agencies struggle with the scale of the task at hand, rights-based shelter programmes, such as the transformation of beggar communities near Makli, teach people to construct their own structures, costing only Rs30,000 (under £200), to provide prefab bamboo shelters and eco-toilets, water hand-pumps on raised earthen platforms, along with finishing and environmental improvement by the villagers themselves.

So successful are these prefab bamboo panel models that they are being sent out to other parts of Sindh, where villagers have heard about them. Malawi, too, has ordered some of the prototype shelters to be shipped to them for local assembly. Plans are afoot to establish a workshop in Malawi to train local personnel to reduce embodied energy.

Once a starchitect catering mostly to the elite of the country, and now only working with the poorest, Lari wonders whether her current work can qualify as architecture at all, or if a better term is ‘non-architecture’, maintaining that she cannot claim that these self-built structures are ‘my architecture’. Following the dictum ‘low cost, zero carbon, zero waste’, Lari hopes to reach the ultimate objective of ‘no cost’ through barefoot micro-enterprises and products for poverty-stricken people – a model that can be replicated worldwide. ‘I believe that giving up a life dictated by the whims of the one per cent of our population has opened up exciting opportunities for me’, Lari reflects. ‘Providing dignity to the marginalised and preventing damage to the planet.’
participatory approach in this work unlike other architectural works', Lari insists. Marginalised communities are taught how to take charge of their lives and make low-cost, quality products for themselves and others. Awards and prizes along with grants and donations collected by friends fund the operations. It helps that Heritage Foundation board members and Lari herself provide services pro bono.

Earlier this year Lari organised eight mendicant villages near Makli into what she calls a barefoot ecosystem. With the help of British Council funding they have been trained as specialists in different kinds of barefoot products for the marginalised sections, so regenerating the local economy. While one village is dealing in prefab bamboo structures, one is concentrating on roof thatching, one on lime and mud bricks, and one on terracotta and tile work. People are also taught to make hygiene products such as cheap, natural soaps and shampoos to make them self-sufficient. A rights-based, holistic model, with the poor helping other poor, the work aims to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, especially goal number one: No Poverty.

The participative approach of barefoot social architecture contrasts with Western charity models which, in spite of good intentions, fail to provide succour to target populations, due to their unsustainable siloed approach that treats people as helpless victims who should be happy with handouts. While governments and aid