



Designing a more sustainable Europe: Stories for change and innovation

European Centre for Living Technology (ECLT)

Deliverable 5.2





Introduction

At the beginning of 2014, INSITE has organized an event focused on the theme of Narratives concerning Sustainability, Innovation and Local Development issues within the European Union. The aim of such a workshop, held in Venice on 31st January- 1st February, was to foster a concrete and stimulating dialogue with relevant social actors operating in these fields, most of which had been previously met by members of the INSITE community in a number of occasions, among them there were DIPOs – Distributed Innovation Policy Organizations such as the Transition Towns Network, Arts and Society, ICLEI and the Informed Cities project, Puglia Smart City, etc. - academic institutions and single scholars from Politecnico of Milano, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, but also policy makers, professionals and entrepreneurs, from Progetto Manifattura, Habitech, etc. Moreover, also artists and art curators have been invited to participate, since the INSITE community – accordingly also to previous events - desired to go on exploring the role Art can play in addressing these crucial issues, convinced that they are relevant change agents, who can play a crucial role on the one hand, providing Society of different perspectives in the understanding of phenomena and the construction of collective sensemaking, and on the other, because art works themselves are endowed by their creators with agency (see Alfred Gell, “Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory of Art”), which means that Art works act directly upon social actors, and can change the way these actors think, feel and act with respect to themselves and the world they inhabit. Indeed, while the artist may have intentions about just which changes his/her work will effect on which social actors, the interactions between art work and others are really out of his/her hands.

A further issue addressed has been how it is possible to design and develop - once we have identified the objectives and priorities of an innovation project, the relevant social actors that will be affected by it, the expertise required, etc. - a common strategy that consider all these elements and agents and can monitor the cascades of changes, induced by innovation projects, so as to steer them towards a more socially and environmentally sustainable future.

An implicit goal of the meeting was to issue a federative proposal to the participating DIPOs, starting from those already sharing the INSITE’s vision.

To this regard, the UNIVE team which was responsible for the organization of the event, proposed to adopt a narrative approach both to share strategies already enacted and envision and design new ones. To tackle this issue, the workshop’s attendees have been invited, weeks before



the event, to join a dedicated Google group (dmse2014@googlegroups.com) where materials on the notion of socially sustainable innovation have been uploaded, and participants have been asked to share also there their own stories of change. Indeed, setting up the Google group was aimed at strengthening mutual learning and understanding, familiarizing with the UNIVE team narrative approach to support, manage and steer Social Innovation projects (e.g. through sharing and discussing materials, concepts, approaches, etc.), but also at fostering the building of relationships among the INSITE community by providing different opportunities (online/offline) of joint action before and after the workshop. The writing of the first-hand experiences of the participants (i.e. the enacted stories) had to follow some basic guidelines – explained and outlined in a Story Template and a Story Example (i.e. The Cat and the Fox, a narrative extracted from a local development project analysed by the UNIVE team), and which basically consisted of: a description of main concept of the story of change and innovation they wanted to present at the workshop (around 5-6 lines), the identification of the targets and characters involved in the story, a brief explanation of the values/orientation it has (i.e. what is story intended to transform? e.g. unemployment, quality of environment, people lifestyles, values, system of production, research methodologies, relationships etc.), and finally the plot of the story, divided into scenes (around 7-8 and no more than 4-5 lines each).

To start, on the Google group, the workshop attendees had only to share the story concept.

Here follows an example of a story concept shared on the Google group by one of the participant. It shows the narrative underlying a specific project, that of Progetto Manifattura, but it is indeed the narrative that many project and industries concerned with the development of a smart, fair and green economy share.



STEVE AND THE TURTLES

In Zeno's paradox the fast Achilles could run at breakneck speed, but he would never be able to reach the tortoise. In history that was perhaps the only time in which the slow turtle had the satisfaction of taking on the sprint of his competitor. Then the realism of empirical observation has taken over and since then the victory has always been the exclusive prerogative of sprinters.

And so today the successful model of enterprise appears only the one that stands out for its ability to accelerate. Steve Jobs and his imitators have avenged Achilles and took revenge on the entire bestiary of companies clumsy and awkward doomed to disappear from the advanced markets .

But the slowness, banished from the economic culture of our time, seems impossible to eradicate completely. It seems as if the gene of the turtle had nested deeply in many other species, returning occasionally to the surface with its evolutionary reasons. Not a slowness daughter of sloth and laziness, but rather to claim a space for the maturation and absorption. A slowness that evokes solidity and rootedness, in a time which is instead marked by mobility and disorientation.

In our country, where the speed has always been more a myth than a reality, perhaps it is time to come to terms with the fact that we do better the "slow" rather than the "fast". Therefore, also with respect to the creation of new innovative businesses it's not for granted that the most suitable model for Italy, the one to bet everything on, is the one of the few sprinters, selected from thousands.

Now that the infatuation with accelerators and startups is already on the wane, a story to tell could therefore be that of places like the Manifattura of Rovereto, where the turtles take on to achieve Achilles. They united into an innovation community, because there is no problem solving without a plurality of social relationships. So artificial community, as the natural ones scattered because of modernity. "Built" communities, but not less effective.

Apart from this, online, preliminary phase, the general structure of the workshop (which is a narrative itself which has a number of structures available) has been conceived so has to address and concretely foster the sharing and envisioning of new narratives of change.



Therefore, the opening of the workshop consisted of a Welcome cocktail, where the presentation of two projects related to social and cultural sustainability and community building were scheduled, i.e. Homm-sw, a software developed by Officina Emilia (Italy) to use ICT to support interactive and hands-on workshops in museums, and specifically designed to create and share on line multimedia narratives and network of stories, that can trigger reflexivity and provide outcomes to be used both for policies design and integration (e.g. in education, cultural heritage valorization, local development, etc.), and Come to Venice, an artistic project by Benedetta Panisson, composed by a documentary and other art works. The project talks about Venice and its community identity, i.e. the contradictions, the fragility of the lagoon, etc. Despite the documentary has obtained international awards and recognition and was part of the official selection of the exhibition “S’adapting to the Anthropocene”, curated by UNESCO and COAL (Coalition pour l’art et le développement durable) Panisson’s work found strong opposition from the city cultural institutions and has never been exhibited entirely.

The day after, the work proceeded with a first session in the morning titled “Stories about”, dedicated to the presentation of case studies and experiences about innovation and sustainability projects run by institutions and industries, and a more theoretical contribution on the uncertainty which characterize so complex processes and the need to design proper scaffolding structures and support the development of generative relationship. In the afternoon, the second session “Networking, con-sensus, storytelling”, consisted of two parallel roundtables on designing sustainable communities in Europe where the stories of various projects – different in scale and scope - have been discussed, and as a conclusion of the session some tools and approaches (i.e. Art and ICT based platforms) which can enrich and help in dealing with Socially Sustainable Innovation projects have been presented.

A third session, “Thinking forward”, has been organized as a call for future joint action and a sort of heads and hands-on momentum among participants: the attendees had to work again on two stories shared and discussed the day before during the roundtables (and on the Google group), focusing on the communication and institutional dimensions, so as to steer them into a more effective and positive directions. This latter, experimental, activity was considered of high value by all the attendees and indeed it succeeded in generating further interaction and work among the people, which continued both on the Google groups and via e-mail (especially on the Palio del Grano story) and face-to-face interaction.



The following pages contains a detailed report of the workshop contributions, whose presentations are available on: <https://speakerdeck.com/insite> while podcasts of the main sessions have been uploaded via: <http://www.spreaker.com/user/insite>. Further information and exchanges can be found in the dedicated Google group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/dmse2014>, while the official hashtag of the event was #DMSE14.

Welcome and introduction

HOMM: hands-on and multi-media laboratories in museums

Margherita Russo, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Museums, places of informal education par excellence, have great potential in assisting the education activities in schools and fostering lifelong learning. homm-sw is a tool



to create and share on line multimedia narratives. Its use may support the effectiveness of museums in developing inclusive and collaborative educational practices, contrasting learning difficulties and creating connections between people. The goal is to allow the accumulation and sharing of relevant knowledge on local dimensions, very often not available through the scientific and academic literature. Potential targets of homm-sw are students, teachers, tutors, educators, social workers visiting a museum along with visitors to the museum in general. By proposing Homm-sw to museums and education institutions, we intend:

- a) to use ICT to support interactive workshops in museums;
- b) to improve the use of the museum by academic and education institutions, training centers and programs of adult education;
- c) to promote social inclusion, strengthening the identity of museums as places of learning and support relationships between individuals, groups and institutions;
- d) to encourage the sharing of homm-sw through networks of museums and research centers interested in developing its use and in implementing new functionalities.

For more information, please visit www.homm-museums.org and www.homm-sw.org



Come to Venice

Benedetta Panisson , Amerigo Nutolo



Come to Venice is an artistic project by Benedetta Panisson about Venice. A never-ending work in progress dedicated to the people who live in the lagoon and to everybody who feels part of it. During the whole movie, the unsettling sound of the high-tide sirens goes with interviews with citizens and pictures of the city, in a constant mood of fear and rebellion. The documentary was part of the official selection of the exhibition “S’adapater a l’Anthropocene”, curated by UNESCO and COAL, “Coalition pour l’art et le development durable”. Despite the international resonance of Panisson’s work, the documentary found opposition in Venice. This opposition is interpreted by the author as a symptom of the difficulty of talking about identity to a community which is losing its own identity. The communication become even more difficult when the message comes from a person within the same community, and deteriorates further if it is conveyed through art.

- For further information: <http://cometovenice.tumblr.com>
- Trailer of the documentary: <http://vimeo.com/59992378>

First Session: Stories about

Manifattura: A shared space for shaping innovation

Gianluca Salvatori, Progetto Manifattura, Rovereto, Italy

Progetto Manifattura – Green Innovation Factory is a publicly financed economic development project that is creating a hub for green development. The project is transforming a former tobacco production plant in Rovereto, Italy, into a business and research cluster for green building, renewable energy, and environmental technology. The project is adapting global green growth policies to the local level. With a budget of €100 million from local and national government sources, the project is renovating historic industrial plants dating from the mid-1800s and building new, energy efficient, buildings. The





resulting site is providing space and services for small companies, research centers, certification labs, and other institutions. With 150 entities and 1200 people working in open offices and shared environments, the project will be a place that stimulates innovation through the sharing of ideas and goals.

Sustainability is a key theme in today's economy and the general idea is to produce more goods and services for an increasing number of users while consuming fewer resources. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Council has defined a green growth strategy for more than 30 developed countries by redefining existing industries or developing new ones. An integrated strategy is necessary to achieve common goals such as greenhouse gas reduction targets. Within the context of sustainable Green Innovation, changing the products used will alter human behavior. A combination of research, technology development, education roles and public institutions and private enterprise are necessary for any of these concepts to succeed. This strategy can also be applied on the local level. With this view, the Province of Trento is supporting Progetto Manifattura in an effort to manage the transition from traditional industries to greener industries.

Habitech,

Thomas Miorin, Habitech/GBC, Italy



Can the story of an industrial district be recounted, and communicated, using narratives? According to Thomas Miorin, yes: building a parallel between popular movies and his past experience, Miorin described the agents, artifacts, scaffolding structures and the narrative logic which led to the genesis of

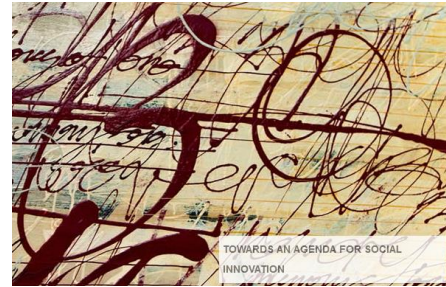
Habitech in Trento, Italy. Habitech was founded in 2006, as an Energy and Environment Cluster and its history was characterized by agents with diverging attributions, challenges and harsh confrontation between the institutions and the characters behind the project. Today, in less than 10 years since its foundation, Habitech has become a reality of excellence, comprised of over 300 companies, research organizations and public agencies, a turnover of close one billion euro and 8000 employees whose main areas of expertise are green building, energy and sustainable mobility. In these three areas Habitech develops projects, offers services for innovation and provide technical and commercial support for enterprises and institutions.



Ontological uncertainty, innovation and generative relationships

David A. Lane, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

The concept of Innovation Society refers to the idea of a society in which innovation, defined as the process through which new artifacts are conceived, designed, produced and introduced into patterns of use, is considered as the only way to face crises and achieve wealth and social stability. The major crisis affecting modern times, from unemployment to climate change passing through resource depletion and widespread diseases, are currently tackled introducing more innovation, which is seen as the sole remedy against unsustainability. But it can be argued that in most cases, are the same innovations that have been a primary factor in inducing these very crises, through the cascade of unanticipated consequences that follow in the wake of innovation processes. Current approaches to innovation studies, with their focus on individual innovations, cannot grasp the complexity of all the unanticipated and unpredictable consequences that the introduction of a new artifact may trigger, and is precisely what makes the Innovation Society's endogenous crises so difficult to detect and address. To understand innovation dynamics, it is essential to take as the unit of analysis innovation cascades and the positive feedbacks that drive them, not individual innovations. These cascades are characterized by ontological uncertainty: it is often impossible to predict what kinds of new patterns of social interaction, new conceptual categories and new artifacts will emerge in the course of an innovation cascade, or even who will be affected by these changes and how. Ontological uncertainty and the resulting innovation cascades have two important implications for the concept of social innovation. First, they imply that all innovation processes are "social," in the sense that they induce changes in interaction patterns and hence social organization, so the modifier "social" in social innovation is redundant or misleading. Second, they imply that the social effects of innovation processes are highly unpredictable: the innovator/entrepreneur's intention to initiate a project that moves in a socially positive direction is no guarantee that the project, even if it manages to obtain financing, becomes sustainable, and "scales up", will have effects that are socially positive, never mind those that the innovator envisioned! To address systemic issues like these, we need a theory of social innovation that does not start from the Innovation Society ideology's way of looking at innovation processes and their dynamics. To be useful, such a theory must also provide guidance for building a social





innovation practice that can take us beyond the dilemmas posed by the Innovation Society. What might such a theory look like, and what might it imply about the practice of social innovation?

The Green Communities project within innovation cascades: a case for Dynamic Evaluation,

Valentina Anzoise and Stefania Sardo, ECLT

Social Innovation projects have to face complex foresight horizons due to the unforeseen changes occurring in the space its designers are seeking to transform. Some of these changes are induced by their own actions and they can trigger cascades of unpredictable transformations which can reveal themselves even in the long period. Starting from these basic assumptions, the “Emergence by Design” project team (GA 284625 FP7-ICT-2011-C founding scheme) developed an approach to evaluation named Dynamic Evaluation. The ECLT team first tested it on a local development case study, namely the Green Communities project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment. The project was aimed at fostering the constitution of economically and socially sustainable communities, through a responsible and efficient management of local resources, in four mountain communities in Southern Italy. This approach is a process itself, and it is immanent to all the phases and dimensions involved in the project. Moreover, it uses narratives as meaningful and constitutive parts of the empirical base of data, and as crucial components of the scenario building processes, so as to generate feedbacks loops. The Dynamic Evaluation is: inclusive, of indirectly/directly involved and affected agents; reflexive, by generating and reintroducing in the process feedbacks and analysis of what is happening; adaptive, in order to cope with cascades of changes; informative and transparent. Moreover, the analysis of the Green Communities case study proved to be fundamental in order to design and develop the Dynamic Evaluation dedicated set of ICT tools, aimed at facilitating the collection, the monitoring and visualization of data regarding changes occurring in the Agent-Artifact space of the project under evaluation.

Second Session: Building networks through con-sensus, narratives and ICT

Roundtable 1

Transition Networks: Transition Network is a charitable organisation whose role is to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the Transition



model, creating initiatives that rebuild resilience and reduce CO2 emissions. Transition Networks uses narratives at different level - the local, the national (across different countries) and the European/global level, which requires a diversity and richness of languages and narratives. Every narrative holds a level of uncertainty, a grey-zone, which is the space in which innovation can happen. Showing and detecting uncertainties in narratives opens opportunities and shows possibilities.

Lessons learnt:

An important point that emerged out of the consequent discussion is that in order to fully be able to tell a story and understand a narrative one needs to be free of interpretation in telling the story but also in listening to the story.

PugliaSmartLab: PugliaSmartLab is a project that aims to foster structural change in Puglia Region, through innovation and “Knowledge Intensive Services” (KIS) development. The goal is to kick-start regeneration after the economic crisis. It is an applied research project aimed at creating an engaged city/region, through creating a scaffolding structure including citizens, the ministry of universities and research, politicians and technology partners. The aim is to create dialogue to identify solutions that focus on people’s needs – and indeed the Living Labs participating to the European Network of Living Lab, like PugliaSmartLab, are about meeting and connecting people. However, even though a multi-stakeholder approach was recognized to be pivotal, bringing people together holds difficulties. Therefore, meeting points on shared citizens’ needs were created, hold together by a shared and common narrative, which facilitates meetings.

Lessons learnt:

- Creating and building shared narratives are an important “glue” to get people together and find common solutions.
- It is vital that no “shared narrative” is imposed on people. Narratives need to evolve organically.

ICLEI: ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, founded in 1990 as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, is an international association of local governments and national and regional local government organizations that have made a commitment to



sustainable development and is coordinating a number of projects, at the European level on these issue. Among the most recent, the Informed Cities project, a 3-year project developed within the Seventh Framework programme, whose aims were to examine and enhance connectivity between research and policy-making for sustainable development, at (and for) the local level. To reach these objectives, interaction and face-to-face discussions between researchers and policy-makers, as well as explorative application of research-based tools for sustainable urban management by local governments across Europe have been fostered. Although the mission and vision of ICLEI has is clear, as a large organization ICLEI underwent several iterations of transformation, currently from the local (local government) level to the citizens level, reflecting a further degree of decentralization.

Lessons learnt:

When organisations are involved in similar processes, having a dynamic narrative is very important, so as to hold a shared understanding of why this is happening and how it is happening. The discussion evolved around several re-occurring issues, but was also touching on the importance of the dynamic evaluation and how it could be a sustainable asset in the transformation of organisations internally.

IMAGIS: IMAGIS is a research group by the Department of Design at the Polytechnic of Milan. Working with communication designers and service designers it created and participated in international network of designers of social innovation (DESIS Network - Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability; N4V – Network for Visions). IMAGIS’ projects explores how to design artefact and meta-stories and create “architects of stories”. It therefore analyses the different structures and languages used, to help designers to become communicators and story tellers.

Lessons learnt:

- The quality of narratives is important. We also need to understand the emotions and emotional levels, which are important elements for narratives.
- Narratives have to be open and narrators need to be able to enter and exit them at multiple points (no fixed structure)



- We need to be able to listen carefully and let a story emerge. The process of telling a story is important, but also the process of listening to a story is vital (i.e. be/becoming good story-listeners). We need to be able to self-reflect and look at the narrative from outside.

Roundtable 2

ANCI – The National Programme on Municipalities: The story told is about a National Programme on Municipalities (Piano per il rinnovamento delle città), that beached – like many other Programmes of this kind - because of many obstacles, among which internal conflicts and lack of fundings. Despite the controverises, this long-avaited Programme – an initiative launched by the Ministry of Infrastructures - was approved, although full of deficiencies, and it finally became law in August 2012. 500 municipalities submitted their development projects to the open call (the collection and classification of the proposals was made by ANCI), revealing the need for such funds. The Programme was managed by a Board composed by all the institutional stakeholders that in some ways could have been affected by it (e.g. Regions, Cassa depositi e prestiti, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Development Policies Department, ...). The aim of the board was that of evaluating the submitted projects and then selecting those that would get the funds. When the selection phase ended, the board realized that there weren't enough funds to fully cover all the submitted projects, therefore these money would have been just a sort of seed capital for those to be implemented. In the meanwhile, other internal and external elements contributed to the process: the fall of the Italian government, the change in the Ministry organization. A new task force was nominated, but it started opposing the whole process, for example adding new norms and regulations that even came to deny the inspiring principle of the Programme. After several months still there aren't constructions sites or signed contracts for the selected projects, and of the 28 proposals only a few have been confirmed.

Villaggio dell'Arte, Azione Matese and Rural Design: The project “Villaggio dell'Arte - Azione Matese”, funded by EU in 2002-2006, was focused on the development of inner lands and was rooted in the idea that a cultural short circuit is necessary in order to change old and persisting narratives deploying in those territories, and enhance the emergence of new ones. One of the ways from which to start building this short circuit, is by stimulating local communities in reflecting about themselves: the hypothesis of the promoters of Villaggio dell'Arte was that this could be done through Arts and through participatory labs which involve the population. This



experience, even if hadn't that much recognition in Italy, has been acclaimed outside as a true example of regeneration of little communities, through the reflection on the identity of the territory and on the concept of landscape, so as to reinforce the relationship between human beings and the environment. Beyond the art performances, outputs of the projects have been new economic activities, such as B&B structures, and of course new relationships. There have been many obstacles to this project, first of all the lack of a deep support from local institutions. In fact, most of these areas are left alone in their problems and they are characterized by the presence of many local groups in conflict with one another. Despite these weaknesses, the project eventually had the chance to obtain some EU and regional funding. This story helped in reflecting on how to overcome these issues, and how important is to have stronger and more effective decision-making scaffolding structures and procedures, able to face conflicts, and to create the space for an outward opening so as to go beyond parochialisms and connect different experiences. Nonetheless, although some years have passed, these difficulties are experienced nowadays also by the Rural Design project, lunched by some of the proponents of Villaggio dell'Arte who are claiming and working for a cultural shift to happen, that could make communities look and think at local resources differently, but also – concretely - redesign rural territories and build innovative productive chains accordingly.

Il Palio del Grano: The “Palio del Grano” project has been developed in a little municipality in Southern Italy. The idea was that of overcoming the imaginary of inner lands as disadvantaged and underdeveloped places, but instead of reflecting on how to better use local resources and change development patterns. The “Palio del grano” experience started several years ago, by a small group of young people supported by the local Pro Loco and the GAL Casacastra, and it shows up as an experience of collective “harvesting” – material and symbolic. The harvesting is carried out as a sort of competition, at first among neighborhoods in the municipality of Caselle in Pittari (Italy), and then among neighboring municipalities (for the next editions, the competition will be extended to other Mediterranean communities). Beyond the harvesting festival, the broader vision is of reflecting on: food and nutrition, sociality, innovation of rural and marginal contexts through the use of ICTs. An outcome of this initiative, has been the setting up of dedicated spaces such as the Wheat Library, which recovers ancient local and European seeds. Further outcome are more immaterial, such as an ever growing and widespread knowledge on biodiversity and agricultural techniques, also stimulated by the “Wheat Camp” initiative - a week of workshops and practical activities related to rural literacy. The biggest value of this



ongoing process is that it has been able to trigger a short circuit, an inward directed force gradually stimulating local people in participating to the activities, in constant relation with experiences, in Italy and Europe, sharing the same orientation (e.g. the Slow Food movement, they are part of). This has been done through a long process of imaginary re-shaping and social acceptance: agriculture seen as a resource, and not as a symbol of underdevelopment. This experience has also led to new activities, some young people – through this project – have set up new productive activities.

Officina Emilia: The story of Officina Emilia is about a project whose characteristics are the innovation and quality of the concept, and the support of tenacious actors, but whose success has always been negotiated with local institutions. This project is settled in one of the most industrialized, rich, dynamic and manufacturing areas of Italy: Emilia. In 1999 a group of researchers, which was reasoning on innovation processes in the mechanical industry, found out that local policies had decided not to invest in the mechanical industry anymore, because it was considered a traditional and declining industry. The consequences were a decrease both in funding and in the specialization of the education system of the Region, once focused in providing trained workforce to the mechanical sector. The data coming from Regional studies were highlighting a decline that wasn't widespread all over the Region. But as a result, the thriving side of the manufacturing system was hit, and it began to drown for a lack of skills. At the opposite, the aforementioned researchers were perceiving a very strong growth momentum in the mechanical sector, which was not represented in the official data. Concurrently, a change within the University was undergoing, since it was acquiring more administrative autonomy, and it was rethinking its societal functions, among which its role in contributing to the development of the territory. The group of researchers decided to rise the issue of the mechanical sector to the Atheneum. As a result, the "Officina Emilia" project was launched, focusing on the development of an active knowledge of the territory in young people, teachers and policy makers, through practical hands-on laboratories (designed in such a way that there is a continuous evaluation, helping in enhancing labs outcomes' quality in time). But soon it emerged the need for a physical space and resources; the support came from regional funds, afterwards from a local bank foundation, the Chamber of Commerce of Modena, and the Municipality of Modena. Despite some frictions with local authorities, finally the University found a building in which to host the new initiative, although it took several months in order to have all the bureaucratic permissions to start using it.



Transition Towns – the Italian node: This story is at the same time global and very local. My experience comes from Monteveglio, a small town of 5,000 people near Bologna. Some years ago, I started looking at what was happening in England, where - in 2006 - a group of people decided to sit around a table talking about how was it possible to solve the problems affecting humanity. What they realized is that in order to deal with such fundamental problems, the story we're telling each other has to be changed: our perception of the world continues to bring us in the same place as we are, and this prevents us from making substantial changes. Is from here that started the Transition Towns movement, based on the idea that one can activate a systemic process everywhere, as long as there are 4-5 people available willing to trigger it. It is not true that people behavioral change is difficult: you just have to know how to do it. Looking at what they were doing in England, I decided to start the same process in Italy. The whole process is about the collective construction of a new and different story with everyone in a community, and it starts with an initial moment of cognitive reconnection with the material and physical reality of our planet. This is a difficult step, but it is the mechanism that allows you to start sharing a common scenario. This passes into a space where this reconnection is managed by an emotional point of view. There are different ways to do so, and the process involves the activation of the context. This work lays the foundation for taking actions, which are different from those that could be obtained in the normal world and are part of a story that is built day by day by the people who belong to it. The new space that is so constructed changes the relational systems, moves priorities, and leads to different results. This is the transition process: we take care of how to deal with the problem, not on how to address it.

Arts and Social Change

Jocelyn Cunningham, Arts & Society



Uncommon Ground suggests that the arts can offer a frame for shared experiences that enable complex explorations of a place in 'seeing differently' and 'imagining otherwise'. This approach is realised in a three-year project in Peterborough, England entitled Arts and Social Change, which was about understanding the conditions on the ground for change and responding to this as opposed to designing a project and then implementing it. In this way, the concept of invisibility plays a critical role in methodology but there is also the continual goal of making visible that which is hidden. This was based upon the notion that if we did this



well, we could leave without being noticed, hence a story of mystery and intrigue. The city wanted to tackle the lack of attachment that citizens felt about where they lived, increase civic participation in local community and political life as well as develop new ways of working together. All ideas were built upon the concept of what would enable people to do all this for themselves – what were the conditions that could sustain this behaviour change?

The programme addressed culture change in a systemic way through the arts, not using the arts as a mechanism for change. In fact, many people did not see the projects they did as arts based at all. The term ‘creative practice’ was employed referring to the processes, structures and thinking that underpin arts practice as channels and catalysts for defining new ways of working. Arts and Social Change was a narrative that cannot be outlined as a single case study and its most surprising and successful chapter was one that was never intended – a leadership programme with city leaders. All of these case studies can be seen on the RSA’s website (the agency delivering this programme).

The story of this programme is captured by Peter Senge:

“Deep beliefs and assumptions can change as experience changes and when this happens, culture changes. The carrier of culture is the story we tell ourselves over and over. When the experiences change, so do the stories.”

Tools and approaches to deal with Socially Sustainable Innovation projects

Andrea Quartarone, ASK Centre Bocconi University; Mauro Mattioli, ECLT. Discussants: Antonio Santangelo, University of Turin

A two folded presentation to explain an approach intended to deal with and exploit the potential of narrative analysis and narrative generation, which has been developed within the context of the MD project (Emergence by Design), in particular as key components of the “dynamic evaluation” methodology. The first part was devoted to outline the Narrative Synopsis, developed in order to make researchers able to translate a story into a defined pattern. The goal was to make narrative structure easier to be analyzed in its constitutive passages, to be associated to a better-known (and more exemplar) narrative and to be depicted in A4 (the ICT tool that explained in the next paragraph). The Narrative Synopsis is a version of a Television Synopsis – which is used by TV writers and producers when they have to clarify their ideas about a program and to understand if



the program is appealing, coherent, feasible and reproducible – has been modified and tailored on the research need of the MD project. Therefore, the Narrative Synopsis has been designed in two parts: the first is about the story - shortly written - and the environment around it (players, motivations, goals, etc...); the second one is a specific schedule of the events (i.e. a plot divided into scenes) as they have occurred, preparatory to the use of the A4 tool.

The second part of the presentation shows the results of a research on narrative modeling. The research led to the definition of a formal modeling language for narrative analysis, called A4, and the implementation of the MD Storyboard, an innovative ICT tool for A4 editing and presentation. The MD Storyboard has been developed as a sub-system of an ICT platform (i.e. the “MD Toolset Ecosystem”, following MD methodology work phases and specific interactions with users and other tools). The A4 language has its roots in Lane-Maxfield theory of Agent-Artifact space that concurred to the definition of its graphical grammar. Examples are shown to illustrate the A4 language: its expressive power and its articulation. Among them “The Cat and the Fox” story, which has been used on the workshop Google group, to guide the workshop’s participants in the construction of their own project/organization story.

Third Session: Thinking Forward

chair: Valentina Anzoise and Stefania Sardo, ECLT

After an overview on the possibilities represented by the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and a call for future joint action, the session was conceived as an hands and heads-on momentum among participants. Attendees had to work on the stories shared and discussed during the first day roundtables (and on the Google group) divided again into two groups. Two stories have been selected – i.e. Palio del Grano and Forrest Gump and the Change Makers – as examples to conduct an exercise of extraction and deconstruction of the narratives beneath them, and of writing of “new narratives” better addressing issues related to the communication and institutional components, that could possibly improve their impacts and steer them into more positive and sustainable directions.

The issues the two groups had to focus on during this teamwork, refer to the institutional and communication dimensions, and can be declined as follows:

How to design institutions ...?



- more inclusive and collaborative
- willing to learn and enabling learning (reflexive)
- open/flexible but solid and trustable (both for participants and “clients”, e.g. how to cope with the growing request of impacts and outcomes assessment)
- willing to exploit/intercept internal/external resources and idea
- able to manage leadership and distributed responsibility and commitment

How to design a communication strategy?

- dealing properly with internal/external communication
- dealing properly with the issue of recognition/representation of the project vision
- «talking» to different relevant social groups using their languages and learning from their languages/knowledge (i.e. exploiting their potential)
- setting the condition to have a conversation and a dialogue, rather than a “driven” extraction of the information, enabling the emergence of action from the bottom (i.e. providing appropriate joint action and reflection opportunity settings)

And finally, how and by whom should a “taskforce” able to deal with all these (and others) issues be constituted?