

COOP
DESIGN
RESEARCH

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M.S.C.
PROGRAM

DESIGN TO INNOVATE CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis traverses the complex intersection of humanitarian social innovation, contextualized design, and participatory methodologies within fragile contexts. Stemming from firsthand experience conducting program reviews for Social Innovation Incubators across diverse regions of Jordan, the research unveils a disjunction between funders' expectations and innovators' intentions. This disconnect drives the exploration of participatory design's potential to bridge this gap. The study probes the significance of design localization in engendering community-centric solutions and delves into the fusion of social innovation, contextual design, and participatory methods. Synthesizing literature, case studies, and expert interviews, the analysis highlights the power of participatory design in overcoming top-down approaches. Patterns emerge, advocating for principles such as acknowledging context, fostering genuine engagement, ensuring scalability, and emphasizing evaluation. These principles culminate in a multidisciplinary approach to navigating fragile contexts and incite lasting change, underlining the transformative potential of community-driven innovations. As the research concludes, a clear call echoes: the path to innovation in fragile contexts demands collaboration, context-aware funding mechanisms, and solutions that genuinely empower communities, encapsulating the essence of participatory design and sustainable development.

Keywords: Social Innovation, Innovation Design, Participatory Design, Fragile Countries, Sustainability, Tacit Knowledge, Context-led Design, Inclusive Design