to have a deeper insight in these projects characteristics, that is: in their aims, methodology, results and involved stakeholders.

The projects included in this group are very frequently developed in the framework of co-design processes (intended, also, as community building processes), integrated with tools and competences coming form different design disciplines, first of all interior and space design.

Open questions

- *How can design collaborate in creating unprecedented place-related social forms? In other words: how can it collaborate in building new forms of communities-of-place?*
- *How can existing spaces be used and reused to generate new urban commons? How can places be connected with highly individualized and mobile people?*

3. Design for urban production. Enhancing distributed manufacturing and regenerative economy in the city: a city making intended as enhancing a distributed urban economy via creating new value chains, and the related social networks.

These quite diverse projects common denominator is their contribution in regenerating the urban productive fabric. This goal is achieved moving from different starting points (such as: Fab Labs, digital and traditional craftsmanship, small industries, research centres, repair-reuse shops, informal workers networks, etc.) and converging in the common direction of creating new chains, and the related social networks. Doing so, these projects enrich the urban ecosystem. In fact: thanks to the miniaturization of several tools and the potentiality given by higher degree of connectivity, and, most importantly, in the perspective of a distributed regenerative economy, they can effectively bring back production (and therefore jobs and the related social capital) in the city.

Kind of project. Projects that support and connect a variety of production activities. They enrich the urban ecosystems bringing production (and therefore jobs and the related social capital) to the city.
The main involved design disciplines are strategic design, product-service system design and communication design.

Open questions.

- *How can design enhance and connect urban production activities, in a regenerative economy perspective? In other words: how can it support socio-technical ecosystems in which sustainable urban production can thrive?*
- *How can Fab Labs, digital and traditional craftsmanship, small industries, research centres, repair-reuse shops and informal worker networks be integrated in the larger scenario of "new urban manufacturing"? How can unprecedented value production constellations be created inside and around the city?*

4 .Design for urban infrastructure. Improving the enabling ecosystem with a hybrid collaborative platform**:** a city making intended as creating ecosystems where, thanks the existence of an appropriate material and immaterial infrastructure, a variety of communities and social networks can thrive.

These projects starting point is one or more (existing or to be realized) physical artefact(s) that, when realized, could trigger and support different activities and communities. Operating in this way, these artefacts can be seen, by all means, as an infrastructure, and the design process as infrastructuring. As a whole they propose the idea of a city intended as ecosystems where a variety of communities and social networks can thrive. And where design can mainly work as co-promoter of a new generation of material and immaterial infrastructure.

Kind of project

Projects creating conditions thanks to which different collaborative initiatives can emerge and thrive. Their results (such as knowledge, products, places, and digital platforms) are to be considered as components of a new material and immaterial infrastructure.

The main involved design disciplines are, beyond architecture and planning, interior and environment design and product-service system design.

Open questions

- *How can design improve material and immaterial enabling ecosystems? In other words, how can it collaborate in an unprecedented infrastructuring process?*
- *How can the existing enabling ecosystems be enhanced with new hybrid (physical and digital) collaborative platforms? How can some basic social, environmental and democratic values be embedded in these platforms?*

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Annex 1 Notes on contemporary design

In the 21st century, design has taken on a rather different character to the one it had in the previous century. Two main characteristics make the difference. The first is that we now refer to it as an approach, a culture and a set of tools applicable to all kinds of complex issues[11]. In particular, the issues that are most relevant for us here are those based on interactions between people, and between people, products and places[12] (and this is the case for all city-making projects).

The second main characteristic of contemporary design is that, in networked societies, the boundaries between the roles are blurred. Insofar as our discussion is concerned, everybody is required to use some kind of design capability, and the position of designers (i.e. the experts who have been specifically trained in design thinking and design knowledge) is changed within the design process. In turn, and for the same reason, design processes tend to be developed by *designing networks:* wide and flexible networks that collaboratively conceive, develop and manage the design processes and their results[13].

In these emerging designing networks, the position and role of the professional designer is changed. Traditionally, designers have been seen, and have seen themselves, as the only creative members of interdisciplinary design processes. In the emerging scenario this clear distinction is blurred, and they now become professional designers among many non-professional ones. But, despite this blurring of roles, the design expert's role is not becoming any less important. On the contrary, in this new context, design experts may have a central role in bringing specific design competences to these co-design processes[14]. That is to say, they become process drivers and facilitators who use specific design skills to enhance the other actors' abilities to be good designers themselves (***Box 1**: The Designer's contribution to designing networks*).

Box 1 The Design Expert's Contribution to Designing Networks

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[11] A very clear statement on the nature of emerging design, and of its present limits, was proposed in 2014 in a manifesto titled "DesignX," collaboratively authored by Ken Friedman (Tongji University, College of Design and Innovation and Swinburne University Centre for Design Innovation), Yongqi Lou (Tongji), Don Norman (University of California, San Diego, Design Lab), Pieter Jan Stappers (Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering), Ena Voûte (Delft), and Patrick Whitney (Illinois Institute of Technology, Institute of Design). See http://www.jnd.org/dn.mss/designx_a_future_pa.html (accessed December 2018).

[12] For instance: collaborative services for prevention and health care (to involve directly interested users in the solution), but also: new food networks (to create direct links between cities and the countryside); intelligent mobility systems (to promote public transport and innovative solutions); urban and regional development programmes (to enhance local economies and new forms of community); distributed power generation systems (to optimise the use of diffuse and renewable energies).

[13] Ezio Manzini, *Designing coalitions: Design for social forms in a fluid world.* In Strategic Design Research Journal, Vol 10, No 2 (2017)

[14] Ezio Manzini, *Design When Everybody Designs*, (Cambridge (Ma): MIT Press 2015)

Design experts can stimulate and support design networks in several ways: generating original ideas, interacting with local communities to trigger new initiatives or support ongoing ones and feeding designing networks, and the social conversation that sustains them, with the necessary design knowledge[15]

- *Investigating,* to explore local resources and social innovation initiatives using ethnographic tools and user and people-centred design approaches to better understand problems and opportunities.
- *Facilitating,* to support the co-design processes using participative design tools to facilitate interaction and convergence between involved parties
- *Visioning*, to feed the specific co-design processes with *scenarios* and *proposals*, and to do so at different scales: from the smallest (considering specific local problems), to the largest (aiming to build shared visions of the future).
- *Communicating,* to give social innovation initiatives more visibility, help people to understand them and create the preconditions needed to disseminate them through specifically designed communication programmes (websites, books, exhibitions, movies, etc.).
- *Enabling,* to empower individuals and communities with a specfic solution (*enabling solutions*), which allows them to start and manage new and promising collaborative organisations.
- *Replicating,* to scale up promising collaborative organisations making them more replicable, thanks to *toolkits* and/or *specifically conceived products and services.*
- *Synergising,* to promote large-scale systemic changes and regional programmes with the development of *framework strategies*, specifically conceived to systemise, and synergise, a range of local initiatives.

[15] Ezio Manzini, *Design and Policies for Collaborative Services*, in Christian Bason, *Design for Policy (Farnham: Gower* Publishing, 2014). It should also be underlined that, working inside the new designing networks, concept generation activities, which have traditionally been the most diffuse and obvious way for a design school to participate in larger design processes, today have a different meaning, and, in my view, when considered as a whole, a more important one: they use original ideas to feed the larger conversations on which co-design processes are based.