

Rural Pact Conference

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Social innovation in Smart Villages

The Case of Ostana

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How to define social innovation?

Societal change (impact) is expected through *innovation*.

Hard to define. Danger to soften up too much. Need to **sharpen**.

Several initiatives, projects, policies came up with their own definitions:

- ✓ **Social** (goal/objective, outcome or process?)
- ✓ **Innovation** ('technologically' innovative and/or in its own context)



Improving farmers' *mental, physical & social* wellbeing through social innovation: **farmers' wellbeing (goal)** & **new practice in its own context**



Smart Villages: **impact on local society (outcome)** & digital but not only **BUT** even when digital/ technological **social impact is needed** (interface of social & technological)



Innovative responses to social challenges

“If you don’t feel that you have a challenge, I’m sorry to say, you will innovate nothing.”

(Professor Henrique Leitão, a historian of science)



Social challenge: mental wellbeing, stress, physical wellbeing, generational renewal, intra-family conflicts, workload – income, access to services ... -> **ageing of the farming sector**



Social challenge: lack of services (health, education, etc.), lack of employment, no diversification, digital divide ... -> **depopulation & ageing of rural areas** + climate change, quality food ... -> **negative impact on society**



Ostana (Italy)



Reversing depopulation

1921: 1,200 inhabitants

1985: 5 inhabitants

2021: 50 permanent inhabitants



Giacomo Lombardo (former mayor)



Silvia Rovere (Mayor)

Tiny Italian town celebrates as it welcomes first baby in 28 years

Population decline has been a problem plaguing small towns and villages in Italy for years, such as Ostana, which currently has 85 inhabitants.

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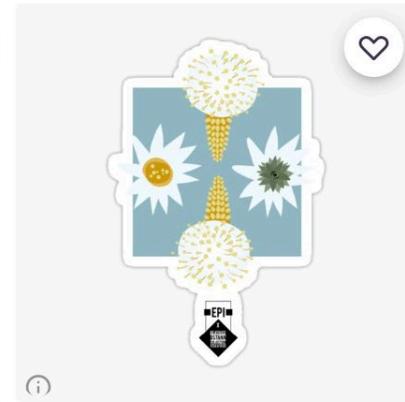
Since the 1980s, the Italian town of Ostana had not seen the birth of a single baby.

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Ostana Collection 24 Results

Ostana Collection, an EPI project for create modern design from the rural Italian community of Ostana.



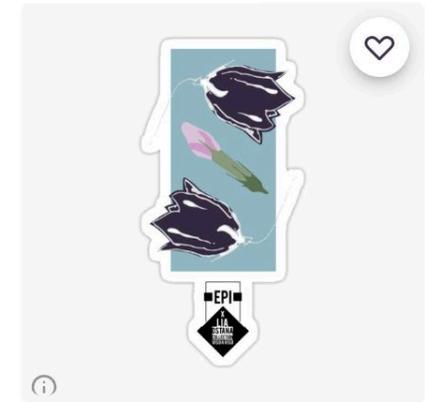
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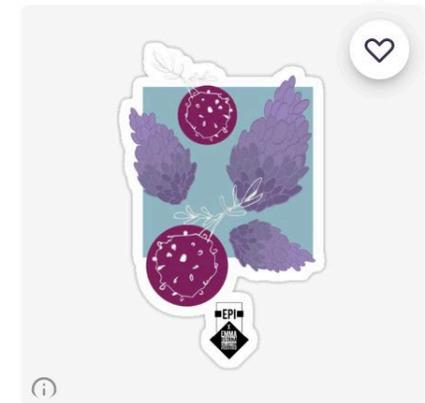
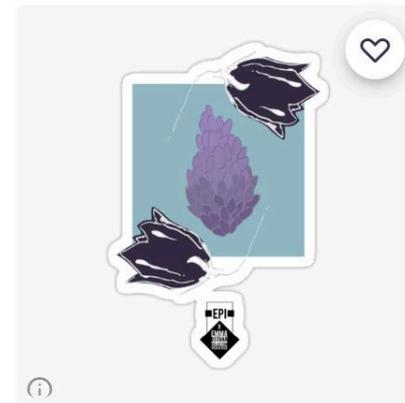
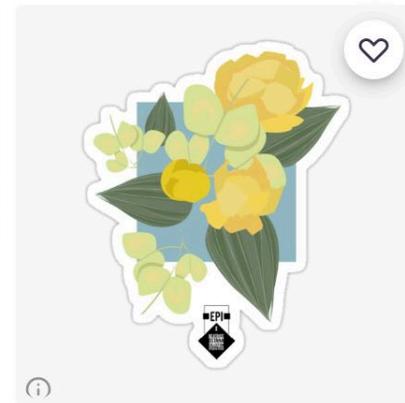
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