

CONCEPTS AND ANALYSIS OF A RELATIONAL SERVICE FROM THE DESIGN PERSPECTIVE

CONCEITOS E ANÁLISE DE UM SERVIÇO RELACIONAL SOB A PERSPECTIVA DO DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a review of the concepts of social innovation, design for social innovation, traditional services, service design, relational service design, and sustainable urban development to analyze the collective Agroecologia na Periferia, which acts as an agroecological technical consultancy in the city of Belo Horizonte and its metropolitan region. As a result, we obtained a practical understanding of the concepts previously presented and also the difference between the perspective of traditional services and relational services in the collective's performance.

KEY WORDS: Relational service design; social innovation; service economy; agroecology

RESUMO

O presente artigo apresenta a revisão dos conceitos de inovação social, design para a inovação social, serviços tradicionais, design de serviços, design de serviços relacionais e desenvolvimento urbano sustentável com o objetivo de analisar o coletivo Agroecologia na Periferia, que atua como uma assessoria técnica agroecológica na cidade de Belo Horizonte e região metropolitana. Como resultado, obtivemos a compreensão, na prática, dos conceitos apresentados previamente e também a diferença entre a perspectiva de serviços tradicionais e serviços relacionais na atuação do coletivo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Design de serviços relacionais; inovação social; economia de serviços; agroecologia



1. SOCIAL INNOVATION: STRATEGIES AND CONCEPTS

According to Howaldt (2017), the term “social innovation” originated around the 14th century, long before the technological-economic development. However, it lacked a theoretical definition to delimit its use. Moulaert (2017) explains that, although the concept of social innovation dates back to this period and has been used in many different contexts, the term only achieved status in scientific debates with social movements in the 1960s in economics, regarding the responsibility of companies, and as a principle of local development, nurturing socio-economic changes in neighborhoods, cities and semi-rural and rural locations. Also according to Moulaert (2017), in the 1980s, in Europe and Canada, social innovation was rediscovered as a scientific concept and as an action slogan to analyze and guide territorial development, especially in urban areas. Thus, urban studies and the disciplines that practiced them were the main incubators of the theory of social innovation.

For Howaldt (2017), there is no shared definition/understanding of the term “social innovation”, which means that it is not clearly distinguished from other forms of innovation. This author explains that the definition of the concept helps in the search for practices that may not yet be considered social innovations, which may be new practices (for example, political instruments, new forms of cooperation and organization), and particular methods and processes that are developed and adopted by citizens, users, beneficiaries, customers, entrepreneurs, etc.

Innovation is social, therefore, insofar as it is socially accepted and disseminated in society. This concept does not necessarily imply an impact that is for all or “socially desirable” in an extensive and normative sense (Howaldt, 2017). In general, social innovations aim to activate, promote, and use the innovation potential of the whole society, involving target groups and empowering beneficiaries to increase their capacities to meet social needs (Howaldt, 2017). For Thackara (2008, p. 206), “social innovations are new ideas that work to satisfy permanent needs”. According to Farfus (2007), social innovation can be defined as “a set of processes, products, and methodologies that improve the life quality of people and reduce inequalities”, which means it is a contribution to the sustainability of the community and the country. Finally, social innovation concerns how, individually or collectively, through changes in the way they act, people create new opportunities and solve their problems. It can also be thought of as the integration of individuals with their

communities, acting outside the dominant thought and behavior pattern and organizing themselves to obtain different results for their latent needs.

An important aspect of this stance is that such innovations are driven more by behavioral changes than by technological or market changes, often emerging through bottom-up organizational processes, rather than as agreed-top-down (MANZINI, 2008; MANZINI and JÉGOU, 2006). Social innovation focuses attention on ideas and solutions that create social value, as well as the processes through which they are generated, not just in individuals and organizations. According to the European Commission, social innovations are new ideas that meet social needs, create relationships and form new collaborations.

These innovations can be products, services, or models that respond to unmet needs more effectively. The objectives of the Commission are related to the initiatives of the Innovation Union Initiative (2010), whose defined points recognize the importance of design as an activity to generate new ideas; and the Social Investment Package (2013), which are initiatives developed to think and apply social innovation in Europe, being 2020 its initial deadline. The main goals are:

- Promote social innovation as a source of growth and employment;
- Share information about social innovation in Europe;
- Support innovative entrepreneurs and mobilize investors and public organizations.

Furthermore, the European Commission intends to accelerate the acceptance of design in industrial and innovation activities at regional, national and continental levels (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2017, s/p). In other words, design is not just about the way things look, but also about how they work, generating value and contributing to the competitiveness, prosperity, and well-being of populations.

For the use of design in the innovation process, it is necessary to raise awareness in society. For that to happen, the European Commission also aims to disseminate these values. The Commission believes that using design for innovation and growth across Europe is indispensable to achieving these goals, and to promoting awareness of how design-based innovation increases efficiency in public services and drives business growth.

The Center for Social Innovation – CSI asserts that social innovations are new ideas that can change social, economic, and environmental directions, bringing benefits to communities and the planet, changing behaviors, transforming systems, and working collaboratively to solve issues.

Collaboration is an important factor for social innovation to take place. According to a research

carried out by DESIS to explore the potential of social innovation as a sustainable possibility for technological and product innovation, “innovative forms of consumption and citizenship were detected in services based on mutual support, self-organization, trust, and interaction” (FREIRE, 2010, p. 7). For Manzini (2017, p. 18), it is known that social innovation produces solid and practical responses to difficult problems, “such as those related to the elderly population, the treatment of chronic diseases, social integration of migrants and requalification of cities and informal settlements in their surroundings”. And social innovation has the potential to solve more complex problems. “The problems that triggered social innovation and that social innovation helps to solve are even greater than the ones we’ve been discussing” (MANZINI, 2017, p. 30). Hence, we understand that social innovations have the potential to resolve the crisis in prevailing ideas about well-being, work, and the current production model, for example.

For the Social Innovation Community, social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes, etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and think about improvements in the use of natural resources. In other words, social innovations are good for society and the planet and increase society’s ability to act. The Center for Social Innovation – CSI and Green Shield Canada foundations created the Agents of Change: Community Health (2016) program to help develop solutions to health problems that affect most communities. One of the projects is Fresh City (figure 1), in the city of Toronto, which works with local organic farm producers. The program is designed to connect urban farmers to lands, facilities, and a learning community. Today, the program supports more than 20 farmers – who produce vegetables, herbs, and flowers for sale – so they can achieve self-sufficiency in their agricultural businesses.



Figure 1. Fresh City. Source: Fresh City (2021)

In 2013, Toronto was undergoing a major expansion as a city. Realizing this, CSI created the Building Roots project (figure 2), designed because, in some low-income regions of Toronto, residents had restricted access to healthy food. The main question made by the project was: “In Toronto’s construction boom, are we creating condos that will have the same problems? If we plan the access to food now, will this help prevent future food problems?”. They understood that yes and began to develop the project to promote markets, community kitchens, urban agriculture, food centers, green spaces, and productive backyards, aiming on benefiting and empowering future residents of the communities, improving access to healthy food and to places to grow, cook, buy and sell it.



Figure 2. Building Roots. Source: Building Roots (2021)

Brazil has many problems related to social inequality and restricted access to basic resources and services, such as education, health, mobility, and security. Cipolla (2017b) explains that a large part of Brazilian social innovations is born as a result of unmet social needs and lack of access to resources. For Cipolla (2017b), this is an important means to encourage processes of social change in Brazil, with enormous potential to reduce inequality, rebuild the social fabric, and encourage sustainable patterns of consumption and production. For Cipolla and Afonso (2018), social innovations can be promoted by governments at different levels, to change the way in which public authorities make decisions on behalf of the population. These transformations can be linked to cultural, artistic, and communicational actions, serving to build networks of local, national, or international relationships, helping to implement more conscious consumption and production patterns and sustainable behaviors, emerging in universities as new forms of knowledge exchange. According to Avelino *et al.* (2015), social innovation can be a solution to persistent problems related to sustainability faced by societies, such as changes in social relations that involve new ways of doing, organizing, knowing, and framing social transformation – for new economic systems, for

example. For Freire (2011, p. 73), "design-oriented social innovation must generate new solutions, through social collaborations, and is capable of solving the social needs of a population in a more effective, efficient and sustainable way" than existing services. Design can drive innovative solutions to common problems through social innovation initiatives, as people come to recognize new actions and solutions as being different from previous ones. (FREIRE, 2010) Social innovation is the best concept for understanding and producing lasting social changes – new ideas that seek to meet unmet needs to improve the lives of people, communities and the planet, valuing local cultures. Systemic problems need systemic solutions, so design can help make these changes happen and be more effective.

2. SERVICE DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

In large Brazilian urban centers, the necessary services already exist; however, they are worse than the minimum expected, even when based on a high technological standard. For Thackara (2008), it is necessary to promote new relationships outside our comfort zones and learn new ways of collaborating and conducting projects, to improve the capacity of all citizens to engage in meaningful dialogue about their environment and context, promoting new relationships between the people who do things and the people who use them.

For Manzini (2008, p. 16), design has a specific role in the transition that awaits us, by "offering new solutions to problems, whether old or new, and proposing its scenarios as a theme in social discussions, in order to develop shared visions about possible and sustainable futures". Social innovation initiatives in Brazil and all around the world are contributing to effective changes for society.

Generally, these movements have a vision of how the economics of these businesses can contribute to more significant changes – a "New Economy". Many of the social innovation initiatives come up with alternative economic visions, making use of terms such as: "Shared Economy", "Present Economy", "Social Impact Economy", "Green Economy" and "Solidarity Economy". "These views overlap and have several similarities in terms of new economic ideas being linked to new configurations of social-economic relations" (AVELINO *et al.*, 2015).

For Avelino *et al.* (2015), "New Economy" is a term that encompasses a broad set of related ideas that "emerge from the critique of conventional economic thought and practice and reflect views on alternative or complementary, prospective or emerging economic theories and practices". The term "New Economy" emerged in the 1990s, being

then related to the transition from an economy based on industry (“Old Economy”) to a service economy based on the use of information networks, such as electronic commerce, new financial services, search sites, and portals. (ALMEIDA, 2001) Thus, social innovation practices bring new narratives of change, including in relation to the current economic model. According to Morin (2013, p. 115), in general, the term “New Economy” is about “reinserting the economy in the social, cultural, and human aspects of our society, which fundamentally means putting the economy in its proper place, as means, and not as the ultimate end of human activity”. Morin (2013, p. 28) further explains that the transition to a new economy is fundamental for “development, which is not infinite and cannot be”, and should “be constituted by a series of movements of growth, contraction, and stabilization. A finite world can’t have infinite growth”.

Thinking about new economies in the service sector means giving new meaning to exchanges, thinking about new ways of working, and understanding how “customers” and “employees” relate to the service being delivered. Cipolla *et al.* (2009) explain that services were not always delivered in accordance with the approach suggested by service design. An example of change in the service paradigm is the supermarket, which replaced the traditional, small, and localized store. And the technologies included in the service process enabled self-service and automation, which contributed to the reduction of interpersonal contact in the provision of services, consequently changing how the service was provided. (CIPOLLA and MANZINI, 2009)

Figure 3 shows how exchanges happen in traditional services, which do not use service design or other innovative methodology to think about customer interactions and experiences.

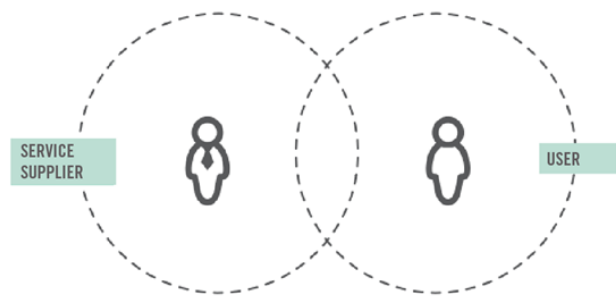


Figure 3. Traditional services. Source: Selloni (2013)

For Pacenti (2004), service design must be designed to be flexible, in order to listen to the customer, and to be able to adapt to the demands that will arise, using an approach developed to enhance customer experience. Cipolla *et al.* (2009) explain that, although the traditional image of users/customers has progressively changed and although market strategies were oriented to build “social bonds” with customers, the initial approach to service design was still related to a service model performed by two main actors: agents (representing an organization) and a customer (user).

Figure 4 shows what the service design approach looks like, with an intersection between the service provider and the customer that is designed to improve customer experience. Aspects such as the physical space where the service takes place, which and how the information will be transmitted to the service user, who he is, and how he behaves are considered; however, the interpersonal relationship between a service provider and the user is secondary, and the benefits are unilateral.

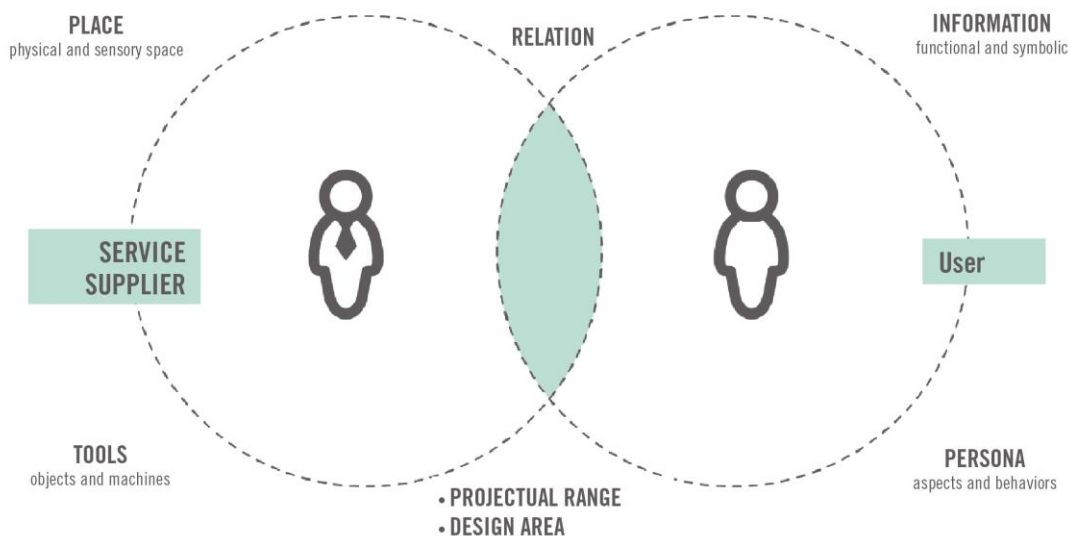


Figure 4. Service design. Source: Selloni (2013)

Cipolla *et al.* (2009) present a new possibility that challenges the standard way of conceiving and offering services, requiring intensive interpersonal relationships to operate. These are relational services, defined as those deeply based on interpersonal interactions. Cipolla *et al.* (2009) further explain that, in relational services, men and women are not seen as users or clients or as theoretical "Humans", but as "relational" beings. For Cipolla *et al.* (2009), the ability to truly relate to the other, a mutual relationship permeated by dialogues and encounters, indicates an emerging service model that is deeply linked to the quality of interpersonal relationships between participants. Service design can be a great ally for social innovations, having interpersonal relationships as its main characteristic and leading a systemic change to transform both the way services are provided and the interaction between service providers and consumers. The approach identified in social innovations in services creates new collaborations and transforms all participants into active co-producers of commonly recognized benefits in a special form of interpersonal interaction, in which participants not only need to be operationally active and collaborative but also inclined and willing to relate

to others in a personal way (CIPOLLA AND MANZINI, 2009; (CIPOLLA, 2012). This special way of interpersonal interaction in services is primarily what defines relational services. In relational (or collaborative) services, all stakeholders are actively involved, taking over the role of co-designers and co-producers (MANZINI, 2008). In these services, the relational qualities—the true interpersonal relationships between those involved—are what produce value (CIPOLLA, 2009). While traditional organizations tend to have a certain degree of relational quality, “for collaborative organizations, this is not an option, but a precondition for their existence”. (MANZINI, 2008, p. 72) Another aspect of collaborative organizations is that their model challenges traditional polarized ways of thinking: private/public; consumer/producer; local/global; need/desire. “Collaborative organizations propose solutions where private, social and environmental interests can converge” (Manzini, 2008, p. 72). These are usually local initiatives, but they can easily connect with other initiatives of different scales and locations. (Manzini, 2008).

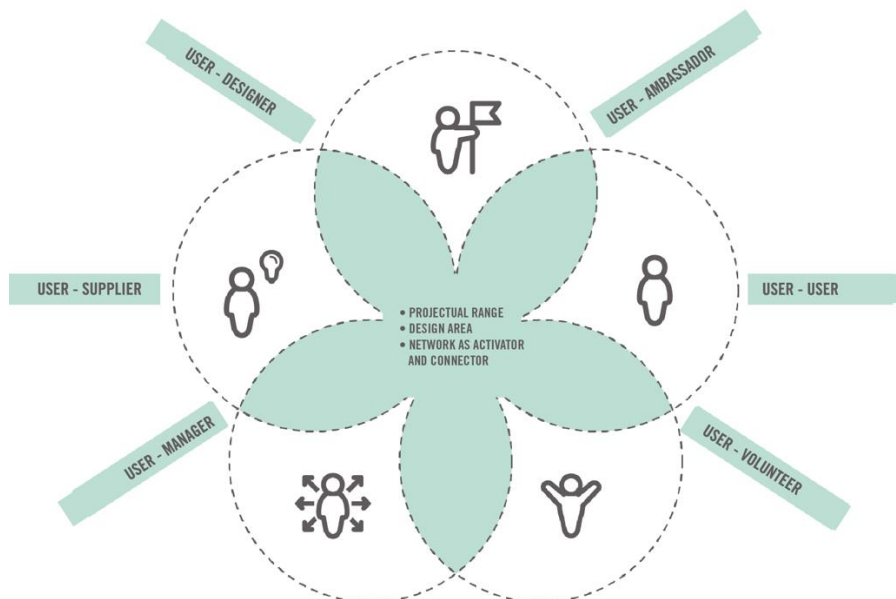


Figure 5. Relational service design. Source: Selloni (2013)

Traditional services, as shown in Figure 03, consider people as mere consumers, as users or viewers of a show. Relational services consider people as members. Manzini (2017) explains that, in this way, it is possible to rethink traditional ideas of work, because manual work becomes valued and because the panorama of the idea of work is changed, expanding this concept to a

greater number of activities, such as childcare, managing neighborhoods, creating green areas, mobility projects and building communities – “activities that, in the final analysis, enable people to face problems of daily life and constitute the fundamental fabric of the quality of daily life” (MANZINI, 2017, p. 38). Relational services allow people to play an active



role in building the future of their choice, as they are solutions based on collaboration, in which individuals connect to help improve something they believe in.

Table 01 - Conventional Services X Relational Services.
 Source: CIPOLLA, 2009 - Authors' Adaptation

Conventional services	Relational services
Interpersonal relationship is secondary	Interpersonal relationship is essential
Employee/Customer	Members
Employees and customers are part of an operation.	Members are part of the whole
Employees can be replaced by another employee with the same technical capacity	Members are difficult to be replaced, as the most important thing is not the technical capacity, but the bonds created
The effectiveness of the service is quantitative	The effectiveness of the service is qualitative
Produces only services	They produce, in addition to the service, a common history and identity
Customers do not form relationships	Members relate to each other and also relate to the locality.
Generalized and predefined	Personalized and relational
Promotes the exchange of products and services	Promotes the regeneration of the local social context
Intersection interaction (customer + agent)	Circular interaction
One-sided benefits	Shared benefits
Actions	Relations

Relational services can lead to environmental benefits, improve the use of existing resources and regenerate life contexts, encouraging collaboration. For Cipolla (2009), relational services are capable of promoting a "social learning process" for sustainability, a way of life based on sharing. If we consider this, we can promote collaboration, the local strengthening of the social fabric, and the creation of new commons. In this way, relational services combined with a new economy, especially in urban areas, and linked to the role of social innovation can contribute to the transition to sustainability.

For Longhurst *et al.* (2017a), because cities are seen as places of economic production and innovation, the understanding of sustainability in urban contexts cannot be detached from the economic logic. For Manzini (2017), the path to sustainability will occur through a socio-technical

change, reaching its physical, economic, ethical, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions.

This change will probably be leveraged by small local disruptions, promoted by a wide range of social actors capable of acting outside the dominant economic model. These local initiatives already exist, breaking away from the traditional approach to doing things; bringing new opportunities and solutions to everyday problems; building a new worldview; providing learning, and strengthening social connections (JÉGOU and MANZINI, 2008; MANZINI, 2008).

In practical terms, what innovations do is recombine existing resources and capabilities, and create new functions and new meanings. Social innovations provide "ways of thinking about problem-solving strategies that represent discontinuities with what is locally predominant, that is, with the ways of thinking and doing that are considered 'normal'" (MANZINI, 2017, p. 27).

When people or institutions try to solve everyday problems by breaking the usual way of doing things and generating social innovation, they are designing, and Manzini (2017) calls this way of designing diffuse design. He explains that there is the expert designer and the fuzzy designers, and they can work together in solving problems and producing meaning.

The specialist designer who works in problem-solving has a highly technical background and aims the resolution of complex problems, reconciling technical and social issues, and involving the collaboration of a variety of interlocutors. The role of the expert designer is to stimulate and support the design processes, through the development of the necessary coalitions between different partners, analysis of available resources, and facilitating the active participation of those immediately involved (which characterizes diffuse design).

The role of the expert designer would then be to identify processes that are under construction or situations in which social innovations are emerging or are needed to solve complex problems. The expert designer uses their knowledge to value people's skills and abilities, as well as the solutions they autonomously develop to face their local challenges (CIPOLLA AND MANZINI, 2009).

In this sense, it is important to understand what complexity is and that society can be considered a complex system. For Cardoso (2012), complexity is a system composed of many elements, layers, and structures whose interrelationships lead to a continuous redefinition of the functioning of the whole. Something like a metropolis, which is made up of several interconnected systems, countless elements, in an intricate relationship of coming and going, up and down, continuous creation and destruction, without one knowing where it begins or ends and without it ever becoming extinct.

Wicked problems are unstable problems that have diffuse solutions and that are socially, economically, and environmentally difficult to be solved by a single entity. “Therefore, these are questions that should not be understood or interpreted through a linear way of thinking, because these problems cannot be predicted nor solved with prescribed formulas” (LACERDA, 2017 p.40).

Deserti (2017) explains that wicked problems demand from public and private institutions and society a greater involvement in the delivery of new services or the restructuring of existing ones, in order to achieve greater efficiency using fewer resources. It is also necessary to understand the difference between social design and design for social innovation, in order to conceive the role of a designer who specializes in solving complex problems. Manzini (2017) explains that the notion of design for social innovation is often considered similar, if not identical, to that of social design; however, the two expressions refer to different activities, with very different implications.

The problem starts with the double meaning commonly attributed to the adjective “social”. The first sense, which is the sense used in the expression “design for social innovation”, refers to social forms as such; that is, the way society is built. In the second sense, it indicates the existence of particularly problematic situations (such as extreme poverty, disease, or social exclusion, and conditions after catastrophic events) for which both the market and the government cannot find solutions and which they, therefore, postulate the need for urgent intervention from some other party. It is in this second sense that the adjective entered discussions about design several decades ago, giving rise to the expression “social design”. (MANZINI, 2017, p. 79)

For Cipolla (2017a, p. 152), “the design practice associated with the term ‘social’ in design for social innovation does not work to solve social problems (such as poverty or physical restrictions)”, however, it can be thought of to achieve changes broadly, for example, in the way society is organized and its ways of life, with more sustainable transformations. Design for social innovation is not a new design discipline. “It is understood that, to promote and support social innovation, all design skills and capabilities are used and combined in different ways, case by case. We can also see which components of strategic and service design are included in all these cases” (MANZINI, 2017, p. 73).

For Manzini (2017), there is not a new type of design, but a new way of working that contemporary design is already adopting. And when talking about social innovation, Manzini (2017, p. 62) explains that “guided by the need or desire to use their ‘natural’ ability to design, many people

actively participate and collaborate in the creation of new forms of organization”. The result of this process is a network society, in which all design processes tend to become co-design processes.

Design is a culture and practice concerning the way things should be in order to achieve desired functions and meanings. It takes place in open co-design processes, in which all actors involved participate in different ways. It is based on a human capacity that everyone can cultivate and that for some – design experts – has become a profession. The role of design experts is to trigger and support these open co-design processes, using their design expertise to devise and improve clear and focused design initiatives. (MANZINI, 2017, p. 68).

For Deserti (2017), social innovation has many challenges in practice, due to the complexity of the stakeholders and ecological systems involved in co-creation. Service design is emerging as a more effective approach in order to improve the co-design of social innovations and long-term stakeholder engagement to achieve the goal of adoption and diffusion.

Service design for social innovation shows how service design can use social innovation to suggest ideas for new service models, aiming at improving and replicating its values (JOLY *et al.*, 2014). Service design, in the context of social innovation, should be used to design and develop ideas and solutions that take into account the quality of the interactions involved, promoting and supporting partnerships between different actors. Service design for social innovation is what expert designers can do to activate, sustain and guide social change processes towards sustainability, thinking about new service models.

3. SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The issue of sustainability in large metropolises of developing countries still presents major challenges related to the process of production and social appropriation of urban space, according to Nobre (2004).

Sustainability requires a systemic discontinuity, “a form of change at the end of which the system in question will be different, structurally different, from what we knew until today” (MANZINI, 2008, p. 27). This is one of the issues addressed by Manzini (2008), who shows that this discontinuity must be planned, as urban centers could be designed to be more sustainable and self-sufficient. In this sense, the transition from the current stage to sustainability will require a great effort to articulate social, cultural, and technological innovations from a new value context in terms of products, relationships, and organizational processes (MANZINI AND VEZZOLI, 2005).

According to Thackara (2008), food systems are part of programs to make urban centers more sustainable. The challenge for designers would thus be to bring together different resources and opportunities to make the urban space balanced and sustainable.

In September 2015, the United Nations defined the Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs, as part of a new sustainable development agenda. In 2016, an integrated perspective of SDGs, developed by Rockström and Sukhdev (2016) (figure 6), was presented. It's another way of looking at the SDGs that shows how all the items are related to sustainable and healthy eating.

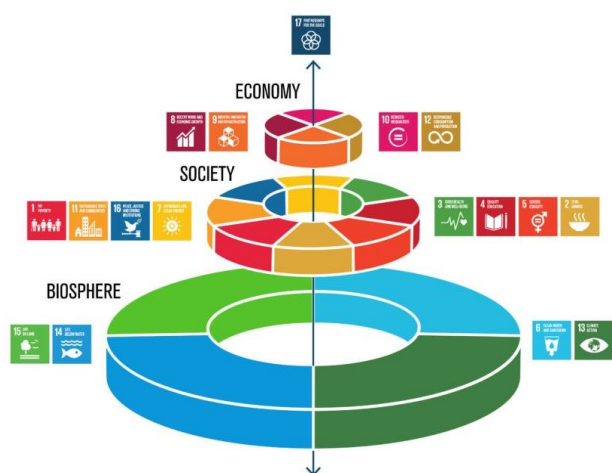


Figure 6. The integrated perspective of the SDGs. Source: Rockström e Sukhdev (2016)

Camargo (2005) shows that the environmental problems we face are not new, but that their complexity has only recently begun to be understood. For a sustainable city to be thought of, a collective learning process is necessary. According to Schussel (2004), the way to think about a sustainable city is to favor accessibility and social interaction; allow integration in a network with the outside world, and think of collective well-being as the positive equation between the natural environment, cultural heritage, economy, and society. Another point to be considered for the development of urban centers is agriculture.

According to Thackara (2008, p. 164), “about 800 million people around the world are involved in urban agriculture”. Food production within urban centers facilitates transport, which reduces losses and waste; it can be a source of income; improves the quality of the food provided to the population, especially the low-income ones; and increases food security.

Urban agriculture has taken place and should be included within city planning and in the various areas of architecture, engineering, landscaping, ecology, design, land use, and energy and recycling

studies. In this complex context, food cultivation in urban centers can bring about changes in the panorama of cities. Today, the practice is carried out mainly in small areas, such as private and collective backyards, and is intended for private consumption or to be sold on a small scale, in markets, but it can be thought of on a larger scale, to serve a greater number of people in big cities, considering that they will always constitute a process of change and not a static objective of optimization.

The practice of urban agriculture offers benefits both for those who cultivate and for the final consumer. They are:

- Decrease in losses – urban agriculture can increase the useful life of crops and reduce transport injuries. This entails a significant reduction in waste;
- No application of pesticides – most urban gardens use an agroecological or organic system. Since 2009, Brazil has been the largest consumer of pesticides in the world (CCST, 2016);
- Transport cost reduction – consumers are closer to production, being able to buy from closer distribution centers or directly from the producer, reducing costs and logistical problems;
- Product flavor – with the product harvested daily and with little or no transport, the food reaches the end customer with greater quality and freshness;
- Food and nutritional security – provides healthier food for local producers and residents, as food becomes easier to access;
- Income generation – it can be an option to generate extra income for family nucleuses or even the main income of a family and generate employment for other individuals;
- Physical and psychological health – gardens offer, for example, opportunities for creative leisure for the elderly, for people with physical or mental disability, and psychiatric patients (RODRIGUES, 2012). It can also provide an improvement in the quality of life through the union of people, creating new networks of relationships.

4. ANALYSIS OF A RELATIONAL SERVICE

From the understanding of the concepts of social innovation, design for social innovation, traditional services, service design, and relational service design, an analysis was carried out to better understand how these concepts are presented in practice and the difference between them for classification and possibly for the creation of relational services with a focus on social innovation using the design approach.

The Agroecologia na Periferia (Agroecology in the Periphery) project emerged in 2014 in Belo

Horizonte, by an initiative of member and founder Tatiane Fonseca, a geologist who graduated from UFMG (a federal university in the State of Minas Gerais). In August of the same year, the mapping of the farmers of Vitória occupation was carried out, and, thus, began the work of the group, which gradually gained members. The collective operates in spaces that do not yet have a master plan – a basic instrument of urban development and expansion policy – and that have great potential to think about urbanization in a different way than that seen in large cities to date.

Relational service design, as presented in previous pages, aims to improve the experience, considering that the users are all involved, both the providers (the Agroecologia na Periferia collective) and the people who use the service (the residents of the occupations).

According to the division proposed by Browning and Singelman (1978), the Agroecologia na Periferia can be classified as a social service, as the collective's proposal is directed towards the community, thinking about the improvement of social well-being and enabling the generation of income and greater understanding of environmental and social issues that affect populations. This happens through workshops on notions of gender, planting, pruning, soil paint, banana tree circles, among others. These volunteers organize joint efforts for the implementation of new gardens and seek partnerships with institutions such as other collectives, NGOs, universities, public authorities, and all those interested in enabling the projects to get off the ground.

Agricultural production is considered by the economy as a primary sector activity; however, the collective uses agroecology to provide a service to the community. The vegetables produced are the final product, and, according to Kon (1999), the service is the glue, it is the driving force that links the collective to small producers and producers to both knowledge and consumers. New definitions have emerged throughout history to determine the type of service provided by an institution. Within a traditional view, such as the one presented above, Agroecologia na Periferia would be a social service; but, beyond this perspective, the collective can also be considered a collaborative organization.

Collaborative organizations are service and production initiatives that encourage direct relationships between producers and consumers, with a focus on local activities, allowing everyone to become co-producers of the designed solutions. To foster innovation, act on a local scale, and reorganize resources oriented towards sustainability, the use of environmental resources is drastically reduced, the social context is strengthened and the life quality is regenerated (JÉGOU e MANZINI, 2008; MANZINI, 2008; MANZINI e VEZZOLI, 2005; MERONI, 2007).

Bearing in mind the concept of sustainable urban development and taking into account the UN sustainable development goals for 2030, we can see that, of the 17 goals defined by UN, Agroecologia na Periferia acts in 13, as shown below:

1. Eradication of poverty – This goal aims to end poverty in all its forms, everywhere. In this sense, the collective makes it possible to generate income through vegetable gardens and sales at fairs;
2. Zero hunger and sustainable agriculture – this is the collective's main focus, as the gardens provide quality food for community residents, and the collective promotes healthier food through workshops and encouraging the consumption of food from the garden, which promotes food security and improved nutrition. And sustainable agriculture is done through agroecology, without the use of pesticides, with agroecological seeds, composts, and water care;
3. Health and well-being – the collective promotes, through agroecology, an understanding of the consumption of food without pesticides and how the diversity of food helps to improve the health of children, young people, and adults;
4. Quality education – through workshops on various topics and the course for agroecology promoters being organized by the Izidora Forum, the collective can provide inclusive and quality education and generate learning opportunities for people in the community;
5. Gender equality – in 2016, a gender workshop took place, in which residents of the Izidora and Tomás Balduino occupations were invited to discuss gender issues. In all meetings, the collective is careful to emphasize the importance of bringing women to the practice of the vegetable garden, always reflecting on and showing the importance of equality and togetherness;
6. Potable water and sanitation – as they are urban squatters, Izidora and Tomás Balduino do not have potable water or sanitation, so water was irregularly channeled, and sanitation is done through a septic tank. The collective helps in the construction of banana tree cycles, for the sanitation of gray water; in the construction of ecological toilets, for the treatment of bathroom water, allowing the tailings to be used as fertilizer if the sewage cycle is certified, and thus helping to preserve the various springs in the communities' region;
7. Clean and accessible energy – the low-cost solar heater workshop allowed the residents of the occupation to have access to this technology, and today it is already replicated by the course participants to other residents of the community, allowing access to clean, accessible and sustainable energy;
8. Decent work and economic growth – Agroecologia na Periferia helps producers to participate in fairs so that they can flow out their

production, promoting economic growth. Adão, a resident of the Izidora occupation, reported, in one of the meetings, that, in some months, he earns the equivalent of one minimum wage from the sale of vegetables. And with the workshops, farmers are trained and gain recognition in their roles – some of the workshop participants work as gardeners and report having managed to apply their knowledge in their work;

9. Reduction of inequalities – one of the ways that the collective believes to promote the reduction of inequalities is to connect people who live in the occupations with people from nearby cities and even from other states, as occurred at ERÊ – Regional Agroecology Meeting, and from other countries, as happened at the ENA – National Agroecology Meeting, in which French, Colombians, Peruvians, Guatemalans, and Argentinians were able to see the protagonism of producers within the occupations in the construction of agroecology, sharing their practices, difficulties, and skills in doing agroecology in their countries;

10. Sustainable cities and communities – the rights to decent housing and to be a part of the city are brought by the collective to the communities, using agroecology as a means to discuss these issues. All the work done by the collective aims at the emancipation of these communities and that they become inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable spaces;

11. Sustainable consumption and production – agroecological production has the principle of being sustainable from an environmental point of view: not using pesticides and preserving the soil and springs; from the social point of view: considering the producer's working conditions; and economic, selling products at a fair price both to consumers and producers;

12. Action against global climate change – agroecology helps combat climate change, as it does not use chemical products and because it considers local vegetation important, for example, in the implementation of agroforestry;

13. Terrestrial life – this item talks about “recovering and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, and halting the loss of biodiversity” (UN, 2015). All these points are addressed by agroecology.

Understanding the design of services allowed an analysis of the Agroecologia na Periferia collective from this perspective, which made it possible to define its performance as an “agroecological technical assistance” and understand the main actions during the service journey. The collective:

1. Goes to the site and maps the male and female farmers, considering the size of the plantation, and whether it is a productive backyard or a community garden;

2. Understands the demands of residents in relation to this production;

3. Brings the community together, by invitation, to participate in the workshops;

4. Offers training workshops related to planting, new ways of cultivation, and agroecology. In the development of these workshops, it explains what agroecology is and its applications;

5. Helps producers to be able to sell surplus production at fairs and events;

6. Monitors production with the help of agroecology and permaculture technicians and forestry engineers, who are part of the collective or who are invited through the partner network;

7. At the same time, it holds biweekly meetings to transfer information to members who were unable to participate in the events and to plan activities. This would be the basic journey of collective service. In it, however, only the main actions are described, without contemplating the interventions that arise from specific demands, such as the creation of a forum with several partners to map and mobilize the entire Izidora occupation, in order to benefit more people in the community with the actions of the collective.

This journey also fails to demonstrate the benefits and relationships between the community and the collective, which are key factors and demonstrate that Agroecologia na Periferia does indeed promote social innovation. After an in-depth understanding of what social innovation is, it was possible to understand why the Agroecologia na Periferia collective is a case of social innovation. It:

- Teaches and encourages a new way of planting with a focus on agroecology, which has as its central concern the non-use of any type of chemicals, such as fertilizers and pesticides;

- Enables contact with and preservation of nature, taking care of springs and the soil, through workshops such as the banana tree circle – for the treatment of gray water – and the low-cost solar heating workshop;

- Promotes food and nutritional security, enabling access to healthy and quality food and encouraging its consumption;

- Encourages new social interactions between people in the community and outside it, taking people to the workshops in the occupation, and the residents of the occupation to workshops in other places and communities, which is strategic to reduce injustice (JOLY *et al.*, 2014);

- Promotes the transmission of traditional knowledge about planting, irrigation, and food;

- Goes against the use of chemical products, which generates low-impact production and promotes the use of organic residues to fertilize and maintain the humidity of the plantation – also reducing the use of water for irrigation;

- Regenerates the social fabric, through interaction between community neighbors, people from other

occupations and “visitors”;

- Brings visibility to a marginalized place that, many cases, is not well regarded by society allowing a better understanding of the reality of these people and the community;
- Promotes sustainable urban development in areas that show great potential to adhere to a new form of urban planning, as they do not yet follow the model;
- Fosters, together with the community, belonging to the city and the right to land and decent housing;
- Promotes training and empowerment of the community through workshops, contributing to the development of autonomy;
- Stimulates income generation through the sale of production at fairs.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The continuous changes in the needs of post-industrial society have broadened the scope of design's activities. The service sector gained importance within the economy; in addition, today, it is increasingly necessary to rethink the term, its definitions, and what role the designer can play in society.

There are many opportunities for service design to generate social innovation and contribute to more sustainable growth, always using design methodologies and thinking of design as a strategic function.

Social innovation must be thought of to improve the life quality of a population, and design has the function of offering solutions to detected problems and suggesting changes that enable innovation.

The literature review allowed us to understand how social innovations are born, with the aim of solving social problems, and that these innovations can and should be orchestrated by designers, seeking to help them organize and gain strength and scale, so that, in due course, significant changes occur towards sustainability.

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