

# 10

## **Design and social innovation**

### **Design practice and methods based on networks and communities**

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#### **10.1 Introduction**

China, the world's most rapidly developing country in the past 30 years, is experiencing a severe economic and cultural development imbalance. On the surface, economic strategies focusing on regional-centred, radiating expansion have shown significant improvements in some areas such as basic infrastructure, GDP, real estate, urbanisation, and fashion products. However there has been very little growth in general welfare, social values, spiritual belief, and culture. Rapid urbanisation has destroyed many regional cultural and traditional communities. Both in rural and urban communities, many issues and contradictions, which arise from both dramatic changes in the relationship between people and the land as well as the reconstruction of old cities, renovation of dilapidated buildings and new city building and urbanisation, are accumulating, often to be solved by grassroots communities. Social unrest caused by the changes at the macro-economic level

has posed new problems regarding how to integrate ‘atomised’ individuals<sup>1</sup> and ‘fragmented’ societies as the ‘Work unit’ system and ‘street residence’ system<sup>2</sup> are rendered useless. As a result of these social issues, pointing to either the need for governance or civil society awareness, many Chinese scholars have begun to focus on a framework to enable analysis of the state-society. ‘Community conflicts’ have also become a focus.

The field of design has also experienced many challenges in the past ten years. It has shifted its focus from product design to immaterial design such as service design, information design, business model design, and system design (Sanders 2006; Burns, Cottam, Vanstone and Winhall 2006; Sanders and Stappers 2008; Mager 2009; Manzini 2009b). Design uses new technologies to stimulate people’s imagination and satisfy their desires; on the other hand, people’s social attributes are reconstructed under the impact of these products, which can lead to many new social and environmental problems. In this process, designers as important conceivers and practitioners need to reflect upon their role, from the perspective of anthropology and sociology, and on the question of how to balance between the ‘material needs of individuals’ and the ‘commonwealth of society’.

User-centred research methods used in the field of design often focus on the needs of individuals, especially as consumer groups. However in reality, the state of being a consumer is only temporary: most often people are within other social contexts. The aim of this chapter is to show how people can be understood *in* their communities and how a real-life project explored design methods centred on ‘community’ and ‘people in their community’. How can design methods be used to create greater social value? What kinds of problems between people and society can designers actually solve? How can designers with different backgrounds work together efficiently?

## 10.2 Design objectives and methods

Key issues relevant to traditional rural communities as compared to modern urban communities differ significantly according to the literature. These issues and their related practices are discussed in the following sections.

- 1 ‘Atomised’ originated from a sociological theory, atomism, in which the individual is appointed as the basic unit of analysis for all implications of social life. ‘Atomised individuals’ here refers to the Chinese population, who are trending towards being self-interested, equal and rational social atoms that together form an aggregate society of self-interested individuals.
- 2 The ‘Work unit’ system and ‘street residence’ system were the basic-level governance systems in Chinese city management. With the establishment of a market economy, the traditional unit system has been profoundly affected and a community system has taken the place of the above two.

### 10.2.1 Objectives of traditional and urban communities

Traditional communities have an existing strong sense of identity thanks to physical proximity, kinship, ethnic, linguistic or religious identities and local culture. Practices in traditional communities mainly aim to achieve the following objectives (Liu 2008):

- Preservation and maintenance of the original social capital, which is threatened by a decreasing population
- Promotion of the diversification of rural industries to stimulate local economic development as the income from agriculture declines
- Transformation of public spaces and infrastructures to prevent decline and strengthen the sense of community through joint participation of local residents
- Encouraging social practices from a sustainable perspective to promote traditional cultural heritage and the rational use<sup>3</sup> of the environment and natural resources

Community building methods introduced by the Japanese scholar Kiyoshi Miyazaki have inspired numerous related innovations in Southeast Asian countries and China's Taiwan region and have had a broad social impact (Suzuki and Miyazaki 2008). These practices are grounded in original community identity and local knowledge.

In contrast the primary social needs of urban communities differ substantially. Urban communities are characterised by heterogeneous population structures, high mobility, diversity and openness, resulting in social relations that are not as strong as those in traditional communities. Concern with the development or diversity of the economy also differs due to the spatial differentiation of urban functional structures. Moreover, as urban communities exist within a broader system of connections compared with traditional groups, they should be examined from the perspective of the entire city, as opposed to a limited, narrow physical perspective that fails to acknowledge the links to the external environment. Social practices in urban communities mainly focus on the following objectives (Liu 2008; Landry 2000; Bolz *et al.* 2005):

- Resolving the problems of inadequate community spatial planning and public facilities caused by rapid urbanisation
- Alleviating the problem of urban community space classification and taking actions on social equity to avoid community confrontation

<sup>3</sup> Several cases have been reported in China where locales with significant environmental and cultural resources have sought economic development through tourism but ended up with pollution and ecological damage. Against this background we propose 'rational use of the environment and natural resources' as a key objective.

- Establishment of an urban community identity to cope with the negative effects brought by the global tendency towards individualism
- Improving community services and enhancing quality of life
- Exploring urban sustainable lifestyles and addressing global climate and environmental challenges
- Creating city brands by establishing distinctive communities, so as to enhance the ability to attract capital and talents in the era of a knowledge and experience economy

Typical methods and examples of urban community social practice include community revitalisation experiences from the city of Barcelona; sustainable lifestyle scenarios constructed by Manzini and other scholars; community building through service design methods by design agencies and actors such as Dott, IDEO and live|work; and cities' future thinking in 'Cities of the Future' by PricewaterhouseCoopers and 'creative cities' by Charles Landry (Manzini and Jegou 2003; Jegou and Manzini 2008; Bolz *et al.* 2005; Landry 2000).

In the transformation process from traditional to urban communities, local differentiation gradually disappears. The dominant knowledge changes from local knowledge to global knowledge. Meanwhile, the linking factors of geography, kinship, ethnicity and local culture weaken, and instead factors such as professional education, status, career and hobbies play an increasingly important role as social bonds. The urban community of the future will be characterised by diversity and individualism (Landry 2000; Florida 2002) and emerging communities of interest are defined by weak ties and contingent commitments. A community of diversity and individualism challenges the traditional ways of building identity, which emphasise geographical links and participation. However, the spread of global network infrastructures provides tools for information sharing and social networks and creates new possibilities to re-connect atomised individuals. **Virtual communities** and **mobile communities** can become bona fide spaces that can unite creative citizens in future.

### 10.2.2 Design networks and social innovation

According to Pierre Bourdieu's social praxeology, Michel Foucault's power theory, and Clifford Geertz's local knowledge research, design can be thought of as actions of social practice or creation, which need the existence of a structure (i.e. power) to implement. 'Design' in this era has been pushed to the forefront of social and public discourse and some design elites keen to participate in the discussion of certain public issues may become public intellectuals. At the same time, popular concepts such as 'Created in China', 'the national innovation system' and 'low-carbon design' often reflect the strategic thinking of governments, and designers actually play a somewhat random role in the process of community transformation. In

the complex relationship among community institutions, designers are merely a grassroots force and mainly involved with 'servicising'. In other words, on the one hand, designers often participate as 'outsiders'. In the confrontation between various kinds of unbalanced *power* and *capital*, designers cannot usually organise the structured form necessary for participation. On the other hand, how can designers acquire the *local knowledge* needed and creatively promote social innovation from a native's point of view? We believe it would be more effective to construct a **multi-disciplinary design network** by which designers can participate in social practices in communities.

In reviewing existing community practices, we find that designers are accustomed to understanding and solving problems within their own disciplines. Solutions thereby tend to be limited to one's special discipline, such as architecture, planning, industrial design, information design or visual design. At the same time, their design activities are often separated and there are few approaches for them to work collaboratively. Nevertheless, a community is a complex system in which all problems and needs are interconnected, and it is almost impossible for one discipline to cope with all community issues. Meanwhile, emerging disciplines or practices such as Transformation Design and Strategic Design all place emphasis on systemic thinking and collaborating between disciplines (Burns, Cottam, Vanstone and Winhall 2006; Meroni 2008). Moreover the 'information age' or 'network society' (Castells 2000) demonstrates the importance of organisational networks: the network-based 'virtual intelligence community' of the future. In the process of community-based design practices and social innovations, *construction of knowledge platforms* and *organisation design* may therefore be a viable approach for designers' participation. This also calls for a re-examination of fundamental working methods.

Emphasis on *local knowledge* helps address the problem of designers' roles in these practices; construction of *knowledge platforms* helps to answer the question on how to obtain local knowledge; and *organisation design* offers a way to involve different stakeholders and multidisciplinary partners. Design in this sense will use a more tensional structural form<sup>4</sup> and the power of social identity (through innovation networks, design networks, social networks, etc.) to participate in community social innovation, enabling web-based and sustainable harmonious community building.

4 Tension in physics means force resistance to passive stretch. It helps maintain the state. Here 'tensional structural form' refers to design that has the resistance to passive powers in community innovation through these networks, which helps ensure the innovation outcomes are more sustainable.

## 10.3 Case study: Social innovation practice in a traditional community

The Autonomous County of Tongdao Dong Nationality lies on the boundaries of three provinces, Hunan, Guangxi, and Guizhou. The population of Tongdao is about 2,250,000. The Dong minority makes up about 78.4% of the population. Besides its well-preserved ecological environment and local culture, Tongdao is also well known as the 'Holy Land of the Dong culture'. Although Tongdao is rich in natural resources, with forest coverage of up to 74% and up to 170,000 cubic metres of merchantable timber produced annually, it is still a poverty-stricken county in the country. In 2008, the per capita income of farmers was 1,756 Yuan.

In this project, called 'New Channel Design & Social Innovation', we wished to take advantage of having several disciplines and, through reasonable town planning, eco-tourism development, information and logistics network construction, integration of product and service systems, and protection of non-material cultural heritage, to establish an International Innovation Design Union and web-based information platform, promoting the cultural self-awareness of local residents as well as industrial innovation.

In order to approach the issues Tongdao faced, a workshop was co-organised by NRC (Nokia Research Center, Beijing<sup>5</sup>) and the School of Design, Hunan University (HNU<sup>6</sup>), who provided relevant design and support in the 20-day field surveys, focusing on the lives of local villagers. The entire team was split into five groups: social research, environmental and industrial design, interactive, video and visual design. The study methods included contextual inquiry, a brief questionnaire, participatory observation, participatory rural rapid appraisal, and social impact analysis. More than 25 families coming from four villages in the Autonomous County of Tongdao joined our project. Twenty-eight local people, both male and female and a diversity of ages, participated in our formal interviews.

### 10.3.1 Keywords

The following terms were crucial concepts in the project and are therefore elaborated in this section.

5 A team of 16 senior research staff members, including information experts from France, the UK, the United States and Finland.

6 The HNU team, with up to 50 members, was made up of professors, doctors, and graduate students from industrial design, architecture, landscape, city planning, environmental protection, information, and video art.

## Local

Local people come first. The diversity of culture is as important as the diversity of nature. It contributes to the harmonious development of the whole society and ecosystem. We should also pay attention to personalised needs and individual experiences in different cultural contexts as well as adaptive faculties and the transitioning status of culture rooted in different cultural groups. We should, with local people, find their own way of living which meets their needs.

## Connected

Connecting the economically marginalised areas to global networks. At present, under the influence of global networks, fundamental changes have taken place in cultural communication, lifestyles, production modes and consumption behaviours. Economically marginalised areas have however missed the opportunities of development brought by the industrial age. How can they take advantage of the cultural and natural resources that are left in order to merge into a global commercial and social network at minimal cost? How can they develop eco-tourism, organic agriculture, and forestry processing? How can they establish web-based transactions and communication platforms and increase employment opportunities?

## Sustainable

Achieving sustainable communities through localised Product-Service System design. The scope of sustainability has extended from environmental protection and resource conservation to sustainable design of lifestyle and consumption patterns, from environmentally friendly product design to community service and innovation.

### 10.3.2 Social needs

The Young Foundation defines social innovation as ‘new ideas that work to meet pressing unmet needs and improve people’s lives’ (Mulgan 2006). Describing the contents of social needs is the starting point of rural social innovation. Pol and Ville (2009) argue that social innovation should benefit the majority, a statement that became one of our main standards to filter social needs. We summarised these social needs in two categories.

#### 10.3.2.1 Lifestyles and ways of living

The ancient village is the original carrier of the traditional way of life. It also represents Tongdao’s most important cultural heritage and visual characteristics. When the traditional peasant economy cannot achieve its development needs, much change is needed. The changing relationship between people and the land leads to

the sale of resources, commercial and tourism development, migrant workers and other new economic forms. Peasants that have saved up for years end up replacing the ancient houses with new buildings decorated with tiles. How can the ancient village landscapes be protected while the villagers' need to rebuild is also met? How can traditional culture and crafts be used to improve the quality of home life? Peasants are not able to solve these problems alone. It is our duty to actively work together with the local people to co-explore the solutions.

- Landscape: protect as well as develop landscape and architecture
- Furniture: enhance with local products and traditions
- Culture and nature as business resources for local benefit

#### 10.3.2.2 Ways of connecting

A large number of young adults move out as migrant workers and leave the children, women and elderly people to become the major members of the village. At the same time, they are offered a large number of new communication methods, but can the services promised in the overwhelming number of ads actually help them maintain communication? New social network services may shift these young adults towards notions of productivity and new lifestyles. In this process, building education, social learning, and communication platforms needs the support of indigenous knowledge and communication systems. Therefore, the study of local communities, existing communication methods between individuals, and ways to build a virtual community was another important goal of our project.

- Families: how to maintain family connections when some of them work far away or move to the city
- Economy: how to connect the rural areas with global networks to gain development opportunities
- Culture: how to use local traditions to preserve a harmonious cultural ecology

#### 10.3.3 Knowledge platforms and organisation design

As stated previously, the construction of 'knowledge platforms' and 'organisation design' is prioritised over actual design outputs when designing for communities and social innovation.

The **knowledge platform** consists of two main parts: first local context and knowledge; and second the background knowledge of the multidisciplinary team. Local knowledge includes various forms of local capital or assets, three major types being cultural, natural and behavioural resources. Local knowledge is obtained through interviews with local government, residents and other organisations, field observations, books and stories. Teams of diverse backgrounds provide diverse

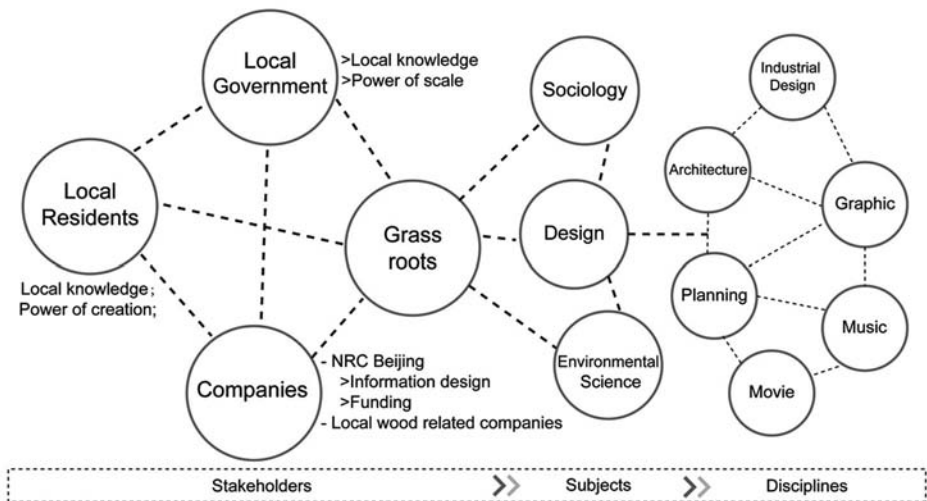
observation and interpretation perspectives, which create conditions conducive to systemic social innovation. Key to cooperation in a multidisciplinary team is to maintain openness and mutual exchange by approaches such as reporting and panel discussion. Building the knowledge platform is a process of gaining **design power**. It also serves as a foundation for attracting other stakeholders and ensuring multidisciplinary cooperation.

When it comes to **organisational design**, we must ask one question: who are the social innovation actors?

Robin Murray pointed out that the new social economy would appear in four sub-economies—the state, the market, the grant economy and the household—and more social innovations would straddle the boundaries between sectors and disciplines (Murray 2009). Moreover Ezio Manzini described social innovation as ‘a process of change where new ideas emerge from a variety of actors directly involved in the problems to be solved: final users, grassroots technicians and entrepreneurs, local institutions and civil society organisations’ (Manzini 2009b). According to these ideas, we summarised the actors in rural social innovation as the government (state), NGOs (the grant economy), companies (the market), and local residents and other grassroots institutions (the household). According to the understanding of these roles, we built a joint innovation organisation for this project.

Figure 10.1 Partners in the ‘New Channel Design & Social Innovation’ project

Source: authors



10.3.4 Design contents

Kretzmann and McKnight (1997) argue that only asset-based community development can help us escape from a needs-driven dead-end. Boyle, Slay and Stephens (2010) also emphasise the importance of building on people's existing capabilities. Design opportunities hide in the integration of assets and social needs. Their discovery depends on the interpretation of the local context and knowledge by the design team.

Table 10.1 Design opportunities

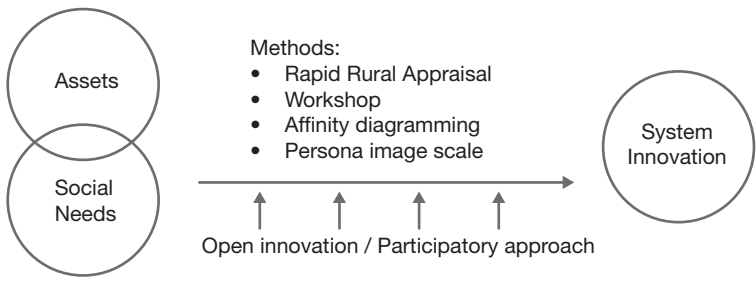
Source: authors

Design opportunities			
Intellectual + social capital	Advantages	Disadvantages	Economic revitalisation
Cultural capital	↓	↓	Retention of social capital
Natural capital	Community assets	Social needs	Infrastructure transformation
Behavioural capital			Cultural heritage
...			...

In 'New Channel Social Innovation' practice, we aimed to combine planning and architecture design, industrial design and information service design in forming a collaborative approach to participating in social innovation. The sociology research team carried out studies on population structure, production patterns, consumption patterns, social associations and other organisations, all of which would be used as reference knowledge for other teams when designing. The environmental and industrial design team handled the social needs classified as 'Lifestyles and ways of living'. The interactive design and communication design team aimed at solving problems associated with 'Ways of connecting'. All these teams were not completely independent of each other; they collaborated on some overlapping design contents. Through this process, the project yielded fruitful design results, some of which are described in the following sections.

Figure 10.2 Participatory innovation

Source: authors



## Planning and architecture

Architectural styles in Tongdao are distinctive. [Zhihua Chen \(2008\)](#), professor at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University, writes that '[s]ettlement is an organic system, whose historical and cultural significance and function is much higher than the total of all of its buildings. Local architecture conservation should protect the village or the town as a whole'. While public architecture in Tongdao is already under protection of the law, what was more worrying were the local residences: from 2006 to 2009, we witnessed the destruction process of local landscapes. This led us to conclude that the villagers do not recognise the value of their landscapes; they have saved up for years to change their wooden houses into cement cubes decorated with white tiles, which, in our view, are not aesthetically beautiful and do not suit the environment. What made the problem challenging was the contradiction between the villagers' will and choice and our objectives to preserve the overall landscape. Moreover most Dong villages in the area are located along the Pingtan River. We found increasing signs of contamination, as more and more solid trash and sewage is directly dumped into the river.

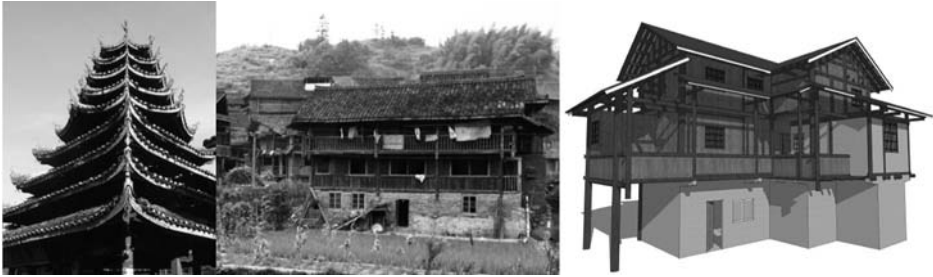
In New Channel Social Innovation Practice, we aimed to tackle these problems from different angles. The environmental and industrial group surveyed the current status of local villages, landscape and resources, and drafted Ancient Village Protection Guidelines and Pollution Control Guidelines, which were presented to the local government as a policy-making reference. The Guidelines included identification of ancient architecture, restoration and transformation methods, material and style requirements on newly constructed buildings, issues related to protection and tourism development, the rights and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders, and approaches to enhance public awareness of and residents' respect for local architecture. The Pollution Control Guidelines, which take Gaotuan Village as an example, discussed methods to deal with daily garbage, wastewater, and ways to reduce agricultural pollution, as well as viable models of Ecological Agriculture. A brief sanitation regulation is also suggested in the report.

From the construction point of view, in order to help villagers find a reasonable balance between new housing building and the protection of ancient villages, we designed new folk housing prototypes that meet the needs of local residents and are compatible with the existing landscapes. Based on the traditional forms, the new folk housing prototypes are improved to be more functional and comfortable, especially in terms of ventilation; protection against rain, fire and noise; strengthening of weak structures; and reconsidering some functional layouts for health reasons. These advantages aim to encourage local people to choose the recommended housing-style willingly, so as to achieve the goal of protecting landscapes indirectly.

Another important incentive to stimulate the villagers to take conscious action is direct benefit from landscape protection. Therefore, we also developed local tourism planning for the village of Hengling to promote cultural resource utilisation. This is also in line with the local government's future economic development plan, to promote the local economy by tourism. We selected the appropriate sites after a survey in the village and planned service areas, distribution areas, and tourist routes accordingly.

Figure 10.3 **Traditional public architecture, local residential housing, new folk housing prototype**

Source: authors



### Industrial design

Our survey found that Tongdao has vast, high quality forest resources, but many forest products are sold at a low price with only primary processing and low added value. Tongdao also has excellent woodworking skills, as evidenced by local public buildings and furniture. Nevertheless as local demand drops and incomes become unpredictable, skilful carpenters tend to go elsewhere, seeking better opportunities. In the long run this means a loss of traditional skills.

We also found there is huge potential for a local furniture market. However from among the current mix of existing furniture consumption patterns involving local furniture, imported furniture from big cities, and homemade furniture, it is a challenge for residents to find a balance between price, quality, function and aesthetics. In addition the local government sets multiple strategies to reduce local poverty, such as supporting local business, job training, and subsidising the peasants to drive market demand. All these efforts are nonetheless independent and discrete and have not yet formed an effective force.

By analysing these service ecologies, it is possible to reveal opportunities for new actors to join the ecology and new relationships among the actors. Ultimately, sustainable service ecologies depend on a balance where the actors involved exchange value in ways that is mutually beneficial over time ([Live|work 2008](#)). Facing the problems and opportunities described above, we designed a new local furnishing product-service system. The new PSS redesigns the relationship among local residents, local carpenters, government, forestry, furniture manufacturers, and other stakeholders. The system map ([Figure 10.4](#)) is used as a visual description of the service technical organisation: the different actors involved, their mutual links and the flows of materials, energy, information and money through the system ([Morelli and Tollestrup 2007](#)).

In this new system, the government helps local small factories purchase wood-processing equipment to improve their product mix. The small factories buy local forest timber and process it into planks of various specifications, which can be directly used for building houses and making furniture. The local carpenters will be organised into local associations. Local residents purchase the standardised

planks and contact the local carpentry association for assembly and customisation services. There are three particularly innovative or novel qualities in this PSS: first, design institutions are included, who take part in government projects aimed at rural areas; second, local carpenters create design solutions with the help of some special training; and third, cooperation with local design schools is planned. As an example of furnishing design innovation, we have sought to match interior design concepts for furniture and decoration with the folk housing prototype described above according to guidelines of low cost and high quality.

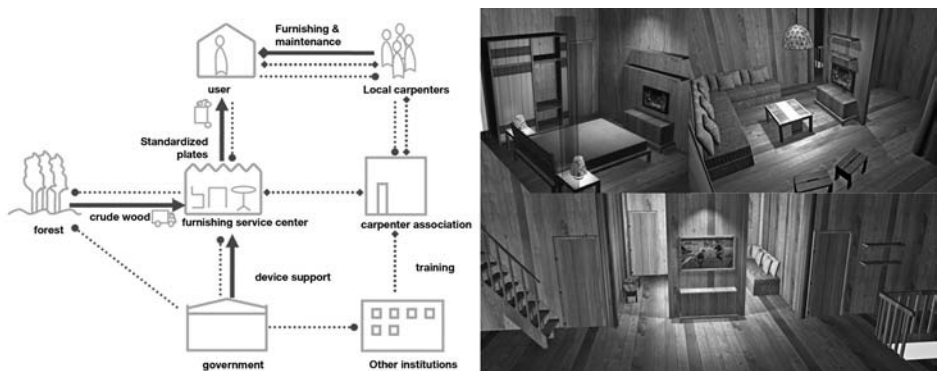
The new PSS makes up for the defects of the original three furniture trading models. It meets the Triple Bottom Line, which is considered the best way to promote sustainable practice in business (*Economist* 2010).

- **Economic.** The local residents can enjoy furniture that in low is price, high in quality, functional in usage, and good looking in aesthetics. The operation of the service unites the efforts of government in poverty alleviation and economic development to form a virtuous cycle of investment and income. It stimulates the prosperity of local furniture-related companies and forestry by consumption pull and ensures the new furnishing is consistent with the original cultural tradition
- **Environmental.** This service could greatly reduce the transportation needs, as less wood will be sold to other provinces
- **Social.** Carpenters' associations are organised in this service as a key part to provide the furnishing service collaboratively, which stops the loss of wood craftsmanship by enhancing carpenters' livelihood capabilities and guaranteeing the continuity of local building and carpentry techniques

In fact, this kind of PSS model enabled by local associations is also suitable for local handmade textile and livestock breeding industries.

Figure 10.4 Local furnishing service design

Source: authors



## Products and visual design

### Design for local residents

Local women mainly have a low level of education and they have no source of income other than farming. Most of them master a variety of handicraft skills such as fabric making, cloth ornament making, and Dong brocade. We also found there are only a few souvenirs for tourists, most of which are imported from China's coastal areas where they are mass produced and not distinctive. We therefore designed home textile and decoration products derived from the local fabric Dongjin. Local women could make these products in their free time and earn extra income by selling these products to tourists.

In addition, we observed a number of delicious and unique local products, such as Dong Wang wine, red bayberry wine and snacks. We made some commercial designs for these local specialities, including wine bottles, packaging, and posters.

### Design for outsiders

This series included three themes. The first was visualisations of local architecture, which aimed to present the most valuable cultural heritage and the local landscape to outsiders. The second was Dongjin (the traditional local fabric), which we studied and aimed to modernise, and the third theme used graphic design to make manifest local textures and communicate local features.

## Information service design

Cell phones have been quite popular in rural areas and have become an important tool for communication and entertainment. We made in-depth studies on rural information needs and found opportunities worthy of further design. For example, we studied the patterns and habits of villagers in finding work opportunities and designed a phone-based job hunting service. Moreover, as in most rural areas, a large number of young adults work in big cities and leave behind many children and elderly people. Family members are thus separated and do not meet each other for long durations: the phone becomes their main tool to keep in touch. Calls are made infrequently for cost reasons, once a week or even once a month. Migrant workers living in faraway cities want to hear more news on changes in their hometown, but the information that the phone can bring is limited. Most young migrant workers have experience with using the internet: they can talk on QQ, browse the web, and are sophisticated forum users. However, children and elderly people in rural areas have few chances to access a computer and their ability to operate one is relatively low. They cannot handle complex registration processes nor use the online video chatting functions on QQ or Skype.<sup>7</sup> Though computers and the internet are not common, residents can access the web in the Local Cultural Centre of each village.

<sup>7</sup> Online software services that connect registered users via audio and/or video.

Taking careful consideration of these characteristics, we designed a local web tool to be as simple as possible. Through the site, migrant workers can catch up on news from their hometown and children and the elderly can use the video chatting function easily after a simple training process.

### 10.3.5 Communication

The design of videos was an important part of the communication team's work, using Participatory Video as one of the methods. We played the unedited video clips to the villagers, who then recommended contents they thought worth shooting and actively helped us to find people, customs and special ceremonies worth recording. This helped the villagers to rediscover their most precious traditions, customs, skills and architecture, which served to enhance their local cultural pride and community cohesion. The resulting video and music productions recorded the local immaterial culture in a digital way and will serve as media to connect and communicate with the outside world, using these excellent cultural traditions to attract more social resources and help ensure the problems are recognised and solved.

## 10.4 Conclusions

Designers who only attempt to carry out 'design services' will not acquire substantial structural power in community transformation practice. Therefore, **construction of a knowledge platform** and **organisation design** may be more viable design aims. In our practices described in this chapter, we have identified the needs of social innovation in a particular region through a participatory approach. By taking the natives' point of view, we have aimed to build a local knowledge platform that meets the local demands and establish organisational networks consisting of the local government, external business, local residents and a cross-disciplinary design team. Through these means, we have transformed the conventional participatory, user-centred design approach, in which designers often serve in an uncertain<sup>8</sup> and individual, business-oriented way, into a new method that integrates design resources as the power of a network and promotes social innovations that meet common social needs (Community-Centred Design).

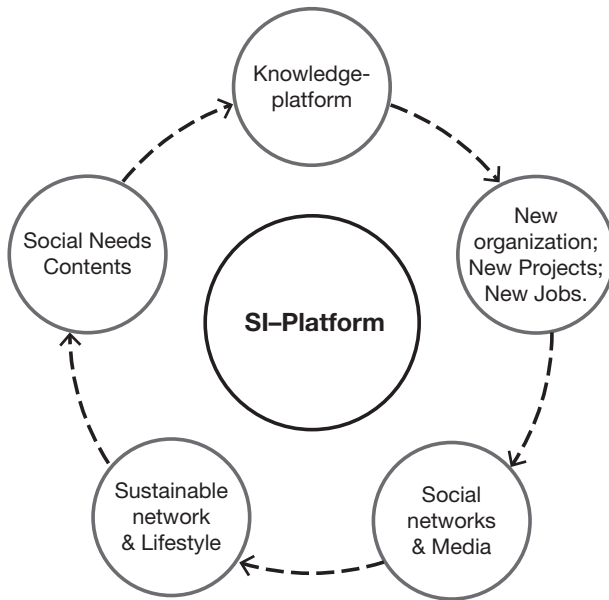
Design based on networks and communities may become a new paradigm of social innovation. Knowledge platforms, organisation design, social learning and other aspects are all dependent on the building of network platforms and cross-disciplinary collaborative design in the process of social innovation. Networks and virtual communities will drive design's participation in community social innovation in a more tensional structural form and with more social identity power

<sup>8</sup> That is, the influence of the design outcomes is uncertain, as they are designed without involving enough actors. They may be unsustainable.

(innovation networks, design networks, social networks, etc.), making a web-based and sustainable, harmonious community possible.

Figure 10.5 **Social innovation platform**

Source: authors



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