

Drawing a new path for development

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Adelia Borges' new book [Craft + Design – The Brazilian Path](#) is a timely publication to read ahead of the [ICOGRADA Design Week 2012 Sarawak](#) where issues about the preservation of local culture and knowledge systems will be discussed.

The book showcases a large range of handmade products that resulted from collaborations between artisans and designers and which encapsulate the notion of *Brazilian identity* in all its diversity and complexity. It also questions the methodologies that need to put in place in order to ensure sustainable practices and a better understanding of the indigenous way of life.

Borges argues that while a number of interventions are carried out by designers to collaborate with craft communities, many of them do not have a lasting impact over the long term. This lack of continuity can be damaging for the development of small communities that base their lives around farming and have close ties with nature. Designers need to develop stronger knowledge and respect toward the livelihoods of those communities, and also learn to work at a different pace.

Development is most often perceived as the successful implementation of modern solutions and technologies, yet we also need to consider a new type of connection between the so-called North and so-called South. Progress can stem from older principles related to well-being, sustainability, and traditional knowledge systems that have been innovative for centuries. "One way to enrich the connection is to focus on ways designers and makers in the north can learn from sustainable techniques that Brazilian artisans have used even before the word ecology was spread."

It may be time to draw a new path.