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## Small, local, open, connected

*An orienting scenario for social innovation and design, in the age of networks*

## Public lecture by Ezio Manzini

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 6pm

Lecture theatre M405, James Weir Building, 75 Montrose Street, Glasgow G1 1XJ

### Abstract

The only sustainable way to get out of the current global financial and ecological crisis is to promote new economic models, new production systems and new ideas of wellbeing. In the last decades, a multiplicity of social “actors” (institutions, enterprises, non-profit organisations, but also and most of all, individual citizens and their associations) have been capable of acting outside of the mainstream models. Thanks to the promising experiences accumulated to date we can outline a new scenario which builds at the intersection of three main innovation streams: *the green revolution* (and the highly environmental friendly systems it makes available); *the spread of networks* (and the distributed, open, peer-to-peer organisations it generates); the *diffuse creativity* (and the original answers to daily problems that a variety of social actors are conceiving and implementing). We will refer to it as the SLOC Scenario, where SLOC stands for small, local, open, connected. These four adjectives synthesise the socio-technical system on which this scenario is based: a distributed production and consumption system where the global is a “network of locals”, a mesh of connected local systems. The SLOC Scenario indicates that sustainable solutions necessarily refer to the local (and the community to which this local mainly refers) and to the small (and the possibilities in terms of relationships, participation and democracy that the human scale make possible). It tells us that to implement solutions, we have to consider these small entities and these localities in the framework of the global network society where the local and the small are both open and connected. This change in the nature of the small and local has enormous implications: with the new networks it becomes possible to operate on a local and small scale in a very effective way. Moreover, these networked systems indicate the one and only possibility to operate in the complex and fast changing environment generated by the present crisis and by the double transition towards a knowledge society and a sustainable society.

### About the speaker

Ezio Manzini is Professor of Industrial Design at the Milan Polytechnic, Director of Unit of Research Design and Innovation for Sustainability and coordinator of the Master in Strategic Design. His works are based on strategic design and design for sustainability, with a focus on scenario building and solution development. He has been involved in several international commissions, expert panels and working groups for the National Environmental Agency, the European Joint Research Centre, IPTS in Seville, and for the Research Directorate-General of the European Commission.

### Participation

Attendance is free and open to all, please book a space by email: [participate@instituteadvancedstudies.org.uk](mailto:participate@instituteadvancedstudies.org.uk)