# What is Participatory Design in Turkey?

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## ABSTRACT

PDC places Turkey will run with a focus on local issues of participation, aiming to build and strengthen the Participatory Design ecosystem in Turkey. In line with the PDC 2022 central theme of embracing cosmologies in Participatory Design (PD), this aim will be realized by two kinds of activities. First, Skills Workshops are sessions where the general public and marginalized communities (e.g., migrants, women) will be introduced to PD through making together. Second, we will host a full day of project presentations and a panel discussion about PD, discussing current PD projects within Turkey and future directions and visions. The ultimate goal of these activities is to understand how PD is practiced in Turkey and identify the challenges we face around participation while building a community around it. This publication presents the activities conducted in the frame of PDC places in Turkey between August and September 2022.

## CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing**; • **Interaction design**; • **Interaction design process and methods**; • **Participatory design**;

## KEYWORDS

Participatory Design, Turkey, Women, Migrants, Urban Design

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## 1 PDC PLACES APPROACH

Our PDC Place activities aim to nurture PD in Istanbul, and more widely in Turkey, focusing on invisible intersections. We are motivated to expand the Participatory Design (PD) community in Turkey by bringing people together and making connections across the work being done in Turkey to discuss how PD is performed and understood and the roles participants take in such projects [9].

We expect to contribute to PD practice and research in two aspects. On the one hand, we aim to spread PD as an alternative to top-down and hierarchical approaches to design and problem-solving. On the other hand, we expect to initiate a network of people working to promote participation, especially for less privileged and vulnerable communities, such as women who are distanced from the labor market and migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Hence, we would like to create and sustain a network of communities, practitioners, and researchers interested in promoting PD-related projects with values of engagement, democracy, and pluralism [4, 7].

Turkey's PDC Place will be a venue for PD practitioners and researchers to exhibit ongoing projects of participation and design with a focus on livelihood, diversity, and inclusivity in Turkey. Hence, we expect to provoke a discussion around people's involvement in contextually relevant design topics for our city and our country, which includes diverse, more-than-western perspectives [4]. Examples may include, but not limited to, how PD is being practiced within pressing issues such as women's economic inclusion [10], migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers' social inclusion [1, 8], and the general public's engagement in urban design decision making [5]. Hence, we are interested in connecting with projects

and people working on these topics and with less privileged and underserved communities.

Finally, we expect to contribute to the broader PD community by enhancing its diversity in two aspects: first, by supporting the involvement of PD practitioners and researchers from our region in global PD work. Second, by its magnitude, Turkey is a culturally, economically, and socially diverse country, and so are the projects developed here. Consequently, it represents a rich source for design issues concerning diversity and wicked problems. For instance, Istanbul is one of Turkey's most modern cities, filled with skyscrapers, shopping malls, and parks on the main streets; however, if you walk a little further in the same neighborhoods, you can find 'gecekondus' (i.e., slums) where people cannot access the internet, digital technologies, or education. These context-specific qualities frame different comprehensions and understanding around participation; therefore, dialogues in these places can integrate diverse perspectives into the PD community.

## 2 ACTIVITIES

Considering PD's goals of promoting the inclusion and empowerment of marginalized communities of society [2, 3, 6], we have organized two different kinds of events. First, we will hold a Skills Workshop (see 2.1) and close PDC places activities with project presentations and panel discussions reflecting on what is understood as participatory design in Turkey (see 2.2).

### 2.1 Skills Workshops

These hands-on sessions will run with a focus on I) women's economic inclusion, ii) migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers' social inclusion and iii) participatory urban design. We will invite people from these communities to get together and practice a skill to promote their participation and empowerment through making and designing (i.e., crafts, world building, participatory walking) through an open call.

In these workshops, we expect to host between 12 to 15 participants from specific communities as women who are distanced from the labor market and migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, with the general public interested in each session's theme. Therefore, these sessions will work as a space to build together and connect with others around one contextually relevant topic. Moreover, we expect that by making and learning together, we can get to know the diverse realities of the participants.

### 2.2 Project Presentations and Panel Discussion

This event will explore the current state of PD in Turkey, thus creating dialogues between different stakeholders interested in promoting the participation and empowerment of women, migrants, and the general public. For the latter, we invite projects, practitioners, and researchers working in these areas to present their work and participate in a panel about topics associated with PD, its possibilities, connections, and futures in Turkey.

There will be four sessions on the same day. The first session will be about women's participation, the second about migrants' social inclusion, and the third session about urban design. The last session will close the day with a discussion about participation and PD in Turkey, showing the outcomes of previous panel discussions and engaging the general public attending the conference in the conversation.

We invite practitioners, researchers, women distanced from the labor market, migrants and refugees, youth and children, public organizations, and the general public to participate in our activities and contribute to the broader discussion on what PD represents for our region as well as to spread the impact of PD projects with contextually relevant problems and participants.

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