

Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

Torino, 10th - 11th - 12th July 2008

Organised by Co-ordination of Italian Design Research Doctorates with
Conference of Italian Design Faculty Deans and Programme Heads.

In the framework of WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL TORINO 2008 | © ICSID
An ICSID initiative of the IDA.

Lia Krucken [lia.krucken@gmail.com]
University of State of Minas Gerais, Design School, Brazil

DESIGNING INNOVATIVE FORMS OF INTERMEDIATION AND COMMUNICATION

Towards sustainable production and consumption systems

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to bring to light novel forms of intermediation and communication among producers, consumers and organizations that support sustainable solutions of production and consumption.

In conventional value chains we can observe several levels of activities that arise from the distance between the producers and consumers, causing opacity and anonymous relations. Looking for alternatives to this configuration, designers face a sort of questions: How can the gap created by the proliferation of levels between producers and final consumers be filled? What kind of relations and solutions can be created? How to promote sustainable production and consumption systems? How can the product values and local qualities be communicated for global consumers?

In order to illustrate how producers and consumers integrate the challenge of developing sustainable solutions of intermediation and communication, there are presented some examples from Brazil and Italy, specially focused on biodiversity products.

Products based on local biological resources are rapidly becoming more important, due both to economic motives related to business potential and increasing consumer demand for more natural and safer products. Such biodiversity products include timber, nuts, fruits, and diverse "intermediate products" used as ingredients for the cosmetics, food, perfumery and pharmaceutical sectors, such as essential oils, natural dyes, latex, fibres, resins, gums, medicinal plants and others. A local product based in biodiversity resources, such as traditional food products, can be considered as a continuation of its region of origin, strongly characterized by its edaphic and climatic conditions, and as the result of local traditions of knowledge that are embedded in its production. Therefore, the local product represents a cultural and social expression of a certain community, a sign of local intellectual heritage. Thus, there is a range of meanings connected to a local food product, which are related to the community's history – as its customs and rituals – and traditional ways of doing, habits and also consumption behaviours. To communicate these qualities through the products, in properly ways, represents a great challenge to be faced by design.

The case study work therefore aims: a) to diffuse sustainable development practices, and b) to identify possibilities of design intervention.

Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

It was found that designer assumes an evident role of facilitator of collective innovations and systemic solutions. The main design supporting actions identified can be grouped as:

- a) *Promote vision and systemic innovation*: visualization of “production + consumption” systems; enabling innovative forms of intermediation and interaction among players; conception of scenarios and solutions for the future; development of transversal relations of people, organizations and values;
- b) *Support the valorisation of local qualities and resources*: recognition and communication of local identifying features and qualities; design of products and services strongly linked to the territory of origin; valorisation and protection of “territory + community + resources” complex;
- c) *Foster sustainable ways of production and consumption*: promotion of producer and consumer awareness about environmental, cultural, economic and social values embedded in products and services; promotion of new aesthetical values and ways of product quality perception; support the inclusion of the consumer into the value creation, as part of the solution, together with producers and stakeholders.

It is noted that design’s scope is being progressively enlarged and oriented towards a systemic perspective, which include the project and the planning of sustainable products and services systems. Hence, there are needed innovative tools and guidelines to support the design action. Important advances in this means can be highlighted in the last decade (Manzini, 2006; Thackara, 2005; Manzini, Jegou and Meroni, 2004; Margolin, 2000; Castells, 1999), which will be considered in this paper.

References

- Allee, A. (2003) **The future of knowledge**: increasing prosperity through value networks. Burlington: Elsevier.
- Altromercato (2005). Chi Siamo. Disponível em: <<http://www.altromercato.it>>. Acesso em: 01 jan. 2005.
- Cannata, G.; Marino, D. (2000) La biodiversità quale risorsa per lo sviluppo rurale endogeno. In: Bevilacqua, P.; Corona, G. (org.) **Ambiente e risorse nel Mezzogiorno contemporaneo**. Cosenza: Meridiana Libri, 2000, p. 210-223.
- CASTELLS, M. (1999) The social implications of information and communication technologies. **Report prepared for UNESCO's World Social Science Report**. <http://www.chet.org.za/oldsite/castells/socialicts.html>
- COSTANZA, R., et al. (1997) The value of the world’s ecosystem services and natural capital. **Nature**, v. 387, p. 253-260, May.
- FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS – FAO (2005). **Building on gender, agrobiodiversity and local knowledge**: a training manual. FAO, Rome.
- Jegou, F, Manzini, E., Meroni, A. (2004) Design Plan, a toolbox to facilitate Solution Oriented Partnerships. In: Manzini, E.; Collina, L.; Evans, C. (2004) **Solution oriented partnership**. How to design industrialized sustainable solutions. Cranfield: Cranfield University, pp.107-118.
- KRUCKEN, L. (2007) Valorização de produtos da biodiversidade: integrando competências para um percurso sustentável In: Barros et al. **Proteção aos conhecimentos das sociedades tradicionais**. Belém do Pará : Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi, p. 183-194.
- _____ (2007) Sustainable Valorization of Biodiversity Products: Creating Networks to promote Local Qualities In: **Third International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability**, 2007, Madras: Common Ground, 2007.
- _____ (2005) Design and the valorisation of agricultural biodiversity products - a case study. **Proceedings of the 6th international conference of the European Academy of Design**. University of the Arts of Bremen, Bremen.

Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

- _____ (2005) How can design support the value creation from agricultural biodiversity resources? **Proceedings of the Agrindustrial Design**: 1st product and service Design symposium and exhibition on agricultural industries. Izmir University of Economics - Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Izmir.
- KRUCKEN, L.; MERONI, A. (2006) Building stakeholder networks to develop and deliver product-service-systems: practical experiences on elaborating pro-active materials for communication. **Journal of Cleaner Production**, Elsevier, v.14, n.17, p.1502-1508.
- Lorigliola, S. (org.) (2001) **Biodiversità ricchezza dei popoli**: consumatori e produttori per colture e culture libere in una comune terra. Verona: CTM Altromercato.
- MANZINI, E. **Creative communities, collaborative networks and distributed economies**. Promising signals for a sustainable development. Work paper, Politecnico di Milano, 6 jan. 2006.
- MANZINI, E., MERONI, A. (2006) Il design dei servizi per l'innovazione della filiera delle produzioni locali di qualità: piattaforme innovative per l'intermediazione alimentare. In: **8° Congresso Italiano di Scienza e Tecnologia degli Alimenti** - CISETA.
- MANZINI, E.; MERONI, A.; KRUCKEN, L. (2006) Relação entre produto, território e consumidor. Visibilidade e comunicação entre local e global. In: **Seminário Internacional Biodiversidade, cultura e desenvolvimento**: crises de uma relação, novas oportunidades, Curitiba, 29 e 30 de junho.
- MAURI, F. (1996) **Progettare progettando strategia**: il design del sistema prodotto. Milano: Dunod.
- MALDONADO, T. (1999) **Disegno Industriale**: un riesame. Milano: G. Feltrinelli.
- MARGOLIN, V. (2000) Building a design research community. In: PIZZOCARO, S.; ARRUDA, A.; MORAES, D. **Design Plus Research**: Proceedings, May 18-20, Milan: Politecnico di Milano.
- NORMANN R.; RAMIREZ, R. (1995) **Design interactive strategy: from value chain to value constellation**. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- SLOW FOOD FOUNDATION FOR BIODIVERSITY (2004) **Ark and Presidia**. Bra: Slow Food Editore.
- THACKARA, J. (2005) **In the bubble**: designing in a complex world. Cambridge: MIT.