

Desis and COLIMAR: projects for social innovation

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Abstract

The COLIMAR¹ was founded seven years ago with the purpose of add value to fish and to generate jobs and income for the families of fishermen. During some periods due to increased demand are called sixteen women in the community who already have experience with the activity. One their besides being the president of the cooperative also works in the production process of snacks based on seafood. Therefore, the COLIMAR is presented as example of social innovation, because "Social innovations generally refers to new strategies, concepts and methods to meet social needs of all kinds [...]. (BARTHOLO, p. 5). Therefore, the cooperative fits into precepts the DESIS network want to advance in practice and study of design as facilitator element of processes social innovation for sustainability also in Brazil. So, the objective of this work is to make explicit connections and their importance for COLIMAR and for DESIS network, because for the network, the social innovation can be seen as a process emerging from the creative and to achieve news objectives socially recognized, besides being considered innovation driven by social demands and generated by the actors involved.

KEYWORDS: social innovation, DESIS, COLIMAR

Introduction

During the creative process of design projects, the designer creates a lot of strategies with the purpose of finding a solution to a need. In view of this, become of great importance to highlight the role of design placed in the cooperative's context, especially, helping the management process design, which also becomes a facilitator of the process of social innovation.

From the monitoring and assisting of design professional that is inserted in these cooperatives looking up from elements of their cultures to identify likes and also customs,

¹ Cooperative Women Food Producers of Mariculture.

avoiding creating a distance from the origins. In this way, the design presents itself as a value transformer inserted in the context of a contemporary society that is in constant transition.

In view of this insertion, it's possible to see increasingly the need to design strategies as a factor of differentiation and competitiveness to help these cooperatives with the recovery of their products by brands consolidating. Thus, we can realize that the designer use the more appropriate information such as attractiveness or design aspects in order to give greater visibility to social projects.

For that, aspects and highlights of region are also incorporated in the constant development of projects with cooperatives. This allows a visualization of the involved characters and their role in the production system, facilitating the connection of local services and identify, for future creations, non-existent services, bringing benefits in the spectra social, economic and environmental terms with community's reality.

Being like that, the purposes of this work are presents two cases of social innovation and definitions related to the DESIS network, the importance of design applied to COLIMAR Cooperative, as well as clarify existing connections and their importance to the network DESIS and COLIMAR, as for DESIS, the social innovation as a process of change emerging from the creative and aiming to reach new goals socially recognized, beyond being considered a driver of innovation of social demands and generated by the involved actors.

Methodology

This article has a central guidance the principles of social innovation, applied to development process of design projects in COLIMAR cooperative.

As to area of science, it is classified as theoretical research, empirical and practical, it depends on the theorical framework for analysis and argumentation. It is about a issue experienced by the author and has a research and application linked to the matter subject.

Beyond that, this research can be characterized, from the point of view of its nature, as applied research, because aims to generate knowledge for practical application directed to the solution of specific problems.

Being like that, the present work is characterized as to their goals as an exploratory-descriptive study, due to the interest in detecting variables that influences user's attitudes and the intention to understand the phenomenon that involve social innovation.

Exploratory research is, in view of Triviños (2006), essential both for experimental and descriptive research, looking that the exploration operation aims to familiarize themselves with the problem, being considered a first and fundamental step for any kind of research. The descriptive phase, beyond to describe the characteristics involving the phenomenon from observations and surveys done, "[...] correlated events or phenomenon (variables) without manipulating them." (Cervo; Bervian and Silva, 2007, p. 61).

By Gil (2002), the descriptives researchs provide more familiarity with the problem, in view of making it more explicit or build hypotheses, having as main purpose the improvement of ideas or the discovery of intuitions.

Relating to proceedings a research paper source, because the object of the research contains a bibliographic research on the themes: social innovation and network DESIS.

As for how to approach the problem, it is qualitative research that, by Gil (2002), believes there is a dynamic relationship between the real world and the subject, it is, an inseparable link between the objective world and the subjectivity of the subject that can not be translated into numbers. Here, the interpretation of phenomenon and the assignment of meanings are basic in the process of qualitative research not requiring the use of methods and statistical techniques.

Beyond this, the study was developed looking to analyze and systematize the activities of the DESIS network and the COLIMAR Cooperative, and promote through the design processes of social innovation.

In this case, was used a design strategy that could handle all the complex interactions that the cooperative needed to economically develop, in balance with all social and environmental aspects. Moreover, were also analyzed all the factors that exerted significant influence on social innovation.

Referring to the research design, to the understanding of the issues addressed in the theory, this research can be classified as bibliographical research, because is based and material already prepared – books of current literature and bibliographical research, scientific articles and periodicals (Gil, 2002).

Becomes relevant noting, that the bibliographic literature was used to obtain information and data about the definitions of social innovation, DESIS network and COLIMAR Cooperative.

Beyond the bibliographical research, are used some knowledge of empiricism of the authors. Thus, the present work was designed to allow expansion of the knowledge of theory outlined in this work.

Social Innovation

Over the years, the concept of social innovation has been more important and appeared in many areas. Between years 60 and 80 of the twentieth century, social innovation was very much confined to the areas of learning (education and training) and employment (work organization). Back to the 80s, social innovation also appeared linked to the area of social policies and planning of territory.

The social innovation can be considered an initiative that goes out the pre-established order, a new way to make or think of something, an alternative, or even a break, compared to traditional processes.

Social innovation can still be considered, as a change process that comes out from creative re-combination of existing assets (social capital to historical patrimony, traditional handicraft to advanced technology accessible) and paradigm changes that aim, especially, achieve goals socially recognized from a new look. It is also a kind of innovation driven by social demand and not by the market and/or autonomously technical-scientific research autonomously, which in turn, is generated more by the social actors involved.

Beyond this, social innovation can be considered as a set of processes, products and methodologies that allows improvement of life's quality of others and reduces inequities. In other words, is the contribution of sustainability of the community and country (Farfus; Rocha; Caron et al. 2007). Social innovation as a process is closely related to co-creation,

learning and collaborative planning (Healey, 1997). According to Mulgan (2006),² "Social innovation is a new idea that works achieving social goals." This kind of innovation develops from the moment that society is facing hard problems and also when new technologies are used broadly giving new possibilities or only part of its possibilities is explored.

Social innovation is also considered an operation that combines creation of social value and social change. Thus, innovation is a social purpose. Recently studies have defined social innovation as combination of results (social purpose) with the process (Mulgan, 2007; Murray et al., 2010).

Nowadays, these initiatives for social innovation is a range of small initiatives promoted, mainly, by the activities of local communities that are created and formed by small producers with family characteristics, generating, consequently, free association through cooperatives³, associations or other groupings. However, it seems that if favorable conditions are created, these small local of social inventions can also be expanded, consolidated, replicated and integrated into larger programs to generate sustainable change on a broader scale. It's possible to consider that one of these favorable conditions is the distribution of a variety of design skills in society.

In fact, all social partners and actors involved with research, design and development of these groups should be able to consider the problems and opportunities that arise during this work of monitoring and help. These diffuse abilities of design can be promoted and supported by experts in design. This is, by design for social innovation that according to the network DESIS, "Design for social innovation is what design can do to initiate and support social innovation." (DESIS 2010)⁴. In the same way, the design professionals that deal with the question of social innovation are those that are actively involved in the conception and development of social innovations.

Thus, is noticeable that the design for social innovation already plays a very important role. However, some things still need to change both internally in the community design (about how designers think about themselves and what they are capable of doing) and externally to it (about what people think that designers are able to do).

In one way, social innovation it is still important if attention is given only to the result because it will ensure the creation of a social value. In another way, if attention is given only to innovation process, then the appropriation of the result can be claimed by specific groups with own interests.

From this discussion accumulated EMES, Skoll Centre, Young Foundation and Ashoka, inspired by their research in this area, propose the following definition of social innovation: "It's creating a social value generally produced in collaborative and participatory arenas with people and organizations who are engaged in innovations that often involve an economic activity". The definition is based on four criteria: social value, innovation, participation and economic activity. Regarding economic activity, social innovation often has an economic impact on the communities involved and in the business organization (Hulgard; Ferrarini, 2010, p. 259).

² "Social innovation is a new idea that works in meeting social goals" (Mulgan, 2006).

³ Cooperative is an association of people with common interests, economically organized in a democratic way, that is, with the free participation of all and respecting the rights and duties of each of its members, which provides services to non-profit. Available at: <<http://www.portaldecontabilidade.com.br/tematicas/cooperativas.htm>>. Accessed on: 03 April 2012.

⁴ Design for social innovation is whatever design can do to trigger and support social innovation (DESIS 2010).

Thus, in the context of social innovation, these cooperatives look to encourage in the need to overcome adversities and risks, seize opportunities and answer challenges. Because this, the "production" of social innovation is based on knowledge or knowledge in general. However, this knowledge can be present in public policy and also in private.

However, the idea more recurrent in the bibliography is that the social innovation emerges out of institutions and often against them, being the result of a mobilization around a goal, starring informally by a social movement or with a more structured array, for a organization. That is, a product of civil society or a result of pressure from civil society. (Andrew, Abreu, 2006, p. 129).

From this, it's noticeable the importance of the work of the DESIS network in relation to the assistance of social projects in design schools. In this case, the Center for Systems Approach to Design (NASDesign) is part of DESIS-Brazil, connected to the DESIS-International⁵ network. Since 2006, the group works with productive communities of Santa Catarina developing projects with the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) and other partners, that allow the active exercise of designer with local productions. Accordingly, this article will be explained the role of DESIS network and the connection between the network and the COLIMAR Cooperative.

Desis and NASDesign

The DESIS network emerged, mainly, from the period 2006-2008. Nowadays is endorsed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and presents itself as a laboratory network of design based on design schools that promotes and supports social innovation for sustainability. It basically operates as a "design agency free", collaborating with local, regional and global partners in co-creating⁶ of projects from scenarios, solutions and communication programs.

Among all the DESIS network's goals, the main objective is to use the design, considering the thought and knowledge in design, to support and promote social innovation for sustainability. But, according to the network's principles this main goal can be divided into four more specific objectives: to increase the potential for social innovation, creating a more favorable environment in relation to social, cultural, political and economic; from promising cases of social innovations to promote the visibility of these and communicate their existence and importance, increase the replicability of social innovations, developing solutions to make the existing cases more efficient and accessible and finally, increasing the synergy of innovations for the development of social structures and platforms in order to connect the various local cases to large regional projects.

Furthermore, the DESIS network also has the objective of promoting the concept and encourage the improvement of the potential of design for social innovation in order to make the concept of social innovation clearer inside the community. Thus, the DESIS managed to introduce some notions concerning to creative communities and social innovation in many design schools around the world and created favorable conditions to start an international network on these issues. The main idea behind the work of the DESIS network is that social innovation can be a powerful motor for sustainability.

⁵ DESIS-International. Available at: < <http://www.desis-network.org/content/nas-design> >. Accessed in: 28 march 2012.

⁶ According to Brown (2009), co-creation can be understood as form of innovation in which there is a joint process of value creation: the community, either internal or external to the organizations, operates from their creativity, experience and / or knowledge in pursuit of a common goal.

To facilitate and complement the work involving the network, its pillars are the laboratories composed of teams of students, teachers and researchers to guide their teaching and research activities for social innovation. Each laboratory serves as a junction point of a large network organization making it a free, open and distributed design agency. Only by invitation of DESIS International and Regional Coordinator it's possible become a DESIS laboratory.

These laboratories have as main activity the association of teaching and research from the monitoring of local projects or regional specifics. In parallel each laboratory cultivates relationships with other laboratories and participates actively in the development of content and management of DESIS's site. Moreover, the network promotes and supports different types of activities from local and collaborative projects, even acts as a facilitator of services. It also supports the local projects that are developed by students or by teams of professional researchers from design courses. Already about collaborative projects, the DESIS network presents itself as an incubator for research projects facilitating the building of research partnerships and communicating the results to a wide public, from each laboratory that serves as a research partner who bring their expertise and sensitivity to the context of each project.

In relation of services facilitation, DESIS laboratories are authorized from one platform to exchange experiences and results, to start and incubate larger projects and research programs, and develop useful tools for design. Therefore, the DESIS site plays the dual role as a platform for communication and organization, because the site has research projects, case studies and stories to an audience twofold: people interested in design for social innovation and the laboratories members. In addition, it is considered as a platform for organizing collaborative activities of the DESIS laboratories. However, each laboratory has its own individual local site by adding the brand with the DESIS lab logo and a sentence explaining your affiliate relationship with the network.

The work's importance of DESIS network is mainly in collaboration with other networks whose focus are social innovation, quality of daily life, design for sustainability and coordination of design schools.

Individually, DESIS laboratories are free to work together in regional networks and thematic groups. His role as the sub-network is to promote discussions of regional specificities and develop initiatives programs on a regional scale. To better understand these two distinctions can be said that the same laboratory may belong to two networks: it can be part of a regional network, but also part of a themed group that is extended over several regions.

In 2012, the NASDesign was accepted as a laboratory of DESIS network. The center aims to conduct investigations and discussions about systems approach to project in order to disseminate understanding of their new theoretical and practical dimensions. To this end, are studied issues related to social innovation, responsible design, creative communities and other aspects of sustainability. This strategy considers the complex interactions realized by communities, also, considers it essential to involve social actors in an active position and expression of identities and capabilities.

In this context, the designer researcher that meets these social projects should also develop his hand as mediator of knowledge, in order to encourage new kinds of habits and new learning.

The objective of NASDesign is proposing at the end of their design process, systems solutions which meet the needs of the community, promote the practice of local initiatives, and from a learning process, allowing those involved to develop a sustainable social conscience .

The methodologies used by the laboratory are based on bibliographic review, action research and systemic approach to elaboration of the strategy.

The main research lines of NASDesign Lab for DESIS network are:

- Systemic approach;
- Creative communities;
- Traditional local communities;
- Responsible design;
- Sustainable design;
- Eco-design;
- Sustainability;

Among the major projects developed with productive communities of Santa Catarina, there is COLIMAR (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – COLIMAR cooperative building.

Currently, the NASDesign lab is available online in DESIS⁷ network represented by COLIMAR project.

⁷ NASDesign. Available at: < <http://www.desis-network.org/content/nas-design>>. Accessed on: 03 april2012.

COLIMAR and NASDesign

THE COLIMAR – Women's Cooperative of Mariculture Products – was founded on June 27, 2003, for the purpose of adding value to fish and generate work and income for the families of fishermen.

The Cooperative is installed in Governador Celso Ramos, near Florianopolis, capital of the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Currently works in a building donated by the Mayor of Governador Celso Ramos (Figure 1) also has the support of the colony of fishermen, OCESC⁸, UFSC⁹, EPAGRI, CONAB¹⁰, Ministry of Fisheries, Bank of Brazil and Phitomare. In addition, it has the State Inspection Service (SIE) and is able to produce and market for the whole state.

The cooperative sells, mainly, products that originate from fishing and mariculture, and as the demand the three women (cooperative members) who work steadily every day during working hours need the assistance of over sixteen women living in the community and who are willing to assist in these periods, but do not gain any compensation. The cooperative is responsible for the development of plates considered typical in the coastal region of Santa Catarina and are already being marketed: oysters and gratinated clams (Figure 2), meatballs fish (Figure 3), mini oysters quiches, croquettes and rissoles. For this reason, these women can be considered "... people who, collaboratively, invent, improve and manage innovative solutions to new ways of life. "(Meroni, 2007).

This kind of group tends to have a territorial solidarity and interests focusing on projects of social infrastructure. Moreover, according to Manzini (2008, p 65). "... apply their creativity to break the dominant models of thinking and doing, and with it, consciously or not, generate the local discontinuities ... "

Since the year 2010, the cooperative members of COLIMAR work incessantly to its products to suit the conditions established by a large supermarkets net concentrated throughout Brazil, in order to expose and market the products manufactured from seafood in their stores. However, it appears, were not successful due to many established and required bureaucratic questions.

For this reason, the relationship between business and community must happen through social initiatives intended to improve the community's life and its citizens, inside and outside the workplace.

COLIMAR's production has been growing in recent years due to the dissemination by cooperative members, with the help of NASDesign, located at the Center for Communication and Expression (CCE) of UFSC.

The monitoring and work of NASDesign is to follow and fulfill the following objectives: to promote actions related to design for potentiate the activities of COLIMAR in search for sustainability, to promote the integration of economic, social and cultural; develop products most appropriate to the reality of the market through the design, promote social transformation through the valuation of product and design, transfer technologies from design to the cooperative and surrounding communities; identify and integrate the productive local groups in the process for local development; search management design that is best suited to local conditions; review internal management processes; identify the physical constraints related to work inside the cooperative, from the work study and application of

⁸ Union and Organization of Cooperatives of the State of Santa Catarina.

⁹ Federal University of Santa Catarina.

¹⁰ National Supply Company.

methods and techniques of ergonomics, without affecting other determinants - organizational and cognitive and finally, report and discuss the results obtained, recommending actions aimed at improving the postures used during the tasks performed by the cooperative members and also improving the organization of cooperative work environment.

The procedures for developing these activities are focused on collaborative methodologies associated with design methodologies, participatory research, action research and social research. Among the range of activities that NASDesign is available to solve are: Briefing, conceptual Project, project informational, and finishing.

Moreover, for better progress of the project should be to combine the practical aspects and not only stay in the theory. The design professional that is inserted in these communities follows the participants as they relate to their cultures, histories, processes, etc. From these socializing experiences, conversations, exchanges of information, and search for elements from these cultures are identified tastes, customs, not to generate a certain spacing from its origins as regards the inclusion of these in the market and also to add value their products. To use this knowledge acquired through this interaction, the undergraduate students of course design of UFSC and scholarship holders of NASDesign involved with the COLIMAR project, developed in addition to the Visual Identity System (VIS), the Visual Identity Manual, the products packaging, the building internal signaling as a organizing factor in the workplace, as well as the cooperative ergonomic design. This process was started from questionnaire and interviews with cooperative women considering the limits and capabilities of the cooperative members (physically, psychologically and cognitively) aiming at the optimization of working conditions to achieve effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and quality, and provide conditions for development of creativity and participatividade avoiding human error, accident prevention and occupational diseases and providing comfort, security, quality of life, wellbeing and job satisfaction.

In these works, students also started studies of the cooperative site templates for . However, it is not known to use tools for websites creating and programming, so the work are mere sketches.

Also created the COLIMAR blog, available at:

<<http://cooperativacolimar.blogspot.com/>>, where it shows a company, and has some photos of Governador Celso Ramos city and snacks made by the cooperative. In this blog, will still be included revenues, contact, location, among other relevant matters. "Blogs allow a more informal language creating a better interaction between the market and what the company wants to communicate. Creates more personality in communication reducing the gap between the company and the customer. "¹¹

Another way to disseminate COLIMAR is the Fan Page created on Facebook available at: <<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Colimar/173315289438816>> for users can follow the news and learn more about the cooperative.

The next goal will be to print the badges to identify the cooperative members, as well as the printing nameplate of cooperative on the building front where the cooperative is located.

¹¹ Available at: <<http://patriciagalvani.blogspot.com/2007/11/importncia-de-um-blog-para-sua-empresa.html>> Accessed on: 04 Feb. 2012.



Figure 2 – Gratined oyster.



Figure 3 – Meatballs fish.

Therefore the design presents itself as a value transformer inserted in the context of a contemporary society that is in constant transition.

In view of this, the COLIMAR can be considered a special case of social innovation, it is linked to local projects as in the case of school meals¹² in Governador Celso Ramos city, presenting tendentiously social and economic homogeneity large and capacity of organize and community participation.

The actions of locality count also, in collaboration with the neighborhood which is organized in the form of projective networks, thus as do women who help COLIMAR permanent cooperative members.

So the regional territories can benefit from the strategic approach of design, which is able to connect people and places in a different view of development, where local resources and people creativity people are engaged in the challenging task of caring human relationships (Meroni, 2008).

Final Considerations

In today's society, are articulated different agents, with power relations and different roles, various incentives and barriers to social innovation. So from the these aspects, it is clear that the involvement of the DESIS network with social projects from different parts of the world, can be considered as a stimulus for the design labs of universities continue supporting and assisting these projects and cooperatives as COLIMAR continue working to achieve their innovation objectives.

It is of paramount importance for NASDesign, be part of international network as DESIS , both to get more partnerships for future projects how to assist in developing of these.

Moreover, it is clear that design can play role of facilitator in the process of project development, especially when it comes to identification, diagnosis and resolution of business issues that are of strategic importance, as in the case of COLIMAR cooperative. But for that to happen requires a little communication in the internal organization of the cooperative, involving collaboration and coordination of participants, practices and resources.

As a result, there is the action process of the designers in the context of COLIMAR cooperative with the goal of creating social motivation and sense of belonging, providing greater acceptance of project practices. And finally, promote economic development of these, as well as local development through the dissemination and value of these products, which resulted in a case of social innovation from established relationships.

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¹² The cooperative, through the bidding process of the City of Governador Celso Ramos , could participate in the project and provided school meals based on seafood for children studying in local schools.

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