

## **Sustainable Design for Grass Roots Craft Production in Eastern Turkey**

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In recent years, social and economic inequities have led to significant immigration from the Eastern part to the Western part of Turkey. This has resulted in the loss of local knowledge, traditions, and customs in the eastern regions. This has included the loss of traditional handicrafts. Consequently, an intervention is required if this heritage is to be preserved and if this age-old knowledge and skills are to be transferred to future generations. Furthermore; local craftsmanship methods have already solved a variety of issues over generations time and they may continue to offer more answers to present challenges.

A further consideration in this present research is to better understand the use of local resources for the local needs. As Fritz Schumacher stated in his book *Small is Beautiful* 'Production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life.' In addition, this is also crucial for sustaining environmental resources, since we have been dependent on a fossil fuel economy for more than a century. Moreover, the evolving design practice methods and '*designing with people - not for people*' will need to become one of the pillars of design for sustainability. Designers can play a significant role in bringing a human face to manufactured artefacts. However, this ability can only be developed by gaining a deeper understanding of people and society. Therefore, participatory design methods are needed as a way of perceiving people and their needs. It is also important to bear in mind that, as Mahatma Gandhi suggested 'The poor of the world cannot be helped by mass production, only by production by the masses'. This expresses another aspect of the research and its relationship to participatory design. Potentially, collaborative manufacturing can be an alternative approach to tackle the social and environmental problems associated with mass-production and mass-consumption. While scientific developments and technological achievements cannot be ignored, it is also pertinent to ask if the contemporary digital era suitable for every context, in every condition? There are many questions to ask about technology and the appropriateness of embedding it, especially into the lives of those in traditional rural communities.

Bringing together these various issues, this research is an attempt to delineate the barriers, restrictions and opportunities for the future of the craft industry in Eastern Turkey and to bring sustainable design principles to bear on its development. To further this endeavour, a variety of implemented design solutions from the similar contexts have been collected and analysed in order to obtain a global view of contemporary crafts. This analysis, which forms the basis of this present paper, will provide the foundation for the primary research phases which will take place in Eastern Turkey for evaluating the local crafts and their production capacity. Local knowledge, local ingenuity, local people, and local resources are the initial areas to investigate in order to comprehend the current situation.

The contribution of this work will be a design oriented strategy/system for the empowerment of local people who are involved in crafts industries and to ensure the sustainability of traditional crafts while considering the community-based social innovation opportunities.