

Design for social innovation – Position statement – Niek van den Berk

I position myself towards social innovation as a designer that is interested in Service Design, UX Design and human connection. Service Design in itself focuses more on a commercial and business view of design. However, within my internship at Koos Service Design in late 2020 I have worked on more socially relevant projects. Especially the project 'Story of Stuff' for the municipality of Apeldoorn. This project has shown me how designers in a social setting can orchestrate information, stakeholders and processes using creative methodologies to create order within chaos. Simultaneously, designers are able to create a solution space which is understood and co-created by stakeholders involved to keep them on board. Designers working within social innovation understand modern technology and have the ability to use existing technologies in a feasible, viable, desirable and responsible way.

I myself have experience with creating order out of chaos by aesthetically mapping information into processes and graphics. This to eventually communicate complex problems better to players involved and create implementable solutions. In my eyes, solutions within the social innovation projects should support discussion but at the same time should use technologies which are already embraced and integrated into current society. For instance by using apps, data visualisations or toolkits and workshops. Social innovation and design solutions therefore focuses less on pushing technology in new ways of use, but make use of designed tools to solve a problem from a different perspective.