Textile craft producer Jordan River Foundation’s collaborative design development with IKEA

Thesis for Master, 30 ECTS
Textile Value Chain Management

Jamila Juzer Siamwalla

Thesis number: 2019.7.07
Title: Textile craft producer Jordan River Foundation’s collaborative design development with IKEA

Publication year: 2019

Author: Jamila Juzer Siamwalla
Supervisor: David Goldsmith, PhD
Abstract

**Background:** The production of textile crafts requires resources and skilled artisans. In modern times, textile crafts sold in the global market are often made through collaboration involving artisans and profit, social and non-profit enterprises with aim to globalize the aesthetic or styling, structural aspects, and marketability of the crafted product. Collaboration is understood here as two or more enterprises working together towards common profit ideologies, values or goals. Textile craft producer Jordan River Foundation’s (JRF) and IKEA's Social Entrepreneurship Initiative; collaboration creates home furnishing collections through design and product development, that aim to promote and develop so called local crafts-based economy.

**Need:** In a collaboration, the textile craft producer plays the role of leveraging its resources, and keeps the capability to test its making in the design development and implementation process of craft products. It is thus this need to know of how these collaborative relationships function from a producer's perspective, emphasizing on the most value adding factor of the design development process.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to investigate and understand primarily from the craft producer Jordan River Foundation's point of view, the collaborative design development and implementation process with IKEA.

**Method:** The study is a qualitative, narrative, analysing the data and experience from a two-week participatory field study at Jordan River Foundation.

**Conclusion:** As exposed through the collaboration, with IKEA, JRF is challenged with working with cost efficient process of the usage of materials and techniques in design development and methods of craft production, and at the same time maintains its niche as a craft producer. The study concludes that collaborative design efforts in textile crafts, uplifts and enhances, tangible and intangible values. Within the perspective of textile management, the knowledge of collaborative design development in textile crafts interconnects new spaces and turns skill knowledge into a force of competitive advantage for the participating organisations.

**Keywords:** collaboration, design development, co-designing, textile crafts, craft production
List of Content

Abstract......................................................................................................................... 2
Foreword: Before venturing to Jordan........................................................................... 7
Acknowledgment............................................................................................................ 10

1. Introduction............................................................................................................... 13
   1.1. Our engagement with textile crafts..................................................................... 14
   1.2. Textile craft producers........................................................................................ 15
   1.3. Collaboration in textile crafts............................................................................ 16
   1.4. Within the landscape of collaboration – Co-design............................................ 17
   1.5. When IKEA explores its collaborative capabilities!.......................................... 19
   1.6. Why is the textile craft producer important in the collaboration?.................... 21
   1.7. The star textile craft producer – Jordan River Foundation (JRF)....................... 22

2. Research gap............................................................................................................. 24
   2.1. Research purpose............................................................................................... 25
   2.2. Research question.............................................................................................. 25

3. Research methodology............................................................................................. 26
   3.1. Literature study.................................................................................................. 26
   3.2. My work at JRF.................................................................................................. 26
      3.2.1. My time at JRF............................................................................................. 26
      3.2.2. Locations visited for field study at JRF in Jordan....................................... 27
      3.2.3. The role I played at JRF.............................................................................. 28
3.2.4. The role of cultural impressions in the study 28
3.2.5. Arabic, a means for communicating at JRF 29

3.3. Narrative analysis, from field notes, voice recordings and photographs
3.3.1. Field notes 31
3.3.2. Voice recordings 32
3.3.3. Photographs 34
3.3.4. Writing of narratives 34

3.4. Research ethics 35
3.5. Research limitation 36
3.6. Research delimitations 37
3.7. Research timeline 38

4. Literature Review 41
4.1. Textile crafts and its production 41
4.2. What is collaboration? 42
4.2.1. Theory of collaboration 43
4.2.2. Creating collaborative relationships 44
4.2.3. Limitations of collaboration 44
4.3. Design development in organisations 44
4.3.1. Factors involved in design and development 45
4.3.2. Collaborative Design – Co-design towards co-creation 47
5. Field study at Jordan River Foundation

5.1. Jordan – the country where JRF functions!

5.2. Observing the headquarters of Jordan River Foundation

5.3. Conversations with JRF Designer, Faridon Abida on crafts, design development, co-designing and collaboration at JRF with IKEA

5.3.1. The inspiration for design in textile crafts

5.3.2. Design development in crafts at JRF

5.3.3. Co-designing for JRF-IKEA collection

5.4. Al - Karma Centre – the craft production center of JRF

5.5. Home Furnishing Collections of JRF- IKEA

5.5.1. First celebratory co-created collection - Tilltalande collection

5.5.2. Hints of handwork - The latest collection in production during my stay, Hantverk - a collection of two cushion covers

5.6. Entering the embroidery process from fabric cutting operations at Al- Karma Center

5.7. Insights with artisan Mariam

5.7.1 Embroidering for the Hantverk collection with Mariam

5.7.2. Improving and thereby strengthening the running stitch embroidery

5.8. Intrigued by tassels and now working with tassels at JRF

6. Discussion

6.1. Regarding Theories of Collaboration from JRF’s Perspective

6.1.1. JRF and IKEA: shared values in a challenging domain

6.1.2. JRF’s orientation in collaborative design development
6.1.3. JRF’s autonomous stand in maintaining its individual position: artisans input into the collaborative design process 92

6.1.4. JRF’s Involvement in collaborative designing 93

6.2 Tassel design development – that builds strong collaborative relationship 97

7. Conclusion 99

8. Future Research 101

9. References 102
Foreword: Before venturing to Jordan

I come from Pune, famously known as the Oxford of the East, a city 200 km south to Mumbai in India, and went on to pursue Bachelors in Textile design from National Institute of Fashion Technology, Mumbai. During the course of studies, it was a privilege to learn about traditional techniques in textiles and crafts, involving embroidery and weaving. Having been a part of a craft cluster project by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, I also studied contemporisation of copper and brass metal craft. This broadened my knowledge of various crafts. With these small experiences for my graduation project in 2017, I got the opportunity to work at Rangsutra Crafts India Limited in Bikaner, in the western part of India near the India-Pakistan Border. They are also one of the craft producers for IKEA, Sweden — contributing to the IKEA Social entrepreneurship initiative. My work took me to villages to work with embroidery and weaving artisans who were initially refugees from the 1971 India-Pakistan War. I was also responsible for documentation of folk Rajasthani crafts and the stories behind the artisans performing it. It led me to learn that, places are not always defined by buildings, but by people who make them, and the work they do. During that period of time, it was interesting to know about the collaborative activities that IKEA initiates to sustain livelihoods, through local skills of crafts. Eventually, I also understood the responsibilities of the artisans that artisans’ shoulder in living in disturbed areas, to perform crafts.

In order to complement my background, I pursued for Master’s program in Textile value chain management at the Swedish School of Textiles. For an academic study in the summer of 2018, I undertook a study titled ‘Product development in craft - a cultural exploration through the collaborations with IKEA.’ At that point of time for the study, I interviewed Jordan River Foundation (Jordan), Mae Fah Luang Foundation (Thailand), Rangsutra Crafts India Limited (India) and the designer brand MAXHOSA by Laduma Ngxokolo (South Africa). It was in knowing how organizations handle cultural meanings into the products for consumption, where a focus is made in creating strong relationships, within the organizational cultures.

For the Master’s Thesis, it was important to narrow down my interests. Initially the plan was to have an in-depth interview with one or two of the organisations, focusing on the business development/design development teams. But out of thought, it was one fine evening that it occurred to me that it would be an experience if I could pull out a field study at the organisations, to know more about the process. I asked David, and his reply was, “Jamila, just go for it”.

7
With this energy, I went forward to keep requests to two main organisations, Mae Fah Luang Foundation (MFLF) and Jordan River Foundation (JRF), and received a reply from JRF, after some days, in affirmation towards my study, which was astounding! It was a confirmation of JRF’s support in guidance and in conducting interviews in Jordan. With MFLF, their affirmative response was a little late, as they were working with many other projects. My supervisor emphasized on just focusing on one field study, due to the limited amount of time available for Thesis. So, I chose JRF to focus my study on. JRF was also interesting to study and despite being a 25-year old organisation, they are just 2-year old in the collaborative project with IKEA. With my experience and the curiosity of the newness that JRF could offer, I chose to focus on design development, as it’s the most value adding factor in the collaboration/co-creation process. At the same time, Jordan as a country, has been one of the growing economies. The country doesn’t own much natural resources, and has significant amount of imports. But with the lack of resources, it is interesting to see of their utilization of skills and perfection for it. I have also been inspired of, these skills that can be noticed in the textile-craft making process, as JRF is dealing with Syrian refugees; that has been something which I have been working before, with war refugees. This also pushed my interests further to look forward for my field study in Jordan.

During the course of my thesis, apart from the studies required in this field, I was also working on scholarship applications to support my study in Jordan. It involved in making project description, gantt chart, budget plan and supervisors’ letter. As I received the scholarships I applied for — Aforsk Travel Grant and Fredika Bremer Scholarship for women, it provided further motivation and confirmation of the value of the study to be performed at JRF.
Amman, the capital city of Jordan - is one of the most important cities of the Middle East, and the hub of economic development in Jordan. It is also the place where I resided for my study.

A view of the old city side of Amman known as Downtown. Orange trees seen over here, as a part of the city beautification projects.
Acknowledgment

It has been a very enriching journey in the course of the Master's Thesis. The journey eventually made a dream study in textile crafts, and has made an international presence! My immense gratitude to the Swedish School of Textiles, for smoothly facilitating and permitting the activities required for the Master's thesis. I would like to express my warmest gratitude to David Goldsmith, PhD at the Swedish School of Textiles for being at every step, in guidance and support needed for the thesis. David's support was also very much in guiding me through strengthening my application for scholarships. I would also like to immensely thank the Fredika Bremer Foundation and Åforsk Foundation – for granting the Women's scholarship and the Travel Grant required for my study to be performed in Jordan. My immense gratitude to Jordan River Foundation (JRF) for letting me be a part of them and broadening my horizons towards Jordanian work culture. At JRF headquarters, in Amman - I would like to thank:

1. Lara Hijjawi, Case manager - for the continuous correspondence and the application process
2. Shadi Salah, Operations manager for IKEA Handicrafts - for welcoming and guiding me throughout the process.
3. Mariam Darwish, Operations Supervisor - for being my Supervisor at JRF, and in opening opportunities
4. Zaid Hajarat and Zaid Rawabdeh, Industrial engineers - for being of continuous support and in also letting me know about local Jordanian culture throughout the study.

At the Al-Karma Centre of JRF,

1. Amal Al-Fitiani, Head of the centre - for supporting throughout craft activities.
2. Mariam, for being my English translator, letting me know about Jordanian and Syrian cultures and in guiding me through the embroidery work.
3. Faten, for showing a peak through of her work and her thoughts as being a Syrian refugee.
4. Nisreen, Qublini, Helen and many other artisans at the Centre for contributing to the knowledge.
5. Anwar and Roreta from the talks in the quality control department.

Image 2: I, surrounded by Nisreen, Faten and Qublini, whilst we were embroidering at the Al-Karma Centre of JRF.
At the Bani Hamida Weaving Centre, Halima for showing the whole process of weaving and the significance of the JRF collaboration with IKEA, through a weaver's perspective.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, family and friends for their support.
“For someone who has never made anything, the full weight of what it means to make something ‘honestly’ may never be understood.”

- Peter Dormer, Editor: The culture of craft (2015)
Image 3: I had observed the camel design cushion cover during my previous academic study, but this close shot of only the camel was taken during my field study at the Al-Karma Centre, when Mariam Darwish, operations supervisor at JRF was introducing me to the Tilltalande collection. The camel is a print that is highlighted, with a bit of hand embroidery, and is one part of the design of a cushion cover from the collection. It intrigued me at that time of how both the organisations got together to design this camel and multiple of them with hand embroidery! I saw the combination of print and hand embroidery, Jordanian inspiration and IKEA’s cost-efficient design. Observing the camel has thus contributed to the thought of how phenomenal or challenging the collaborative design development process can be!
1.1. Our engagement with textile crafts in society

Crafts are an integral part of the lives of people who create and use them. Throughout the long history of craft, its making has transitioned from necessity to leisure activity and into a vibrant professional practice (Schwarz et al., 2010; Hackney 2013). Crafts have eventually developed into varied techniques that are implemented in its making and ornamentation. Varying mediums contribute to crafts that range from wood, metal, ceramics, glass to paper, leather, textiles, that makes a craft distinctive. In textiles, its nature and making have fulfilled our basic needs. Textile crafts are also one of the earliest crafts in human history (Andersson et al., 2010). In today’s time, textile crafts retain a small but very important niche in the craft market, that uses different textile techniques and materials; because they are linked to the retention of local traditions, the provision of jobs, especially for women in rural areas and the preservation of a level of quality and exclusivity that cannot be found in mass-manufactured items (Perivoliotis, 2001). Textile crafts are the least marginal of the crafts but have a centrality uniqueness among crafts (Dormer, 2015), and have always had important social, cultural and economic impacts on individuals and communities. Thus, there is an importance for textile craft products (Venkatesan, 2009; Dormer, 2015).

![Image 4: Spindle spinning using an Iron Age whorl from Tal Dayr Alla/ Jordan Valley (The Jordan Museum, Amman).](image4)

![Image 5: Cross stitches, a major aspect of Palestinian Embroidery (The Jordan Museum of Popular Traditions, Amman).](image5)

![Image 6: Heavy silver crescents from Hauran (region that spans parts of southern Syria and northern Jordan), combining cucumber and triangle motifs (The folklore Museum, Amman).](image6)
1.2. Textile craft producers

Today the use of textile craft and design often equate with a high-end craft product, encompassing the notion of excellent quality combined with complicated techniques, in the crafts sector, and thus embodies time consuming processes of production (Ebert et al., 2016). According to Perivoliotis (2001), textile craft producers fall basically into two groups: professional producers who earn their living from textile sales, and those who produce textiles alongside another occupation, generally farming. The first group of producers are open to new developments, with high levels of interest in seeing and learning about textile techniques and design improvements. Emphasis on product standardization and quality control is also expected to be high, and such facilities typically include managerial personnel responsible for coordinating, scheduling and evaluating craft production (Sinopoli, 2003). They usually have a good distribution network, including outlets abroad (Perivoliotis, 2001). Textile craft production has been an important part of society and, involves people with a great deal of knowledge, experience and skills (Sjöbeck, 2014).

Falling in the first group of producers, Ishkar sets an example as an organization dedicated to bringing the work of artisans living in war torn nations, particularly to Afghanistan. The founders Pierre de Taisne and Edmund Le Brun, describe their nascent organization as a platform for collaboration between NGOs, designers, artisans and other social enterprises, bringing them together under a single website. In uplifting livelihoods, they say that, “If Afghanistan is really to build an economy around craftsmanship — which is believed is possible, then businesses like ours are essential to that equation.” (Crafts, the magazine for contemporary craft).

Another textile craft producer, Five | Six—a textile company that works towards traditional woven textiles from Côte d’Ivoire, produces home goods and bags. Their textiles are a collaboration

Image 7: The brand Ishkar, portraying their values in the CRAFTS Magazine

Image 8: Sorting of woolen yarn in Afghanistan.
The collection from the brand, Five | Six, is of contemporary textiles, inspired by vintage West African Motifs. Through the design process, the artisans have shared histories of the motifs and meanings behind how it should look and thus have collaborated through the design development process for the collection.

Image 9: Women hand spinning cotton at Côte d’Ivoire

Image 10: The collection from the brand, Five | Six, is of contemporary textiles, inspired by vintage West African Motifs. Through the design process, the artisans have shared histories of the motifs and meanings behind how it should look and thus have collaborated through the design development process for the collection.

between the founders, Emma and Laine in New York, and the weaving collective artisans of Waraniéné, in Côte d’Ivoire. Their motives are to preserve an ancient artistic practice, to make goods in a contemporary way that supports the artisans and their communities, and to create an elegant product unlike anything available on the market today (About—Five and six textiles). In performing their roles of the textile craft producer, these examples show the growing trend of textile craft producers extending their international reach through collaboration in sustaining crafts.

1.3. Collaboration in textile crafts

Textiles and other crafts, have longstanding histories of being made collectively. Evidence of this can be found as far back as the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages (Robertson et al., 2016). Currently, the number of organisations using collaboration for design and product development, marketing, and innovation has grown steadily over the past 20 years, where collaboration is a way to achieve competitive advantage (Bhalla, 2011). It is suggested therefore that the making of crafts can be enhanced through collaboration.

Collaboration between organizations; leads to the first key of establishment and amalgamation of ideologies and values between two organizations. Thus, to match and uplift values it is important to not only look at the individualistic properties of textile craft, such as the hands and the knowledge, or the intentions that lie behind the make of the single craft producer. Rather, we should also seek the external relationships that form the body hood of craft, the networks, protocols, techniques and attitudes among the craft producers, as these culminate to form the craft product, made from
the diversification of skills. How might craft, shared by many, ‘bring forth worlds?’ (Busch, 2013). It is agreed, that collaboration is likely to produce something that could not have been achieved alone. But if collaboration is to do, to make and to discover something that cannot be achieved alone, then this only happens by changing and opening up practices of craft producers (Ravetz et al., 2017), i.e. the craft producers of what they do and how they do? Should the collaborators work together to develop a particular idea and then their works individually? Or will they work together to produce a single work? All are valid approaches and these are important questions that should be asked to analyse and understand collaborative working structures. Though collaboration must at the same time deliver mutuality of benefit to all partners from the point of process to the point of outcome (Ravetz et al., 2017), leading to economic profitability. A true collaboration requires an approach based on mutuality of benefit from the process and the outcome and to share and act on one another’s ideas (Ravetz et al., 2017).

Collaboration in textile craft can create new forms of collaborative expertise that rather than transmitting pre-existing content, involves opening situations up to the rule finding capabilities and skills (Ravetz et al., 2017). For example, collaboration contributes to shared working and knowledge exchange in the creation of textile materials and surfaces. Collaboration is the core aspect of also creating competitive advantage for the participating organizations, where in today’s times, the organization taps on in the right place and the right people to make the textile craft product.

Working collaboratively can be rewarding but also difficult in negotiating, finding nodes of connection, tolerating differences, maintaining the sense of self while creating a joint identity. Any collaboration is a matter of risk taking, of taking part in a work in which existing position may be reinforced and extended or changed in ways none of the collaborators would have originally envisaged (Ravetz et al., 2017). What do you give? What do you gain? What do you lose? How difficult it is when the two partners in the collaboration are from different countries? And if it is of such influence it is important to know the key factors driving collaborations, where it enhances the production capabilities but at the same time also carefully carves and outlines the design development process in crafts.

1.4. Within the landscape of collaboration – Co-design

In the 1920’s the term ‘design’ came into existence (Dormer, 2015). Amidst design’s ambiguity,
it has eventually shaped as a plan or specification for the construction or implementation of a product/system/process. In today's times we're seeing a radical shift toward design as a driver of value. Taking example from the technology sector, Google's algorithms don't cost any more to run than anybody else's and Apple's products don't have significant capabilities that rival products lack. Rather, it is their products' design—how they interface with both users and other products and services—that makes them valuable (Satell, 2010). Jon Kolko points out in Harvard Business Review, the emphasis on design is just as important in how we run our organizations as it is in how we develop products. It is such that everywhere we look, design has become a central driver of value rather than an afterthought (Satell, 2010). Similarly, Peter Dormer, editor, of 'The culture of craft' (2015), mentions that currently designing in crafts is oriented in a way where designers are constantly thinking about consumers, that makes it constantly a value-embedded process. Thus seen, the design development of a craft product is the most value adding factor in the product development process.

For example, since 1981, the textile collective Coopa-Roca has enabled women living in Rochina, Rio de Janeiro, the largest favela (recognised by the Brazilian communities as low and middle-income, and unregulated neighborhood in Brazil that has experienced historical governmental neglect) in the world, to learn and use sewing skills indigenous to different regions of Brazil, and to share ideas, materials, and even sewing machines. Originally, they made quilts, pillows, and patchwork items made from waste fabric and sold them through public art fairs, and kiosks in shopping malls (Jefferies et al., 2016). The initial products were unsophisticated in design but this changed after 1994; when Maria Teresa Leal, a local woman with a background in art education, connected the cooperative with designers. Using traditional textile techniques and working with the likes of Brazilian fashion designer Carlos Miele or Dutch product designer Tord Boontje (that are a mix of traditional and contemporary designs) brought the collective to international attention (Jefferies et al., 2016). It has led to it being sponsored by the Kering Foundation, created in 2007 by the luxury fashion Kering Group to promote environmental and social sustainability and the prevention of violence against women. This collaboration between designer and artisans also demonstrates how collaborations, work for a common goal that can bring livelihood to artisans if established on a non-exploitative basis, and provide much needed support for textile traditions at their indigenous points of origin, (Jefferies et al., 2016) through effective collaborative design development process. Collaborative design also known as co-design, is built on a mind-set based on collaboration (Sanders et al., 2008) and are relatively new business practices (Bhalla, 2011). Like
all new business practices, they are weaving through the various stages of diffusion and adoption in the way collaborative organisations function in markets.

Emphasizing on design of textile craft products, design as a practice enters everything one makes (Dormer, 2015). But what if there is a collaborative design development in making for the textile craft product? It will help in achieving a larger objective, through the process of shared knowledge, skills and further the understanding to implement it. The larger objective of collaborative design is elaborated by the authors of the book ‘Collaboration through craft’ who mention that,

Collaborative design development in craft challenges in how working with others can blur identities, challenge notions of individual authorship, test skills, subvert territorial divisions between supposedly discrete or antithetical fields, produce ideas that would not have been reached alone, demand improvisation on the basis of existing skills and expand horizons. (Ravetz et al., 2017).

Continuing with the previously mentioned example of textile craft producer Five | Six Textiles, their collaborative process begins as they re-imagine how these patterns work with contemporary design. The artisans also share histories of the motifs, their names, and meanings behind how they look. Operated on the loom by foot and hand, the raw cotton is woven into long narrow strips of cloth using a complex system of peddles, wood slats, and dowels (parts of the loom); where the motifs are then woven through complex warp and/or weft float patterns (About—Five and six textiles). Thus, through collaborative design, the drama and magnetic qualities of materials are heightened as they meet through collaboration with new experiences that characterize the material dialogue between collaborators (Ravetz et al., 2017). As seen the outcome of focusing collaborative working through materials can creates new techniques, processes and forms.

1.5. When IKEA explores its collaborative capabilities!

Since its 1943 founding in Sweden, IKEA has offered a wide range of well-designed home furnishings and functional living solutions. To date, there are more than 330 IKEA stores in 38 countries, where it’s driven by the vision of creating ‘a better everyday life for the many people’ (IKEA Vision, Culture and values, 2018). Starting in 2012, IKEA have formed partnerships with social entrepreneurs that are craft producers around the world from Thailand, India to Romania. IKEA is working with Mae Lah Foundation in Thailand that works with rural hill tribes who were affected by the illegal drug trade and poverty to produce textile and other ceramic crafts. In
India, IKEA is collaborating with textile craft producers working in textile and basket weaving and embroidery techniques.

Focusing in Jordan, they are working with communities of local Jordanian women and Syrian women refugees. Within the framework of the IKEA Social Entrepreneurs Initiative, its chosen to collaborate with artisans in small-scale producer groups who, due to their limited resources and small numbers, would not normally meet the company’s regular demands of supply. Through the partnership, the social entrepreneurs or the craft producers learn about design, production, sustainability, work environment, export and more, to collaboratively co-create a premium collection. In exchange, IKEA gains access to artisans skilled in traditional crafts. These collaborations between enterprises and global corporations i.e. IKEA, have been advantageous for

---

1 Collaboration: A collaboration involves cooperation in which parties are not necessarily bound contractually.

2 Partnership: A partnership is a contractual relationship involving close cooperation between two or more parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities. Each party has an equal share of the risk as well as the reward (Partnership, Collaboration: What is the Difference?).

3 In this context, IKEA partners with craft producers, where JRF is a supplier of textile craft products to IKEA and are paid only upon acceptance of delivered orders checked for quality (Malik et al., 2018); but at the same time both the organisations collaborate, in the design and product development process, through their shared knowledge and expertise to co-create craft products. Thus, both the terms ‘partnership’ and ‘collaboration’ can be used within this context, but collaboration is used in the study as the focus is not on the contractual agreement, that covers all aspects of the partnership from both the organisations—but it is on identifying the steps/elements that shape the collaborative design development process, from a craft producer’s perspective.
both parts as they are able to leverage their differences, resources and strengths to create a wide range of new possibilities for each other (Acumen Summit Report, 2017).

1.6. Why is the textile craft producer important in the collaboration?

In collaborative initiatives that brands have with textile craft producers—are the ones that are majorly located in areas rich in textile traditions and have artisan cluster groups. Whatsoever maybe the objectives of collaboration/co-creation/co-designing, the craft products are outsourced from the textile craft producer. But, it is not possible to outsource the craft products in the same way shirts are sewn anonymously in developing countries, which outlines many factors of design development and production (Murray, K, 2010). In a collaboration, the craft producers themselves are somehow strangely silent, as the production system reacts, and the producers involved are merely pulled along in larger systemic flows (Sinopoli, 2003). According to Cathy Costin, a researcher in craft production systems emphasizes that, less attention has been paid to the producers, as active participants in and shapers of productive systems and relations as well as of the craft products they produce (Sinopoli, 2003). Thus, they have not been viewed as active, thinking, individuals and groups who make the decisions that affect the nature and form of these reactions.

By focusing the perspective on craft producers, we still necessarily view them in relation to institutions and external conditions, but we also see them as individuals and communities whose decisions and responses help to determine their economic and social positions, for their making of craft products (Sinopoli, 2003). There are many elements to observe in the design development process in craft production—for example craft production has been viewed as responding to external stimuli i.e., for example wheel-made pottery is a response to demands for increased output through increased productive efficiency (Sinopoli, 2003). This is indeed a useful perspective as craft producers do react to the external conditions of their world and modify their technologies and production practices accordingly to implement design efficiency in crafts (Sinopoli, 2003). This keeps the textile craft producer at a strategic position in a collaboration, as it is the main contributor to the economic outcome and future growth of the project. Thus, further, the study, focuses on Jordan River Foundation as the textile craft producer and its views and working with the most value adding factor of design development of the collections that are co-created with IKEA.
1.7. The star textile craft producer – Jordan River Foundation

Jordan River foundation (JRF), in Jordan is chaired by Jordan’s Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, and is a non-profit and non-governmental organization established in 1995 with a focus on community empowerment and child safety. Their mission is to promote, in partnership with stakeholders, the development of a dynamic Jordanian society by initiating and supporting sustainable social, economic and cultural programs that empower communities and individuals based on their needs and priorities. The foundation operates the programs, and aims to engage Jordanians and the refugees (Jordan’s refugee situation, explained in Ch 5.1.) to realize their full economic potential (Jordan River Foundation-About Us, 2017). JRF’s operational headquarters in Amman, is shaped by the successful management team who harnesses the capabilities and expertise of employees to ensure demand-driven implementation and facilitation of its programs and activities. One of their programs is in working in traditional crafts and training artisans thereby facilitating community engagement towards producing craft collections at the Al-Karma centre, Bani Hamida Weaving centre and Wadi Al Rayan centre. They produce home-furnishing and other interior accessories using weaving, embroidery and mixed media techniques; that are sold through JRF’s Jordan River Designs showroom. JRF from 2017 is collaborating with IKEA’s Social entrepreneurship initiative, to create co-designed home-furnished collections that aim to promote and develop local crafts and economy.

Made in collaboration with Jordan River Foundation, it’s an initiative sprung from the urgent need to get people into work and into society. (Tilltalande – designed to create jobs, 2019).

JRF met IKEA, when IKEA visited Jordan. JRF matched their requirements, and objectives of the initiative, as a textile craft producer and social entrepreneur, in providing opportunities to disadvantaged portion of the population, through crafts, for IKEA’s social entrepreneurship initiative. Through this initiative, JRF’s design and operation team work with the artisans, for creating the collection.

Image 13: Hand weaving of rugs, from the Tilltalande collection-2017, a collaboration of Jordan River Foundation and IKEA.
Through the collaboration with social entrepreneurs, it is to support positive economic and social development across the world – long-term sustainable change in a way that charity by itself can’t. (Building partnerships with social entrepreneurs, 2019).

Achieving their matched objectives, JRF has collaborated with IKEA contributing towards IKEA’s social entrepreneurship initiative to integrate Syrian refugees and local community women through a series of exquisite handicraft collections capturing Jordan’s tradition and heritage. The first co-created collection Tilltalande, showcased these values.

Together, we co-create unique products, using traditional handicraft methods and materials – limited edition collections available at IKEA stores in selected countries (IKEA Social Entrepreneurs – Co-creating change, 2019).

The initiative is to help sustain social and economic stability across host communities, offering local women and Syrian refugees’ jobs to produce handmade carpets and embroidery items. Though from IKEA’s point of view, it aims in fulfilling its social aspect in providing livelihoods, but for Jordan River Foundation, the collaboration is important also as in the realisation of the crafted product, that they can contribute to the global economy.
2. Research gap

In textile craft production, the craft producer, as seen at JRF, comprises men and women artisans, designers and operational teams. This unique mix itself compliments in creating a production system that gives a pace to work with the material and design characteristics in the time-consuming process to create crafted products. Now when a craft producer is introduced to work in a collaborative space, with an international brand like IKEA, it is exposed to knowledge of international standards of design and production of craft products. At the same time, is meeting of the small-scale producer and the large-scale vendor produces a significant change in processes (e.g. the usage of material resources in design development process, that is dependent on shared values) required to develop the craft product. The change is due to the engagement with the shared collaborative values, and this also includes simultaneously maintaining the individual craft producer’s stand in making unique craft products. The design and development of the craft product is the first step which governs the other process and requirements of product and operation management. Therefore, initiatives in collaborative designing between organisations to create craft products is a new realisation towards achieving better value—where there is also a combination of shared values, skills and even risks that draws appeal to work in collaborative functions, and also pacifying today’s rapid industrialised production systems.

Academically, there has also been few studies focusing on collaboration and co-designing in craft in such small-scale/large-scale situations. The book 'Collaboration through Craft', which has been referred to, was first published in 2013 and provides knowledge and examples to collaboration in crafts, that offers a space for exploration between certitude and risk and an opening up of the ‘craft knowledge’ held by the craft producers (Dormer, 2014). There are only two peer-reviewed papers, in the area of co-designing in crafts, that shows the newness of this kind of collaboration, although it is growing more common. JRF’s collaboration with IKEA began in 2017 and there had been no studies until a recently published paper by the Urban Institute that focused on the social impact of JRF’s and IKEA’s project. The paper though provides a foundation of the background and the impact of the collaboration, it doesn’t provides information about its activities i.e. co-designing within the collaboration.

Focusing on the textile craft producer, the many nodes of information are strongly present at the production sites of these collaborative initiative. In line with exploring the study area and the methodological approach, Ravetz et al., (2017) notes that, ‘The turn towards explicit collaboration through craft currently being witnessed demands ‘reports from the field’—to know first-hand
accounts of the practice that makes the collaborative products.’ It is important, as also the craft producer keeps the ability to test its design development ongoing in process, and keeps the skilled labour and capabilities to bend and mould to match the requirements/ shared values (importance of textile craft producer in a collaboration explained in Ch 1.6.)

Ravetz et al., (2017) asserts that,

Collaborative practices are commonly read as strategic methods of production (overhere the major role is of the textile craft producer) and create points of consumption, where the impact of these collaborations can affect the inner world of thought, dialogue and identity, and the outer material world to alter ‘the very environment’, in the creation of the craft product.

We see the usefulness of the study, where craft producers draw strategic lines in design and product development in a collaboration that contribute to the development of the way the craft market functions. Therefore, through the above points we see there is growing trend but less of theoretical understanding of complementing the knowledge from the field, towards knowing of ‘what’ is the collaborative design process in developing craft products, through the lens of the textile craft producer, i.e. JRF—for this study.

2.1. Research purpose

In the collaboration project of IKEA’s Social Entrepreneurship Initiative, it is therefore important to know the collaborative design development and its implications—that JRF, as a textile craft producer experiences in producing crafts. This ‘what’ tries to know the elements/steps that determine the collaborative design development process, and how these elements/steps function or do not function in collaborative designing initiatives. The elements that constitute it are important to know of how shared values can create constraints/challenges/opportunities in innovating and creating the steps of design development process, that eventually forms the textile craft product. This further open opportunities in creating a strong collaboration relationship and valuable production systems on the foundation of co-design initiatives.

2.2. Research question

The research question thus is: What is the collaborative design development process in textile crafts at JRF with IKEA?
3. **Research methodology**

The study is qualitative and based on a field study at Jordan River Foundation in Jordan. A qualitative research strategy emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2008). The field study research is based on a participatory study i.e. narratively analysed. The methodology of the study is outlined with the support of: *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research* by Clandinin Connelly (2000) and *Social Research Methods* (2008) by Alan Bryman. I have drawn three phases of the research, that are theory development, my work at JRF and lastly formulating the writing of the thesis through narrative analysis from field notes, voice recordings and photographs:

3.1. **Literature Study**

Literature review was studied in craft, collaboration, design and co-design development process, before the field study at JRF. The study of literature beforehand supported and gave a structure for the observation and working in the participatory field study, that hereby gave an understanding of narration to write the thesis. *(continued in Ch 4.)*

3.2. **My Work at JRF**

The following sections describes my time at JRF, shows the locations of the field study in Jordan, the role I played there and how my role helped me in identifying certain cultural impressions at work place, that was important to gain information.

3.2.1. **My time at JRF**

My internship at Jordan River Foundation began from 8th to 20th April, but I reached Jordan on the 6th of April, 2019 to settle and get a peek at Jordan’s heritage and textile culture. The 2-week field research in Jordan took a participatory approach amidst JRF’s operational and design teams, and alongside JRF’s artisans, that are local Jordanian women and Syrian refugees. Field research or study is a methodological approach to observe behaviour or participate under natural conditions (Reyes-García et al., 2011). The production work for JRF-IKEA’s collection started just two days before I arrived for the study, and therefore it was also a right time and right place for me to be at JRF, to witness and work with the design development and implementation process.
3.2.2. Locations visited for field study at Jordan River Foundation in Jordan

There were three locations that were visited for the field study at Jordan River Foundation.

- Jordan River Foundation's Headquarters, Amman - operational center
- Al Karma Center, Amman - artisanal embroidery and textile craft production center
- Bani Hamida Weaving Center, Madaba - wool rug weaving center
3.2.3. The role I played at JRF

In being enrolled as a design intern at the handicraft department of Jordan River Designs under the Jordan River Foundation, and thus according to Bryman (2008), I had a role of being a participating observer, where one participates in group's core activities but not as a full member. My role as an observer participant and a researcher that works in JRF, was as a part of the research bargain to gain entry or to gain acceptance; in open settings, where the researcher is a regular in the vicinity and is involved fully in the principal activities (Bryman, 2008). The role took me to work in the design development and implementation process of embroidering with artisans and making tassels, and also to work in the fabric cutting and fabric quality control department at JRF.

3.2.4. The role of cultural impressions in the study

To humbly present, the field study at JRF shaped there itself to be a participatory study. Whilst working, the initial plan was to interview officials and artisans from the design development team at JRF. But it was observed that as I initiated the interview, there was a certain consciousness in giving answers, so the perfect way was to get involved in the work and try to know, step-by-step about it. The way an interviewer acts, questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship, but it also is dependent on the way's interviewees respond and give accounts of their experiences (Clandinin et al., 2000) is very important. It was also observed, that people in Jordan, would indulge in conversations, and kept certain inquisitiveness about each other. When at the second last day of my work, I got the opportunity to interview Faridon Abida, the head designer at JRF; the interview was planned to be semi-structured, but as I began and completed my correspondence with Faridon, it happened to me more of a conversation. Conversation also affirms to the fact that it entails listening, and provides meaningful insights. Clandinin Connelly (2000) supports this phenomenon as,

> When a researcher begins with the intention of conducting an interview, the interview often turns into a form of conversation and is also explainable as when researchers enter the field, they experience shifts and changes, constantly negotiating, constantly re-evaluating, and maintaining flexibility and openness to an ever-changing landscape, of the field and its actors.

These observations contributed to knowing the work environment at JRF, that was important to understand; and was the key to the study. By participating in work also offered me the opportunity to get close to people and thereby gain a more complete and intense understanding of their way
of working, local culture and values (should be seen in Ch. 5.6., where through conversations and working in fabric cutting, led me to enter the embroidery process, for the Hantverk collection). These values also contributed to the understanding of inspirations for the design development process, which was also observed in the co-designing process. At the same time, working in Jordan for the first time, implied in knowing its own cultural and work norms, for example, integrating into the work environment by engaging in conversations and in keeping efforts to understand the language.

3.2.5. Arabic, a means for communicating at JRF

A section dedicated to the language is essential as the working languages at JRF Headquarters are Arabic and English, but at the Al-Karma centre and Bani Hamida weaving centre, where artisans work, almost everyone only communicates in Arabic. Therefore throughout the fieldwork, I was continuously coping with the newness to work and research in a different country and culture, as well as communicating with artisans who mostly speak Arabic. Participation in field research entails the discovery of new places, challenging oneself, often learning how to work in a cultural, and linguistic context different from one’s own, and learning how to overcome difficulties in this unfamiliar context (Reyes-García et al., 2011). This meant actively seeking methods to communicate in the most effective way. Arabic was of significance for the field study as also Reason & Bradbury (2001) emphasize,

We need to find a way of acknowledging the lessons of the linguistic turn while not ignoring the deeper structures of reality, and propose a more creative and constructive world-view that can be based on the metaphor of participation.

It is also appreciated to use Arabic words in conversation in Jordan, for example I used to begin my day in wishing everyone. The following are some Arabic words with meanings that were used frequently in office, that helped me in entering the work process, required for the research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>marhaba</td>
<td>hello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sabah khair</td>
<td>good morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki falekh</td>
<td>how are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mey</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kahwa</td>
<td>coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tatriz</td>
<td>embroidery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mashallah</td>
<td>divinely beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamaam</td>
<td>good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Image 16: Google Translate used as a medium to communicate, with Amal Al-Fitiani, head of the Al-Karma center.
On an instance, once working at JRF’s warehouse, Zaid Hajarat, industrial engineer at JRF and I were working on the fabric scanner, when Zaid H., asked, “Have you seen the makbus?” I questioned, “What is ‘makbus’?” Zaid H. added “Sorry, have you seen the stapler?” When we used to place in another fabric roll, after the initial fabric from the roll is scanned, the fabrics from both the rolls used to be attached by the stapler at the corners. This was to avoid, the time taken for fabric placement in the scanner. I then replied “Yes, it’s at the other corner. Now I get it, makbus is stapler in Arabic. In Hindi, we don’t have any word for stapler. It’s nice that there is one in Arabic.” Zaid H. laughs and says “Yes, we have every word in Arabic!” The next day when I was working with Anwar and Roreta, the officials from the quality control, they framed a sentence in Arabic and ended it with ‘makbus’, as they were conversing and searching amongst themselves. I figured the translation. “Yes, makbus!” I exclaimed and found it at a shelf close to the scanner. As I stapled the fabrics, they were surprised. The attentiveness towards Arabic words added as a catalyst to my involvement in the work environment, and eventually lead to a personal connection with the officials and artisans.
3.3. Narrative analysis, from field notes, voice recordings and photographs

Narrative methods have been embraced by academics and professionals across disciplines (Riessman 2008), including the sciences. Hoffman (2000) writes, ‘is the motive force for experimentation and the weaving of theories.’ Narrative is not only about facts, order and certainties, but about finding meaning and new possibilities for action and therefore closer to the truth of lived experience and more scientifically valid. As a practice, it is the unfolding of real or fictional scenarios, that enables one to live simultaneously in different realities of own’s creation and to imagine things and ourselves as different (Brockmeier, 2009), as one weave’s delicate webs of meaning and fabrics of cohesion, of ‘pictures and words, imagery and narrativity...interwoven in one and the same fabric of meaning’ (Brockmeier, 2001), in ‘the manifold layers of the cultural fabric that weaves together individual, group and society’ (Brockmeier, 2002). At the same time, studying textiles not only provides information about practices from past and present and across the globe, but an insight into our own being and becoming, because the fabric of our life is not just metaphorically but literal. The involvement of humans with textiles for fulfilling daily needs, makes narratives rely heavily on textiles (Goett, 2016), signifying its material, utilitarian and relational value. Narrative analysis thus becomes a useful tool to study and analyse textile-based activities, and eventually forms an important tool to analyse textile crafts and its collaborative design development.

But also at the same time, Goldsmith (2019) emphasises that in narrative analysis, one must also remember and ‘be proud of’ the fact that one is representing a moment in time. In a way, it’s not reliable at all because that moment in time isn’t coming back ever. For example, the pattern of behavior/expectations/aims in the collaboration/relationship that JRF has with IKEA might change according to the purpose/continue in different ways with each co-designed collection. So in terms of reliability or trustworthiness, one is just making an educated, mindful, report to the best of one’s unique ability and limits (Goldsmith, 2019), that can act as a point of reference for future researchers. In the following subsections, I thus elaborate on my access and usage of information through field notes, photographs and audio recording for collecting field notes, that are then used in writing for narration.

3.3.1. Field notes
At the Al-Karma centre, I used to keep an A5 size notebook, with a pen-pencil, in hand, during all the activities. At times, I used to write down some words to have a focal point, to remember, and then I used to take out the time in the afternoon after coming back from Al-Karma centre, to
prepare detailed notes. This helped in framing the richness of the process work done. Because of the frailties of human memory, researchers have to take notes based on their observations, that are fairly detailed summaries of events and behaviour and the researcher’s initial reflections on them (Clandinin et al., 2000). These ongoing, daily notes, full of the details and moments in the field, are the text out of which we can tell stories of our story of experience (Clandinin et al., 2000). As there were different types of notes taken during the field study, it is useful to classify the types of field notes that are generated in the process of conducting the field study. The classification also helps in realising the potential of the field notes, that have helped in narration, from words and phrases to paragraphs and in shaping to stories. There were three types of field notes made which are also validated by Bryman (2008); Sanjek (1990) and Lofl and Lofl (1995):
a. Mental notes: useful when it was inappropriate to be seen taking notes (for example, during the coffee breaks, amidst conversation with officials at JRF headquarters)
b. Jotted notes: very brief notes written down in my field notebook to remember about events that should be written later, and were made up of, little phrases, quotes and key words
c. Full field notes: detailed notes, made as soon as possible, and were written at the end of the day

3.3.2. Voice recordings

Although field notes may be written by researchers in the events, but at the same time, researchers are often more reluctant than necessary to use field notes, as it is a worry that field notes will be insufficient to capture field experience adequately (Bryman, 2008). When this happens, voice recorders and videotape tend to be overused (Clandinin et al, 2000). The usage of voice recording tools, has been of significant importance in the study and have only been used when there were other tasks that I had to emphasize on. One of the examples at JRF, was the interview with the JRF’s designer. The scenario also at the time was that the designer, was taking me on a tour to the JRF showroom, and we were conversing simultaneously, where it was not possible to accommodate information mentally, as well as in written format. Thus, the voice memos application in iPhone was used for the recording, and is further transcribed for narration. It has also helped to shape the narration in some parts of the thesis, as conversations, (specifically in Ch 5.3. Conversations with JRF Designer, Faridon Abida on crafts, design development and collaboration at JRF) that gives the reader an idea, of these inter-exchange dynamics of dialogues, that portrays elements of information, narrated interactively.
Jotted and full field notes: The following are the scanned handwritten notes from my field notebook taken at JRF. To showcase some examples of the kind of note the text is marked in red, and rewritten above the image, to make it readable and clear.

‘Supervisor checks regularly and maintaining the work process’
*(used in Ch 5.6.)*

‘Speed is important’
*(used in Ch 5.7.)*

‘...had a different style to do the embroidery slowly and steadily — as she was new’ *(used in Ch 5.4.)*

‘Mariam was happy with her interlocking work and speciality in it. She has been specially trained in it. Initially after her training she started interlocking for JRF...’ *(used in Ch 5.7.)*

‘She was collaborating with IKEA communication team, and teaching them some words in Arabic.’ *(used in Ch 5.7.)*
3.3.3. Photographs

The various examples of the use of visual materials give a sense that they have great potential for qualitative researchers more generally (Bryman, 2008). In narrative analysis, researchers often turn to the usage of photographs, which are viewed as a kind of field notes (Clandinin et al, 2000), and therefore Many researchers have incorporated the usage of photographs in narratives, that complements the stories. DeCarion (1998) from the University of Toronto (1998) has made extensive use of photographs, in her doctoral dissertation, ‘A narrative inquiry into home: a space called anywhere’ taken by herself and other actors of the field study themselves, as a kind of field note. For this thesis, the photographs are placed alongside the texts in the stories and were taken, at the research place and amidst the topic of conversation with artisans, and is thus an effort to capture the scenario at JRF.

Image 21: Photographs have also helped in identifying expressions of people, that can be deciphered into the level of involvement in work. (seen over here is an artisan embroidering, a Hantverk cushion cover)

Image 22: Photograph taken while artisans are working at the Al- Karma Center at JRF, that captures the action of work, at that time

3.3.4. Writing of narratives

The sections of the story in collaborative design development at JRF, have thus been developed from field notes, photos and audio recordings but as also having my fair share of experiences in the textile and craft sector, the narratives may have unconsciously been shaped as to what I have experienced before in relation to what I experienced at JRF. As also perfectly denoted by Walter (1999), “The story bears the marks of the storyteller much as the earthen vessel bears the marks of the potter’s hand.” Carl Leggo (2008) asserts that, “Just as an artist represents a still image of
the ocean rolling onto a beach, the writer holds a moment, or part of a moment, in order to draw attention to it”. The narratives written into this study are small moments within my overarching narrative. It is therefore my aim to understand the purposes and possibilities of meaning that lie in the seemingly tangled messiness of lived working and experience, and organising creatively through narratives or stories. At the same time, I, as a researcher didn’t just invent information (where the research was dependent on the behaviour and work functions of the actors of the field study) and that I took it seriously and carefully and tried my best to represent the truth as experienced. Validity therefore more or less means truthful in narrative analysis, where I capture a moment in a particular time and place.

The narration in the thesis has been arranged context wise, to form a continuous thread of meanings. For example, the conversation with JRF’s designer, actually happened on the second last day of my study, but in the narration, it is right after introducing JRF’s headquarters. As there are many stories to be told and many forms in which they may be told, attention is also given to what stories to emphasize in its given purpose. The sub-section is kept in this order, whilst keeping in mind the flow of the story, from design inspiration to its development and implications that affect the continuous improvements in the textile craft production.

There are some pieces of information; where the reader can find additional information to the topic, nor fulfilling the scientific purpose of answering the research question. For example, mentioning the time of the event, the duration taken to travel to places and local experience of food, art, perspectives of Jordan. These are the little elements that add or moreover shape the story, that have also composed the stand of JRF as a textile craft producer working in the area, with specific skills and work processes in crafts.

3.4. Research ethics

The purpose of the field study was clearly described at the time of my correspondence with JRF. After reaching JRF, I had a small meeting with the operations team to discuss further of the requirements of the study on collaborative design development with IKEA and understanding to it, the team has always encouraged me to be a part of the learning process.

As a researcher in a participatory field study I always had to be concerned about my responsibilities in getting informed consent for my field notes, the use of them, and respecting the actors. And as
I have composed my field notes into narrative, I have always been thoughtful of the actors of the field study, and representing them and their stories.

In the field study, in line with taking photographs, I was given only limited access at the JRF headquarters, that I duly followed. At the Al-Karma centre with the officials and artisans, I established a communicative relationship of my research objective and asked them if they agreed or not to be photographed. It was important to make everyone know of their role in contributing to the study, that will complement the narratives. I had verbal consent from the artisans before I photographed them while they worked. JRF’s designer, was very supportive and moreover encouraged me to take photographs at JRF’s showroom that contained exclusive craft products, that have helped the study.

The information in the study is used for academic purposes, as it is for outlining, showing details and eventually structuring JRF’s role in the collaborative design development process in textile crafts, with a global brand. This contributes to an important research area within textile management, where collaborative ventures keep the dynamic future in developing shared values and outcomes.

3.5. Research limitations

One of the main difficulties with qualitative research is that it rapidly generates a large, cumbersome database because of its reliance on prose in the form of such media as field notes, interview transcripts, or documents (Bryman, 2008). The vast content of the field study to JRF was that it generated two weeks of information, that was huge compared to the six month-thesis study. Within field notes—the voice recordings become an are important version of written narratives because the stories are the target, as we need to get them right, but this may create a problem of needing to transcribe a lot of speech (Clandinin et al., 2000). The voice recordings from the field study ranged from 30 to 120 minutes, which involved in time consuming process of compiling field notes, from points to sentences to paragraphs and then to relate and reflect, to create the narrative.

In the field, maintaining the relationship of the actors of the field and the researcher can be a tenuous one (Clandinin et al, 2000). In this case studying and working in a different working language setting was challenging. There were only two officials from Al- Karma centre, knowing English, but majorly my conversations there would be through Google Translate (GT). Not all the times,
3.6. Research delimitations

The research delimitation was of maintaining the word limit in keeping the clear focus of the thesis. It was done by categorizing and emphasising on the information that can be a part of the thesis, and ‘eliminating the significant less’. This was decided in categorizing factors by questioning of: where I majorly spent my time? what I observed the most? and what could be interesting at the same time crucial for the collaborative design development process?

For example, my work at JRF also involved at the quality control at JRF’s warehouse, where there were certain observations that affected the design development process in textile craft production. The part has not been covered, in the narrative, due to the preciseness that has to be kept in Thesis. I also had a one-day field visit to JRF’s Bani Hamida Weaving Centre, that gave many perspectives in weaving of rugs of the Tilltalande collection (1st JRF-IKEA collaboration). I have not covered this craft production centre as it specialises in another textile craft of ‘weaving’, which elaboratively needs to be explained of the implications that its methods and tools have on weaving, and further

I used to use GT, as the officials and artisans will be occupied, sometimes I could pick up meanings from their sentences—through some Arabic words that are closer to Hindi/Urdu or some words that are spoken in English, amidst an important Arabic conversation. Though, the application was a saviour, as a technological assistant, but at the same time, my experience with GT was challenging as my concern was that GT does not only pose problems to non-English texts translated into English; it also raises the issue of accuracy in the translation of English into other languages (Vidhayasai, 2015). There were at times when there were broken sentences through translation, that affected the context of the words, and therefore posed as a hindrance in having a fast-continuous correspondence through Google Translate.

Image 23: An example: Nisreen, the artisan writes about her journey in textile crafts at JRF, where the sentence translated by Google Translate is “For me it is an old and beautiful legacy and love it a lot and I did not work by a textile work, but my work made me work in it” Over here the translation, has disarranged the words at the end of the sentence and this posed a challenge in understanding the meaning at the very moment. This takes a while to know the real meaning, that it was for her work and training at JRF that led her to work in textile crafts.
on co-designing. As I worked majorly at the Al-Karma centre, and experienced the collaborative design development process in embroidery, I have focused on that process.

### 3.7. Research Timeline

The purpose of the following timeline, is to give an overview of the activities in the research that led up till the field study. The timeline is structured according to when and where it occurred, of what was learnt or activity performed, with the officials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23rd Mar - 21st Aug, 2018</td>
<td>Academic Study titled- <em>Crafted collaborations</em> - Collaborations in craft, an exploration through the supplier perspective of IKEA’</td>
<td>Swedish School of Textiles, Borås, Sweden</td>
<td>Online interview study with - Mae Fah Luang Foundation (Thailand), Jordan River Foundation (Jordan), Rangsutra Crafts India Limited (India) and Maxhosa by Laduma Ngxokolo (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Nov - 31st Jan, 2019</td>
<td>Research on further establishing a thesis from field study - creation of abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th Jan, 2019</td>
<td>Decision of conducting a field study and research for it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Feb, 2019</td>
<td>Confirmation from JRF to conduct field study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th Jan - 21st Mar, 2019</td>
<td>Applications for funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th Feb - 24th Mar, 2019</td>
<td>Theory study - craft, collaboration and design and co-design development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th Mar, 2019</td>
<td>Internship contract confirmed to conduct field study from 8th - 18th April, 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th Mar - 5th Apr, 2019</td>
<td>Background study of Jordan’s, local culture for field study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th - 21st April, 2019</td>
<td>Stay in Jordan - visit to IKEA store, Roman theater, Jordanian Museum of popular traditions, Folklore museum, the Jordan museum,</td>
<td>Amman, Jordan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Research timeline

38
### Daily Activity Table - Participatory study at JRF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>With whom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8th Apr, 2019 | First day – Ice-breaking session  
Embroidering and layering of fabrics at Al-Karma center | JRF Headquarters and Al-Karma Center, in Amman | JRF Headquarters:  
Handcrafts Operation Manager - Shadi Saleh, IKEA Operation Manager- Mariam Darwish, Operation and Industrial Engineers - Zaid Hajarat and Zaid Rawabdeh.  
Al Karma Center:  
Amal Al-Fitiani, Head of the Center  
Quality Control:  
Anwar, Roreta  
Rania – Fabric Cutting Associate |
| 9th Apr, 2019 | Embroidery and organizational study | JRF Headquarters and Al-Karma Center, in Amman | Al Karma Center:  
Amal Al-Fitiani, Head of the Center |
| 10th April, 2019 | Quality control, wealth from waste inspiration – yarn sorting from waste yarns for tassel development, learning of organizational culture and values | JRF Headquarters and JRF Warehouse | JRF Warehouse:  
Zaid Hajarat and Zaid Rawabdeh |
| 11th April, 2019 | Quality control, learning of organizational culture and values | JRF Headquarters and JRF Warehouse, in Amman | Al Karma Center:  
Amal Al-Fitiani, Head of the Center  
Nisreen, Roreta, Anwar, Zaid Hajarat |
| 14th April, 2019 | Embroidering and organizational study | JRF Headquarters and Al-Karma Center, in Amman | Al Karma Center:  
Amal Al-Fitiani, Head of the Center |
| 15th April, 2019 | Embroidery, artisanal and organizational study | JRF Headquarters and Al-Karma Center, in Amman | Artisans: Faten, Mariam |
| 16th April, 2019 | Embroidery and quality control | JRF Headquarters, JRF Warehouse and Al-Karma Center, in Amman | Artisans: Faten, Mariam  
Nisreen, Roreta, Anwar, Zaid Rawabdeh |
| 17th April, 2019 | Embroidery, meeting with designer, organisational study, JRF store study | JRF Headquarters, showroom, Al-Karma Center, in Amman | Artisans: Faten, Mariam, Qublini, Nisreen |

| 8th Apr, 2019 | First day – Ice-breaking session  
Embroidering and layering of fabrics at Al-Karma center | JRF Headquarters and Al-Karma Center, in Amman | JRF Headquarters:  
Handcrafts Operation Manager - Shadi Saleh, IKEA Operation Manager- Mariam Darwish, Operation and Industrial Engineers - Zaid Hajarat and Zaid Rawabdeh.  
Al Karma Center:  
Amal Al-Fitiani, Head of the Center  
Quality Control:  
Anwar, Roreta  
Rania – Fabric Cutting Associate |

**Table 1: Research timeline**

39
18th April, 2019  Field study to Bani Hamida  JRF Headquarters, in Amman, Bani Hamida Weaving Center, Madaba  JRF Headquarters - Handcrafts Operation Manager - Shadi Saleh, IKEA Operation IKEA Switzerland and Romania team Swiss Journalist team from Tamedia AG Bani Hamida Weaving Center: Hanima – Weaver artisan

Thesis writing - Narrative analysis

22nd April - 10th August  Narrative analysis: Reviewing and analyzing field notes from words to sentences and paragraphs and relating the narrative to theory.  Swedish School of Textiles, , Borås, Sweden  Thesis Supervisor: David Goldsmith, PhD

Table 1: Research timeline
4. Literature review:

Definitions are vital for theory (Wood et al., 1991), and theory underlines ‘the nature of causal relationships, identifying what comes first as well as the timing of such events’ (Sutton et al., 1995). Furthermore, definitions and theory contribute to the existing links among different phenomena, and about ‘stories’ explaining why events, thoughts, structures, or acts occur (Sutton et al., 1995).

Collaboration in Creative Design, Methods and Tools (2016) by Panos Markopoulos, Jean-Bernard Martens, Julian Malins, Karin Coninx, Aggelos Liapis; Collaborative Information Seeking Best Practices, New Domains and New Thoughts (2015) by Preben Hansen, Chirag Shah, Claus-Peter Klas – have been of important references. The literature review is thus based on understanding textile crafts and its production, the theory of collaboration, that leads to co-design in textile crafts.

4.1. Textile crafts and its production

The International Encyclopaedia of Social Science describes crafts as including ‘all activities that produce or modify objects by manual means, with or without the use of mechanical aids’ (Venkatesan, 2009). As a craft discipline, textile crafts employ techniques such as embroidery, knitting, weaving, spinning, felting, dyeing and basketry (Riley, 2008). Textile craft is embedded with skills and knowledge of these techniques, and textile craft producers tap into the economic opportunities provided by these actions, to create craft products.

Craft producers can respond in a variety of ways to heightened demands for craft products. These can include increasing the complexity and scale of productive units. However, they can also include artisan-initiated innovations that result in greater output (Sinopoli, 2003). According to the author specializing in craft production, Cathy Costin’s formulation provides four parameters of craft production: scale, concentration, intensity and context.

The parameter scale closely corresponds to the units of production, and refers to both the sizes of production units and the principles for their recruitment. Concentration refers to the spatial distribution of specialists across the physical landscape and in relation to other producers. Intensity is defined as the amount of time producers and thereby artisans spend on their craft, that defines their dependency and the economic output of it. The fourth parameter, is context, refers to the relationships of productive activities and producers to other organisations (Sinopoli, 2003).

Through these parameters, craft producers themselves use various raw materials (in textile crafts
it includes: different yarns, fabrics etc.), tools (for example needles, tools for weaving etc.) and
other resources (such as looms, sewing machines) as part of the production process, and may
relies for a variety of other specialists for the operation of these resources and services. Thus, in
the contexts of production of textile craft products, individuals and groups are linked in complex
webs of interdependence and interaction (Sinopoli, 2003). To enhance the outcomes of the craft
production, textile craft products in today’s times are reached through collaborations (Temeltaş,
2017), and therefore it is important to study the theory of collaboration.

4.2. What is collaboration?
It is natural for us to work with others, as man is a social animal, and sometimes a problem is
just too complex for a single individual to tackle. Denning and Yaholkovsky (2008) regard such
problems as ‘messy’ and argue that collaboration is essential for resolving such messes. Many
modern tasks involve looking for, retrieving, analyzing, sharing, and using information from or
through multiple sources. Some of these tasks are too difficult or even impossible for an individual
to solve within a reasonable time frame and therefore demand collaboration (Hansen et al.,
2015). The term collaboration come from, Latin roots ‘com’ and ‘laborate’ suggest, collaboration
indicates, ‘to work together’ (Hansen et al., 2015). Earlier research emphasizes the increasing need
to encourage problem solving collaboratively among different level organizations (Gray 1985).
While the old philosophy of ‘birds of a feather, flock together’ or the idea of homophily still
prevails, collaborations that connect people of diverse background or span multiple domains
are increasingly becoming common as many complex problems call for people from different
backgrounds and skill sets to work together, between organisations (Hansen et al., 2015). Thus,
collaborations are motivated through the requirements or setup, divisions of labour and diversity
of skills (Putnik et al., 2007).

For example, in today’s times, email and face-to-face meetings are some of the most popular
methods of collaboration, needed as due to the changing structure of work environments in
varied geographical locations and habits people working on multiple projects with different
set of collaborators, across multiple sessions, and with multiple devices (Hansen et al., 2015).
Collaboration is exercised in different ways in order to effectively manage knowledge and stay
competitive, effective, and innovative (Denning 2007), and is perceived as a powerful strategy
facilitating the achievement of a vision that may not be possible when entities work independently
(Gadja 2004).
4.2.1. Theory of collaboration

According to Gadja (2004), collaboration theory comprises principles generated through the observation of numerous entities and individuals working together developing strategic alliances. Earlier pioneering work attempting to develop the theory (Wood et al., 1991) refers to Gray’s (1989) definition, which highlights various key elements: ‘Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain’. We collaborate for various reasons, solving complex problems, learning a skill, and even for simply propagating social connections. Due to its ability of solving complex problems (Hansen et al., 2015), collaboration is a difficult process and must have a purpose, usually translated to a joint goal or problem to be solved.

The paper, ‘Towards a comprehensive theory of collaboration’ by Wood and Grey (1991) has been one of the most influential (Alonso et al., 2017) and widely cited general discussion of collaboration, and has provided a framework that has been acknowledged, if not fully applied, in numerous studies. The important elements that constitute the theory of collaboration are:

a. Stakeholders of a problem domain: Stakeholders are composed of organizations with an interest in a problem domain, or an issue of common concern. At the start of collaborative efforts, stakeholders’ interests may be common or even differ; as collaboration continues, these interests may become redefined or may change (Wood et al., 1991).

b. Domain Orientation: The existing change-oriented relationships of a certain duration involving the participating stakeholders is important, where shared rules, norms, and structures are responsibilities for participating stakeholders. Moreover, stakeholders must adhere to norms and rules that govern interactive processes when they participate in collaboration (Wood et al., 1991). Through the interactive process in collaboration, participants should orientate actions, decisions, and processes toward issues associated with ‘the problem domain that brought them together’ (Wood et al., 1991). The underlying principle should, therefore, be the focus on aspects intrinsically related to the group’s main objectives, as they ‘concern the domain’s future’.

c. Autonomy: Even when stakeholders may agree to follow certain shared rules within a collaborative group, they still maintain independent powers to make decisions (Wood et al., 1991).

d. Action or decision: Collaboration may exist as long as the participating stakeholders are involved in processes intended to end in decision or action (Wood et al., 1991). Therefore, given that
collaboration focuses on particular objectives, participants should intend to make decisions or act. However, action or decision does not imply that intended goals must be accomplished for collaboration to exist; indeed, ‘collaboration may fail in its objective’ (Wood et al., 1991).

### 4.2.2. Creating collaborative relationships

Collaborative relationship is depicted through organisation’s network when two or more participating enterprises are engaged in the supply and receipt of goods or services on a regular and on-going basis. Within organisation networks, partners rely on each other and the supply of goods (or services) will be controlled by the associated logistics, manufacturing commitments and the operating dynamics of the participating enterprises (Jagdev et al., 2001). Within the case of JRF that is studied, the textile craft producer is a supplier to IKEA, and also relies on other suppliers for their raw materials, to create the co-designed textile craft collections. An important point to note is, that collaboration involves creating a solution that is more than merely the sum of each organisation’s contribution (Hansen et al., 2015). At the same time, the situation that could create a meaningful collaboration, are of having a diversity of opinion, where people are able to communicate and draw on local knowledge, and create shared values (Surowiecki, 2004).

### 4.2.3. Limitations of collaboration

Collaboration is not always desired or useful. Even when collaboration is desired or encouraged, it could induce additional costs that includes cognitive load and the cost to coordinate various events and participants (sometimes called collaborative load) (Bruce et al., 2003; Fidel et al., 2004). There is also inadequacy observed in general of our understanding of how people work in collaboration on projects, as, working in a group may not always be beneficial if the participants have conflicts of interest, they do not trust one another, or they do not intend to collaborate (London, 1995). (Shah, 2008)

### 4.3. Design development in organisations

The study has been focused on the collaborative design and development within the landscape of collaboration, as to form an understanding towards the value-added factor of collaborative design process that JRF undertakes. But, before focusing on collaborative design, it is important by taking into consideration the design process. This will provide a complete understanding of the collaborative design method and will give some insight into the design method in general (Vannella, 2017).
Design is many different things to many different people and it can be viewed as a discrete activity, as a total process, or in terms of its tangible outcome (Cooper et al., 1995). Design also does not occur in isolation from other disciplines and professions but in relation to a wide range of different conditions. There have been numerous definitions of design, but the definition by Holt (1990) a design researcher (also referred by Scrivener et al., 2000) has mentioned the following definition in the ‘New talent design annual: the international annual of design and communication’ elaborates design as a process, where

Design is the process to optimize consumer satisfaction and company profitability through the creative use of major design elements performance, quality, durability, appearance, and cost) in connection with products, environments, information, and corporate identity.

The social setting is certainly important with regard to how nascent ideas can be nurtured and developed (Markopoulos et al., 2016); that affect the external contexts around where the design is taking place, for example in business, society, technology, politics, and the environment. It is also evident in designers’ relationships to the worlds of marketing, management, engineering, finance, and economics (Scrivener et al., 2000). There are many different views on how a process of design and its development should be structured or staged as can be evidenced by the prolific number of models of design processes that have been discussed in the design literature (Dubberly 2004).

Moreover, every design process needs to address its own planning constraints and its own business and organizational context.

4.3.1. Factors involved in design and development

The following are the factors that are contributes to the design development

1. Design process needs to be able to adapt to changes to the context of a project, the evolving understanding of a problem domain, and the needs of different stakeholders as they are discovered and shaped while designing.

The design council’s, ‘double diamond’ model, is one of the models used to study design process and development (Markopoulos et al., 2016), shown in Fig. 1, that delineates four broad areas – ‘discovery’, ‘definition’, ‘development’, and ‘delivery’ – this allows design teams to explore ideas, test solutions and innovate. The model also indicates that improvements can occur during phases, and that previous phases may be revisited during the process. The following is the elaboration of
the double diamond model:
a) In the discovery phase, through initiatives of idea generation and brainstorming, the objective is to orient ideas that characterise the phase, where the design ‘problem’ is explored, investigated and questioned.

b) For the phase of definition, the insights are collated, that result in the definition of a clear brief to be addressed, that frames the fundamental design challenge. The implementation of this phase is achieved through the requirements, agreement and analysis, collect ideas, discuss and brainstorm around these, select winning concepts.

c) In the development phase, the fundamental aspects and the details of the solution are investigated in detail; and is achieved through design development, prototyping, including testing and production improvements. This helps to improve and refine the ideas that come from discovery to development phase.

d) The delivery phase brings the winning’ concept to reality in this phase, when production, manufacture and launch take place.

Sketching design ideas and concepts becomes a key practice for communication of ideas as well as enabling the designer to externalize thoughts, experiment, challenge and gain a better understanding of the design purpose or problem (Markopoulos et al., 2016). The important aspect of the design development process is that continuous feedback loops enables improvement.

2. Design transcends considerations of the physical product to focus on how using a product is lived, experienced, and appraised by people. The design should affect how the product is lived, experienced, and remembered (Hassenzahl 2010). Focusing on the experience rather than the product provides a basis for envisioning, innovation, and even evaluation during the design process.
3. Design involves different modes of thinking, which opens up options, invites, external influences, brings in new information, which is more analytical, structured, reducing the options considered, and elaborating design representations (Markopoulos et al., 2016).

Design in textile crafts refers to the activities involved in creating the product structure, that decides on the craft product’s form, selecting materials and processes. Development refers collectively to the entire process of identifying a market opportunity, functional requirements, and finally testing, modifying, and refining the product until it is ready to manufacture (Kamrani et al., 2008). The development of a textile craft product is time-consuming, lengthy, and costly. Today’s textile and craft manufacturers encounter various difficulties involved in the product development process and these must be overcome for international competitiveness (Kamrani et al., 2008). Fiona Maciver and Julian Malins in their chapter entitled ‘Two heads are better than one’, in the book ‘Collaboration in Creative Design Methods and Tools’ (Markopoulos et al., 2016) discuss collaboration in the design process and argue how being connected to others can enhance the overall creative effort. Thus, the above factors for design and its development can be applied to collaborative design development in textile crafts. Typical concerns include design methods that address idea generation, creative problem solving, communication, business relevance, manufacturing feasibility, and the realization of physical prototypes, and can achieve its highest value through collaborative design development.

4.3.2. Collaborative Design – Co-design towards co-creation

Within this landscape of collaboration and design, notions of co-creation and co-design have been expanding. The terms co-design and co-creation are today often confused and opinions vary widely about who should be involved in these collaborative acts of design, when, and in what role (Sanders et al., 2008). Although online dictionaries do not yet have entries for co-creation, cocreation, codesign or co-design, there is ample academic discussion about the terms. Peer reviewed journals take co-creation to refer to any act of collective creativity, i.e. creativity that is shared by two or more people or organisations. Co-creation is a very broad term with applications ranging from the physical to the metaphysical and from the material to the spiritual, to be collectively created that generates value as can be seen by the output of search engines. By co-design it indicates collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process. Thus, co-design is a specific instance of co-creation (Sanders et al., 2008). Co-designing refers, to the collective making of collaborating designers, and other actors involved in the design development process. The codesigning process proposed by Sanders and Stappers (2008) can be adapted to the co-designing
process in textile crafts (also adapted by Tung, 2012)
The drawing from Sanders and Stappers, 2008 depicts the explorations in the front end is to
determine what is to be designed and sometimes what should not be designed and manufactured, in
textile crafts (Tung, 2012). The fuzzy front end is followed by the traditional design process where
the resulting ideas for product etc., are developed first into concepts, and then into prototypes that
are refined on the basis of the feedback of collaborators (Sanders et al., 2008). In this stage, there
are many divergent paths to explore, and the goal of exploration is to discover design problems,
identify opportunities and determine a design approach.

The double diamond model outlines similar elements showed by Sanders and Stappers, 2008, of
idea and concept formations, and refining these ideas for prototype i.e. sample development that
lead to the final craft product; where there is continues improvement involved in the process.

Different perspectives on the collaborative process and experience can be considered and
compared, of collaboration participants, of their institutions to the complex processes and
outcomes associated with collaborative design activity (Détienne et al., 2012). Further the field
study at JRF is studied to know the collaborative design development process that they have newly
ventured into after collaborating with IKEA in making the Tilltalande collection (in 2017) and
currently the Hantverk collection.
5. **Field study at Jordan River Foundation**

I start the narration of the field study from the country, Jordan (Ch 5.1.) that forms an important function as to why JRF functions the way it does. Then I focus on my first day at JRF (Ch 5.2.), describing as to what I saw, and understood from the surroundings and the officials. I then dive into the conversation with JRF’s designer (Ch 5.3.) to study the collaborative design process. As highlighted by the designer of various JRF’s crafts production centres, I focus on describing the Al-Karma centre (Ch 5.4.), and the co-designed collections (Ch 5.5.) that are majorly produced there. In Ch. 5.6., I work in the fabric cutting process at Al-Karma, that was my first point of contact in experiencing the Hantverk collection, through which I enter and work in the embroidery process, and having conversations with artisans, especially with the artisan, Mariam (Ch 5.7.). The last part of the narration is where I work for a tassel design project with JRF (Ch 5.8.)

**5.1. Jordan – the country where JRF functions!**

Jordan, known officially the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has played an important role in trade between east and west because of its geographic location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe (Jordan History & Culture, 2006). Jordan’s history is strongly built upon the economic and cultural activities of the Arabs and Bedouins (nomadic Arab people). It is also necessary to know the background of Jordan for the study at JRF, as it is also the very basis on the functioning and the purpose of JRF in Jordan as also effectively asserted that, ‘Every nation has a story—a public narrative it tells to explain its place... in the flow of history, to give meaning its principles and practices (Somers et al., 2005)’ It is to think of an area of the world as a place is to see it as a ‘rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment’, and, as such, a place can be seen as a ‘meaningful location’, not just a geographical construct (Cresswell, 2014).

The creation of a specific Jordanian culture dates only from when Jordan gained independence in 1946 and is still secondary to regional origins. Jordan is now an upper middle-income country and is headed by King Abdullah II. Today, majority of Jordanians are Arabs. Half of Jordan’s Arabs are Palestinians, most of whom were refugees from the 1948 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli wars. Jordan hosts currently one of the largest numbers of Syrian refugees from the Syrian civil war started in 2011 (Jordan Country Handbook). Thus, the substantial pressure on its over-stretched resources adds to the country’s economic difficulty.

Water is one of the important resources in Jordan, as water shortage is the most pressing problem, as
per capita water resources are expected to reach critical levels by 2025 (Jordan Country Handbook). On entering the biggest museum in Jordan - the Jordan Museum, where I was only expecting to see, historical lifestyle of the area, I was firstly greeted with the very importance of water on the dry land. A major section was focused on historical water management strategies to current water usage and development. To convey interactively the significance of water, was expressed through the making of the known Jordanian dish of ‘Mansaf’. (For example, almond being one of the ingredients, it takes 42 litres of water to produce 20gms of almond.) Economic development of the country is thus important for the maintenance and research and development for water preservation. As also of eight years in the Syrian refugee crisis, leveraging the private sector’s financial capital and capacity for innovation has emerged as an attractive solution to protracted displacement (Malik et al., 2018).

Amman, the capital city of Jordan, is where manufacturing (majorly in textiles, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics) is concentrated, but the majority of the resources and raw materials are imported into Jordan. To support the scenario, Queen Rania of Jordan adds,

We always say Jordan is not rich in natural resources. We don’t have oil or gas like some of our neighbours do—but I think in terms of human resources, we are quite lucky and we are really trying to foster an environment of innovation and technology. I think Jordan will emerge as a centre of innovation in the Middle East (Queen Rania of Jordan, quote).

The society thriving for development, has a rich history and strong traditions that govern most of their family life. In the many textile and craft traditions, the motifs, design and colours come from day to day activities and their historical heritages. There can be escalating floral patterns or geometric striped patterns, designs of pomegranates, cactus, desert art and textures from the rocks of Petra, the historical heritage that can be seen on textiles, ceramics and jewellery. These inspirations have also been emphasized by Faridon Abida, designer at JRF.

---

4 Protracted displacement: In 2009, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), under the United Nations (UN) agency—provided a definition for protracted displacement for refugees as situations where 25,000 refugees or more have been in exile for 5 years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions (Crawford et al, 2015).
Image 24: The unique earthy color of white stone is observed in all the buildings in Amman, that’s the color code provided by the Municipality. Seen over here is one of the mosques in the center of Amman.

“Jordan has a strange, haunting beauty and a sense of timelessness. Dotted with the ruins of empires once great, it is the last resort of yesterday in the world of tomorrow. I love every inch of it.”
- Hussein bin Talal, reigned King of Jordan from 1952-99 (quote)
5.2. Observing the headquarters of Jordan River Foundation

In the western part of Amman, stands the headquarters of Jordan River Foundation. A big sprawling campus with a three-storey building, surrounded by; parking space and lush gardens. Opening the main door, I was welcomed by the reception hall that was a large space surrounded by fine ceramics, cane-craft and textiles. One of the walls is adorned by an arrangement of small wall panels, made of wood showcasing many designs. The crafts portrayed there have local inspirations, that included kitchenware, wall hangings, candles, silk embroidered cushion covers, ceramics etc. A lampshade catches the eye, with multi-coloured cross stitch patterns, that I would later come to know as the Palestinian embroidery. I also see that the pomegranate, is of a very significant inspiration in Jordan, and is utilised in three dimensional forms and as well surface design motifs.

Image 25: Jordan River Foundation Headquarters building in Amman

Image 26: The front desk reception

Image 27: Forms are experimented for jute baskets that are adorned with tassels. As I had limited access for photography, I decided to draw the forms at display in the headquarters in my field notebook

---

5 Amman: In the year 1924 Amman consisted of little more than a collection of dwellings and some 2000–3000 inhabitants, but now, is the capital city of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan currently has a population in excess of 2 million. “Amman is a modern Arab city rather than a great, ancient metropolis of the Orient: it has never rivalled Damascus or Cairo as a grand Islamic city of antiquity.” (Potter et al., 2009)
On the other wall, was a sprawling black and white photograph of the Citadel of Amman, photographed by Faridon Abida, Head Designer at JRF, who I converse with in the next chapter regarding the design development process. Furthering my sight, I see; the area is attached to an open coffee area. Amidst the environment and my observations, there are conversations in Arabic, at the reception, where I was waiting, and was soon then welcomed and guided by the Case manager at JRF, Lara Hijjawi. My initial correspondences with Lara, had been to guide me to apply for an internship, in order to study JRF, that would allow me to be a part of the processes. It also gave me a view of that JRF encourages international visitors.

I was then received by Mariam Darwish, who is the operation manager at JRF, and who also handles JRF- IKEA operations. Mariam D. who gave me a tour of the handicraft department at the headquarters. In one of the conversations with Jessica Gustaffson, IKEA communications Manager, who was at JRF at that time, Mariam D. mentioned of being to Älmhult (Sweden), work experience at the IKEA store in Amman, and now experiencing the IKEA culture, through work at JRF. Also being assigned as my Supervisor for the internship and field study, Mariam D. had opened me many opportunities to plan and visit on the craft centres at JRF, and at the same time ensuring its smooth facilitation and safety.

The Handcraft operation department at JRF’s corporate headquarters was at the ground level. There were two major rooms. One hall where the finance and operations representatives worked. The other room was reserved for the Heads of Operations, as their positions demanded. I would sit at an extra table aside their tables. On one side of the wall was the white board where dispatch quantity of the soon to be released, Hantverk collection is mentioned, and where I got the idea the current collection is in process. Adjoining the hall is a meeting room, where usually Skype meetings with IKEA are held. There were photo frames outside the department showcasing other projects and how women artisans work in crafts. Observing so many elements at the headquarters itself, and the decorated
space showcasing Jordanian culture, gave me the curious thought of their work implementation behind it, and the enthusiasm they carry to work in collaboration, with their already established stand as an organisation. Organizations have been trying new designs and techniques to construct office buildings, which can increase productivity, and attract more employees (Kamarulzaman et al., 2011). With my observations, I knew it was an opportunity as well to be at the right place and right time, to see the design process, development in textile craft production take place.
5.3. Conversations with JRF Designer, Faridon Abida on crafts, design development, co-designing and collaboration at JRF with IKEA

In one of the conversations discussing my research and JRF’s work, Zaid H. said,

Two weeks before we all were super busy, in the launch of the exhibition and new JRF showroom⁶. Since the Queen was going to inaugurate and be present, it’s always very important for everything to go smoothly. In line with your topic, you should request Mariam D., in arranging for a meeting with Faridon. It will be very helpful.

Next day I went on to ask Mariam D, for which the reply was, “Yes it will be very helpful. You can till then try to prepare what you would like to talk to him and we will try to arrange a meeting with you.”

On the morning of the planned meeting, Mariam D. says,

There hasn’t been any response from Faridon. So, it can be difficult for the meeting. You see Faridon is very busy, and rarely visits the headquarters. He is mostly at JRF’s showroom, from where he operates, and then for sampling or design production he will be at the craft cluster fields or at Al-Karma.

The meeting, eventually worked out. On entering the decorative showroom of JRF, it was a reflection of the detailed handmade crafts displayed elaborately. Initially I had planned for questions

Image 31: Queen Rania launching the exhibition of JRF’s handicrafts at the new showroom.

Image 32: Jordan River Designs Showroom of JRF

---

⁶ JRF Exhibition: Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan launched the 23rd annual Jordan River Designs handicrafts exhibition on Tuesday (April 2nd, 2019), introducing a new collection by JRF. The handicraft collection incorporates techniques of needlework, embroidery, photography and the use of new media; that takes inspiration from natural landscapes, geometric motifs, arabic calligraphy and the ancient city of Petra. (Queen Rania Launches 23rd Annual Jordan River Handicrafts Exhibition, April 2019)
regarding the work and challenges to produce textile crafts at JRF, co-designing process for Tilltalande (the first collection), if it was observed for the ongoing Hantverk collection and to know about major factors for co-designing with IKEA, but my meeting with Faridon turned out to be more of a conversation, starting from the inspirations to co-design development process with IKEA.

5.3.1. The inspiration for design in textile crafts

I was introduced to Faridon, and we started our journey around the showroom, as I asked about the design development process. I started with the inspiration of the design, as supported by the Double diamond model, and by the drawing of Sanders and Stappers, (2008) that emphasise the formation and discovery of ideas and concepts, as the first step to a design development process. Faridon thus started to detail about inspirations of design at JRF,

The inspiration comes from our culture and daily life at Jordan and moreover the Middle East. They are all done by the ladies at the centre. We have three centres. Some of them are in the capital Amman and some of them are outside the capital that are the less fortunate areas. You know it’s all about women (Faridon refers the women artisans as ‘women’ or ‘ladies’ in the conversation) and community empowerment, so we can train the ladies and have them work in our centres and introduce them to new techniques and guide them so they can come up with beautiful work as you see here. This cushion over here shows is the folkloric dance. It’s a traditional dance that men do, called Dabke. They do in a happy event and it’s a way for them to express their loyalty to the country, Jordan. Here also another scene that you see, it’s in the countryside where you see men and women working together. The woman is carrying water and the man is helping with our beautiful donkey—carrying stuff. So we took these inspiration and, just added it to these cushions. Everything over
here as you see is inspired from our culture, and it should be felt and experienced as it’s what you see when you go to a village or a city. We have horses, donkeys, the folk dance, oyster. For example, in the holy month of Ramadan, we sell, a special drink in Ramadan, and is a street food. And then we try to capture these scenes, and have them on cushions through our techniques. You will have like this embroidery, this very famous traditional art. I added, “Yes, it’s a cross stitch.”

Faridon continued,

Yes, it’s cross stitch. It’s Palestinian and we also added our designs to it, just to get a hand or feel of our traditions and culture. Through Arabic calligraphy and typography on wall panels, we have shown Arabic chants, where kids sing, we all know these songs.

“Ask him, he knows” as Faridon looked over Zaid H.

“All, this is what we know, like having different experiences and adding them to our product, and I’m trying to say in a very simple way I mean this is what we do!” added Faridon.

5.3.2. Design development in crafts at JRF

Keeping in mind the factors of design and now its development, I then asked, “How do you start with the design development of the collections?” Faridon replied,

Every year, I keep an eye on everything
from people to different cities in Jordan, and also other cultures like Turkish, Persian and from countries around us. I go to a lot of exhibitions because it’s very inspiring. So, I bring some sought of ideas like, how about making a chair, this size and this height. I then sketch and sit with the ladies. I mean when you sit with them, it’s just fantastic. You keep on coming up with more and more ideas and then we work on samples. And the funny thing is that sometimes we start with something and we end up with really completely different, something really new. So, it’s about the process and all about it. So, I can’t tell you like, ahh I design this, and then we send it and this is our craft product. I will be lying. You know because a lot of amendments sometimes from the ideation to even sometimes in the production, turns into great ideas.

Thus, the action of sketching, and discussion with women artisans for brainstorming contributes to the first stage of design development process at JRF. In the design process designers create prototypes or samples for testing new materials, methods and technology to bring ideas to life before these ideas are manufactured. According to Valentine (2013) designers’ approach to sample becomes as a tool for solving the problem and expressing in creating the collection. The last sentence by Faridon was an affirmation to the design development theory, of how continuous feedback and as specified amendments becomes important for developing the craft product.

I understood and added, “Yes, I know sometimes when you are designing, between in the process you just get in your mind, that this colour looks good.”

Faridon was very affirmative and continued,

Yes exactly yes. Of course, definitely the way we come up with the design is that okay I go and sit with the ladies. We brainstorm and talk about the designs and ask them what kind of, what do you think of this and that. Specifically, it goes about, why you do it? How we can do it? what do you think about it? Let’s do this and that? Do you think it’s cool? Then some of the ladies will be like, okay what if we do this and then we add accordingly and
we all be like, “this is genius!” So, let’s do this and this is how it works! And you know as I said, I sketch, and we sit together, talk about it and discuss it. Because you know, when you talk and discuss about it you might come up with even more ideas or find more ways to do and make it. I’m trying to keep it very simple, am not going to use big words for the design development process. Yes, and you know—we don’t like to sit in a proper meeting room to discuss that this is the sketch one, two, three... We have breakfast together and we talk about it and we talk about food more than even design and products and then this is how we come with designs.

Scrivener et al., (2000) highlights that the evolution of design ideas is governed by social interaction processes, a point that shows how ideas for design for JRF comes at the food table!

Faridon continued,

Keeping it very simple, this is how it is; I sketch, keep an eye, take a lot of notes and I go and sit with the ladies, to make sure that they are involved in every single process, because it’s their work at the end. And I want them to be happy about the creative process of working together. I also mean about the final result, it’s not only like you know, let’s do this and I don’t give them like steps. There are steps of course I mean in terms of let’s design, make a sample, and then we do some amendments and then we send it to production.

The designer though carries out the process up to the final stage of the product together with other employees in production but however, the artisan is also dominating the process who decides the result of a unique product by a holistic approach. (Yair et al., 2001).

Faridon added further, “Yes, and we don’t have a big team. It’s only me and I have a new assistant, hired two months ago! That’s it. Yes, so all of this I mean you see...”

I continued, “Ahh, it’s just you....”

Faridon said,

Yes. Yes, and the ladies. I mean they are like heroes. They are literally the heroes. Every single detail that you see is here because they always provide me with solutions. For example, this design is inspired from a pomegranate 7, it’s a very famous fruit here in Jordan, it’s

---

7 Pomegranates: Eight tons of pomegranates are produced each year in Jordan (Malkawi, 2014) And thus it becomes a significant fruit for design inspiration, in a country where it is difficult to produce vegetation, due to its geographical and harsh weather conditions.
represents beauty and we love it and it’s in every single house. Here in Amman, specially, in every old house, you will find like a pomegranate tree. So, I ask them what do you think of the shape? Let’s do this, let’s add this, because we also have to keep in mind on the pricing. In line with cost being an important factor, Kamrani (2008) also mentions that, the design process is considered efficient, when the output of the process satisfies the general product requirements and meets management objectives and cost, being the most important factor.

“So, I mean it’s the continuous creative process. I wish you can, join us in one of the sessions.”, added Faridon.

“I would love to join the design team, in the future…”, as I said.

Faridon laughs, as I continued, “I’m a Textile designer, so…”

“Ahh great, wow!”, exclaimed Faridon.

I said, “So, I understand about all these things and have worked with crafts, back in India.”

Faridon was delighted and said,

Am sure, I mean India, I wish to go there. Seriously, it’s a dream for me… it’s so rich in culture and colours and a lot of things and I mean the food, the food.... Sorry for that... I just say everything that comes to my mind.

I admired of Faridon’s humbleness and how my quest to enquire and interview was turned into an engaging conversation to know about the design development process.

As we were entering the other side of the showroom, Faridon proceeded,

And also, we have three centres and each centre, is specialised in certain craft. For example, we have one, in the Jordan valley, they are more specialised in Banana leaves weaving, for creating baskets They do this as well, it’s crochet work. Another centre they are more into fabric embroidery and producing it, whilst the third one works the wood and weaving. So, we also, try to combine techniques from the three centres that come and work together. For example this is done at one of the centres, the one in Jordan valley, and you know adding the tassels and everything at the other centres. So also sharing techniques and yes... it’s a very simple process, yet complicated in some ways but it’s a great challenge and I love it. They are just fantastic.

The following page shows an overview of the conversation, that highlights the design development process followed at JRF, which creates a foundation for the further conversation with Faridon that focused on co-design development.
Image 40: The pomegranate plant, seen at JRF’s showroom, also observed in many of homes in Jordan.

Image 41: Form of pomegranate seen on a wood wall frame.

Some of the guiding questions:
- Why do you make the craft product?
- How the craft product will work?
- How it will look?

Local inspiration

Inspiration Discussion with artisans Sampling Decision of final product Craft production JRF showroom

Sketching

Material and colour implementation Cost to make

Continuous improvement in process

Image 38: Panaromic view of Petra, the national heritage of Jordan.

Image 39: Collection inspired from the rocks of Petra.

Image 42: Overview of the design development process at JRF.
5.3.3. Co-designing for JRF-IKEA collection

Having the foundation knowledge of the design development work at JRF, now I slowly proceeded with the collaborative design development with JRF’S designer and artisans’ team with IKEA, as I continued further, “How did design development work with the IKEA collection?”

Faridon answered,

Ahh well, IKEA collection, at first it was challenging because you know IKEA, we have to pay attention, for example to the price, and it was a bit of a not a problem but more of a challenge. You know because you want from that side, I mean a certain budget is demanded or a set of money that we can’t go up. So that was a bit challenging, but at the end we worked with both that side and our side. So, we reached sought of an agreement at the end and because it’s handmade craft also, that was another part of the challenge. You know because from hand to hand and it’s different from woman to another woman. Also, there is a big part of the work is down in the centre, where you have supervisors to supervise the whole process, but some of them are done also... yes, at their homes. Yes, so that was very challenging. But I think we did good.

Faridon thus highlights two challenging factors, firstly cost and the fact that it is a handmade craft, and that each product will differ slightly, as each artisans hand differ on the technique of craft.

I added, “Yes, it’s successful, it was interesting to know the designers from IKEA were over here and were working together...”

As Faridon continued from that,

Yes of course, we worked together and it was really such an amazing experience because, this is how I said the more minds you have or the more people you have, you can come up with more solutions and more ideas and learn even more. So, for me personally it was a learning experience and it was such an inspirational process. This is for me and for the ladies. It was very rewarding, for them and they really enjoyed it and the good thing about it is that they discovered that what they do is highly appreciated and not only from IKEA, but also for us in getting the opportunity to send in the work all over the world... yes, they felt they were important. Yes, it’s part of the empowering thing. So, it was really cool.”

During the collaboration process, designers can act as connectors and facilitators to transfer ideas from one source to another, and can also propose new concepts based on previous experiences in various domains and create new opportunities for innovation (Dormer, 2015). Thus, the designers
play a catalytic role to empower the artisans and assist them in designing craft products to meet modern market needs. *(The next page shows the digital drawing of the designs from the Tilltanadle collection that have been co-designed with IKEA.)*

“I have a question for you? What do you think about the work here?” Faridon asked.

I answered,

It’s really wonderful, I think it truly shows Jordanian and Middle Eastern culture. I have been over here from almost two weeks, and for me it is also important to learn about the culture. So, I was visiting museums and heritage places, and have seen many things and it really portrays well. Also, if I see it, I feel like taking it. That is the first thing which is very important and it has this innate hand value as well and plus a thought that I can take this, use it and can make a wonderful experience out of it.

“Ahh, great, thank you very much”, Faridon delightfully said.

I added,

I have worked with research documentation in crafts, back in India and we were trying to save dying folklore embroideries and working with textile craft products in the India-Pakistan border. So, it’s very nice to see.

Faridon said,

I’m so happy, yes, it’s very important, even the technique of wool weaving is dying, in Jordan. That’s why we are trying to keep it alive. And that we have, a wide variety of products from working in fabrics, embroidery, with wood, you know I mean a lot of other mediums...but I think the best thing over here is there is so much of intricate work, that we create.

I said, “In contrast to JRF’s own collections as I see, the challenging part of IKEA’s collection in terms of craft, that it can be limited...”

Faridon continued from me,

Yes, and that was also very very encouraging for the women. I mean they felt that they are really
Image 43: Digital drawing of Tilltalande floor cushion cover, showing the print and embroidery design

Image 44: Digital drawing of Tilltalande cushion cover
doing something very special, because for the IKEA products, let’s say you know we make less work so that we can reach the pricing. The challenging part also was the quantity. Not only producing one or two that is easy, because as I said this work in terms of embroidery and there are lot of things you see... but the craft production and the quantities that was also another challenging part that we have to work on. Not only I mean in terms of design, but as a foundation to create more of everything, design implementation and production. All of it plays an important role in creating value of the craft product.

A common goal of collaboration in design is for designers to play the role of intermediaries adapting traditional crafts—the final products to the requirements of niche markets, which demands high standards of quality, presentation and exclusivity (Chalkho, 2011; Vencatchellum, 2005). Faridon, identified that in collaborative design firstly managing the craft production is challenging. Secondly, it is managing the quantity, that is understandable, since the design depends upon the handwork of the artisans. It was asserted that the design development creates a structure to all the processes, that achieves the price.

Faridon continued,

The design also depends upon techniques, for hand quilting there is no machine work. In some techniques, we work with the machine, for stitching and sometimes machine embroidery, but still it’s manual work.

“Yes, I get it, mechanized means are needed to form the product itself.”, I added.

Faridon replied, “Yes exactly.”

The interlacement of mechanised elements used in design in craft production, for example machine stitching, and overlock machine for finishing is also worked by the artisans. For example, a piece of embroidered panel will be of less utility compared to the same embroidered panel used as the front fabric for the cushion cover. It is necessary to shape the craft product to make it marketable.

Faridon then continued, with showing the second floor of the showroom and said, “This is also something that we did…”

“This is the Jordanian dress...”, I kept up in between.

Faridon said,

Yes, it’s a Palestinian actually. It’s multimedia design. We print on fabric, and then embroider
on the fabric. The cool thing is that it’s about Jordan heritage, and the other wonderful thing is that it is free embroidery. They did not even follow like... for embroidery the cross stitch they add another fabric for follow up.

I added, “Yes, there is a fabric required for marking.”

Faridon continued,

Yes exactly, this one was without marking, so there was freedom for each and every woman to do whatever she feels like, with a bit of guidance, so they should not damage the fabric. But they did an amazing job and we did with women and men. It was really cool.

This action of free embroidery observed was interesting to the contrast of the embroidery method observed in the collaborated collections, that will be elaborated after knowing the craft production centre Al-Karma.
5.4. **Al - Karma Centre –the craft production center of JRF**

The Al-Karma centre is one of the production centres of JRF in the old city area of Amman. A 20 min drive from JRF headquarters. It’s a three-storey building with levels committed to the different activities of craft production. The ground level consisted of the quality control (QC) section. In one corner of the room, an artisan was embroidering one of the pieces of the upcoming JRF - IKEA’s Hantverk collection. She was smiling and held my hands warningly to welcome me, as I observed she was taking ‘one stitch at a time’ of the running stitch embroidery. *(In the next chapter, as I detail the embroidering process of the Hantverk collection, I come to know about her reason of doing one by one stitch.)*

In the other corner of the room also contained a metal detector, to scan the finished craft product. On the walls, sheets of the product and technical specifications of the JRF-IKEA collections, are seen. It also consists of a section where rejected pieces, stacked from top to bottom — of JRF-IKEA’s collection are kept. They were in big plastic bags and it seemed to be more of the floor cushions left from the Tilltalande collection.

The first level of the building held artisans working on; embroidering, hand stitching and overlock, aspects of the textile craft production. Mariam, the artisan mentioned that, “There are total 85 artisans at the Al- Karma Center that includes Jordanian women and Syrian refugees.” Majority of the workforce of artisans I saw were involved to work for the JRF- IKEA collaborative collection, and some of them worked at the second floor of the center for JRF’s own collection development.
and production. The artisans at Al- Karma Center arrived at 8am in the morning to start their work. They will either take up the new pieces to be embroidered/stitched or will continue to work. At 11 am, they have a half an hour break, that is their breakfast time. I didn’t know initially and with my talks with Mariam, it was known that,

Indeed, breakfast is the first meal of the day. But we have it at 11 am, here at the centre. We bring from our homes and share and eat together. This culture of eating together and making things together — facilitates togetherness, in us becoming a small community.

I reflected on this part, as even Faridon mentioned how their discussions in design development came up while having breakfast, emphasizing on community rituals, that develops engagement amongst artisans to implement designs.

The artisans designated place to embroider is at the Al- Karma Center, of JRF. Unlike the operational team where nameplates are kept in front on the table. The name of the artisans is handwritten in Arabic and stuck with a tape on the back post of the chair. One good thing was my ability to read Arabic and got a quick grasp on who sits where. There were three rooms allotted to the artisans for the work. The artisans there usually address their work as ‘IKEA work’. Everyone at the Al-Karma center, will have a coffee break at 14:00, for ten minutes. As the kitchen is small, the artisans go batchwise to the coffee room. The second level had a cutting room, a room for JRF’s showroom craft production, Amal’s office and the kitchen. Amal Al- Fitiani, is the Head of the Al- Karma Center of JRF. Amal was always very welcoming and showed me her work
and moreover her adventures in crafts. Some months back Amal was with Shadi on an official trip to India to visit Rangsutra Crafts (India). On one of our conversations in Google Translate, Amal said that she has an experience of over 25 years in traditional textile crafts, and understands the know-how of the craft industry, a true heritage. Amal has also contributed in the smooth functioning of JRF-IKEA collaborated collections of Tilltalande and Hantverk, that was majorly developed at the Al-Karma centre.
5.5. Home Furnishing Collections of JRF- IKEA

The Tilltalande collection was the first co-designed collection, and as I could just see the final product in front of me, and not the process; so, my experience with the collection was what everyone described about it, that is majorly the inspiration of the design, and the method used. The second ongoing collection is Hantverk and I was there at the time of craft production, and have identified certain elements observed in the continuous development of the design development process. *(to be seen in ch 5.5.2)*

5.5.1. First celebratory co-created collection - Tilltalande collection

The ‘Tilltalande’ collection released in 2017, consisted of eleven products, that were colourfully embroidered cushion covers, floor cushions and woven handmade rugs– that were made, at JRF’s Al-Karma and Bani Hamida weaving centres. This first limited collection has been produced by over 110 women artisans.

The designs were co-created with the IKEA team visiting JRF, and co-designing with symbols of strong local significance, like flowering cacti, camels, palm trees and decorated eyes. During the design process, one of the Jordanian artisans mentioned that Bedouin women traditionally decorate themselves with pompoms when they marry. From this came the idea for the tassels, which can be found on many of the Tilltalande products (IKEA press, 2019), they symbolize blossoms that

Image 52: Co-creation of local inspired desert crafts, the first co-created collection by JRF and IKEA (Inspiration marked and written in red)
are shown on the pillowcase printed with a cactus. The usage of tassels by JRF is also seen in section 4.8. The palm tree seen is an inspiration taken from the oasis. Oasis - a relief of life, providing water in the barren areas, and important for which Jordan is also striving for.

Mariam.D said further, “The cushion cover is inspired by Bedouin eyes specifically.”

I read further that many women and children of Bedouin tribes decorate their eyes with kohl. Eyes are also important as some women wear a niqaab, revealing only the eyes. It is thus seen, that the Tilltalande collection, had incorporated the stages of design development that JRF follows, with IKEA’s values in collaboration, by taking inspiration from local culture. The then business development manager at JRF, Tareq Hamdan had said,

Inspiration was created from the local community and women themselves, and geographical and cultural aspects, for the first collection, and they were left to designers... Artisans had the freedom initially to really work together.

The stitches used in the collection varied from machine embroidered chain, stem to handcrafted running stitches. Mariam, the artisan was once showing me one of the embroidery processes of the Tilltalande collection, where there were machine embroidered stitches involved on markings done by tracing paper. Thus seen, there is a mix of print and handicraft, for the purpose of creating work opportunities while still ensuring that Tilltalande can be offered at an affordable price, and so be available for many.
5.5.2. Hints of handwork - The latest collection in production during my stay, Hantverk - a collection of two cushion covers

The Hantverk collection is the second collection of the JRF-IKEA collaboration and consists of two cushion covers, that will go on sale in 2019. It is a contemporised collection, consisting of black curved geometric patterned print on white background and has highlighter colours on the silhouette of the shapes. Mariam D. adds, “The design is created by IKEA and is such, as it is needed, that makes it a part of a global collection, and we as a craft producer is expanding our reach with this collection with IKEA.” The front printed fabric, back fabric, labels all are imported by other suppliers, and thus the work at JRF is to perform fabric quality control, embroider, stitch, final quality control and deliver the collection.

The interesting part of the collection, I observed was the print is also done for the style of embroidery. The highlighting colours of blues, red and pink, are marked in print. The artisans just follow the printed lines, to embroider a simple running stitch. I found this very interesting, as of have seen and worked, where marking is usually in designs that are temporarily set on fabric, not for the style of embroidery itself, especially of a simple linear nature. *The zoomed images for this observation are shown on page 74.*

The minimal hand embroidery on the printed guideline is somehow seen as the meagre or compelling need to add handwork/handmade element made by the artisans to the collection. As Zaid R. said,
This is of course to increase the quality of performance, and thereby reduce cost, that is necessary to maintain with IKEA. If it would not have been marked or printed, the time taken to embroider would have increased, and also the possibility that it would create unequal stitches, that can be difficult to pass through the quality control.

Faridon had also added that the challenging aspect is maintaining quality of the uniqueness of every artisans’ hand on the craft, that makes every piece unique. But, in talking with the non-contended artisans, there was another perspective where they said, “Removing all kinds of imperfection, makes to loose the essence of hand embroidery, the craft itself.”

Having known the motive behind the design and method, I slowly understand that the Hanverk collection is far from the objectives of the Tilltalande collection. Mariam.D adds to this thought,

But this is supposed to be a light work for the artisans. This is to give the artisans a break from the heavy work. The first collection, Tilltalande was a huge work, and after Hantverk, there are upcoming two future collections, that will again be huge work.
Image 56: Showing only the digital print (focusing on the blue pattern) shown on the front and back sides of the fabric. The printed design already gives an illusion of a running stitch.

Image 57: Showing the hand running stitch embroidery (focusing on red) now done over the printed pattern. The digital print is a replica, but is also now a guideline for the hand embroidery.

Image 58: Spec sheet showing the size, colour and the precise method of the embroidery and the machine stitches to be done for the cushion cover - Hantverk collection (Design 1)

Image 59: Spec sheet for cushion cover - Hantverk collection (Design 2)
The following is the process that I understood and observed at JRF for developing Hantverk collection. The list bracketed, is the part of the process which I worked or contributed in the process, within my limited time span at JRF.

The following sub-section, will further explore some observations with the artisans of the continuous improvements that happen in the design process in craft production.
5.6. **Entering the embroidery process from fabric cutting operations at Al-Karma Center**

On the third floor of the Al-Karma Center was the cutting room. The room accommodated a long table and space for fabric rolls. At that time, a woman was cutting the fabric along the width of the fabric. Two pieces of the front side of cushion covers aligned the width of that fabric.

The woman said, “Hello, welcome”.

Further I introduced myself and asked the woman’s name. “Rania is my name” - I was happy, as I could now converse in English.

I added further, “You share your name with Queen Rania”!

She was surprised and said “Yes, yes ... Malikat ranyaan min al’urdun (as she said in Arabic), yes, I do share.”

Eventually, through this conversation, my work with the artisans and having seen the family photos of Jordanian royalty (who have founded Jordan) at workplace of JRF showed the importance of Jordanian royalty and the sense of pride to work at a royal foundation, was known.

Since I didn’t know Rania’s background, I asked, “How long have you been in Jordan and then working here?”

As Rania was cutting the fabrics and throwing them on one of the corner tables, she replied, “I am a Jordanian but it’s been one year in working at Al-Karma, and before it I had one year of training.”

In my previous interview with JRF, the then business

---

8 Queen Rania: Since 1995, the Jordan River Foundation, which Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan chairs, has spearheaded a number of local initiatives improving the quality of life for Jordanians. Queen Rania is also an international voice of cross cultural dialogue, an outspoken philanthropic advocate, and a promoter of advancing health and educational opportunities in Jordan and across the globe. This sense of responsibility is felt by the Jordanian citizens, and the Royal Jordanian family is “well loved and respected at home” (Dumas, 2016).
development manager at JRF, Tareq Hamdan had emphasized the importance of training; where artisans are trained not only in the manual skills in embroidery and carpet making, but also life skills training in child protection and in community engagement. The training ranges from 1-2 months, prior starting the work of the collection, which is an efficient time to gain knowledge. They work with local Jordanian women and refugees, which brings in the integration of mixed ideas and skills.

As I see her work lined up, I participated in layering the fabrics, as being part of the process. Rania showed me and said, “Hers is how you pile fabrics, and align the border lines of the cushion cover.” A pile of 50 layers of fabrics is to be layered and then Rania cuts them with a fabric cutter. Amidst the work, she asked about my expertise and I told her about my embroidery and weaving skills. She was surprised. Zaid H. then came in the room and Rania said in Arabic that I could do the embroidery work. Zaid H. said, “Ahh you know, nice. We will arrange something for you to work on.”

Later on, when I went downstairs and Zaid Rawabdeh, industrial engineer at JRF, handed me a piece to embroider of the Hantverk collection. He introduced to me a group of artisans. Initially one of the artisans readied the threads by measuring the thread according to the design embroidered and tying the knot. Then the artisan showed me how to start with the running stitch embroidery, where the whole design (for Hantverk cushion cover design 2) is involved in the usage of two colours (as seen red and blue). The running stitch is one of the simplest stitches. The stitches which start with a knot, on the back and then runs alternatively on the front and back of the fabric, are usually equidistant to each other.

As I see, the working environment at JRF is relaxed, everyone works at their pace. Artisans are playing Arab music from Youtube through their smartphones while embroidering. Al-Karma has a centralised Wi-Fi coverage. I exclaimed to everyone, “I like how you play Arab music and work. It makes working wonderful.” They smiled and agreed. The next
moment Nisreen, the artisan changed the song and played a renowned Indian musician’s music for me! They said to me that they listen to Indian songs as well. I realised for a moment, the effort that the artisans took in integrating with me coming from Indian culture and also at the same time working with enthusiasm for the collaborative collection of JRF and the Swedish brand, IKEA. It gave an insight that how the artisans integrated and shared the collaborative and cultural values of people and the organisations they interacted and worked for.

Both the time the thread was knotted and hence readied for me. After a part of work done, the artisans, they used to come and give feedback, for example to keep on stretching the fabric, while embroidering as running stitch puckers or tightens the fabric, and it’s necessary to loosen it at intervals, for ease in further stitching of the cushion cover. Later after completion of embroidering my first cushion cover, the artisans came to see of how I had embroidered, they praised the work by saying “Mashallah”!

9 Songs/Music: Everyday, the operation team and I used to have go together from JRF headquarters to Al-Karma center. One day in the morning Zaid R, and I left for the Al-Karma Center, whilst I was seated aside, when a mini truck carrying gas cylinders overtook us! And Zaid.R said, “This is who we are, we have music associated with every purpose of work! People realise that the gas cylinders are passing by and call upon them. There is also a different music for the waste collectors!” These little inspirations of, how music from daily life has also found a place to integrate in the work life, which I saw in JRF.
After completing my work Zaid.R came in to see the work, and asked, “What will be the difficulty rate for you, from 1-4 of the embroidery?” I answered, “For me it is 1, its one of the easiest embroideries. It’s simple and very fast.”

“Is it? I didn’t know, but now that you’ve said that it’s nice since artisans won’t complain that it’s too difficult, when a designer says that.”

At that time, it made me think the value and the position of the designer at JRF. As I talked more with Zaid.R, I remembered the artisan at the QC room,

Downstairs, the artisan was taking the stitch one by one, and then on the first floor, as I was working with the artisans, they were taking 2-3 stitches at a time while embroidering. It’s quite an interesting pattern observed in relation to personal techniques in embroidering, for craft production.

Zaid answered,

Yes of course there is always. But the artisan downstairs is new and it’s just her second day on this project. That is the reason she is slow for now. The other artisans have been a part of the making of Tilltalande. And usually before a new collection has started a 1-2-day training is given to artisans to implement the embroidery and the overall process.

After finishing the one piece of embroidery, I was finding as to where to submit it. Going upstairs to Amal’s office, Amal and her correspondent asked, through the ways I could understand, “How much time it had taken to embroider?” I replied through GT that, “It took 35 mins approximately. But of course, it was leisurely done as I had small talks and laughs with the artisans in between.”

With their collaboration with IKEA, JRF’s operation and the design development team continuously emphasized on the importance of time taken for the embroidery, it affected the cost of the collection. This point was also highlighted by Faridon, as managing the cost was a challenging factor, and now I observed of how these values were imbibed in the process.
5.7. **Insights with artisan Mariam**

I first saw Mariam when she was corresponding with IKEA’s communication team in English and teaching them some words in Arabic. And at that time, I knew of Mariam, of her ability to be a part of my later conversations, in English. I eventually came to know that having studied English literature, Mariam was also a master of the language, and thereby had acted as my translator in many instances at the Al - Karma Centre.

In my conversations with Mariam said that, she was trained to work with overlock stitching. Overlock stitches that include edging, hemming, or seaming to sew over one or two pieces of cloth; are produced from an overlock machine that is a specialized type of sewing machine. Mariam was remembering her initial days, after her training when she started overlocking for JRF. It was challenging for the centre, as she damaged four IKEA pieces. Through these mistakes and practice she eventually learnt and gained confidence in working. With this Mariam was delighted to show her work, and how she threads the overlock machine using the guiding diagram provided below the machine. She stated on her use that,

\[\text{We use only three threads because if machines use the fourth thread then the stitch is also formed with overlock. We don’t want stitching to be done on the cushion cover - as it’s already stitched. Its stitched before, as gives more movement to stitch, at a pace.}\]

Thus, sometimes these perspectives and the capability to make choices, is central to the making of craft products, sometimes from the above example, where the overlock stitch is required to make the form of the product usable. In the following examples, these choices represent the fulfilment
of the purpose, and thereby showing the flexibility the craft producers keep.

But Mariam added that,

Everyone is specialised in a specific kind of work, from fabric cutting, embroidering, stitching, quality control. But it’s now observed at once everyone is doing embroidery, even the artisans that are responsible for machine stitching. Even myself, when there is no work, I work in embroidery.

This process was observed as to balance the work distribution of the craft production, and also showed how JRF’s collaborative involvement had changed the dynamics of collection development.

5.7.1. Embroidering for the Hantverk collection with Mariam

I used to sit with Mariam and embroider most of the times, whilst I tried to understand about her work in the design development process. Firstly, it was observed that Mariam was embroidering in a different way. As seen in the Hantverk collection, two colour threads are used. On receiving thirteen pieces to embroider at a time, Mariam used to complete all the embroidery with one colour and then the other colour. Whilst for everyone used to embroider piece by piece (cushion cover), it was comfortable for Mariam, as she used to say “Lets embroider all the pieces first blue, then we take red!”

In line with it, Dormer (2015) mentions,

Artisans believe they are involved in an activity in which they think they can get something right, and this means more than that they simply think they are doing something that is right for themselves, they are doing something that is right in itself. In craft production, there may be more than one right way of doing a particular thing, there may be several right ways, and there may be several wrong ways (Dormer, 2015).

While embroidering, Mariam asked me many times, “Jamila, let’s have a race of who finishes the embroidery on this cushion cover first.”

I said, “Mariam, I know you are winning it, you have more experience, and also have a better hand for embroidering this piece.”

Mariam laughed, “Ahh, we don’t know that yet.”

I added, “If I am supposed to have a race, there is a possibility that my quality to embroider can decrease.”
Mariam said, “But speed is important. For me having a competition will not affect the quality of the embroidery, but one will have more interest on the motivation of doing it. Motivation will improve quality.”

This perspective was important to know that despite working for Hantverk and not Tilltatlande that took local inspirations, the artisans were motivated and engaged with the embroidery work, of the Hantverk collection.

5.7.2. Improving and thereby strengthening the running stitch embroidery

In the end days of mine, at JRF, while I was embroidering Mariam came up to me to correct about a newly announced procedure to end for embroidering.

She began, “Here, before you make the knot of the thread with the needle, you make a back stitch, behind, that then cover the knot on the back side, making it neat and secondly makes it secure.”

(Digital illustration of this improvement shown on page 83)

Later in the evening, the same procedure was implemented for starting the embroidery. On asking Mariam, of why the process changed, she added,

Downstairs at the quality control, there were many instances of the knots opening and the embroidery loosening up. To avoid further corrections, they devised this method, and made everyone know about it. Now we all are doing that.

On another instance Mariam said,

We realise that we follow or are accustomed to following a method to implement the design, but many small changes happen when in craft production as well. For example, in the Tilltalande collection, while machine stitching the cushion covers, we were accustomed to using pins to perfectly layer the fabrics on both sides. We were later directed to avoid as it affects the quality control process.

Thus, these small alterations along the way, whether it is in the choice of raw material, the machine setup or embroidery process, keeps the potential in resulting different outcomes.
Direction of the running stitch embroidery, from the knot. (shown in pink)

The single knot of the running stitch posed a risk, of the stitch opening up on either the beginning or the end of the stitch. This occurred while loosening the puckering of the fabric or whilst in the stitching and overlock process.

Improvements in the Running stitch embroidery by JRF

After there were instances of the embroidery opening up, affecting the quality control process, a new procedure was implemented — where the beginning of the running stitch embroidery was secured through a back stitch. In this way, the knot is hidden underneath the running thread.

Securing the beginning and end of the running stitch embroidery.
5.8. **Intrigued by tassels and now working with tassels at JRF**

One day at the warehouse, Anwar and others were outside for getting coffee and snacks at break time. When we were working on the fabric quality control, there was a woman on the corner of the warehouse, sorting and counting, embroidery threads that were kept on the table. As I was passing by, there were many threads of varied lengths and colour lying on the floor and on the table. A thought of collecting them and making something of it was the first inspiration. I decided to make tassels—a kind of textile craft also seen in the Tilltalande collection, and knowing its significance, it motivated me to contribute in my own way, of being a part of JRF’s environment. The first step was the time-consuming process to sort the jumbled threads, and the next morning, I was doing this work at the office when Mariam D. exclaimed, “What are you doing?—from where did you get these?” I replied, “I was exploring the warehouse, and got it lying on the floor.”

Mariam was surprised and she said, “Amal (the head of the Al-Karma centre) would love this. She is always pushing to make something creative with waste.” Shadi agreed, “Yes she would like this work.” Shadi Salah, is the Operation Manager for IKEA Handicrafts at JRF, and was my first point of contact at JRF.

Later, as I looked at the colours of the sorted threads that were available in front of me, I made and arranged the tassels in a way to form a rainbow collection. The next day, I was upstairs at Amal’s office to show the tassels I was seeing how critically it was being examined by sorting each tassel and checking its strength, and then she said, “Maashalah, it’s wonderful.”

Next page shows the step by step process of developing the rainbow tassels, through images. This self taken initiative opened an opportunity, in which Shadi handed me a tassel design project for JRF (continued from page 86).
1. Sorting of waste threads, colourwise

2. Seeing the range of colours available, a rainbow arrangement is decided. The threads are arranged to prepare tassels. A plait of the red thread is creating to support the arrangement

3. Uncut tassels in making

4. All the tassels are arranged in a rainbow pattern

5. Cutting and finishing of the threads at the bottom

6. Final developed tassels
After some days I was embroidering with the artisans, when Shadi approached me and said, “Jamila, you are a designer right... I need your help. Come upstairs to Amal’s room.”

Upstairs we went and, on the table, lied samples of tassels, with beads. There were packets of different key chain rings scattered besides it. Shadi said,

Yesterday, we were making tassels with the artisans, and these are the designs we came up with... what do you think about it? We can discuss it more tomorrow and maybe then you will have more thoughts about it after tonight.

I asked further “Great, what is the purpose of the tassels?”

Shadi answered, “It’s to present IKEA as a gift product. So that when someone purchase our products from IKEA, they get a piece of tassel as a gift.”

I asked, “Are the designs limited to colours and materials?”

“No no, we have all the colours and materials. We want it to be unique with our designs, to present it to IKEA.”, added Shadi.

I then took photographs of it so to look at it later. Later at evening, when I was working on the guiding points for tassel development. I was starting from the inspiration, and I took the inspiration from colours of the samples that Shadi had showed, that had festive shades. Later as I worked on the guiding points, I came to know that they were the embroidery threads from the Tilltalande collection that were utilised. I wrote in my field notes, that inspiration from earthy shades can be also taken, as it matched with the upcoming collaborative collections. For method implementation, I noted that there is flexibility in using other accessories like beads and there can also be an experimentation in thread work. Other important factors that outlined were: that the tassels should not entangle and the time taken to implement is important. It was later I reflected on how at that moment I had considered time taken to design and create tassels as important—which was a result of my initial interaction with Amal, while I embroidered, my first piece of cushion cover.

But the next day, I never got the chance
to correspond with Shadi and Amal as there was a Swiss Journalist Team that had arrived and everyone was occupied with them at the centre, and the next day we went to Bani Hamida Weaving Centre in Madaba. Later when I came back to Sweden, in keeping my tradition of keeping up gratitude mails to everyone at JRF whom I corresponded—and with that I forwarded to Shadi, the suggestions to make tassels and attached the scan copy of my notes and drawings. Shadi came back to me after a couple of days and sent an attachment of image containing sample designs for tassels; and asked my views or corrections that can be done. I observed that the artisans had made it closely following the guidelines with variety in materials. Shadi asked my views or corrections that can be done.

I replied to the mail, (Shadi's sent image with markings for improvement on page 88), and observed that the tassels lacked a designer’s view, to correctly implement it. For example, for the tassels made in Design 1 & 2, the fabric strips were fraying, as they were cut out horizontally or vertically of the selvedge of the fabric. To avoid fraying, the strips should have been cut at 45 degrees that are cut to the straight (warp) and cross grain (weft) of the fabric. The challenge also in this case was that the strips used are waste fabrics, but it also is necessary to design the craft with the artisans in a way which doesn’t hinders the QC process. Currently at the sample development phase, the process requires will be achieved through continuous improvement, that can make these tassels as an upcycled craft product. But I observed the materials used for the tassels were the embroidery threads and wool yarns used for the Tilltalande collection. It showcased an effort to make use of the resources of the previous collection to develop a collaborative relationship. Thus, through the initiative of creating tassels, I experienced the motive, and JRF’s process of tassel development.
Fabric strips can be cut at the angle of 45 degrees, to avoid fraying. (Bias strips to the straight and cross grain of the fabric)

1st design looks more better and fuller than 2nd.

Partially visible beads, thus beads can be removed, but a good option.

Good design - can be experimented with pink pom-pom as well

Good tassel design - can also be experimented if circle can be formed with beads.

Loose plaits

Good colour co-ordination with composed tassel design

Partially visible beads

Can be equal size pom-poms for the visibility of beads

Great colour combination

Transparent bead is not getting emphasized - maybe 2/3 beads can be kept

Too many tassels and pom-poms can cause entanglement

Image 76: Marked improvements for sample designed tassels
6. Discussion

As explained, the study was based on the field work at Jordan River Foundation, a non-governmental organisation, founded by Queen Rania of Jordan that has been working in the area of traditional crafts, artisan training and community empowerment in Jordan for the past 25 years. Aligning with these values, the European Conference of Crafts and Small Businesses (ECCSM, 1994) have identified crafts as a key strategy for sustainable development through developing local crafts, providing opportunities for employment, especially in rural communities, as well as contributing to economic growth and social stewardship. Small-scale craft production also gives craft producers greater flexibility to experiment in design innovation and/or material exploration (Bassett, 2010), where JRF has been producing exclusive craft collections at a small scale to be sold in JRF’s Jordan River Designs showroom.

JRF headquarters displayed some of their intricate craft work that also was an immediate reflection in the craft activities that the organisation carries out. That scenario primarily defined my image of JRF’s work in textile crafts, and through my study it was known that the crafts produced by JRF include textiles and leather-work, and they have also experimented with crafts made from other materials and mixed mediums. ECCSM have identified textile crafts as a feasible focal point for business ideas, market competition, innovation and economic growth (ECCSM, 1994, 1997).

Continuing with its craft production, JRF has ventured into collaboration with IKEA, from 2017, to create co-designed home furnishing collections. The study is focused on the textile craft producer JRF, and knowing its collaborative design development process. Carla Sinopoli (2003) mentions the importance of focusing on the textile craft producer that,

The growing lucrativeness of textile craft production is dependent on the ability to understand the complex functioning of craft producers, the ideological values attributed to producers and production, and the abilities of producers to affect or determine the conditions of their own existence (Sinopoli, 2003).

JRF headquarters and their textile craft production centres are situated in a particular time, place and local variables, that affect their production (Sinopoli, 2003). In line with Sinopoli’s functions of textile craft producer, the product output of JRF is also dependent on the fulfilment of their status as being a safe haven in a region in crisis (giving refuge to Syrians affected by the civil war) and as a small-scale producer.
To study the value-added factor of collaborative design development process, from a textile craft producers’ perspective, took me to work and converse with the four team members of the operational team at the handicraft division of JRF, design development team and artisans of the Al-Karma center—in Jordan.

6.1. Regarding Theories of Collaboration from JRF’s Perspective

A good collaboration is very much a process and amongst the most interesting things about collaboration are the outcomes which are not about the product at the end of the day, but about the knowledge gained and the organisation’s own process in the discipline. The theory of collaboration by Wood and Gray (1991), comprises of stakeholders of a problem domain, domain orientation, autonomy of the organisation within the collaboration, and in achieving the action/decision of the collaboration. In achieving to know the collaborative design development process at JRF, it falls within the landscape of collaboration, and having conducted a field study at JRF, gives a strong foundation to reflect and analyse on different elements; and thus, it seems relevant to discuss within the collaborative theory. These different elements are important to highlight in collaborative design development process, to know the:

a. different reasons and objectives behind the collaboration that facilitates and shapes the co-design development process;
b. how they are translated and executed; and
c. the impacts that are followed.

These factors are bound to correspond with one another. They also carry with them, the social responsibility of creating crafts and its significance in a globalised design environment. Thus, through the narrative approach taken in the thesis, I try to understand JRF’s role and process in collaborative design development.

6.1.1. JRF and IKEA: shared values in a challenging domain

JRF and IKEA are mutually collaborating on the creation of home furnishing collections, and have worked together for the Tilltalande collection, released in 2017, and are currently working on the Hantverk collection and other upcoming collections. The collaboration brings together IKEA, the world’s largest furniture manufacturer with a clear focus on ‘holistic sustainability’, with a well-established local non-profit foundation of Jordan River Foundation with over two decades of experience training marginalized populations in embroidery and weaving crafts, and producing
Inspired by IKEA’s social enterprise model being implemented elsewhere such as in India and Thailand, JRF thus found alignment of interests over their shared goal of supporting refugee and Jordanian women’s livelihoods, and bringing sustained financing to the non-profit, by creating a market of collaborated craft products (Malik et al., 2018).

The level of collaborative activities varies from the expertise the individual organisation can offer to complete the collections. JRF keeps the capability of continuous monitoring of the co-design process in the craft production, but the collaboration challenges JRF to design and produce collections with IKEA, giving an importance to time, cost and quality. Both organizations appear to have found solid alignment of interests and a suitable working arrangement that minimizes risks (Malik et al., 2018), which has led to the collaboration facilitating the second collection.

6.1.2. JRF’s orientation in collaborative design development

JRF’s move towards collaboration clearly showed at the Al-Karma centre, where they have focused their maximum resources i.e. workforce and other material resources for the collection development, leaving just a small room with some artisans to work on their own collection development. For developing these collaborative collections, Faridon Abida, the head designer at JRF emphasized that for JRF-IKEA collaboration, co-designing was challenging, as there were certain preconditions to be kept in mind, for design, that takes into consideration, the time needed to prepare, the cost and continuously maintaining the quality of the craft product (as some of the part of the Tilltalande collection were made at artisans homes). These conditions came along as for maintaining the competitiveness of the product range at IKEA, for the collaborative craft collection is only sold through IKEA stores.

Also, Zaid R. added that designing and production of textile crafts is expensive in Jordan, due to high living cost and labour laws. At the same time, JRF as a craft producer is dependent on its suppliers, for the machine woven fabric and embroidery threads, that challenges cost performance. This keeps an emphasis on the relationship of time, cost and quality, of how mutually dependant they are in this collaborative relationship for design development in textile crafts. For example, to determine the time required for the design we must first define the time required for design implementation of the craft product. This was also seen when Amal emphasized on the importance of time taken to embroider, and whilst I also took the time to make tassels, as an important factor in tassel development. These values in the collaborative relationship are continuously imbibed
within the process to serve in the required time, with quality — that makes the home furnishing collection cost-efficient.

Collaborative textile craft production can thus challenge the capabilities of JRF as a textile craft producer, to design and produce under these constraints who have especially not been under the pressure of time and cost factors. These factors governed the design, by limiting the material and artisanal labour usage for craft products. There was also a continuous evaluation to the cushion covers I used to embroider. It was also an understanding, the importance that the collection kept in order to clear the quality control required for IKEA; and showed that other phases of the final product development were dependent on these shared values implemented at the design development process at JRF. Thus, the domain orientation towards this shared value and knowledge concerning how goods are designed and produced is transmitted through interaction and learning—at JRF.

6.1.3. JRF’s autonomous stand in maintaining its individual position: artisans input into the collaborative design process

The methods devised by artisans in design implementation, as seen for example — taking the stitch one by one, or embroidering the cushion cover colourwise, are some of the actions that I observed within the processes of craft production that shape the methods of design development and its implementation. These activities are not necessarily known by the collaborating organisations (that are JRF and IKEA) The execution of some of the craft production steps may involve conscious decisions by artisans; others may involve rote behaviours that are consciously learned as an artisan masters her or his craft, but later become highly routinized and largely unconscious (Dormer, 2015). These small methods known by that organisational stage, over here consisting of artisans effect the craft production. The effect is seen as an increase or decrease of time, in relational to the standard time for embroidering, which is then a value-added factor for design implementation.

When during my last days, Mariam taught me the other way of finishing and completing the running stitch, which is an important factor as to how this change contributes and is dependent on the later processes of stitching and passing through the quality control. The correction of the running stitch in the craft production process, relates that the design of the craft continuously develops in the craft production stage. The improvements are prevalent in design development for crafts, as mentioned before, that the process is not like sewing of shirts. Though there are
specification sheets for the collection development at craft production, it is so to make the design structured, but does not always assure the exact implementation. Artisans may at the same time also respond to increased demands by reducing labour investment, such as by decreasing the complexity or quantity of ornamentation, engaging in less labour-intensive raw material processing, or by otherwise simplifying or modifying design implementation techniques and resource use (Sinopoli, 2003). These actions thus show how artisans engage different modes of commodity production in order to be competitive tend to narrowly position craft producers actions in terms of economic inputs, information, and innovation (Sinopoli, 2003).

6.1.4. JRF’s Involvement in collaborative designing

Each technique in textile crafts comes with its own challenges, flexibility and limitations. The design development of textile crafts are annexed to the method, tools and of course the artisans who work with it under the supervision of the design development team. It was necessary to know the first collection, Tilltalande, that explores embroidery and weaving techniques—as it is a contributor in facilitating the ongoing Hantverk collection. I didn’t get the opportunity to work in the design development process for the Tilltalande collection, where JRF and IKEA designers worked together with the artisans. But observing the collection and through my conversations, I learned that the collection resulted in a colourful Jordanian-inspired collection made by the local women and Syrian refugee women. The important aspect is that the actors making the design—the designers and as well as the artisans, had input during the co-designing process. This is how the first collection was collaborated and ‘co-created’ with IKEA.

In accordance of answering the research question, the collaborative design process from the lens of the textile craft producer JRF starts from local inspiration, discussions of JRF-IKEA designers with artisans that follows with the sampling of the craft product. On deciding the final product, the craft production is commenced at JRF. There is also continuous design improvement observed in the process. The collaborative design process is determined by shared values of giving importance to time, cost and quality. The collaborative design process challenges/changes JRF’s role and contribution towards developing textile crafts—which is dependent on the objectives of the textile craft collection set by IKEA. Lastly, the textile craft products then are sold at the IKEA store. The collaborative design development can be understood by knowing the process that has been highlighted by JRF (through the field study) for the two collections (Tilltalande and Hantverk). With foundation knowledge from Illustration 2 (Sanders and Stappers, 2008) and Illustration 3 (Design development process at JRF); the next page shows the collaborative design development process, experienced by JRF.
The Tilltalande collection follows more or less the same process, as JRFs observe for their own design development process, and added with IKEA’s values, JRF keeps the ability and flexibility to refine its ideas continuously, through improvements in developing the collection.

Illustration 8: Understanding the co-design process of Tilltalande collection from Illustration 2 (Sanders and Stappers, 2008) and Illustration 3 (Design development process at JRF).

Global design inspiration only by IKEA that also tries to maintain the quality by implementing embroidery on over print

Shared values in JRF- IKEA co-designing. Important factors include: time, cost and quality (marked in pink space)

No involvement of JRF in first two steps

Sampling

Decision of final product

Craft production at JRF

Continuous improvement in process

Refined ideas to final product

Fuzzy ideas

As seen, the Hantverk collection doesn’t follow the same process, as the co-designed process of Tilltalande collection (elaborated on page 95)

Shared values in JRF- IKEA co-designing. Important factors include: time, cost and quality (marked in pink space)

Challenging factors for JRF: Maintaining the collaborative values, handling the quantity, with the artisans hand on the craft

Other observations: Embroidering colourwise, and stitch by stitch, improvement on strengthening the knot, in running stitch whilst in the craft production process

Continuous improvement in process

Illustration 9: Understanding the co-design process of Hantverk collection from Illustration 2 (Sanders and Stappers, 2008) and Illustration 3 (Design development process at JRF).
For the Hantverk collection, I got the opportunity to work and thus study of the ongoing textile craft production. At first glance, the collection’s design was surprising to that of Tilltalande. The black and white design highlighted with the coloured running embroidery shows similarities to other IKEA collections, for example IKEA’s Avstiklig collection, that shows simple digital prints. It is also not necessary that the consecutive collections be of similar design. Even though the Hantverk collection’s purpose is to cater to global platform, but at the same time if the objectives are pertaining to co-designing, co-creation and collaboration, shouldn’t it then there be an inspiration through design from both the organisations? For example, why are there guiding embroidery print lines, for an embroidery as simple as running stitch, which is then hidden with hand done running stitches? This action comes after, when JRF is also exploring its capabilities in performing free cross-stitch embroidery on print, as shown by Faridon.

There have been instances where fashion and textile craft brands have used digitised printed version of the embroidery (such as Alexander McQueen using only digital cross stitch prints, for a dress), to create an illusion of the handwork. But this case is different, where there are both forms of techniques ‘layered over another’. This was of course done as discussed earlier and also emphasized by Zaid R., to achieve a stability towards the mutual relationship between time, cost and quality. But this also showed the hints of handwork, done for the purpose to just to show a tiny element of hand done craft, that also finds it dependency on the digital print. Thus, there are interchanging roles, where JRF plays between from independency in designing and producing for their showroom, to dependency in a collaboration to cater to a global platform.

The collaboration between JRF and IKEA is towards co-creation, in creating a shared value of working with textile crafts, and thereby empowering women and communities. JRF is also not one of the regular suppliers of IKEA, who mass manufactures, for example plastic glasses, but produces locally co-designed textile craft products. Is the design for the Hantverk collection, one
of the outcomes of authoritativeness of an organisation, in a collaboration?

According to Wood (1991) collaboration and its related activities i.e. of co-designing over here are not always fulfilled, and especially the collaboration in achieving all its objectives is at a questioning point for the Hantverk collection. The author of the book Neocraft- Modernity and the crafts, Sandra Alfoldy (2007) notes an important point,

> Many questions are asked and concerns expressed about cultural and economic exploitation in the craft production centres, where skilled artisans, often with traditional knowledge, now work from designs from elsewhere. But interestingly at the same time, equally there are also some extraordinary collaborations that help bring economic and social benefit to those same people, many of whom are seeking to improve their own conditions.

Of course it can’t be said or justified that there is exploitation, in this case, since JRF is very much involved in creating these craft collections with IKEA, as seen through the narratives of expanding their facilities, in terms of equipments (e.g. fabric scanner) and also focusing their artisan workforce towards the collaborative initiative

As Mariam D. had denoted the Hantverk collection is for IKEA’s globalised collection, as they are expanding their reach. The notion of the collection being contemporised that is having a modernised approach is that it fits in the likes of global markets. In this way, collaborating organisations may seek to limit access to raw materials or finished products; they may seek to regulate the form and quality of craft products, design and production processes and technologies; or they may control the bodies and lives of craft producers (Sinopoli, 2003). And clearly seen of the collaborative involvement of Hantverk collection, in terms of design development, is not much of consideration. The congruent factor of this collaboration for the Hantverk collection is thus settled on the primary fact of fulfilling the social aspects of the collaborations, that is to support the lives of Jordanian women and Syrian refugees, through ‘continuing production’, but not through co-designing process.

But even though the objective of the co-designing is partially fulfilled for the Hantverk collection, as the collaboration is supporting livelihoods only for the artisans at the Al-Karma centre, through limited embroidery work, and not in weaving for the Hantverk collection.

Mariam D. added to this aspect as that Hantverk collection is supposed to be of less of work, in terms of embroidery, and other processes compared to that of Tilltalande, and the future
collections to come, that are going to be of heavy work of craft production, which questions, pacing the scale of work within collaborations, for better work productivity, to implement their designs. It also gives another perspective of how an organisation, as a global brand understands the functioning and the limit to which JRF can handle their facilities.

Thus, there are these multiple back and forth overlapping points of what and how is the collaborative involvement in the design development of a textile craft producer in a collaboration? What is the finishing line for an organization to extend their degree of co-design involvement? What is the degree to which, the inspirations of designs, materials, and in the end the people, artisans working on the craft, are considered in collaboration in textile crafts? Where and why do these small elements play their role in these collaborative relationships?

As denoted by Malik., et al (2018),

IKEA-JRF collaboration is unique because of its mainstreaming of business interests while creating traditional crafts for the global market, social value for refugees, focus on women’s livelihoods and success in creating value for both sides.

But at the same time, the important point is that motivation to drive this collaboration, is fulfilled when the collaborative understanding in co-designing and implementation is realised at every stage of design development in crafts that goes up till the craft production, that eventually paves the way in fulfilling the social impacts.

### 6.2. Tassel design development – that builds strong collaborative relationship

In the tassel design development project for JRF, the purpose of the tassels as highlighted by Shadi was to present it as a by-product or a gift to be presented after a purchase at IKEA, for a JRF-IKEA co-created craft product. I observed this as extending a step further in maintaining a strong collaborative relationship with IKEA, that clearly shows that JRF drives and motivates on self-initiated projects, to present to IKEA and create further opportunities for craft production. The idea was to use the resources left from the Tilltalande collection, that includes embroidery threads, and woollen yarn. I saw the tassel development project as a move towards an enthusiastic collaboration, that is also driven by the shared values of the collaborators, for example, tapping on the value of sustainability to create an upcycled product, in this case. The tassel development took place at the Al-Karma centre, but there seemed to be a lack of design development, its implementation and knowledge in the craft process. Though the functions of craft and design have their own powerful definitions, but can be very related, in today’s times (Dormer, 2015),
where craft adds the ornamentation, but the design of the craft shapes it to make it appealing, lasting and thereby at a saleable position. For having a critical look in terms of these factors, there was a requirement for a designer, to having specialised textile and crafts knowledge, to be at the centre and somehow at that time, I fulfilled that place temporarily. For example, while developing the tassels, the cutting of fabric strips for tassel had to be cut at a 45-degree angle (bias), to avoid fraying—but they weren’t so, when developed by artisans. This is where specialized textiles and crafts knowledge plays its role, where a designer monitors these inspirations with the artisans. The importance of a designer was also observed in my conversation with Zaid R., when the difficulty level of the running stitch embroidery was enquired, and how the designer’s perspective, has a value in the textile craft production. This intriguing factor made me look onto textiles and crafts education in Jordan, and it was known that it has not been much developed. Though experience is more important than education, but sometimes it is also emphasised that specialised education and training brings benefits in higher productivity (Abdulrahamon et al., 2016). Thus, specialised knowledge in textiles and crafts is required in the design development process at JRF. It’s necessary to understand the purpose and usage of designing in crafts in today’s time as designers can fulfil this role to be at craft production. In the future, on the approval of the design, the design can be intervened by the other collaborators, to strengthen its value through co-designing.
7. Conclusion

JRF, having fulfilled one home-furnishing collection, with the highest quality level, that facilitates their working on a second collection, affirms that the collaboration in crafts offers a revenue stream for JRF through artisanal work. JRF’s move towards collaborating with IKEA, determines their continuous strive to expand its limited textile craft production capacities, having an international exposure to co-design development and lastly in building JRF’s specialist knowledge in materials and techniques through design development.

For example, the rethinking and implementation of how to begin and secure the knot of the running stitch embroidery at the start and finish of the design for the Hantverk collection, after it didn’t clear the quality control, that also took the time-consuming process of correcting the fault. This shows the importance of the shared values of collaboration imbibed within the process of design development and implementation at JRF. My study thus is based not only to the realms of production and collaborative approach of textile crafts, but also on the people, who design them and continuously improve the design—and their roles within the design development process, contributing to elements of improvements, as seen in the embroidery process. Together sometimes, the operation and design team and artisans in the design development and implementation process—act in harmony (e.g. artisans working and eating together), sometimes not and bringing their various concerns, hopes and aspirations (the elicit drivers of enthusiasm and motivation) for themselves and the different actors who make up the networks that make textile craft valued in both material and ideological terms.

Collaboration in design development had included the JRF design development team and artisans input for the Tilltalande collection, but somehow didn’t achieve the same, for the Hantverk collection. It also shows of JRF’s collaborative contribution in the stages of design development of textile crafts. Collaborating with craft producers has become a new trend of design praxis, but the collaboration is still under development and needs more exploration to achieve better success, that creates a structure to collaborate at all stages of the design development process.

But in this case it has also been seen that collaborative design development in textile crafts, uplifts and enhances, tangible and intangible values, as JRF also emphasises in their annual reports for example that, ‘collaboration and its activities, makes a difference by enhancing crafts and also in offering communities, women and children access to sustainable livelihoods and work
opportunities.’ (JRF, 2017). In supporting local Jordanian women and beyond that, refugee women can also be artisans who support mainstream business interests, that capitalizes on their potential as independent breadwinners within their families. The authors of the paper, ‘For-Profit Humanitarians IKEA’s Partnership with the Jordan River Foundation’ assert that JRF is realizing the benefits of collaborating with a large corporate entity, as a commercially viable business partner (Malik et al., 2018). This can contribute to increase in foreign investment that should provide continued infrastructure development, lowering unemployment and boosting economic expansion, that is needed in Jordan. It is also that though the level of JRF’s contribution towards co-designing varies from Tilltalande to Hantverk, but this has not stopped or hindered in any way of JRF’s team and their major workforce of the artisans in their way of doing work or implementing their designs; but instead provided continuous work opportunities for artisans to contribute with the shared values with IKEA. JRF have not only scaled-up their support of local women, but are in the process of obtaining valuable skills and knowledge that could help improve their long-term financial sustainability.

But at the same time, artisans and the textile craft producers work entangle economic performance with cultural expressiveness and, in so doing, JRF is posed with the challenges to design and produce textile crafts in a globalised economy, with an international brand. It is thus clearly shown, that JRF’s collaborative design development with IKEA in textile crafts is concentrated on achieving a cost minimisation through minimal textile crafts in order for IKEA to sell the products at a “globally affordable” price.
8. Future Research

Future research can expand opportunities in trying to achieve close collaboration between all stakeholders in the design development process to sit together with the variety of professionals having hybrid design or research skills. Two weeks is also a very short amount of time to be in a craft production system to understand the collaborative design development process. It will be interesting to know if a researcher could understand the impact that, co-designing has on craft product development. This can be achieved by studying and working on the field from sample to finished products in the collection, where many perspectives into the storytelling can be achieved.

In the collaborative design process, the strict approach of the elements of time, cost and quality and their inter-relationship was something that was discovered and understood on the field at JRF. Due to the lack of the literature available on the focused study, I didn’t read about it in my literature study before going to JRF and also didn’t expect of how it influenced the collaborative design development process at JRF with IKEA. But clearly this affirms that the economic approach of collaborative design is very important, as that is what makes it profitable, and should be focused in future research.

Through IKEA’s Social Entrepreneurs initiative, I came to know about JRF’s exploring its capabilities as a textile craft producer through the collaboration. Though JRF plays both the roles of a craft producer and a social entrepreneur; but in this study, I have seen and analysed JRF only as a craft producer. The study can be elaborated to JRF as a social entrepreneur and know the social impact of the collaborative project on the livelihood of the artisans. Further, the research can be carried forward to know the relationship and dependency of the outcomes of JRF as a craft producer and as a social entrepreneur.
9. References


Chalkho, R. (2013). Diseño y Artesanía: Debates en torno a la producción de Objetos [Design and


Craft: Debates around the production of objects]. In: S.Valdés (Ed.) Diseño participativo y

Crafts - The magazine for contemporary craft (2017) [online] Available at: https://www.ishkar.com/en/


Jan, 2018]


JRF. (2017) Annual report, Jordan River Foundation


Queen Rania of Jordan-Quotes [online] Available at: https://www.brainyquote.com/nationality/jordanian_quotes [Accessed 20 Feb. 2019]


Council, London.


IKEA Press. (2019), TILLTALANDE- Made in collaboration with Jordan River Foundation and Jordanian and refugee women artisans, Inter IKEA systems


Images:


