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Original
Participatory Design Processes Towards Inclusion: Three Case Studies within Italian Social Care System / Di Prima, N., Campagnaro, C., Ceraolo, S.. - ELETTRONICO. - (2021), pp. 110-111. (Intiate, Sustain, Expand Limassol, Cyprus 5-6 Ottobre 2019).

Availability:
This version is available at: 11583/2898304 since: 2021-05-05T12:10:14Z

Publisher:
Socially Engaged Design Conference - Cyprus University of Technology

Published
DOI:

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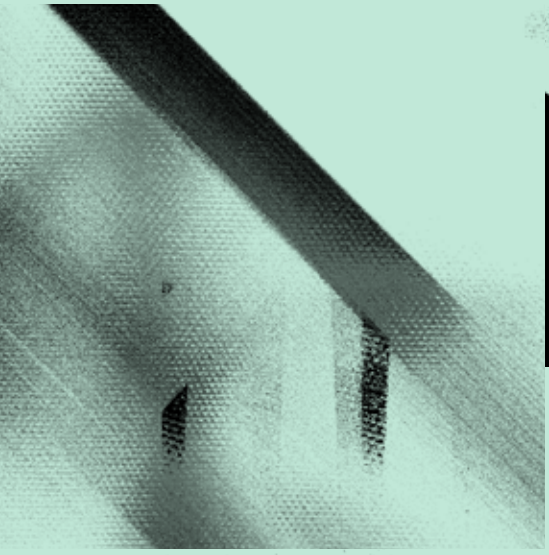
(Article begins on next page)

28 November 2026

socially engaged design↘ conference ↗2019

sed2 conference

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proceedings

issn: 2672-8060

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PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESSES TOWARDS INCLUSION: THREE CASE STUDIES WITHIN ITALIAN SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM

Nicolò Di Prima, Cristian Campagnaro, Sara Ceraolo
Politecnico di Torino, Dipartimento di Architettura e Design

Keywords: co-design, design-anthropology, participatory design, social inclusion

(10)

The presentation discusses the topic of participatory design processes with a systemic approach as a tool to negotiate, shape and prototype new inclusive models of citizenship and care to benefit marginal groups in society. Since 2009, our interdisciplinary research group, composed by designers and anthropologists, carries out socially engaged practices in several italian cities, entailing both methodological analysis and transformative actions on social care systems and on their users: services' beneficiaries (e.g. asylum seekers, migrants, people affected by chronic diseases, homeless people), caregivers, services' management.

The topic will be addressed via three case studies from our field experience: 'Design for Each one', a co-design project of personalised devices for people suffering from multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy; 'Cantiere Mambretti', a participatory renovation of shelters for migrants and homeless people; 'Costruire Bellezza', a new service aiming at social inclusion based on design workshops involving homeless people and university students. This variety of interventions implies different levels of participations of the stakeholders reflecting the scalar vision of the impact of design according to the "design domains" developed by Jones and Van Patter. The projects described move from the stakeholders' desire of tangible transformations in order to improve the quality of service: development of new products, redesign of spaces, innovation of the service itself. In order to support and facilitate this "desire of change", on the basis of the complexity of the relations that shape the network of the system, it seems to be preferable to operate with a co-design approach and to develop projects based on participation and collaboration among all actors, in order to include the most of them in decision making processes.

According to our experience, the co-creative process can be intended as an experiment of participative democracy applied to the design of objects, spaces and services within socially disadvantaged contexts. In fact, the practice of codesign entails an approach of 'dialogic cooperation', as sociologist Richard Sennett calls it, between users of the services and designers, since every decision taken within the creative process is negotiated together. This tickles the topic of delegation. Giving value to individual capabilities and know-hows in every stage of the processes, all the participants have the power to orientate the projects and the transformative actions: the power to decide is shared among the actors and they are all implicated and responsible for the achievement of the desired changes. Mechanisms of co-authorship and co-ownership are encouraged: the more the process is collaborative, the more the outcomes are legitimised by everybody. Moreover, socially engaged practices transform the relationship between the designers and the users from engagement (in terms of consultation) into mutual empowerment. This fosters the cohesion and the inclusiveness of the practices and it generates the opportunity for all those involved to flourish.

Katie Hill (UK)
Katie Hill trained in product and furniture design and specialised in user research and working with communities. She has worked in universities, social enterprises and as a consultant on a range of socially engaged design projects in the UK, designing tools to engage communities in social and environmental change. Most recently Katie has been working on an AHRC funded research project about pro-environmental behaviour change and clothing - S4S Designing a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing.

Lara Penin (US)
Lara Penin is an Associate Professor of Transdisciplinary Design at Parsons School of Design, where she has been director of the Transdisciplinary Design graduate program from 2015 to 2019 and is core faculty of the Graduate Minor in Civic Service Design. Lara is co-founder of the Parsons DESIS Lab, an action research laboratory that works at the intersection of strategic design, management, and social theory. Lara is the author of "An Introduction to Service Design. Designing the Invisible" (Bloomsbury, 2018). Lara has a PhD in Design from the Milan Polytechnic University and a BA in Architecture and Urbanism from the University of São Paulo.

Bernd Rohrauer (AUT)
Bernd Rohrauer has been studying and teaching multimedia and fine arts, working with artists from different disciplines and dealing with youth and community work in Austria since 2004. Having a background in fine arts and a master degree in clinical and spatial social work, he now deals with projects related to community work and participation in Vienna.

Nicolò Di Prima (IT)
I'm Nicolò Di Prima, I have a bachelor degree in Industrial Design and a master degree in Cultural Anthropology. I'm currently a PhD student in Management, Production and Design at Politecnico di Torino. I have been working on interdisciplinary research projects dealing with participatory design processes in deep social marginality contexts since 2014. I'm interested in material culture and I like to observe how the relation between artefacts and people changes within collaborative-design and transformative processes.

Noemi Sadowska (UK)
Noemi Sadowska is a Programme Director at Design School, London College of Communications. She has extensive experience in HE curriculum design and degree launch, with most recent success: MA Design for Social Innovation and Sustainable Futures. She teaches reflective writing, strategic design and team collaborations in design practice. Her work has been published as part of 01.AKAD, Sweden; the Encyclopedia of Gender and Information Technology, USA;Visual Tools for Developing Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity, Australia; and most recently in The Design Journal, UK. Her current research investigates how to facilitate design students' sustainable decision-making, leading them to become responsible design practitioners.

Jennifer Schubert (IT)
Jennifer Schubert is researcher at Free University of Bolzano in the area of Social Interaction Design. In 2018 she obtained her Ph.D. (Dr. phil.) at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK). In her practice-based dissertation about "Civic Tools for Informal City Making" she explored new possibilities of visual and tangible forms of participation. Since 2011 she worked in bottom-up as well as municipal research projects, in rural and urban spaces, locally based or with a global perspective. She studied Design Concepts and Service Design at KISD (Cologne) and Parsons (New York). She has been teaching Design Research modules at Hochschule Anhalt (MA of Integrated Design), University Wuppertal (MA for Strategic Product & Innovation Development) and KISD (BA/MA Integrated Design).

Christna Skarpari (CY)
I am an artist, designer and academic with a strong interest in community-oriented, socially engaged practices. I have recently received an AHRC Techne studentship for my practice-based PhD at Central Saint Martins, which blends communication and social design, employing a co-design methodology in the field of intangible cultural heritage preservation and community resilience.
In parallel, I work as an Associate Lecturer at Central Saint Martins. I have been working in the public arts sector, in higher education industry and in the NGO field for over seven years. My training began during MA in Communication design at Central Saint Martins (2012-2014). There I focused on the conceptualisation and realisation of Xarkis Festival, of which I function as its creative director.
As part of Xarkis NGO I conceptualise, curate, facilitate and produce cultural events, artist residencies, exhibitions, non-formal education programs, participatory design workshops, service design and communication design initiatives.

Alejandro Villacis (EC)
Alejandro Villacis is a photographer and an educator in physical education. His practice is based on the complexity and interaction between subject and object where the forms, textures and people are participants in the creation of each image. From 2013, he has been living in London where he continued his studies on photography at Morley College London, focusing on the development of personal research projects.

Jason Murray Winn (CY)
Jason Murray Winn is a registered architect with the State of Texas, USA, a certified planner with the American Institute of Certified Planners, and a certified energy manager with the Association of Energy Engineers. He has practiced architecture and urban planning for 15 years and is currently lecturing on urban design at Eastern Mediterranean University. Read his research on Narrative Infrastructure at SpacePoetics.com. He can be reached at JasonWinn@SpacePoetics.com

Lauren Williams (US)
I'm a designer, researcher, and writer who works with visual and interactive media to understand, critique, and reimagine the ways in which social and economic systems distribute and exercise power in service of a more equitable present and future.
I'm currently a graduate student in the MFA program in Media Design Practices (Field) at the Art Center College of Design. Before that, I worked at CFED, a national nonprofit intermediary that expands economic opportunity by helping American families build wealth and achieve financial freedom. I have a background in qualitative research and writing, nonprofit program design and management, and policy advocacy.



Organising Committee

Despina Hadjilouca
Despina is based in London where she co-founded the design collective Eclective. Since 2011 she co-curates Narrative in Practice, a symposium exploring the value of narrative in creative practices. She is also the co-founding member of Schedia, a group dedicated to spreading the word of human-based design amongst young creative thinkers in Cyprus.

Marina Hadjilouca
Marina Hadjilouca is a performance designer and an academic, currently based at Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, London. Hadjilouca's research interests lie in the synergy between social art practices and performance design, conflictual aesthetics, scenographics, spatio-temporality and agonistic politics. Marina holds a BA(Hons) in Theatre Design for Performance and an MA in Narrative Environments. Hadjilouca is currently completing her PhD research at the Royal College of Art (The Social Turn: The Performance Designer as Trigger for Active Co-Existence).

Omiros Panayides
Omiros Panayides is an Assistant Professorr of Graphic Design at the School of Fine and Applied Arts at the Cyprus University of Technology. He studied Graphic and Advertising Design at Frederick Institute of Technology and obtained his MA in Graphic Design at the University of Arts London at Camberwell College of Arts. In September 2009 he represented Cyprus in the Applied Arts category at the 14th Biennale of Young Artist from Europe and the Mediterranean in Skopje. He is part of the founding members of the Cyprus Association of Graphic Designers and Illustrators. His professional practice and academic research pivots around book arts, zines and the preservation of Visual Communication in Cyprus through the Graphic Design of printed matter.

ISSN 2672-8060

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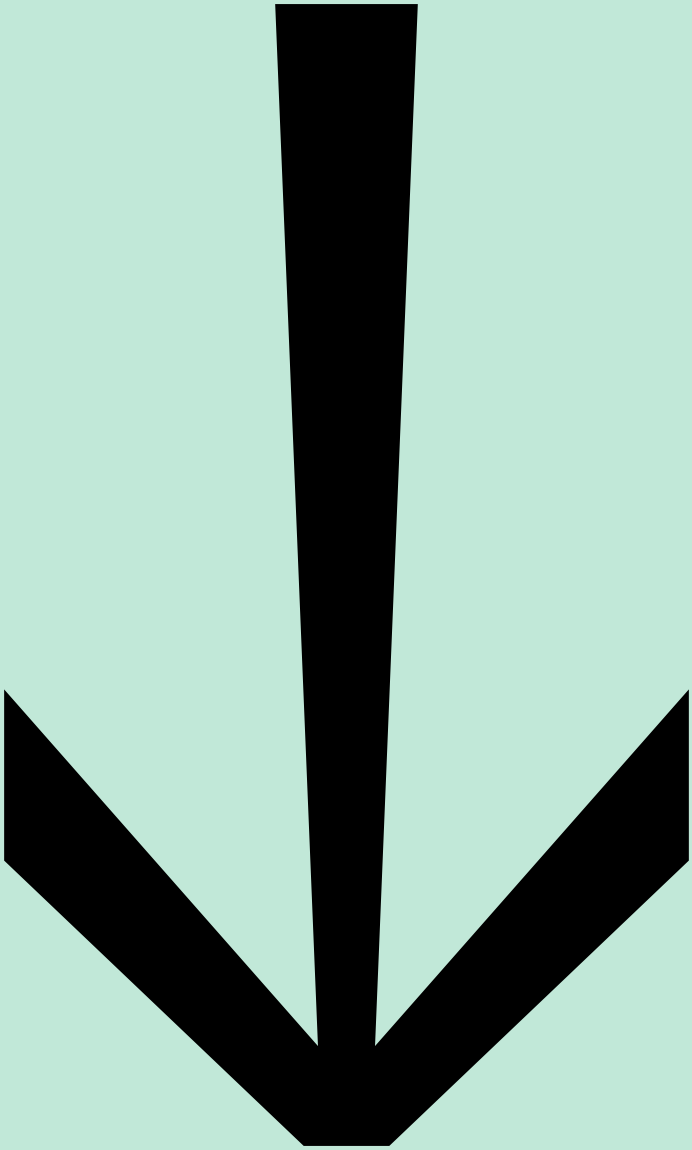
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We would like to thank the Session Chairs for agreeing to moderate the speaker presentations. We are particularly grateful to Dr Theopisti Stylianou-Lampbert, Dr Evanthia Tselika and Dr Evripides Zantides for their advice, suggestions, help and patience.

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