

## **Bridging academic research, international business studies and craftsmanship:**

### **ZHAW Sustainable Impact Program (SIP) supports Dr. Fabio Duma's teaching project promoting understanding, knowledge transfer & cooperation between students and artisans**

From the haute couture ateliers in Paris to leather workshops in Italy, craftsmanship is a deeply rooted cultural source of pride in Europe and in other parts of the world. Techniques and traditions - including watchmaking, which is cultivated in Switzerland - are revered as markers of quality, valued by a growing international clientele and strategically used by major brands in their storytelling. Besides their cultural significance and despite – or because of – the increasing automation and computerization of work, craft traditions and manual labor are an important source of creativity, innovation, as well as social inclusion and economic independence for people in many parts of the world.

And yet, in Europe and even more so in other parts of the world, artisanal traditions are suffering from low social prestige and an increasingly fast-paced and mechanized fashion and luxury industry. A lack of education and training opportunities in entrepreneurship and business management, rapid technological change and the shortage of young people learning crafts, make it even harder for SMEs and independent artisanal workshops to assert themselves in the global market.

Although the global handicraft sector is valued at over \$500 billion and expected to reach more than \$900 billion by 2023 (Research & Markets, 2018), these small but numerous and quite important players and their skills and specific needs still receive too little attention in business, policy, research, and training. In the business disciplines there is a strong focus of research and education on the needs of large organizations or corporations, and not enough on the economic importance and potential of skilled creative and manual work.

With his project, Fabio Duma wants to foster awareness among his students and contribute to interdisciplinary solution finding by future leaders. As part of the project, he wants to promote the deeper examination of the meaning of craftsmanship and the potential of craftspeople's "desire to do a job well for its own sake" (Sennett, 2009) in different sectors, countries and cultures.

The project, which will be linked to an elective course of the BSc International Business in spring 2022, aims at contributing to several [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG). IN an interdisciplinary and intercultural teaching-learning experience the students will learn about major challenges that artisans around the world are facing, identify solutions and, coached by experts in the field, make recommendations to different stakeholders in this context.

The project has the following objectives:

- Raise awareness about the cultural, social and economic importance and role of artisanal work, especially craftsmanship, in and outside Europe.
- Create awareness among students about the international supply chains of the luxury industry and critical aspects related to skilled manual and creative work.
- Sensitize of the students for a responsible and respectful interaction between representatives of international companies and international small producers in the field of handicrafts.
- Address the needs, working and living conditions of actors in the field of handicrafts and the potential of skilled manual & creative labor for diversity & inclusion in society and business.
- Use the potential of problem-based & immersive learning and the proven positive impact of knowledge transfer, training and coaching in different business disciplines (esp. marketing) on the economic success of entrepreneurs in developing countries to realize the above.