

COMMUNITIES' SUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCES

EDITED BY
Salvatore Di Dio

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Via P. Carnesecchi, 39 – 50131 Firenze
Tel. +39 055 333428
info@altralea.it
www.altraleaedizioni.it

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SERVICE DESIGN INTENSIVE SCHOOL

CLAUDIA SCHILLACI - DOMENICO SCHILLACI

The 2023 Service Design Intensive School, hosted by PUSH, represented a distinctive immersive educational experience. Within the contemporary context, innovation is increasingly recognised as essential for the sustainable development of local communities. The “Madonie Living Lab” exemplifies this approach, focusing on agricultural, natural heritage, craftsmanship, and energy transition, aiming to support communities, administrations, research, and businesses in fostering new ideas and collaborative models. The Lab prioritises community involvement and active participation, ensuring innovation is a democratic and participatory process. This article delves into the context, methodology, and objectives of the latest Service Design Intensive School by PUSH, illustrating its positive impact on the Madonie Living Lab’s outlook. In September 2023, the Service Design Intensive School, conceived by PUSH, offered a unique opportunity for growth, learning, and experimentation within the challenging context of the Madonie Living Lab in Sicily. Aimed at fostering innovative services, this four-day program was held at the historic Ex Convento dei Padri Riformati in Petralia Sottana, facilitating an intensive training and experimentation experience in Service Design. Participants, selected through an open call, included sixteen individuals from diverse global and local backgrounds, with a majority coming from design fields but also encompassing other disciplines such as philosophy. Among them were professionals from renowned companies, highlighting the program’s appeal across various sectors. Ginevra Romagnoli from Frog participated, emphasising the project’s potential for real-world human context experimentation and cross-cultural learning.

Structured over four days, participants were divided into balanced teams for optimal collaboration. The program began each day with selectable morning activities to encourage active involvement, complemented by evening sessions for informal exchanges. The methodology centered on Design Thinking and Creative Problem Solving, focusing on user-centric solutions for innovative outcomes. The Service Design Intensive School 2023 featured a structured four-day training program, beginning with a welcoming session where participants shared personal stories around a campfire, enhancing community and connection. The following days focused on discovery, definition, development, and presentation phases. Activities included team-building exercises, expert-led workshops, stakeholder interviews, and feedback sessions, all designed to deepen understanding of local needs and foster innovative service design solutions. This academic approach facilitated a collaborative learning environment, emphasizing the application of design thinking to real-world challenges within the Madonie Living Lab context.

The MaLL Partnership Program, developed by the first team, proposes a novel framework for sharing spaces and resources between businesses and the community in exchange for training and opportunities, targeting NEET youth, students, businesses, and the local community for mutual growth and prosperity. The “Orizzonti” service, conceived by the second team, addresses challenges like aging demographics and revitalizes the Madonie through cultural and landscape appreciation, connecting locals with foreigners. The third team introduced “Travagghiu Lab” and “SinergieMadonite,” aiming to enhance entrepreneurial prospects and crowdfunding opportunities, respectively, for local businesses and initiatives. Lastly, “Roots,” developed by the fourth team, is a digital ecosystem designed to counter depopulation and social isolation, connecting the Madonie diaspora with their homeland to improve local quality of life and community strength.



Figure 1. - A moment of the intensive school, Figure 2. - Final gathering.