



**Place-Based Creative Problem-Solving
and the Power of the Everyday**

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Based on research conducted by Chiara Camponeschi as part of the Major Portfolio submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada.

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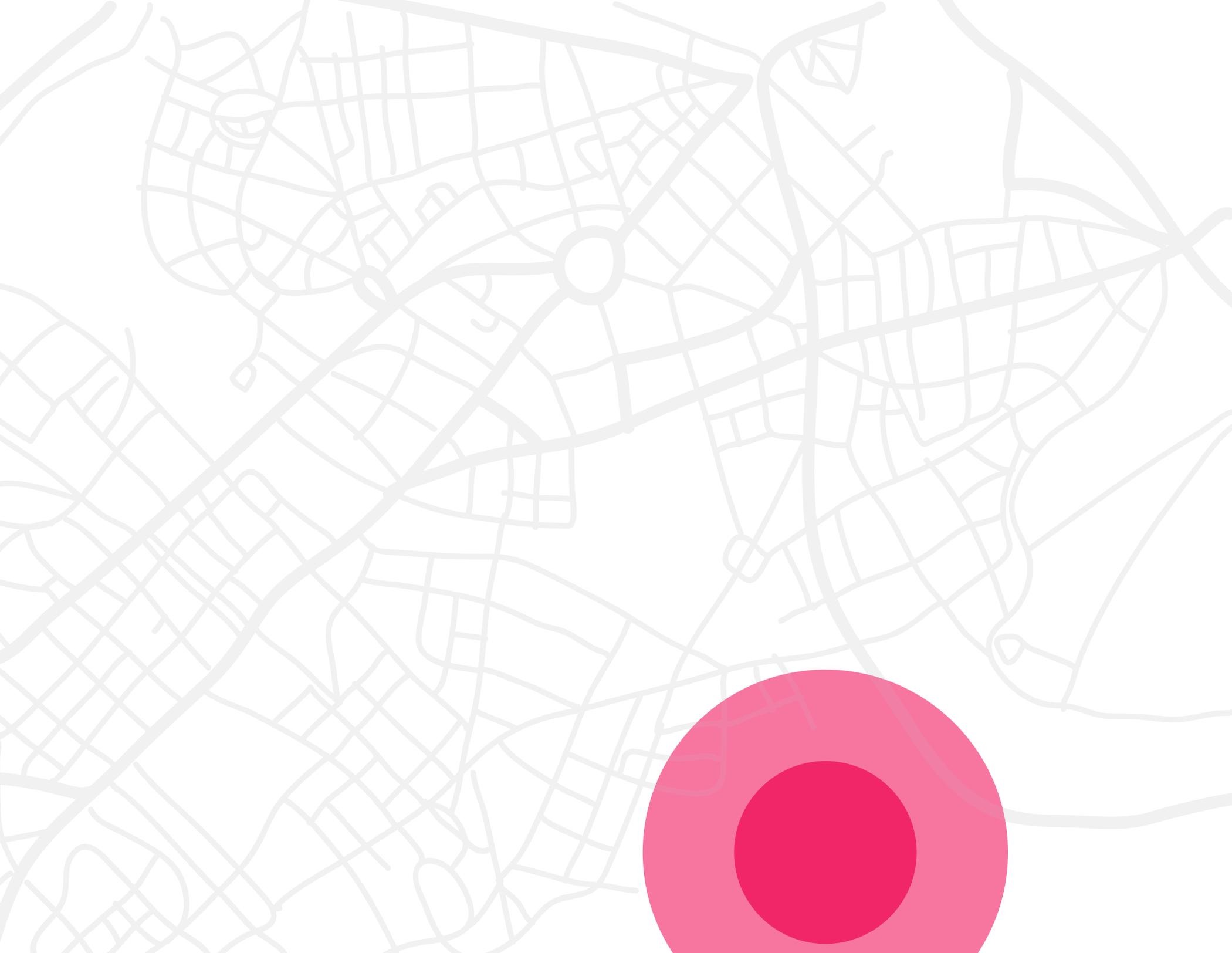
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**Chiara
Camponeschi**
Toronto, July 2010



Foreword

How much does a city trust its citizens?

I first came across the concept of active citizenship when I was writing my honors thesis called *When Green Was Still a Color*, a piece of original research that looked at “green” consumerism from a critical perspective. At the time, environmental issues were finally seeping into mainstream consciousness; eco-celebrity gossip sites and designer tote bags were all the rage. In a way, the renewed interest in environmentalism relieved me, but I worried about the inherent message that seemed to transpire from traditional media: that we could shop our way to sustainability. The rapid surge in “green” products left me feeling like we were ready to consume environmental solutions more than to engage with them for their inherent values.

Organic candy and celebrity-endorsed bottled water did not reflect my own journey with active citizenship, nor my personal and professional experiences with the climate change and youth-led development communities. All around me, I saw consumerism being confused with activism, carbon offsets with environmentalism and growth with innovation. Nowhere in the mainstream did I see the principles of self-organization, mutual support, and interaction — the elements that kindled my commitment to sustainability — recognized as valid pathways to participation. Instead, concerned citizens like me were being encouraged to buy (RED), shop green, and donate to far-away causes from the comfort of their home.

I emerged out of that research feeling disempowered, but hopeful. I refused to believe that citizens were nothing more than consumers; that the only way of truly making an impact was by matching good intentions with credit card swipes. Gradually, I became interested in studying the (many) ways citizens can be part of effective, long-

lasting solutions to the problem of environmental degradation — especially in the age of ‘peak oil,’ growing urbanization, and global economic crisis. I wanted to believe that there were sound alternatives to the model of participation-through-consumption, so I started collecting evidence that spoke to the potential of participatory governance and co-design in moving cities and communities towards a more sustainable future.

The concept of active citizenship is one that resonated deeply with me because of its inclusive, creative, interdisciplinary, and participatory characteristics. Today, I am fascinated by the world of creative communities because, to my eyes, it represents an antidote to the widespread erosion of local practices and cultures, and is also an inventive and timely way of tackling increasingly interconnected social issues. What is even more remarkable is the democratic and grassroots level in which communal change is achieved — through dialogue, openness, collaboration, and the rediscovery of the everyday.

I call all this place-based creative problem-solving, an approach to participation that leverages the imagination and inventiveness of citizens, experts, and activists in collaborative efforts that make cities more inclusive, innovative, and interactive. This toolkit exists to document and celebrate the power of inter-actor collaboration and of our everyday experiences in enhancing problem-solving and social innovation.

So why this toolkit?

- To reclaim definitions of innovation and sustainability from their static, corporate counterpart and expand them to include creativity and local culture;
- To document the contributions of the already-strong 'creative community' movement;
- To spark a conversation about the potential of our everyday experiences in contributing to sustainability, and the roles cities can play in providing enabling frameworks for social innovation and participation.

The tools are many, but the argument can be summarized as follows:

- Innovation is being reduced to a repetitive formula, but if we take a closer look at the local level, we uncover a vibrant world where individuals and organizations in the social economy are mobilizing to generate solutions that make cities more sustainable and governance more inclusive.
- Through DIY tools and interactive technologies, the way we collaborate is redefining the role our everyday experiences play in formulating a more nuanced understanding of urban sustainability and social innovation.
- Why is this important? Cities are currently facing massive challenges that range from growing urbanization rates to over-consumption. The way they choose to address these issues — and who they decide to involve — will influence the future of the planet in permanent ways. We need cities that are: livable, inclusive, and resilient.

How do we achieve this?

- A. We need to include culture and creativity in the definition of sustainability.
- Culture encompasses lifestyle choices, value systems, and local traditions that empower residents to tackle social/urban needs in a localized, but scalable, way.

- Creativity fosters open-mindedness and innovative thinking, helping communities articulate their needs and visions in ways that celebrate the spaces and places that are at the core of their everyday reality.

- B. We need to create enabling environments for enhanced participation both in the public sphere and at the institutional level.

How?

- By using public spaces as sites of experimentation, places where we can learn to interact with (and respect) diverse actors, as well as harness the power of collective imagination.
- By pushing for a new idea of governance that expands the definition of citizenship to reflect: our multiple identities and affiliations, the value of experiential knowledge, and our new ideas about well-being (think commons vs profit)

Introduction

Place-Based Creative Problem-Solving and the Power of the Everyday

The word ‘innovation’ seems to have become ubiquitous. But what exactly is innovation and why do we need more of it?

The term in itself is nothing new: business and tech ventures have been innovating for years in an attempt to remain on the leading edge of market fluctuations. In fact, when we think of innovation, most of us think immediately of multi-million-dollar development projects or the latest, status-defining electronic gadgets of the future. But this toolkit is not another rhapsodizing piece of prose on why businesses need to innovate to remain relevant, nor an exposé on the many ways new technologies are going to revolutionize our lives. This publication is about a different kind of innovation, one that springs from the most unlikely (according to some) places — the sites of need and frustration, imagination and opportunity — that shape our public lives. They are the places where citizens, individually or in concert with one another, nurture creative projects that make their lives, and those of others, a little better. They are the streets, living rooms, gardens, and squares reshaping the way we think of the public sphere.

They are the places where social innovation begins.

As ‘creative communities’ guru Ezio Manzini explains, the term refers to shifts in the way individuals or communities act to solve a problem and generate new opportunities.¹ Here, then, innovation is intended as a catalyst for social change — a collaborative process through which citizens can be directly involved in shaping the way a project, policy, or service is created and delivered. As a whole, the theories and cases presented in this toolkit speak to the desire of communities the world over to participate more meaningfully in the process of brainstorming and designing initiatives that address the complex realities of urban sustainability. In so doing, creative

“We are the leaders we have been waiting for.”

Grace Lee Boggs, activist and organizer

individuals not only challenge our ordinary ideas about expertise, but they actively redefine our understanding of citizenship itself. Their involvement demonstrates that citizenship is so much more than duties and taxes — it’s about outcome ownership, enablement, and the celebration of the myriad connections that make up the collective landscape of the place(s) we call home.

We know that markets are no longer the only sources of innovation, and that citizens are capable of more than just voting during election time. We now see artists working alongside policy makers, policy makers collaborating with citizens, and citizens helping cities diagnose their problems more accurately. This is particularly significant as respect for our political leaders seems to be declining, while support for democratic principles such as openness, transparency, and inclusion is on the rise.² We have entered an era where interactive technologies and a renewed idea of citizenship are enabling us to experiment with alternative notions of sustainability and to share knowledge in increasingly dynamic ways. Inevitably, this becomes a process that allows the public to articulate a more nuanced understanding of sustainability — one that acknowledges and celebrates the realm of the everyday while, at the same time, showcasing the role that creativity can play in promoting a kind of sustainability that opens up new avenues of participation for civil society. The elements can be glaring or part of a long-term journey of discovery; either way, they are likely to generate new perspectives and insights that help society uncover diverse ways of thinking, doing, behaving, and advocating.

This toolkit, then, is a collection of everyday experiments happening in our backyards — ones that prove how everyone can unlock their creative potential and embark on a transformative journey towards participatory citizenship. Its aim is to document the global movement of ‘creative citizen’ projects and the ripple effects they are having on the way we learn, work, eat, and govern.

Here you will find international initiatives and interventions that push us to reconsider process, momentum, and innovation from an everyday perspective. The focus is on the social economy and on participatory governance; actors in the social economy — single citizens, co-ops, foundations, and NGOs — have been introducing meaningful innovations often while facing great constraints. Their contributions are numerous, but often underestimated and in need of visibility. In addition, what these examples make clear is that the time for institutional innovation has come, and that we are ready to spur governments in the direction of open, inclusive, and transparent governance. In other words, one needs the recognition and support, while the other needs a push — and proof that we’re up for the challenge.

This is not a journey free of obstacles, battles, or social justice considerations, but when the motives are legitimate and the strategies considerate, collaborative innovation can have powerful effects that resonate across neighborhoods, cities, and even countries. The examples collected here make it evident that we are past a model of participation that is unresponsive and one-

“What has been missing so far in the story about innovation in cities are the human and neighborhood dimensions.”

Melissa Mean, Director, Demos Cities Program

size-fits-all. We want to celebrate the places and spaces that make up our daily reality, and we want to cooperate with all kinds of actors in the quest for an expression of citizenship that allows us to participate in our own society in interactive, deliberate, and considerate ways.

In short, this toolkit is about place-based, creative problem-solving and the many inspiring individuals who are working hard to prove just how powerful our everyday actions can be. You do not have to be a hero or a public leader to make a difference; what these cases demonstrate so clearly is that humility, hard work, creativity, and an open mind can go a long way in pushing for institutional reform as well as building communities that are more livable, inclusive, and resilient.

After all, as the Young Foundation reminds us, “the way an innovation is developed is just as important as the innovation itself.”ⁱⁱⁱ

i For more information, see: Manzini, E., Jegou F., eds. (2007) Collaborative Services: Social Innovation and Design for Sustainability, Milan: Edizioni Polidesign.

ii See, for example, Cornwall, A. (2008) Democratizing Engagement: What the UK Can Learn from International Experience. London: Demos

iii The Young Foundation is a British organization that specializes in social entrepreneurship and innovation. Social innovation enthusiasts may want to take a look at their recent publication: Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J. and G. Mulgan (2010) The Open Book of Social Innovation. London: Young Foundation/NESTA.

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The Enabling City

Unlocking the Democratic Potential of Places & Spaces

“That democracy is intrinsically geographic is somewhat unconventional.”

Nancy Ettlinger, Professor, Ohio State University

They are yellow and can often be found in inexplicable places: light poles, fire hydrants, public phone booths. They can be in pristine condition or clearly weathered, lonely or surrounded by other sticky objects. No matter the case, many urban centers now host the tiny yellow stickers that over the years have turned into a secret symbol of lived experiences, at once a subculture’s language and its brand. What started in 2004 as Yellow Arrow, a street art project on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, quickly expanded to over 460 cities and 7500 arrows, turning into a global public art project that makes use of the urban landscape to chart crowd-sourced ‘deep maps’ that reveal the many personal stories hidden in our everyday spaces.

The way the project works is intuitive even for the biggest tech skeptics, provided they have operated a cell phone at least once. Participants make use of uniquely coded yellow arrow stickers to draw attention to a location of special significance to them. Whether it’s the Eiffel Tower or a piece of graffiti, all that’s needed is to place a sticker on a chosen site, text one’s story to the number provided, and leave the yellow arrow for others to find. When another person comes across the sticker, they can text in the same code and immediately receive an SMS with the place-based story of others, often short poetic fragments or game-like prompts to action. In this way, Yellow Arrow’s frisky anonymous exchange enables residents and travelers to celebrate the often imperceptible value of urban spaces, helping participants reclaim personal narratives from official accounts of what is significant and noteworthy in a city.

And it’s not just stickers and SMS that are helping us tell our own stories and discover the everyday potential of places. [murmur] is another perfect example of how oral histories and memories can be documented and shared within a city. [murmur] signs are hard to ignore: they are green, ear-shaped, and great at making you wonder what they stand for. Anyone with a mobile phone can call the number provided at each [murmur] location to listen in on the stories of others, thus experiencing personal or historical accounts that are a connection between past and present, intimate, and public.

Lonely Planet’s Experimental Travel Guide is a repository of International Situationist-like prompts for transforming tourists into travelers, city-dwellers into urban safarians. As in the tradition of the Surrealists and Psychogeographers, travelers are invited to engage in all manner of creative experiments in an attempt to connect with more than just the de rigueur monuments and museums a city has to offer. From photo jaunts to walking through streets with horse masks, the guide’s approach to experimental travel illustrates how anyone can uncover and appreciate what’s unique in any city — seeing things from a different perspective, finding a connection between seemingly disparate realities, and becoming the author of one’s own experience.

All three examples reflect a curious, playful, and adventurous desire to celebrate the urban, to reclaim it from its sometimes aggressive or alienating tendencies and to play a bigger role in its overall evolution. For renowned scholar Manuel Castells, “cities are an essential raw material in the production of human experience,” so it is no surprise to see arts-based interactive projects as increasingly more popular platforms for public expression and experimentation. More than ever, in fact, finding a way to articulate an alternative

vision for our urban centres is a matter of using interactive tools and methodologies to confront the hidden power structures that influence patterns of spatial meaning. A crowd-sourced approach to place-making thus creates opportunities for innovation that have the potential to connect social change and citizen aspirations in ways that are truly locally distinctive, enhancing the ability of local communities to articulate their own needs while simultaneously advocating for a renewed understanding of urban livability.

At its simplest, urban livability is about harmony, a heuristic concept that is at the heart of sustainable lifestyles, active citizenship practices, social inclusion, and cultural diversity. The recently published UN-HABITAT World Cities Report for 2008–2009 speaks of the creation of harmonious cities as a process that is deeply linked to inter-actor collaboration, greater citizen participation, and the emergence of collaborative services that harness the power of grassroots imaginationⁱⁱ. In the report, the development of partnerships between citizens and governments is seen as a means of accelerating institutional innovation and project scalability, while encouraging effective citizen participation in the urban planning process. Under this framework, a shift from control to enablement turns harmonious cities into platforms for community empowerment — holistic, living spaces where people make their voices heard and shape the future of the city by collaborating and interacting with others.

The challenge for cities, then, is to foster a new idea of public life that links communities together and encourages urban social innovations that target all areas of life — from the economy to personal well-being and beyond. The next section of this chapter focuses on public spaces because of their potential to open up new avenues of participation in ways that emphasize the value of everyday experiences in the social sphere, and highlight their ability to inform social innovations from a crowd-sourced, or user-led, perspective.

“Parks, streets, and other public spaces provide the necessary bandwidth for the flow of information between people; they are where we learn who we live with, what they look like and what they do.”

**Melissa Mean & Charlie Tims,
authors, *People Make Places: Growing the Public Life of Cities***

Public Space: The Social Innovator’s Playground

The term ‘public space’ refers to a place that is open and accessible to everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic background. Commonly perceived as the unit of measure for assessing the health of our democracy, it is in public spaces that we negotiate our common interests and express our differences, where we celebrate creativity and display our dissent. At once a physical resource and an ideal, public space is often viewed as a compass for political action, the anchoring element through which citizens feel free to build community and promote social inclusion.

For Melissa Mean and Charlie Tims, authors of the report *People Make Places: Growing the Public Life of Cities*, public spaces act as self-organizing public services because they form “a shared spatial resource from which experiences and value are created in ways that are not possible in our private lives aloneⁱⁱⁱ.” What this means is that public space is better understood not as a predetermined physical place, but as an experience created by the interaction between people. This interaction, in turn, contributes to creating a sense of place in the community, which is of crucial importance in empowering residents to take ownership over their own environment. This encourages them to build community in ways that place local issues within a framework that enables people to forge partnerships with diverse actors in a multi-scalar fashion. By participating in the public sphere, civil society can therefore build on the established identity of a place to reflect upon the role it wants the public (and its culture) to play in the daily life of a city.

Culture, then, is not merely confined to the realm of artistic expression; it is also inextricably linked with lifestyle choices, value systems, and local traditions, which together form the collective identity of a community. Thus, cultural sustainability becomes a process that empowers residents to become decision-makers over their own environment, encouraging both the act of reclaiming public spaces for place-making and the advancement of participant-led initiatives that work to make cities innovative social change hubs.^{iv} As such, a key role of cultural sustainability is to provide a space for residents to express their values and to satisfy their needs in a self-reliant and participatory way.

“Cities require continuous social and political creativity to address the problems that they throw up as they grow, mutate and decline.”

Khan et al., Breakthrough Cities Report

A user-led approach to understanding and building public space is a powerful way to counteract the persistent lack of trust in the public sphere, particularly when it comes to issues of disempowerment and community fragmentation. Peter Galison coined the term ‘disruptive spaces’ to describe locations that are at once physical and symbolic, where vision and action converge to redefine our urban experiences in the public realm. Disruptive or in-between spaces galvanize the public to get involved in civic initiatives and work on issues of common interest, providing the emotional and intellectual outlets needed to help people form better relationships with their communities. Hence, public spaces become a powerful organizing tool, the hotbed of ‘creative community’ social innovation and the starting point for creating places that are open, inclusive, and sustainable. As Mean and Tims eloquently state, “one important implication of this shift from a place-based to user-led understanding of public space is that the universe of public spaces within a city expands — potentially dramatically — as people are able to create public experiences in a variety of settings — civic, public, private and spaces that blend elements of all three.”

Unfortunately, over the years, many urban centers have come to neglect or enclose their public spaces in a race to obtain world-class or ‘creative city’ status aimed at bolstering their international reputation as unique cultural destinations. This process, in turn, has had serious repercussions on both places and the people living in them, frequently favoring a particular corporate definition of creativity that too often reinforces patterns of inequality within and between cities. Melissa Mean argues that there is a “mismatch between the language of economic innovation — with its constant references to openness and distribution — and the essentially closed nature of much policy making and governance in most of today’s major cities^v.” For Mean, this mismatch is what precludes deliberation and collaboration among groups, presenting opportunities to already resource-rich areas and deliberately neglecting undesirable ones. Her essay in *Unlocking Innovation: Why Citizens Hold the Key to Public Service Reform* aptly illustrates how city-sponsored ‘official futures’ are narratives that often dominate over all others, defining optimism and opportunity specifically in relation to economic growth instead of citizen well-being. Thus, in a ‘creative city’ or ‘world-class city’ setting, public places come under threat as they are occupied and rearranged to accommodate market transactions, while vulnerable groups and concerned residents are limited in their ability to self-organize and enhance their collective capacity to interact with governmental institutions in participatory ways.

Nevertheless, the availability (or lack thereof) of inclusive and accessible public spaces inevitably tells us something about a city’s political climate and the values it upholds. Democracy cannot be separated from physical space, and cities, facing increasingly more diverse demographics, need to find a way to incorporate and encourage diverse uses and perspectives into their public dimension. In fact, if the traditional approach to public management was heavily influenced by neoliberal beliefs in market-centric development and a minimal role for state governments, today, a new, people-centered approach is emerging, based on the concept of enablement — whereby governments create (or should create) favorable conditions for local actors to mobilize around a cause.

Consequently, without a focused analysis of the intricacies of place and capital, the distinction between the enablement of the market — as opposed to the enablement of local communities — is inevitably diluted so not to threaten the status quo, keeping places disembedded from the larger decision-making processes that affect them.

Co-design and co-production, on the other hand, are a powerful means for individuals and institutions to connect and collaborate, building inviting and vibrant communities that truly reflect the local needs and values at the heart of a city's character. This way, public experiences can be transformed into powerful tools for addressing needs, stimulating critical thinking, and forming self-perpetuating networks of civic solidarity. For co-design to truly thrive, however, it is first necessary for cities to invest in the creation of a culture of 'publicness,' whereby the exchange and interaction of diverse audiences reflects the different uses they make of the city's infrastructure. To fully uphold the principles of collaborative design and reap its greater rewards, it is necessary to push for a sort of local politics that is less adversarial and more dialogical, making the labyrinthine world of governance more accessible and relatable.

Imagination is the first step in this direction. It may seem too abstract of an element to make a difference, yet in Europe and beyond, calls for the submission of user-generated contributions to programs designed to reinvent the city make imagination their main ingredient. In Glasgow, British think-tank Demos was enlisted in a city-wide collaborative project aimed at harnessing the power of collective thinking with the goal of formulating a crowd-sourced vision for the city in 2020. Through storytelling and arts-based techniques, citizens of Glasgow were invited to participate in an experiment to open up the city and articulate their own narrative for its future. "If the first step to a better future is imagining one," the authors explain, "then the next step is about collaboration," making the crucial move from mass imagination to mass collaboration and learning to involve local government and the voluntary sector in the cultivation of systemic leadership.^{viii}

"What is pragmatically possible is not fixed independently of our imaginations, but is itself shaped by our visions."

Archon Fung & Erik Olin Wright, authors, *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*

In Finland, an innovative approach to cultural planning spearheaded by the Greater Helsinki Area led to the launch of an international ideas competition that sought input on its future development^{viii}. Fourteen towns and municipalities solicited ideas for open-minded residential, land use, and transportation solutions that would address issues of rapid population growth and environmental change. One of the winners of the competition was a collective called "Social Silicon Valley," which released an incredibly insightful three-page manifesto by the title of *Towards City 2.0*. The proposal outlined a vision for a city that is open, transparent, people-centered, and responsive to the great challenges facing our generation. By declaring that the duopoly of state and business is over, the collective intended to raise awareness of the potential of user-produced cities to mix 'innovative incrementalism' and 'strategic leadership' for the creation of problem-solving tools that step away from the 'NIMBY' mentality that frequently characterizes the response to most societal challenges.

The City 2.0 idea combines a bottom-up approach with systemic leadership primarily by seeing service users not as consumers but as participants — thus challenging static conceptions of professionalism and expertise. At the same time, City 2.0 is a social innovation platform that encourages a new kind of governance, supported by what the collective calls 'social risk capital.' Under this model, the city becomes an innovation hub, a place where social entrepreneurship and its inherent risks are part of a learning process facilitated by the political will to help people solve problems the administration itself is unsure how to solve. Lastly, City 2.0 is commons-based, infusing elements of social and diverse economies into the everyday realm, stepping away from dominant neoliberal practices of competition and private property and

Reimagining the City: Characteristics of City 2.0

1. **Combines a bottom-up approach with leadership** that sees service users not as consumers but as participants, stepping away from traditional paternalistic approaches of professional control and ethics that characterized the post-war period.
2. **Defines a social innovation system for a city** by envisioning a new kind of local government that has citizens and their communities at its core. Here, local administrators support grassroots ideas in a hyper-local way by providing funding, consulting services, and working spaces, and conducting ongoing political discussions on the survival of the commons. The hyper-local is then connected to the larger city fabric through the work of a Social Innovation mayor who conducts foresight work about big structural changes, takes responsibility for long-term risk-investments, and employs open leadership methods to trigger people-powered change.

3. **Creates an enabling environment** by creating conditions for creative self-organization. City 2.0 and its Social Innovation Mayor articulate compelling goals that unlock the capacity of others to reach these goals.
4. **Uses Social Risk Capital** to compel political leaders to focus on problems they themselves are unsure how to solve by mobilizing people to generate long-term solutions via, for example, hubs for innovation and periods of political/issue prioritization.
5. **Employs commons-based production** through a model for combining market and social economies to mainstream the importance of thinking about the value of the commons and not, by default, just profitability.

Towards City 2.0, Social Silicon Valley Manifesto, available here:

http://www.greaterhelsinki.fi/files/GHV_j2p_Towards_City_6_boards.pdf

encouraging more experimental and sustainable ways of producing and exchanging goods.

Examples such as these ones are forming an increasingly richer body of evidence that speaks to the power of creativity to contribute solutions to a wide range of complex and intertwined issues. The challenge, then, is to create a common language for actors to communicate across fields and cultures. So how do we create enabling frameworks for harmonious cities to form? How do we balance an emphatic approach to people's needs with the need to accomplish city-wide goals?

We collaborate.

i Castells, M. (1983) *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 67
ii For more information, see: United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-HABITAT (2008) *Harmonious Cities: State of the World Cities Report 2008-2009*. London, UK: Earthscan.
iii Mean, M. and C. Tims. (2005) *People make places: Growing the Public Life of Cities*. London, UK: Demos, p. 9
iv For more information on the concept of Cultural Sustainability and its benefits, see for example: Duxbury, N. and E. Gillette. (2007). *Culture as a Key Dimension of Sustainability: Exploring Concepts, Themes and Models*. Working Paper 1, Vancouver: Creative Cities Network, p.4
v Ibid., p. 44
vi Mean, M. (2007) 'Chapter 6: Urban Innovation and the Power of Mass Imagination' in *Unlocking Innovation: Why Citizens Hold the Key to Public Service Reform*. Parker, S. and S. Parker, eds., London, UK: Demos, p. 95
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viii For more information, see the Greater Helsinki Vision website: <http://www.greaterhelsinki.fi/>
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Collaboration

Dialogue and Design for Distributed Enterprise

If every problem is connected to something or someone else, then collaboration to solve it is logically necessary."

Tom Bentley, director of applied learning at ANZSOG, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

Just a few years ago, before the advent of ubiquitous web-based tools, collaboration was more readily associated with volunteering or office teamwork than with surfing the 'net. In a matter of years, however, mobile communication platforms and greater Internet access have transformed the very way we conceive of interaction and problem-solving, making collaboration a matter of the everyday. Here are some examples of that change in action.

The Extraordinaires is a network of online volunteers who, by donating their time to select micro-tasks, join forces with others around the world to contribute to a cause they are passionate about. Whether it's translating a website to encourage online linguistic diversity or helping cultural institutions catalogue and archive resources, The Extraordinaires platform allows users to turn routine breaks into opportunities for collaboration, transforming the act of waiting for the bus into a socially useful activity and making of chronically busy people potential agents of change. Since its inception, over 29,000 Extraordinaires users have completed more than 240,000 micro-tasks, helping with anything from awareness campaigns to posting and scanning photos of earthquake victims in Haiti to help with the humanitarian relief process.

See Click Fix is an online platform that helps residents signal instances of neglect and degradation so that city officials can intervene to rectify them. Operating on the three principles of

'empowerment, efficiency, and engagement,' See Click Fix is a network that allows anyone to report and track non-emergency issues anywhere in the world, providing the impetus to improve one's neighborhood and the platform for making connections that will lead to change. In Philadelphia alone, the website was used by an engaged citywide advocacy group to mobilize citizens to document instances of vehicle idling, leading to new inter-stakeholder initiatives to help clean the air.

Engaged citizens are finding increasingly more creative ways to collaborate in physical settings, too. Not Far From the Tree is a network of residents and local food enthusiasts that together help make the most of the natural resources present in the city of Toronto, connecting fruit tree owners and volunteers through a residential fruit-picking program designed to harvests fruits that would otherwise go to waste. At the end of the process, one third of all fruit goes to tree owners, another third to volunteers and the remaining third is delivered by bike or cart to local organizations, who then join forces to make fresh, healthy, local food available to marginalized communities in the city.

In the age of connectivity, it is no surprise that collaboration is increasingly seen as a design principle, a style of thinking and acting that elevates the practice of problem-solving from a managerial tool to a way of thinking about participation itself. According to Yochai Benkler, Harvard Law School professor and co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, this is because social cooperation presents an opportunity to introduce greater flexibility in the design of human societies — a chance to carve out a space for civil society to collectively brainstorm solutions to the problem of how to live together in a just and sustainable fashion.ⁱ

“In the past, thinking about democracy focused on issues of formal governance, today it focuses on citizenship and issues of participation.”

Richard Sennett, Professor, London School of Economics

The examples included in this toolkit are all experiments in collaborative social design. Its focus on place-based, creative problem-solving highlights the many actions that people worldwide take every day to build more sustainable cities. User-led projects for social change are vital in creating confident, articulate residents who promote the development of a pluralistic and sustainable economy that supports and challenges cities to think about social cooperation in innovative and inclusive ways. Through their projects, creative people support the social economy and play a fundamental role in creating networks of urban solidarity that, particularly in the age of globalization, ensure our basic public services and civil rights are safeguarded.

Collaborative social design is not intended as a substitute for government intervention; it is another way to shed light on what it is that government is currently doing — or not doing — for its citizenry. According to Peter Bradwell, author of *Making the Most of Collaboration — An International Survey of Public Service Co-Design*, collaboration has increasingly been embraced by both policy-makers and practitioners in an effort to reinvigorate public services burdened by increasing social complexity and a perpetuating lack of resources. It is no coincidence, Bradwell argues, that the most innovative and successful examples of co-design have emerged from contexts where problems often appear to be intractable, where specialized thinking alone has proven not to be enough to address issues holistically and durably. Whereas engagement often ends at the consultation level, co-design implies long-term involvement in the design and delivery of the service itself, allowing participants to have a say in the way questions and projects are shaped. As a result, the end product typically better reflects customer needs, generates useful information, and creates a feeling of involvement and ownership.¹

What makes co-design so appealing and promising is precisely the delivery of public services in a reciprocal relationship between diverse actors and experts, addressing more than just the dominant perspectives and spheres of action that currently characterize mainstream policy- and decision-making. When the community is directly involved in entrepreneurial ventures, in fact, collaboration often takes on the characteristics of self-development projects- sparking opportunities for local organizations to make substantial investments in resources which then lead to enhanced economic and social vibrancy at the neighborhood level. Therefore, by regenerating the social fabric at the (hyper-) local level, actors in social economy- creative citizens in particular- effectively facilitate and invest in new approaches to social development. Leveraging their extensive networks of distributed enterprise, actors in the social economy blur the boundaries between production and consumption, placing an emphasis on long-term durability and care rather than unnecessary consumption.

What emerges, then, is a community where the local and global dimension are balanced and mediated by the city at large, and where local resources and know-how are given wider legitimacy as meaningful problem-solving tools in the quest for urban and cultural sustainability. The examples of ‘creative community’ projects included in this toolkit were selected precisely for their ability to open up creativity to all demographics and to infuse innovation into the everyday realm in ways that are more holistic and inclusive. As a whole, they are a clear testament to the power of community in addressing recurring needs and stimulating the kind of creative thinking needed to tackle complex issues ranging from participatory citizenship to urban livability.

Of course, collaboration is not free of frustrations; without a clear process of design and transparent intents, it can be hard, slow, and ineffective. Empowerment is clearly the goal of collaborative design, but participants need always be wary of whether institutions are legitimately invested in sharing their power, or whether they are using the participation rhetoric to absorb criticism. Collaboration is at its best when there is ‘optimal cognitive distance’ between actors

“Change is not driven by systems, but rather by people who find themselves trusted. Systems only help people innovate. The rest is just hard work.”

Mette Abrahamsen, Team Manager, Danish Technological Institute

— that is, when the distance between participants is large enough to yield novelty, but not so large to block mutual understanding and the ability to cooperate.ⁱⁱ This way, diversity becomes an opportunity to leverage the wide variety of skills, backgrounds, and perspectives present in any given group to reach important breakthroughs and co-create innovative solutions for society. When the conditions are conducive to collaboration, in fact, there is often greater diversification and tolerance in the way a project is carried out, so the dispersal of power can produce transformative shifts: from leading to enabling; from controlling to influencing; and from operating in isolation to working in partnership with others.ⁱⁱⁱ

For projects to be successful, much ultimately depends on the immediate and broader context in which collaboration takes place. Once under way, however, co-design frequently leads to a rich-get-richer effect where the more citizens do, the more they'll want to take on. Collaboration, as it turns out, can be highly addictive, and the examples in the next chapter all seem to prove just that.

i Benkler, Y. (2007) 'Chapter 1: Beyond State and Market: Social Cooperation as a New Domain of Policy' in *The Collaborative State: How Working Together Can Transform Public Services*. Parker, S. and N. Gallagher, eds., London: UK: Demos

ii Bradwell, P. and S. Marr. (2008) *Making the Most of Collaboration: An International Survey of Public Service Co-design*. Demos Report 23. London, UK: Demos, p. 10

iii Khan et al. (2009) *Breakthrough Cities: How Cities Can Mobilise Creativity and Knowledge to Tackle Compelling Social Challenges*. London: British Council/Young Foundation, p. 44

Quotes (in order of appearance)

Bentley, T. (2007) 'Chapter 16: Evolving the Future' in *The Collaborative State: How Working Together*



PNWRA • <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pnwra/429831152/>

Can Transform Public Services. Parker, S. and N. Gallagher, eds. London, UK: Demos, p. 189

Sennett, R. (2006) *Housing and Urban Neighborhoods: The Open City*. Berlin: Urban Age, p.4

Benkler, Y. (2007) 'Chapter 1: Beyond State and Market: Social Cooperation As a New Domain of Policy' in *The Collaborative State: How Working Together Can Transform Public Services*. Parker, S. and N. Gallagher, eds. London, UK: Demos, p.36

Abrahamsen, M. (2007) 'Chapter 8: Twenty-First-Century Civil Servants: The Story of MindLab' in *Unlocking Innovation: Why Citizens Hold the Key to Public Service Reform*. Parker, S. and S. Parker, eds. London, UK: Demos, p.124

The Innovations

Social innovation thrives on the ideas and efforts of social entrepreneurs and creative individuals whose socially conscious work contributes to environmentalism in a variety of ways. The cases collected in this section are all examples of pioneering activities and services embodying a return to personal and community-centred participation. Included here is a total of forty examples across six categories: place-making; eating and growing; resource-sharing; learning and socializing; steering and organizing; and financing. They were selected based on the level of citizen involvement they offer, the degree of inter-actor collaboration they encourage, the collaborative design of their governance structure, their scalability, and their potential for innovation.

As the categories suggest, these examples are diverse and far-ranging, but they all focus- in one way or another- on values such as collaboration, transparency, and participation. The purpose of this section is to stimulate the imagination and hopefully encourage you to learn more about these projects either online or offline.

So be surprised by how walks have the power to make neighborhoods more vibrant, or find out how art can be used to convert dull city intersections into safe community spaces. Learn how creative interventions can disrupt and open up spaces for reflection and participation, or witness how online resources can lead to offline collaboration, resource-sharing, and, at times, even getting free stuff. See how the values of the Web 2.0 translate into the birth of the open government and open data movement, or what a holistic approach to financing can bring to local communities and cities alike.

This is what social innovation looks like in action.

Place-Making





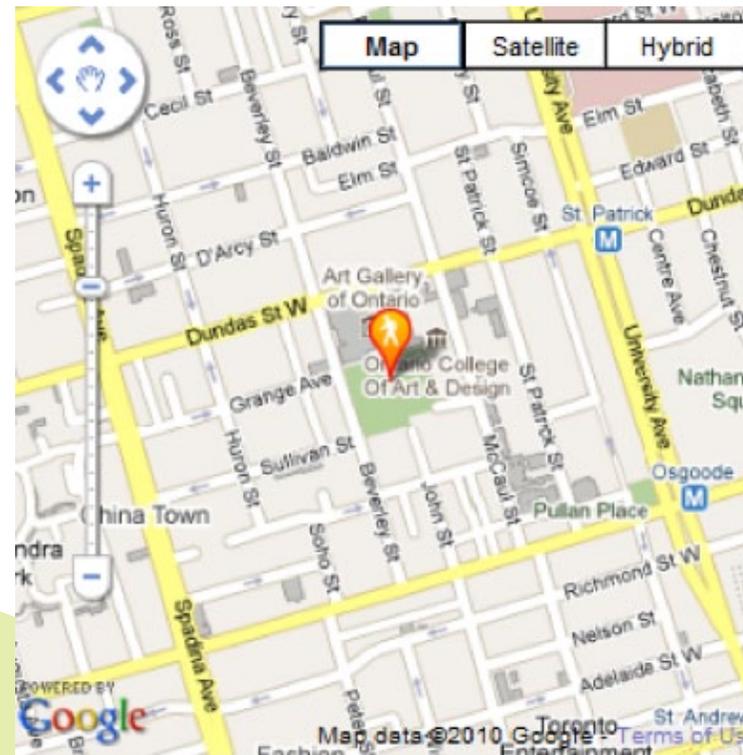
Jane's Walk

Global

Started in 2007 to honor the legacy of urban activist Jane Jacobs, Jane's Walk is a Canadian innovation that bridges social and geographic gaps by bringing residents together through a series of free neighborhood walking tours. These events explore a wide range of urban landscapes and celebrate walkable neighbourhoods, urban literacy and the idea of people-centered cities. In 2010, walks took place in 68 cities and included over 418 tours offered by volunteer group leaders, sending a strong message that people want and need opportunities to build community with those with whom space is shared.

<http://janeswalk.net/>

JANE'S WALK





PLACE-MAKING

The Innovations

City Repair

Portland, Oregon (USA)

City Repair is an Oregon-based non-profit driven almost entirely by volunteers and known internationally for Intersection Repair, the citizen-led conversion of an urban street intersection into a public square. Each Intersection Repair project is the work of neighborhood residents who join forces to turn anonymous intersections into places where people feel safe and welcome. Operating under the assumption that localization - of culture, of economy, of decision-making - is a necessary foundation of sustainability, citizens reclaim urban spaces to plant the seeds of greater neighborhood communication, community empowerment, and cultural sustainability.

<http://cityrepair.org/>





Transition Network

Global

A Transition Initiative is a community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and economic recession. Working to address community needs while rebuilding resilience in the face of peak oil and climate change, initiatives linked to the network seek to reduce carbon emissions by raising awareness of the concept of resilience; partnering with existing groups to conduct outreach efforts; self-organizing into thematic sub-groups that address key areas such as food and energy; embarking on an EDAP (Energy Descent Action Plan); and sharing successes and failures with other Transition Initiatives across the world.

<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>





PLACE-MAKING

The Innovations

Cittaslow

Global

Cittaslow, also known as Slow Town, is a growing international network of over 140 towns in 20 countries that have adopted a set of common goals and principles to enhance quality of life for both for their residents and visitors. Inspired by the Slow Food movement, each Cittaslow town commits to working towards a set of 50 goals that provide tangible benchmarks against which a town can measure its progress. The aim of obtaining an affiliation with Cittaslow is to act as a mechanism for bringing locals together to work collectively for the good of their town, with results ranging from greater support for local businesses, to a stronger emphasis on local traditions, increased environmental protection, and enhanced participation in community life.

<http://cittaslow.net/>



Neglected Spaces

London, UK

Neglected Spaces is an innovative digital platform for signaling underused spaces in London's 32 different neighborhoods. Anyone can nominate a neglected space and suggest activities to revitalize it. Spaces in the city can be transformed through temporary events such as small concerts, art installations, poetry readings, cooking classes, and more. Born out of the MA program in Design at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design in London, Neglected Spaces is currently part of an ongoing campaign to highlight the beauty of London's urban environment and will continue over time with city-wide workshops, events, and talks.

<http://www.neglectedspaces.com/>





PLACE-MAKING

The Innovations

Storefront Residencies

Windsor, Ontario (Canada)

Broken City Lab is an artist-led interdisciplinary creative research group that operates to re-imagine the potential for action in Windsor, Ontario. The lab attempts to generate a new dialogue surrounding public participation and community engagement by focusing on the city as both a research site and a workspace. SRSI is a project that calls on over 25 different actors ranging from artists to restaurateurs to occupy a space in downtown Windsor for up to one month in June and July 2010. The goal is to plan an intervention in the everyday realities of skyrocketing vacancy rates, failing economic strategies, and a place in need of new imagination.

<http://www.brokencitylab.org/srsi/>



Eating & Growing





EATING & GROWING

The Innovations

Not Far From the Tree

Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

Not Far From the Tree is a network of residents and local food enthusiasts who together help make the most of the natural resources present in the city of Toronto, connecting fruit tree owners and volunteers through a residential fruit-picking program designed to harvest fruits that would otherwise go to waste. In 2008, over 3000 pounds of local fruit was picked from a handful of neighborhoods, while just a year later that number grew to over 8000 pounds, with fruit such as sweet cherries, apricots, pears, and apples collected and donated across the city. At the end of the process, one third of all fruit goes to tree owners, another third to volunteers, and the remaining third is delivered by bike or cart to local organizations in the neighborhood.

<http://www.notfarfromthetree.org/>



Free Form Katia ▪ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/freeformkatia/4003232036/>



The Stop's Green Barn

Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

The Green Barn is a 10,000 square foot sustainable food production and education centre that engages people to grow, eat, learn about, celebrate, and advocate for healthy, local food. A satellite of Toronto's The Stop organization, the Green Barn facility includes a year-round greenhouse, a sheltered garden, a bake oven and compost demonstration site, as well as a community kitchen and classroom. Here, neighbours come together to shop at the local farmers' market; schoolchildren learn about the value of healthy food; visitors learn about gardening and cooking; and volunteers and community members pitch in to grow healthy, fresh food for low-income people.

<http://thestop.org/green-barn>





EATING & GROWING

The Innovations

Yum Share

U.K.

YumShare is a dynamic web tool that helps users find organic and specialty food via local clubs that interface with wholesalers and local producers directly. Each month, club leaders place group orders through Yum Share, then meet with the group to coordinate delivery efforts. This way, club members enjoy food produced by local growers and save money while supporting local businesses.

<http://yumshare.co.uk/>



A. Roberts • <http://www.flickr.com/photos/aroberts/4331821479/>



Windowfarms

Global

Started by artists Britta Riley and Rebecca Bray, the Windowfarms project approaches environmental innovation through Web 2.0 crowd-sourcing and a method called R&D-I-Y (research & develop it yourself). Many neighbourhoods around the world (particularly low-income ones) are considered food deserts, meaning little fresh food is easily accessible there. With Windowfarms, however, urbanites can now grow food from their apartments or office windows by means of inexpensive, vertical, hydroponic vegetable gardens made from recycled materials. The first system alone produced 25 plants and a salad a week in mid-winter in a dimly lit 4x6 New York City window and is now available for pre-sale online.

<http://www.windowfarms.org/>





EATING & GROWING

The Innovations

Patch Match

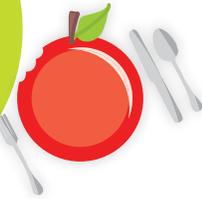
London, U.K.

Patch Match is a free service for people who live in or near Westcombe Park in south east London. In the city, demand for food-growing space is booming, with grow-your-own undergoing a huge resurgence in popularity. Patch Match connects urban gardeners with residents who have an underused patch of land, then lets the two parties come to a shared agreement on the use of the space. This way, gardeners have a chance to grow food locally- thus reducing their overall food miles- and more room is opened up for growing food outside of municipal community gardens.

<http://patchmatch.blogspot.com/>



Flatbush Gardner ▪ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/flatbushgardener/2669248981/>



Replate

Global

Replate.org is the brainchild of San Franciscans Josh Kamler and Axel Albin, two designers who noticed that people in West Coast cities were leaving their leftovers on top of (or next to) garbage cans when they couldn't find someone to give them to. As a result, they gave this behavior a name, created a website, and a logo, and started advocating packing up leftover restaurant food and leaving containers of it on top of sidewalk ash containers to share with the hungry. Today, Replate has grown into an international movement and a practice for reducing food waste across neighborhoods and cities.

www.replate.org



Resource Sharing

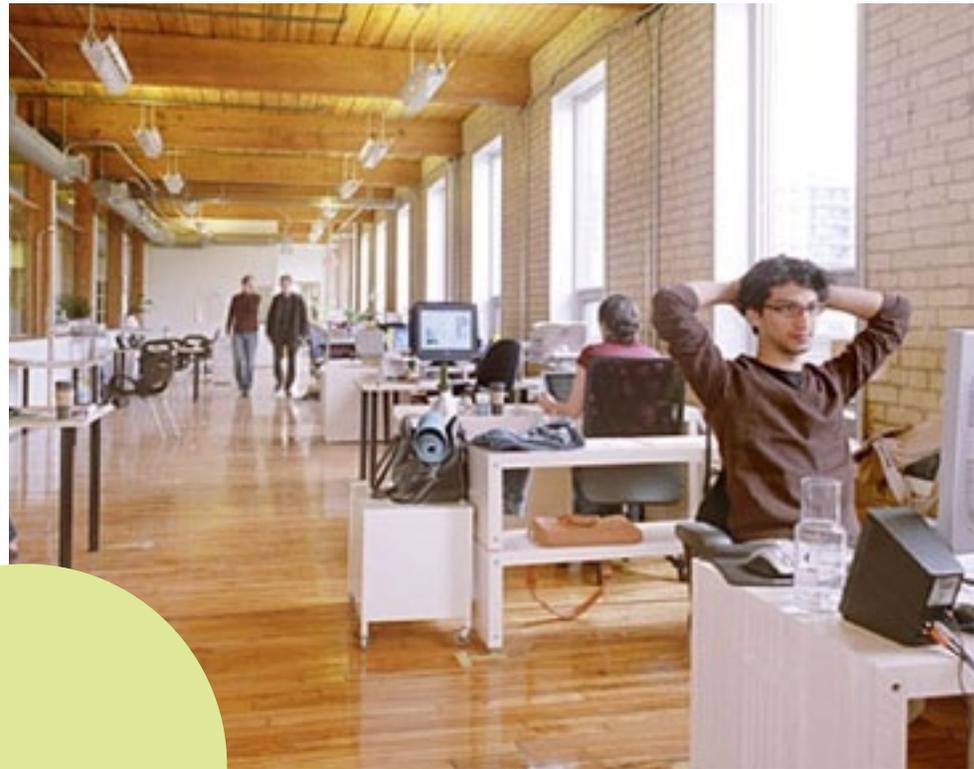


Center for Social Innovation

Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

The Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) is a social enterprise with a mission to catalyze social innovation in its home base of Toronto and around the globe. CSI's shared workspace model offers office amenities to initiatives that are typically under-resourced, increasing social capital and connecting members with a powerful network of local change makers. CSI is also home to hundreds of meetings, capacity-building workshops, information sessions, and community events every year, typically hosting over 10,000 people annually.

<http://socialinnovation.ca/>





RESOURCE SHARING

The Innovations

Tool-Lending Libraries

Berkeley, California

A tool-lending library is a service that allows library patrons to borrow tools, equipment, and "how-to" instructional materials for a small fee or free of charge. One of the first tool libraries was started in Berkeley, California in 1979 with only \$30,000 in community block grants. Today, Berkeley's Tool Lending Library offers thousands of tools free of charge to registered residents and property owners—enhancing use of local resources, lowering unnecessary consumption rates, and fostering a sense of community among its patrons.

<http://tinyurl.com/55zrzl/>





Kollektivhus NU

Sweden

Kollektivhus NU (Co-housing Now) is an association working to promote collaborative housing and other alternative ways of living in Sweden. Started in 1981, the association supports existing co-housing units by raising awareness on the benefits of co-housing and lobbying authorities to facilitate the creation of more shared units. Today, Kollektivhus NU has 32 out of Sweden's 40 co-housing units as full members, and three local organizations working to raise awareness on the benefits of shared community living.

http://www.kollektivhus.nu/english/index_eng.html



Kollektivhus NU



RESOURCE SHARING

The Innovations

Freecycle

Global

The Freecycle Network™ is a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement that promotes worldwide gifting as a way to reduce waste, save resources, and ease the burden on landfills. Since its inception in 2003, Freecycle has grown into a network of 4,810 groups with 7,245,000 members across the globe. Users find their community by entering it into the site's search engine, then begin offering or receiving free goods in their towns via email. Each local group is moderated by a local volunteer and membership is free.

<http://www.freecycle.org/>



Share Some Sugar

U.S.A.

Share Some Sugar is a Web 2.0 inventory of community tools that is the equivalent of the old-fashioned knock on a neighbour's door. Registered users can browse for items to borrow or rent by neighbourhood, with the possibility of registering their own street or building for more geographically specific search options. Users then send in a request to borrow a neighbour's item and if the request is accepted by the lender, the two parties meet in person for the hand-off. Small deposits and contracts exist as options to ensure extra security in the transaction and, similar to eBay, users can leave feedback on their neighbour's profile so that others can learn more about their sharing history prior to initiating a request with them.



share
some
sugar

<http://www.sharesomesugar.com/>



RESOURCE SHARING

The Innovations

Bright Neighbor

U.S.A.

Bright Neighbor combines community involvement with social tools that help local governments, communities, and businesses increase livability, sustainability, and relocalization while simultaneously improving local economies. Users can map important resources in the community, schedule private and public events there, start an inventory of skills and items available for hire or exchange, and more. The aim is to promote community cohesiveness, maximize resource use, and lower the carbon footprint of residents through an online hub that facilitates offline connections.

<http://www.brightneighbor.com/>

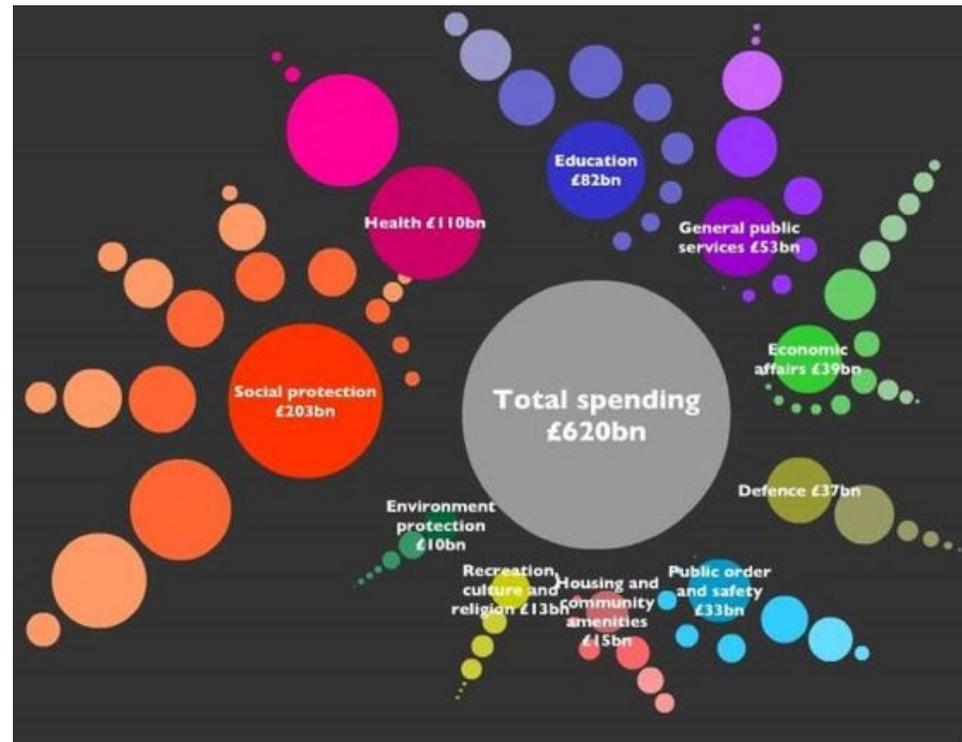


Where Does My Money Go?

U.K.

“Open knowledge” is any content, information, or data that people are free to use, re-use and redistribute without legal, technological, or social restrictions. Where Does My Money Go? aims to promote transparency and citizen engagement through the analysis and visualization of information about UK public spending. A free, politically neutral, online tool to find out about where public money in the UK is spent, the site is a program of the Open Knowledge Foundation, a community-driven and volunteer-led organization.

<http://www.wheredoesmymoneygo.org/>





Maison des Initiatives Etudiantes

Paris, France.

The Maison des initiatives étudiantes (MIE) is a multi-purpose facility that provides conference rooms, audio-visual equipment, shared office space, computers, archives, and an art gallery to student organizations based in Paris, France. Located in the heart of the city, resources are available free of charge to help students carry out socially conscious initiatives, ranging from international fair trade projects, to arts-based anti-racism campaigns and sustainable development work. Known as a meeting place, an incubator, and an innovation hub, the MIE also offers a mentorship program to help students learn more about project management and financial sustainability.

www.mie.paris.fr



Learning & Socializing





LEARNING & SOCIALIZING

The Innovations

Human Library

Global

The Human Library is an innovative concept designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices, and encourage understanding in the form of a mobile space that gives visitors the opportunity to speak informally with "people on loan," a group widely varied in age, sex, and cultural background. The model enables groups to break stereotypes by challenging the most common prejudices in a positive and humorous manner. It is a concrete, easily transferable, and affordable way of promoting tolerance and understanding that since its inception in Copenhagen, Denmark has spread to over 27 countries.

<http://humanlibrary.org>





Toronto Design Nerds

Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

The Toronto Design Nerds is a group that was initiated to foster multidisciplinary collaboration between creative people of all persuasions. Modeled after the Vancouver Design Nerds, the concept is to organize public 'idea potlucks' that create and nurture a network of creative people who meet to discuss projects and ideas for sustainability and innovation. Diversity in the group enriches the design process and propels discussion far beyond the prescribed parameters of a project, revealing opportunities and unanticipated, often surprising results.

<http://torontodesignerds.wikispaces.com/>



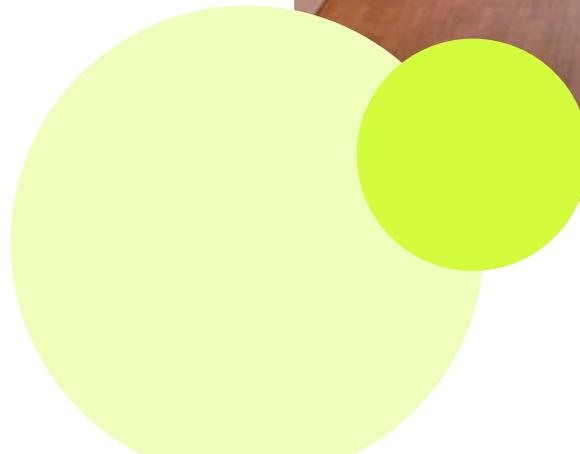


Spiritus Mundi

Malmö, Sweden

Spiritus Mundi is an intercultural dialogue organization working in the fields of youth empowerment and cultural diplomacy. Through its arts-based, video, and music programs, the organization creates unique meeting spaces that facilitate cross-cultural communication and bridge social, cultural, and geographic gaps in the city of Malmö, one of Sweden's most multicultural urban centers. Its pedagogical models are used as a reference by other cities and countries looking to create programs that tie culture, education, and economics together and have contributed to raising awareness of the benefits of culture and dialogue provide in creating peaceful and inclusive communities.

<http://www.spiritusmundi.nu>





Drommarnas Hus

Malmö, Sweden

Drommarnas Hus (House of Dreams) is a holistic organization working for community change. The organization's art studios, youth courses, workshops, and city-wide partnership with educators and pedagogues across the city make Drommarnas Hus a centre for education and innovation for the empowerment of marginalized/at-risk youth. Located in Rosengård, the community it services is one of the most underprivileged in the country, populated mostly by immigrant families where kids face the double burden of having to integrate into society while acting as interpreters/cultural mediators for their parents.

<http://www.drommarnashus.se/>





Laundromat Café

Copenhagen, Denmark

The Laundromat Café is part of what are called “fusion cafes,” spaces that provide a secondary service (in this case, laundry) to turn typically mundane tasks into more social activities. Here, individuals in the community maximize the use of their time and make connections with others instead of being isolated while waiting for the washer to finish the spin cycle. Young artists exhibit their artwork in the space, café staff cook homemade meals, patrons can borrow from over 4000 books for free, and chess, backgammon, and free WiFi are offered to encourage socialization and community-building.

<http://thelaundromatcafe.com/>





School of Everything

Global

School of Everything is a web platform that helps users learn new skills by facilitating a connection between students and teachers. A database of teachers and lessons allows users to find relevant support anywhere in the world, either in the form of paid lessons or by the form of a free knowledge exchange that happens locally directly between interested parties.

<http://schoolofeverything.com/>



Tentenuk ▪ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tentenuk/4417934993/>

Steering & Organizing





Change Camp

Canada

ChangeCamp is an event, an open community, and a set of tools and ideas designed to give citizens and governments the ability to work collaboratively in ways that address real-world challenges in local communities. A ChangeCamp event is a creative face-to-face gathering that is citizen-led, non-partisan, and social web-enabled. The program is focused on two goals: helping governments become more open, transparent, participatory, innovative, efficient, and effective; and helping citizens become more connected to each other around their civic passions in the place they call home.

<http://changecamp.ca/>





STEERING & ORGANIZING

The Innovations

Raging Grannies

Global

Raging Grannies is an activist organization born in Victoria, British Columbia, over the winter of 1986-87. Members of the group are women who mock stereotypes of older women by dressing up in old-fashioned grandmother clothes and singing songs at protests and community gatherings. Lyrics are typically written by members themselves, putting their political messages to the tunes of well known songs. The Raging Grannies, now an international movement, advocate for social justice in a humorous manner. Their activism includes peace and environmental causes.

<http://raginggrannies.org/>





Reboot

Copenhagen, Denmark

Reboot is a two-day participatory conference for young activists and creative types looking to act for a more sustainable world using technology, creativity, design, and whatever else comes to mind. It is a participatory conference where everyone has the chance to propose and run a workshop, lecture, or seminar. Started in 1998 with a Danish focus, the event is now a truly European phenomenon, with 400 participants attending from over 22 countries each year. During the conference, everything except the keynotes is open to change and the schedule is constantly evolving, allowing users to follow the flow of the event through a website that also doubles as a social network and online community.

http://reboot.dk/english/index_eng.html





STEERING & ORGANIZING

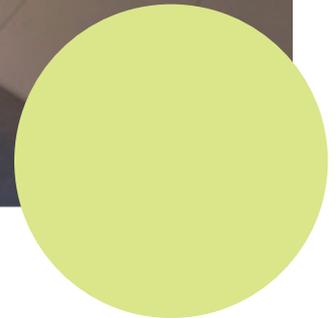
The Innovations

MindLab

Copenhagen, Denmark

MindLab was established in 2002 as an in-house growth facility for innovation at the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs in Denmark. Now working with two additional ministries, MindLab's strategy is to act as an in-between body creating neutral spaces in which radical innovation can take place in. MindLab's main function is to facilitate the meeting of different cultures in the ministries, and to encourage civil servants to use their creative competencies in the development of policy initiatives that meet the needs of citizens or businesses in participatory, and co-designed ways.

<http://mind-lab.dk/en>





WIMPS

Belfast, Northern Ireland

WIMPS stands for “Where Is My Public Servant?” and is a web platform and project run by youth for youth. The platform’s main feature is a database of public representatives that serve at the local council or European Parliament level. Youth across Northern Ireland use the database to connect with their representatives and access advice on how to take action on community issues that affect them, while WIMPS volunteers update the site on a daily basis with information on social change issues of interest to young people.

<http://www.wimps.tv>



Labour Youth • <http://www.flickr.com/photos/labouryouth/3831035620/>



STEERING & ORGANIZING

The Innovations

Toronto Cyclists Union

Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

The Toronto Cyclists Union is a membership-based organization that works alongside citizens, community groups, bike shops, and the City towards the common goals of ensuring that cycling remains a legitimate, accessible, and safe means of transportation for all Torontonians. In particular, the organization encourages newcomers to learn about cycling via the unique Newcomer Cycling Outreach program, a partnership with Ontario's CultureLink Settlement Services. The project promotes the integration of newcomers in the Greater Toronto Area by fostering cycling transportation as an affordable, healthy, and convenient option-- and connects newcomers to the wider cycling community in the city.

<http://bikeunion.to/>



Swanksalot • <http://www.flickr.com/photos/swanksalot/2926199438/>



Kafka Brigades

Europe and U.S.A.

The Kafka Brigade is an independent, not-for-profit action research team comprising a network of researchers from Amsterdam and the Hague (NL), Boston (USA), and Northern Ireland and Wales (UK). The team's mission is to tackle the bureaucratic red tape that prevents people from accessing the services they need and which often constrains public service staff. The Brigade's unique approach to identifying, diagnosing, and remedying bureaucratic dysfunction is centered on the involvement of citizens and front line staff, supported by participatory theoretical frameworks that lead to innovative responses and bureaucratic efficiency.

http://www.kafkabrigade.nl/?hl=en_US



KAFKA
BRIGADE



Code for America

U.S.A.

Code for America helps city governments become more transparent, connected, and efficient by connecting cutting-edge web developers with local decision-makers. Inspired in part by Teach for America, CFA works with city officials and web developers to identify problems and then develop web solutions to be shared and rolled out more broadly to cities across America. Each participating city identifies the need for a project and is assigned a team of five fellows who develop that application for the city over the course of the 11-month cycle. Beyond simply procuring a piece of software, the cities then engage in a deep, multi-directional exchange between the city government and the fellows, and also among the host cities.

<http://codeforamerica.org/>

CODE *for*
AMERICA

Financing





FINANCING

The Innovations

Timeraiser

Canada

Timeraiser was conceptualized in 2002 as a way for a group of friends to find meaningful, relevant volunteer opportunities in their community. Today, Timeraiser is an event that links organizations with prospective volunteers through a silent art auction where, instead of money, participants bid volunteer hours in increments of five. So far, the event has generated over 51,000 volunteer hours and has invested over \$300,000 in the careers of emerging artists, linking 5,000 Canadians with over 250 charitable organizations across the country.

<http://timeraiser.ca/>





Citta' dell'altra economia

Rome, Italy

Citta' dell'altra economia (City of Alternative Economies) is a multi-purpose facility in Rome where visitors can attend exhibits and events, buy organic and fair trade products, learn more about recycling, and speak to representatives from leading organizations offering ethical tourism, ethical finance, and renewable energy services. The space also hosts a restaurant and café where community members come together and socialize over the potential of alternative economies in promoting sustainability and fostering innovation.

<http://www.cittadellaltraeconomia.org/home/>





FINANCING

The Innovations

Zopa

U.K., U.S.A. Italy, Japan

Zopa is the world's first social finance company to pioneer a way for people to lend and borrow directly with each other online. Social lending eliminates the massive overhead costs faced by regular banking institutions, so lenders and borrowers get better rates and more immediate support. Online, borrowers evaluate the rates offered to them and select the ones they like the look of. To avoid risk, a lender lending £500 or more has their money spread across at least 50 borrowers, giving people around the world the power to help themselves financially at the same time that they help others.

<http://uk.zopa.com/>





Banca Etica

Italy

An ethical bank is a financial institution concerned with the social and environmental impacts of its investments and loans. Banca Etica, one of Europe's first ethical banks, manages savings raised from private citizens, organizations, companies, and institutions and invests them in initiatives pursuing both social and economic objectives, operating in full respect of human dignity and the environment. Maximum transparency is one of the main principles of ethical finance and the active involvement of shareholders and savers in the company's decision making process is continuously encouraged. As such, Banca Etica does not set out to reject the basic rules of finance, but it rather seeks to reform its main values.

<http://bancaetica.it>





FINANCING

The Innovations

LION

Port Townsend, Washington (U.S.A.)

The Local Investing Opportunities Network (LION) allows individuals to provide financial backing for businesses in Jefferson County, Washington through an easy application process. A business owner submits a business plan, references, and a request for a specific amount of funding to LION, which then distributes the application to resident investors. From there, the business and the investor figure out the details of an equity investment or a loan. Keeping investment money in the community creates positive echoes through what's known as "the local multiplier effect." When an investor helps a neighborhood business grow, the profits and jobs stay local as well.

<http://www.I2020.org/index.php?page=investing-opportunities>



Good Magazine • <http://www.flickr.com/photos/swanksalot/2926199438/>



ArtReach

Toronto, Ontario (Canada)

ArtReach Toronto is an innovative, youth-focused, and youth driven program with a mandate to support arts initiatives that engage youth who have experienced exclusion in under-served areas of Toronto. With strong financial support from all three levels of government, funding organizations, and donors, ArtReach is spending \$1.2 million over three years to support projects that encourage creative expression through quality arts opportunities for youth. The organization also provides free youth capacity building workshops on fundraising, leadership, and non-profit organization administration, recognizing the important role youth play in creating solutions to the issues of youth oppression and disengagement.

[http://www.artreachtoronto.ca /](http://www.artreachtoronto.ca/)



Participation

“Citizen participation is citizen power.”

Sherry Arnstein, planner & author of A Ladder of Citizen Participation

Traditional approaches to participation have made us used to the idea that representative democracy is unresponsive to local needs, that voting with our dollars is the only way of exercising more immediate control over our everyday experiences. As a result, the democratic life of most Western cities is suffering from a serious participation deficit, and the relationship between central government and citizens is often more akin to a game of broken telephone than one between equals.

Today, however, individual aspirations extend beyond consumption to the desire to play a part in stimulating local economies and embarking on life-long, self-directed learning journeys that encourage personal expression and participation in the public sphere. In fact, though the industrial age was based on the belief that ‘more is better’ and that progress was mainly defined in relation to GDP growth, today people are increasingly concerned with a non-material conception of well-being — where progress encompasses the health of the planet, takes into account personal ambitions, encourages community empowerment, and promotes a shared social responsibility.

Participatory citizenship’s roots date back to the 1960s, when Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed popularized the idea of participation from below. For Freire, development was a transformative process brought about by critical reflection and action taken by the people themselves. The Brazilian popular educator advocated for grassroots engagement as a way to

challenge power dynamics and give visibility to the excluded. Today, participatory governance can be considered an extension of Freire’s ideas about bottom-up empowerment, an avenue for citizens to uncover their own areas of expertise and monitor their well-being in relation to that of their community.

So as the general orientation towards citizenship evolves to transcend narrow, state-centric definitions and expands to acknowledge multiple values and inclinations, urbanites worldwide use their involvement in civil society to influence the forces that shape their lives. The plethora of meanings now attached to the notion of citizenship not only makes the concept more nuanced, but also acknowledges that people have multiple identities and affiliations. Consequently, citizenship is no longer just a reference to one’s political standing within a country, but an indication of involvement in the community — a descriptor of responsibilities that doubles as a value orientation. Initiatives such as Human Library or organizations like Spiritus Mundi are perfect examples of how, when we look at citizenship as more than just a matter of duties and taxes, we uncover a multifaceted world of daily experiences that gives more legitimacy and visibility to the resourcefulness of the traditionally excluded.

Recognizing that citizens have more than just needs, participatory frameworks diffuse creativity and distribute it to ‘non-specialized’ people, empowering them to employ innovative thinking in meeting their own needs. The results are encouraging: in the policy-making sphere, greater recognition of experiential knowledge is slowly making way for new forms of democratic engagement that open up opportunities for dialogue and diversity. Outside of the spaces for participation that citizens and communities carve

out for themselves, governments can also rely on devolution, decentralization, and delegation as mechanisms for opening up previously closed spaces of decision-making. Artreach and Code for America are both examples of how governments can invest their capital to join forces with other actors so that we can move from speaking of 'government' to speaking of governance — a testament to the belief that steering is more empowering than ruling.

"Government will need to become more porous, letting people into previously closed systems of policy-making."

Sophia Parker, Demos Associate

So how does participatory citizenship involve ordinary citizens in decision-making processes?

In her seminal essay *Porous Government: Co-design as a Route to Innovation*, Sophia Parker discusses the idea of a social investment state as "a chance to imagine what it might look like if government understood people's own experiences and lives as potential sites of learning and innovation." For Parker, the traditional models of governing are becoming less powerful, so institutions must explore new governance practices that shift the emphasis from service delivery and quantifiable outputs to determining goals and directions in concert with beneficiaries themselves. Parker argues in favor of a kind of innovation that requires user knowledge "as much as it needs new forms of technology or eureka moments". This enhanced understanding of expertise, she argues, is what allows policy-makers to focus on creating greater parity between traditional forms of evidence and the experiential insight citizens bring to the table.

In particular, Parker speaks of 'agile government' — an innovative model of governance which has the potential to democratize participation, address poverty of access issues, and support and enhance the work of creative communities. An agile government is one that is capable of fast decision-making, flexible resource allocation, and open policy-making, allowing institutions to maximize responsiveness while simultaneously driving change. Agile culture, in fact, is outward-oriented, aligning systems and policies to the changing dynamics of the community, all while working on clear goals that promote swift and effective community participation. Most institutions still have a long way to go before they can be considered 'agile,' but pioneering examples such as MindLab demonstrate how partnerships can be a powerful way for citizens and frontline public servants to develop more opportunities and greater capacity for collaboration, effectively driving co-production and co-design from the bottom up.

Design is more than just a matter of pretty fonts and nice graphics; it is a fundamental element in the creation of processes that enable and empower people to take responsibility for their own lives. Its role is wide-ranging: from communication, promotion, and diffusion of resources and information, it is a tool for actor mediation, scenario development, as well as a means for scaling participatory tools and best practices. For communities, design is a way to raise awareness on both the local and personal cultures that exist alongside more 'official,' or institutional, ones. In this context, then, design focuses less on products and more on services — on strategies that contribute to the quality of interaction between actors and the success of participatory processes in creating communities of active and creative citizens worldwide.

Co-design is by no means the easy option. It involves great amounts of concentration, coordination, and the facilitative skills to let multiple perspectives emerge and coalesce into a coherent whole. Participation is above everything a normative term, but it can help shed some light on who is and who isn't interacting, and on the health of a society's overall relational capital. Creating a culture of 'everyday democracy' means that democratic values influence not only the formal sphere of politics, but the spheres that remain hidden from official outreach — be they family-oriented, arts-based, or community-focused. With participatory citizenship, the issue is precisely whether the energy and everyday experiences of people can be employed in socially constructive ways and turned into ongoing learning experiences.

“The purpose is not to present a static utopian state, but to open discussion to the need to connect a discourse of meaningful social interaction to the design of material practices towards fostering democratic life.”

Nancy Ettilinger, Professor, Ohio State University

So what kind of enabling environment is required for citizen action and engagement?

For Charlie Tims and Shelagh Wright, authors of *So What Do You Do? Policy in the Age of Creativity*, the focus should be on the equitable distribution of tools and spaces for self-knowledge and self-production — on policies and services that can “stimulate our individual capacities to create new possibilities, make new connections and tell a collective storyⁱⁱⁱ.” Resources vary from creating learning opportunities and developing creativity as a basic human capacity to providing opportunities for micro-financing and project incubation. Innovation hubs and public spaces are also key in encouraging knowledge exchanges; they help provide mentorship and support networks, stimulate spontaneous discovery, and

disseminate collective stories. In short, Tims argues in favor of sparking conversations among actors in order to stimulate new kinds of leadership and creating a system of “mass-story storage” to document civil society's journey into empowered participatory governance.^{iv}

Collective will is the first step in ensuring that political authorities and their constituents mobilize resources that prove relevant to the community's vision, creating a supportive culture where service providers have strong incentives to share their power with beneficiaries. Similarly, mutual trust is crucial in ensuring a fair distribution of inputs and outcomes, especially if unequal power relations between stakeholders are not addressed, and if vulnerable demographics are not given a chance to meaningfully participate.

Similarly, when creating spaces for citizen participation, it is of critical importance to design an enabling framework that empowers individuals to take control over their lives. In her book *Democratizing Engagement: What the UK Can Learn from International Experience*, Andrea Cornwall refers to Jane Mansbridge's idea of 'laboratories of self-interest' to describe spaces that enable marginalized groups to gain confidence and build their position in the community^v. It is not enough, Cornwall argues, to employ the often vague notion of community when speaking of social justice and cooperation, because community is a term that as a whole risks flattening issues of powerlessness into a homogenous whole. Borrowing from Dagnino's idea of perverse confluence, Cornwall turns instead to the notion of heterogeneous communities to speak of a kind of participation that leads to both diversity and efficiency in self-sustained civic ways.^{vi} Citizen engagement, she argues, should be an opportunity to face up to the complex dynamic of power relations and inequality that are an inevitable part of communities. This way, actors can step away from static idyllic scenarios of cohesiveness and accountability and enter a sphere where interests are instead debated and defended by the public itself.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of ideas to help cities and communities enhance their everyday reality and spark new experiments and experiences in participatory governance:

Develop & Document Models That Work

1. Give communities tools instead of ideas — this will give them the confidence to frame their own needs and explore their own solutions;
2. Never lose sight of the importance of methodology — a well designed process architecture actively encourages the values of co-design from start to finish;
3. Introduce checks & balances to ensure that the collaborative design of services and projects remains a consensus-based decision-making process;
4. Invest in scenario development and forecasting techniques that are responsive to emerging trends and interconnected social issues;
5. Create an interactive knowledge-management system to capture progress — Web 2.0 tools and open source platforms are powerful ways to archive and diffuse information in real time;
6. Experiment with evaluation mechanisms that are more attuned to the values and true impact of the social economy, focusing not just on quantitative but also qualitative metrics; and
7. Explore models for co-investment, incubation, and prototyping that provide opportunities for mentoring, informal exchange, formal skill-building, and networking.

Nurture Networks for Learning & Sharing

1. Recognize the importance of social networks in creating a culture of openness, interactivity, and everyday democracy;
2. Support networks that facilitate interdisciplinary and holistic discussions of social issues and provide innovative opportunities for involvement — through online volunteering and reporting, for example;
3. Use social media and social publishing platforms to document progress, start a working group, find collaborators, ask for feedback, share resources, and celebrate achievements;
4. Create peer-to-peer learning opportunities both online and offline by fostering knowledge-transfer and capacity-building so that repetition of similar innovations is limited;
5. Fund and share Internet applications that support open government and open data practices;
6. Leverage the ability of online tools to reduce barriers and stereotypes, providing greater space for input and exchange; and
7. Learn by doing: track and evaluate progress by embracing a 'constant beta' approach to innovation.

Diversify Design

1. Redesign institutions so that there is greater team cooperation and less hierarchy, with clear incentives for sharing power and information across sectors;
2. Facilitate an 'open process' architecture that allows others to collaborate easily;
3. Design infrastructures that support the work-intensive aspects of collaboration by balancing it with the flexible systems that allow individuals to make their voices heard and explore their interests;
4. Use design to deal with complexity in ways that are interactive and holistic, stepping away from over-specialization, over-simplification, and segregation of function;
5. Recognize experiential, intercultural, and informal ways of knowing and doing as valid sites of insight and intuition;
6. Use co-design to understand the daily experiences, needs, and contributions of diverse actors in diverse communities — we need to broaden our conception of which knowledge matters and foster a politics based on the values and aspirations of citizens; and
7. Stimulate 'diffused creativity,' expanding the definition of creativity to include its potential for social change and investing in the ability of all to participate.

Set Up Spaces for Diffused Leadership

1. Instead of zooming in on measurable outcomes and quotas, place emphasis on people and places so to encourage local priority-setting and resource allocation in ways that are locally meaningful and participatory;
2. Create in-between spaces for research and dialogue that are not inhibited by institutional structures;
3. Encourage the spontaneous emergence of disruptive, in-between and/or 'micro' spaces for public participation, urban exploration, and social innovation — this will spark the imagination of the public and foster provocative thinking;
4. Support pioneers by connecting them with leaders in the community who can enhance their ability to co-design and innovate by providing access to resources, spaces, and visibility;
5. Foster a stimulating environment — one that provides a safe space for input, and where power is legitimately shared and all are welcome;
6. Set up spaces to encourage diversity of use and users — leaving room for self-organization and DIY development in public spaces is a powerful way to build community, encourage interaction, and focus on more than just monetary exchanges; and
7. Be mindful of issues of access and availability — publicize the existence of a place or the availability of a service linked to it, and provide flexible hours and locations to accommodate the needs of diverse users.

Scale Up Innovative Projects

1. When thinking about scaling a project, choose problems that are locally relevant but have wider scope;
2. Investigate effective demand for the innovation: Can it capture the imagination of the community? Are there individuals or organizations willing to support it?
3. Assess the project's capacity to grow: What is its vision? What is the business model? How does the governance structure reflect the values of the social economy?
4. Once the project is underway, raise awareness and scale it up through community advocacy, professional/social networks, and inter-stakeholder dialogue;
5. Lobby governments and institutions to:
 - invest in creating diverse and widespread capabilities for innovation across the public, social, and commercial sectors;
 - pass new laws and policies that support the initiatives of 'creative communities' by providing low barriers to entry and an enabling environment for social innovation;
 - commit to spending and investing in infrastructure that stimulates social innovation and focuses on the equitable distribution of funding;
6. Build learning systems that can nurture and scale up local innovation, investing in face-to-face relationships where mutual trust can grow and local needs can be truly understood; and
7. Learn and adapt by sharing lessons learned.

Cultivate a Culture of Trust both Online and Offline

1. Create a climate that promotes social investments in co-design by sharing success stories, creating opportunities for inter-actor dialogue and fostering open ownership;
2. Support Creative Commons licensing as a flexible way of increasing sharing and improving collaboration;
3. Encourage people to find one another both online and offline with the aim of stimulating social production and promoting collaborative consumption for optimal resource use;
4. Design education systems that have the social economy — not the industrial economy — in mind;
5. Harness the power of online tools to remove technological barriers, but be wary of the old social ones — overlooking the disconnect between people and politics can set back innovations and limit impact;
6. Adopt an 'I will if you will' attitude; and
7. Seek and learn from inspiring individuals, embarking on an ongoing process of self-development that is receptive to emerging trends and the personal stories of others.

Keep the Innovations Meaningful

1. Get to know the community: organize periodical get-togethers or idea potlucks as a way for informal networking and idea-exchange to take place;
2. Make sure the innovation, collaboration, or participation agenda is not co-opted or treated as a managerial tool. Always ask: Why participation? Whose design? Whose solutions?
3. Invest in communities as an approach to community resilience;
4. Avoid fixating exclusively on innovations and dismissing every established method of meeting people's needs. Innovation is often stifled by narrow definitions of high performance;
5. Bring social justice and intercultural dialogue into the heart of government and the institutions that (should) support the social economy;
6. Foster deliberation, not just consultation; and
7. Enable public servants to understand the shifts from leading to enabling, from controlling to influencing, and from operating in isolation to working in partnership with others in order to better serve the public.

For more on Paulo Freire's pedagogy, see: Freire, Paulo (2006) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary ed. New York: Continuum.

ii Parker, S. (2007) 'Chapter 11: Porous Government — Co-design as a Route to Innovation' in *Unlocking Innovation: Why Citizens Hold the Key to Public Service Reform*. Parker, S. and S. Parker, eds. London, UK: Demos, p.148

iii Ibid., p.147

iv Tims, C. and S. Wright. (2007) *So What Do You Do? A New Question for Policy in the Creative Age*. London, UK: Demos, p.43

v Ibid., p.43

vi Jane Mansbridge in Cornwall, A. (2008) *Democratising Engagement: What the UK Can Learn from International Experience*. London: Demos, p. 57

vii Ibid., p. 28

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Conclusion

In 1968, Stewart Brand launched the Whole Earth Catalog, a publication that quickly became the symbol of environmental counterculture and alternative technology. Individuals like Brand expanded the reach of techno-scientific experimentation beyond music and psychedelic drugs to the realm of alternative energy and information technology, guided by the belief that expanding access to innovative and subversive information would provide people with the impetus to lead more sustainable lives. Brand understood well that “the most radical action against the status quo was not throwing bombs or staging sit-ins but fabricating wind generators to ‘unplug from the grid’”ⁱ.

The purposes of the Whole Earth Catalog were multiple, but its primary function was to act as an access device for users interested in making more environmentally-friendly choices. By arguing in favor of direct involvement and the re-discovery of community, Brand’s thought leadership made a lasting impact on the culture of the time, pushing for a renewed understanding of sustainable thinking and ‘the everyday.’ In his 2005 commencement speech to graduates of Stanford University, Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs called the Whole Earth Catalog a precursor to the World Wide Web, stating that it was “sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along.”ⁱⁱ Today, Web 2.0 technologies and online social networks can be considered an extension of publications like the Whole Earth Catalogue. What has changed, perhaps, is their ability to blur the boundaries between the production and consumption of information, allowing users to reach a bigger-than-ever audience at historically unprecedented lower costs.

So if a paper-based catalog fuelled the imagination of countless individuals and inspired them to experiment with alternative forms of living, imagine what could be achieved today with the powerful tools and platforms available to us. Open-source software, crowd-sourced projects, and social networks make it incredibly evident that the impact of the Internet is not just online. Through the meaningful creation of opportunities for resource-sharing and skill-building, Web 2.0 technologies are enabling us to build a culture of informative and creative collaboration that is redefining the very way we conceive of participation, innovation, and now even governance.

These shifts are already happening. The ‘creative community’ movement is strong and is growing everyday. So now the question is: how will you harness the power of your creative thinking?

ⁱ Kirk, A. ‘Appropriating Technology: The Whole Earth Catalog and Counterculture Environmental Politics’ *Environmental History*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (Jul., 2001), pp. 382

ⁱⁱ For the full speech, see: <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2005/june15/jobs-061505.html>

Glossary

Active citizenship is an approach to citizen duty and responsibility that values the input of citizens in policy-making and recognizes the importance of all three levels of participation in decision-making (personal, local, and global.) Here, actions and discourses allow for the bottom-up formulation of different views, taking into account the perspective of disenfranchised groups and questioning the need to achieve sustainability through the consumption of more (green) products.

Co-design is, at its simplest, about decision-makers and stakeholders working together for the creation and implementation of a policy, service, or project that meets the needs and wants of its beneficiaries. Based on central tenets such as participation, collaboration, and transparency, co-design's emphasis on process adds a political dimension of user empowerment and democratization to service delivery, allowing for the creation of a framework for debate that unleashes the power of creativity without employing traditional-thinking moulds that reduce interconnected issues into isolated problems.

Cosmopolitan Localism refers to a new sense of place and culture, where local communities are no longer isolated but act as nodes in a wider network that regenerates the social and production fabric, both locally and globally.

Creative communities are groups of people who brainstorm and facilitate innovative solutions for more sustainable ways of living. In particular, creative communities attempt to solve local problems, or meet local needs, in ways that challenge everyday thinking and foster a sense of inclusion and belonging.

Hyper-local refers to user-designed initiatives or events that are located within a well-defined, community- or neighborhood-scale area. Though scalable, the initiatives are usually intended for consumption by residents of that area.

Participatory governance is a process that strives to create opportunities for a broad range of constituents to have a say in the direction and operation of political systems. Since the values behind participatory governance mirror those of Web 2.0, technology is often the backbone of many participatory governance models and initiatives — especially those that enable communities to contribute knowledge in interactive and open ways.

Social innovation refers to ideas and strategies that meet social needs in ways that bring value to communities and strengthen civil society movements. Successful social innovations have durability, impact, and scale.

Social economy refers to a third sector in economies between private (business) and public (government). It includes organizations such as cooperatives, NGOs, and foundations, and community activity that ranges from volunteerism to social entrepreneurship. By mobilizing to fill a need with not-for-profit aims, it is generally believed that the social economy has a distinct and valuable role to play in helping create a strong, sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive society.

Resources

Organizations

ACORN <http://www.acorn.org>
Artscape <http://www.torontoartscape.on.ca>
Ashoka <http://www.ashoka.org>
Center for Social Innovation <http://www.socialinnovation.ca>
Change Fusion <http://www.changefusion.org/>
Creative Commons <http://creativecommons.org>
freeDimensional <http://www.freedimensional.org/>
Global Links <http://www.glinet.eu/about.php>
Glocal Forum <http://www.glocalforum.org>
Hope Institute <http://eng.makehope.org>
Involve <http://www.involve.org.uk>
New Zealand Center for Social Innovation <http://www.nzcsi.org>
Open Plans <http://openplans.org>
Participle <http://www.participle.net>
Sparkseed <http://www.sparkseed.org>
The Australian Center for Social Innovation <http://www.tacsi.org.au>
Transparency International <http://www.transparency.org>
Women's World Banking <http://www.swwb.org>
Youth Social Enterprise Initiative <http://www.ysei.org/>

Foundations & Think Tanks

Anna Lindh Foundation <http://www.euromedalex.org>
Aspen Institute <http://www.aspeninstitute.org>
Canadian Sustainability Indicators Network <http://www.csin-rcid.ca/>
Citizenship Foundation <http://citizenshipfoundation.org.uk>
Demos <http://www.demos.co.uk>
Living Cities <http://www.livingcities.org/>
Long Now Foundation <http://www.longnow.org>
New Economics Foundation <http://neweconomics.org>
Polaris Institute <http://www.polarisinstitute.org>
Skoll Foundation <http://www.skollfoundation.org>
Sunlight Foundation <http://sunlightfoundation.com>
UnLtd <http://unltd.org.uk>
World Resources Institute <http://www.wri.org>
Young Foundation <http://www.youngfoundation.org>

Networks

C40 <http://www.c40cities.org>
CIVICUS <http://www.civicus.org>
Creative Cities <http://creativecities.britishcouncil.org>
Creative Cities Network of Canada <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/>
Design 21 <http://www.design21sdn.com>
DIY City <http://www.diycity.org>
Feast <http://www.feastongood.com>
Global Changemakers <http://www.global-changemakers.net>

Global Knowledge Partnership <http://www.globalknowledgepartnership.org>
Human Cities Festival <http://www.humancities.eu>
Inclusive Cities <http://www.inclusivocities.eu>
Institute for Distributed Creativity <http://distributedcreativity.org>
International Making Cities Livable <http://www.livablecities.org>
Lab for Culture <http://www.labforculture.org/en>
Social Edge <http://www.socialedge.org>
Social Innovation Exchange <http://www.futurelab.org.uk/about-us>
Sustainability Network <http://sustainabilitynetwork.ca/>
Sustainable Cities <http://sustainablecities.dk>
Sustainable Cities Collective <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/>
Sustainable Everyday Portal <http://sustainable-everyday.net/SEPhome/home.html>
TED <http://www.ted.com>
UN-HABITAT best practices <http://www.bestpractices.org>
Urban Recipes <http://urbanrecipes.ning.com>
Unreasonable Institute <http://www.unreasonableinstitute.org>
Walk 21 <http://www.walk21.com>

Publications

Stanford Social Innovation Review <http://www.ssireview.org>
Oxford Community Development Journal <http://cdj.oxfordjournals.org>
GOOD magazine <http://www.good.is>
Spacing magazine <http://www.spacing.ca>
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<http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/collaborativestatecollection>

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<http://web.mit.edu/evhippel/www/democ1.htm>

Resources

Web Portals

Dinner at Your Door <http://www.dinnerco-ops.com/>
Global Voices <http://globalvoicesonline.org>
Green Map <http://www.greenmap.org>
Grist <http://www.grist.org/>
Livable Streets <http://www.livablestreets.com/about>
MIT Community Innovators Lab <http://web.mit.edu/colab>
Open IDEO <http://openideo.com/>
People and Participation <http://www.peopleandparticipation.net>
Shareable <http://shareable.net>
Social Earth <http://www.socialearth.org/>
Social Innovator <http://socialinnovator.info>
Social Entrepreneurship Portal <http://socialentrepreneurship.change.org>
Submate <http://www.submate.com/>
The City Fix <http://thecityfix.com/about-us>
ThinkChange India <http://www.thinkchangeindia.org/>
WiserEarth <http://www.wiserearth.org>
World Changing <http://www.worldchanging.com>

Learning & Research Centers

ARNOVA <http://arnova.org>
Catalyst Centre <http://www.catalystcentre.ca>
Center for Civil Society <http://www.ccsindia.org/ccsindia/aboutus.asp>
Center for Deliberative Democracy <http://cdd.stanford.edu>
Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad <http://www.cedes.org/english/index.html>
Centro Popular de Cultura e Desenvolvimento <http://www.cpcd.org.br>
CIRCLE <http://civicyouth.org>
Earth Institute <http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sections/view/9>
Engaged Youth <http://www.engagedyouth.org>
International Institute for Sustainable Development <http://www.iisd.org/>
Kaospilots <http://www.kaospilot.dk>
Orbis Institute <http://www.orbisinstitute.org>
Pathways through Participation <http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk>
Social Economy Center <http://socialeconomy.utoronto.ca/english/index.php>

Videos

Coalition of the Willing <http://vimeo.com/12772935>
Collaborative Consumption <http://vimeo.com/11924774>



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/zephyrance/2865451246/>

