"For the DESIS Network, social innovation can be seen as a process of change emerging from the creative re-combination of existing assets (social capital, historical heritage traditional craftsmanship, accessible advanced technology) and aiming at achieving socially recognised goals in new ways."

The world is facing a wide range of problems (economic instability, resources crisis, poverty, hunger, disease, etc.) and in the past few years people have come to realize that the traditional methods are no longer delivering results. Society is in constant change and so are its social, economic and cultural arrangements. The demand is for creative and innovative solutions capable of fostering sustainable growth, securing jobs, among others. For the past decade, there has been a phenomenal surge of interest in social innovation as a way to achieve sustainable economic growth. "Social innovation can be defined as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations."(Guide to Social innovation, 2013, p.6) It's a new response that is more effective, efficient or sustainable than the current solutions, and the value created aims at the wider society rather than private individuals. Social innovation is helping to solve some of the world's most pressing problems with new and creative solutions.

In the past years, the concept of design has also been changing. The discipline of design is increasingly applied in a variety of areas and sectors, expanding its territory of action.

"Design is growing out of its "making things look prettier" stage and moving towards solving the more complex human challenges." ("Design transitions" (2013) Emma Jefferies, Joyce Yee, Lauren Tan) Therefore, design can be used to improve the process of social innovation through the application of its methodology in the creation of new models, services and products that address the complex social and environmental challenges facing business, governments, society and humanity. Unlike other professionals, designers focus their work on people and have developed the ability to communicate with them and understand their problems and needs. Notwithstanding that, most innovation design teams are made up of actors from different areas and backgrounds. This happens because in order to solve a social problem it is necessary to work within all those involved, from the consumer to the organizations, all working together to achieve a specific goal. At this point we are talking about co-design and participatory design projects. In this scenario, design has a really important task: it is responsible for ensuring a correct and fluid communication between the different parts. Designers "act as facilita¬tors, supporting ongoing initiatives. But they can also be the triggers that start new social conversations" (Ezio Manzini, 2014, p.66) By using design's methods people's needs and desires are met in a technologically feasible and strategically viable way. In a co-design process of social innovation, the involved actors are often local communities, institutions and research centres. The designers are responsible for promoting collaboration among the actors and participating in the construction of a shared vision. To foster sharing, it is common to use design methods to brainstorm and organize the information such as prototypes, mock-ups, design games, models and sketches. Quoting Ezio Manzini, "social innovation can be seen as a process of change emerging from the creative re-combination of different assets". (Ezio Manzini, 2014, p.57) Designers have the ability to understand how it is possible to change and shape culture by implementing new projects that are going to have a positive impact in society. They know that culture is a powerful agent for innovation to occur. Furthermore, designers can develop new approaches to existing problems, uncovering new perspectives that bring a whole new level of understanding of a problem. Social innovation projects take place within the communities and systems by working with, not outside them.

In conclusion, the designer's sensibility, methods and ways of thinking can be a great contribution to social innovation. They help to create a stronger, more coherent project and can play a central role at steering society in the right direction.

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