



Living Heritage Crafts:
significance, value, risk, endangerment,
sustainable future

Patricia Reynolds
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Cover image: Chikankari (the craft of Chikan embroidery), SEWA Lucknow

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Figure 1 Getting good advice: Hansiba (SEWA)

Glossary

- AIACA** All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (NGO)
- BIS** UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Merged with the Department of Energy and Climate Change to form the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in 2016.
- CFC** Common Facility Centre, part of the Government of India's Micro and Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme, providing a physical location for micro, small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises to use for production, design, testing, training, marketing, etc.
- Dastkar** (Craftsman) Society for crafts and craftspeople (Indian NGO not to be confused with Dastkari Haat Samiti, a separate organisation)
- Dastkari Haat Samiti** (Crafts Market Association) National association of craftspeople, most famous for running bazaars (Indian NGO not to be confused with Dastkar, a separate organisation)
- Design SEWA** Design cell of the Self Employed Women's Association, Gujarat, India (Trade Union)
- GI** Geographical Indication. A marque indicating that a product originated in a given place, and has qualities, characteristics or reputation essentially due to the place of origin
- ETWIE** Expertisecentrum voor het Technisch, Wetenschappelijk en Industrieel Erfgoed vzw¹ (centre of expertise for technical, scientific and industrial heritage Belgium, NGO)
- FARO** Vlaams steunpunt voor cultureel erfgoed vzw ("Lighthouse" - Flemish interface centre for cultural heritage NGO)
- Gaatha** (Story) a venture which started as a student project to document crafts and widened to a commercial platform
- Handmade in Brugge** is a multi-annual programme of tapis plein vzw in cooperation with the city of Bruges.
- Hansiba** fashion brand name and museum of the SEWA Trade Facilitation Centre, named for a famous craftswoman (commercial enterprise formed by rural artisan-shareholders from desert districts of North Gujarat)
- HCA** Heritage Crafts Association, UK NGO
- ICIC** International Centre for Indian Crafts, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India
- ICH** Intangible Cultural Heritage
- IKA** Instituut Voor Kunst En Ambacht (Institute for Art and Craft) Mechelen, Belgium
- Immaterieelerfgoed** (Intangible Cultural Heritage) www.immaterieelerfgoed.be website owned by the Flemish Community and managed by tapis plein vzw and FARO
- INTACH** Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (NGO)

¹ vzw - vereniging zonder winstoogmerk – Not-for-Profit Organisation or Social Enterprise - literally "organization without lucrative purpose" – comparable to a Community Interest Company in the UK

- NID** National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad (University)
- NGO** Non-governmental Organisation (although can be funded by a government)
- SEWA** Self Employed Women's Association, Gujarat, India (Trade Union)
- SEWA Lucknow** An autonomous association of textile workers in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India
- tapis plein vzw** ("fitted carpet" the implication is that the public space is our living room)
Flemish national centre of expertise for heritage participation & intangible cultural heritage
- TCE** Traditional Cultural Expression (also known as 'expression of folklore') an intellectual property. The term includes dance, music, architecture, names, signs, and many other artistic or cultural expressions.
- TK** Traditional Knowledge; "knowledge, know-how, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity"
- UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations
- UNIZO** De Unie van Zelfstandige Ondernemers (Union of Independent Entrepreneurs NGO)

Definitions Crafts? Sustainability? Interventions? Frameworks?

Definitions exist within the context of their purpose. It follows that the definitions I use need some explanation

Craft: skills and knowledge used to produce things (material culture), with or without the use of tools and machines (Jennings, 2012).

Sustainability: the ability of craft skills and knowledge to be passed to the coming generation.

Interventions: purposeful changes prompted or promoted by individual craftspeople or groups of craftspeople, or others (academics, governments, other businesses, etc.).

Frameworks: systems within which craft practices and interventions take place - these include informal networks of craftspeople, formal alliances of craftspeople, legal frameworks, qualification frameworks and heritage management frameworks.

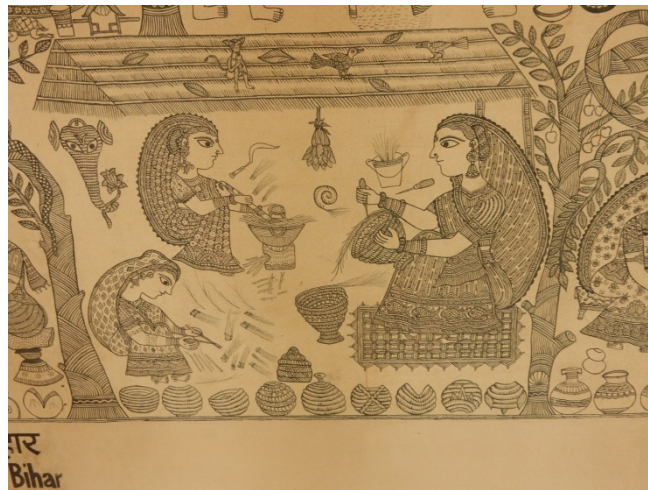


Figure 2 Craftspeople depicted in a mural at the Craft Museum, New Delhi

Executive Summary

In 2015/2016 I visited Belgium and India to look at the methods in use in these countries to make crafts more sustainable, with a view to learning what could be done better in the UK, both in terms of interventions and the supporting frameworks for those interventions. My conclusion is that there is a leadership gap in the UK, which needs to be addressed if the work of the many non-governmental bodies and individuals with a keen interest in seeing crafts continue as part of our living heritage is to be effective.

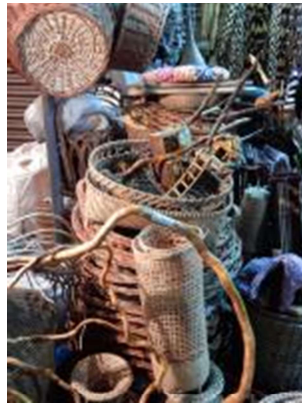


Figure 3 Baskets at Police Bazaar, Shillong

Key recommendations

- Leadership is needed from UK and home nation governments, including joined-up delivery of:
 - Practical recognition of the cultural and personal value of Intangible Heritage through delivery of support in inclusive ways to heritage and the organisations supporting heritage, and wellbeing.
 - Practical recognition of the social and economic importance, and vulnerability of crafts through delivery of support to enhance quality, consumer knowledge, business practices and change management.
 - Development, in partnership with craftspeople, of progression routes from Community and Adult Education. Neither these routes, nor their delivery should rely upon community volunteers as policymakers, teachers/trainers, or examiners.
 - Engagement of craftspeople and other intangible heritage practitioners as equals in developing environmental safeguards and delivering environmental behaviour change, including sustainable consumption.
- Cooperation between organisations of craftspeople as bridges between government and individual craftspeople to ensure the sustainability of the cultural, personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of crafts.
- Consideration by museums, universities, and other institutions comparable to those I met with in Belgium and India of how they might support craft sustainability as part of their mission.

Introduction

Why Sustainability of Craft Skills is important

In my research, I have taken as givens the value of crafts, and the need for them to be sustainable. There is a large literature recording the importance of craft skills to the coming generations, and even more in recording their importance to people today. The areas can be summarised as:

- Contribution to Economic sustainability – crafts are a significant employment sector in the England (BIS, 2013), the second largest sector in India. Comparable information is not available for Belgium. Reports often refer the contribution of crafts to creativity and problem solving skills, to brand value, and to offering diverse opportunities for employment.
- Contribution to Environmental sustainability – crafts give economic and other value to the environment, including providing (higher) end value to natural products, providing use for by-products, and employment in rural areas that makes sustainable farming practices possible (Collins (ed.), 2004) (Reynolds, 2014). Crafts are also used in maintaining ecosystems.
- Contribution to Social sustainability – crafts are an occasion for people to engage in, and contribute to, social networks of all kinds. They are particularly valued when they offer opportunities to individuals who would otherwise find it difficult to take part.
- Contribution to Cultural sustainability – crafts are part of the national and local narratives of the UK and the places I visited – they are one of ‘the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves’ as Geertz defines culture (1975). Craft skills are also valued for their role in preserving and interpreting material heritage.
- Contribution to Personal sustainability – this includes both the UK/Belgian recognition of crafts as part of guardianship of mental and physical wellbeing and therapeutic strategies, and the Indian recognition of crafts as being inherently spiritual.



Figure 3 Paper products made using waste – sold to raise funds for conservation – Elrhino dung paper

The need for research

In 2014, I wrote a paper *Crafts in the English Countryside: dark reflections from the future* for the Heritage Crafts Association which outlined the difficulties faced by craftspeople in the UK, and the resulting threats to the UK economy, environment, society, culture, and individual sustainability. Among the gaps and lacks faced by craftspeople were:

- funding for craft apprenticeships outside of the building sector funded in a way that was appropriate for craft businesses
- support for supply chains that in turn supported the maintenance of historic landscapes and historic agricultural practices to thrive
- the disappearance of craft – and other social and culture-sustaining subjects – from the curriculum
- the lack of ‘heritage’ funding or leadership for heritage which was intangible, and which was closely associated in many cases with economic activity.

The funding provided by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in its 50th Anniversary year for Fellowships focussed on crafts was a very welcome development in this last area, and one which has now been extended. I applied to the Trust for funding so that I could undertake a more positive response to the current situation for crafts, through visiting countries which appeared to be addressing similar issues with more success than we were achieving in the UK, to see if anything could be learned from others’ approaches which might be use here.

This report is the first product of my research in Belgium and India: a series of articles or reports are planned which are directed at specific audiences.

Belgium and India were chosen as they have good reputations in support activities for crafts, confirmed by initial desk research.

Approach

My research took the form of a series of semi-structured interviews with staff of governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individual craftspeople. While I wanted to include a variety of crafts in both countries, to gather information on the widest range of support activities possible, my work was not intended to replace or supplement the work of those who are documenting crafts in both Belgium and India, including many of the organisations I met.

Crafts – similarities/differences

The individual craft traditions of the UK, Belgium and India reflect their different raw materials, histories and present day cultures. Some crafts, and some craft skills are endemic (unique to certain places), while others are global. This has an impact on the range of craft skills in each country and their significance (economic, environmental, cultural, etc. value).



Figure 4 An example of an endemic craft: Lippan Kaam (Mud Mirror Work), used in Kutch, Gujarat to create a cool interior to a building or, as here, to create a cold store without electricity

Sustainability – similarities/differences

The pressures on sustainability are remarkably similar at the larger scale:

- Failure to successfully incorporate craft into mainstream² education and training leading to lack of interest in, and lack of ability to enter into craft careers, and lack of interest in craft products
- Failure of familial transmission – in India this is compounded because the transmission is also within caste. Many castes are identified with a craft – the potters are the caste, and to be in many parts of the country / many crafts – and for many actors in India, caste is something to be removed
- Failure of supply chains
- Legal changes – particularly legal changes relating to working practices and the environment
- Lack of access to capital
- Market failure (lack of demand for type of goods)
- Market failure (competition from cheaper producers for type of goods)
- Market failure (arising from increasing distance between craftsman and market) – this was only mentioned in India, and is explored further, below.

² 'Mainstream' in Indian English has a slightly different meaning – it refers to the culture / politics of North India, particularly in contrast to 'tribal' areas. I use it here in the British English meaning

Findings

Frameworks – similarities/differences

Political Frameworks

Key findings

- Belgium and India both recognise the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Culture Heritage (UNESCO, 2003), but in both countries, activities to sustain craft took and take place outside the framework of the convention.
- Divisions between the political recognition of some crafts and other crafts exist in Belgium and India, as it does in the UK. In both Belgium and India, this division is experienced as detrimental to all crafts.
- A key successfully sustaining Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), in expressed the UNESCO convention, is that knowledge and sustainability is in the hands of the communities, groups and individuals, and thus any political framework needs to be 'bottom up' as much as it is 'top down' – a departure from the frameworks used for tangible heritage in all three countries.
- Flanders has an innovative framework for support for heritage that should be considered for adoption elsewhere, as it supports community participation in heritage management, does not straight-jacket organisations, and enables efficient and effective networking between organisations, particularly on thematic grounds including those of importance to other government departments.
- The cultural legitimisation of crafts, which is one route to their enhanced sustainability on cultural grounds, is a political act, which stresses equality over privilege.

The political organisation of the UK has strong parallels in both India and Belgium: in all three, there are national, regional (in the sense of part of a country), and more local governments. The UK and Belgium are also (currently) part of a regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union, and India is part of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation which has some similarities with the European Union. The UK and India also part of a shared global context, with structures around the Commonwealth reflecting the common political and cultural inheritances of their colonising/ised histories. In Belgium I almost exclusively visited organisations and individuals working in Flanders. In India I visited organisations and individuals working at a national scale, but also those at the state scale (Gujarat), and more locally (in various states in North-East India, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Delhi).

A key line of enquiry was the impact that signing the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) had on the sustainability of craft skills in Belgium and India. The UK has declared that it will not sign the convention, but support ICH “through other means”. There is no comparable framework in the UK as whole, but in Scotland the UNESCO approach has attracted cross-party support, and is used practically (Edinburgh Napier University, 2014) (Edinburgh Napier University and Museums Galleries Scotland, 2011).

In Belgium, the impact of the UNESCO convention was profound: a number of colleagues noted that before deciding to sign, there was no acknowledgement of craft, or support for craft from the heritage, or any other sector, but that after this there was support from various bodies (several of which I met with during my visit), both within and without the heritage sector.

In India, the impact of the UNESCO convention was overshadowed by the role that craft played in twentieth century Indian politics. The British colonial model acted to restrict the roles of colonised peoples to producers of raw materials and consumers of processed goods: in India, they were growers of cotton, and buyers of cloth – the cloth production taking place in the UK. The fight for independence thus became strongly identified with the fight to weave cloth – and one cloth in particular, khadi. Khadi is hand-spun, hand-woven; mostly cotton although some other fibres (wool, silk) are sometimes included in the yarn. Khadi is the icon of the Swadeshi (self-sufficiency)³ movement. More recently, the ideology which privileged Indian craft has lessened, and many of those I spoke with were talking about the new world where the economic value of craft was no longer accepted uncritically – and craft is now a “sunset industry”. Following my visit, the Crafts Council of India met to re-visit the legacy of earlier times in terms of contemporary needs and challenges.

The UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage recognises “that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity” (UNESCO, 2003). This presents a particular challenge to those politically charged with sustaining ICH: institutions and individuals who are often rooted in traditional Western heritage management practices, many of which were developed in the UK and are held in high esteem world-wide. These practices, which have developed from an antiquarian approach to the past, to one which increasingly uses scientific methodologies, place authority with experts who have academic qualifications. Laurajane Smith’s concept of ‘authorised heritage discourse’ illustrates where this leads – the views of the elite as to which heritage is important is prioritised for political support, and the views of communities, particularly disadvantaged communities, are over-ridden (2006)

In the UK, this emphasis on ‘indigenous communities’ has been viewed by some within the UK bodies potentially charged with sustaining ICH as meaning that (at best) intangible heritage is irrelevant in the UK context, and (at worst) that only so-called primitive peoples have intangible heritage (Anon., 2013). But as Smith (2006) argues, all heritage can be viewed as intangible, and thus all communities have intangible cultural heritage. The authorised heritage discourse has resulted in “a kind of self-satisfactory hum within the heritage community that the job [of community] had, indeed, been done” (Waterton, 2011). As a result crafts are subject to a process of cultural legitimisation in the UK from which craftspeople are excluded.

The UK, Flanders and India have in common a distinction between the crafts which relate to the built environment on the one hand and other crafts on the other. This distinction has different origins, and takes different forms. In the UK, the support for traditional craft skills began from an acknowledgement of their value in supporting the sustainability of tangible heritage. Building craft skills have a well-funded national organisation, and are

³ Wikipedia (Swadeshi movement, 2016) has a useful summary of the political background to craft in 20th Century India.

the concern of governmental / government funded organisations such as Historic Scotland and Historic England, and non-governmental organisations including the National Trust. In Flanders, building crafts and buildings are considered, and funded, separately to all other crafts (the latter being part of a wider cultural portfolio, the work of the Community governments (e.g. the Flemish-speaking peoples), the former being the work of the regional government (e.g. the region of Flanders). In India, building crafts were not part of the Swadeshi movement, and are rarely included in the remits of organisations or targeted interventions. In Belgium and the UK, and increasingly in India (from a decades-later start), the importance of the craftspeople in maintaining protected heritage buildings is recognised. In all, to a lesser extent, less work is done to support the sustainability of the building craft skills which are needed in maintaining an extensive building stock (which is more environmentally sustainable than replacing with new builds). Individual architect/designers in all three countries work with craftspeople to create buildings which have enhanced environmental and/or economic value.

Those I talked to in India felt that this division between building crafts and other crafts was harmful, leading to duplication of efforts, and lack of ability to take charge of the potential synergies. Several people spoke of the need to widen the scope of their organisation, or craft organisations in general, to include building crafts. At INTACH, the three divisions with a craft element all include working with building crafts, from their specific perspectives. The Architectural Heritage Division of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), for example, is one of a number of conservation departments in India which is beginning to support building craftspeople in repairs. Their work on clusters of textile workers' houses has gone further, and strives to support traditional saree weaving skills. In Belgium, the political separation of responsibility for building and other crafts does not seem to be a major hindrance, with, for example, building crafts participating in the Handmade in Brugge programme, and being included within the remit of the Museum of Old Technologies. In the UK, there are signs that institutions with building (crafts) focus are beginning to take on responsibility for a wider definition of crafts, including landscape management/gardening, the production of fittings and decorations for use in buildings alongside the fixtures which were already part of the definition. In the UK, crafts which have a similar function to the tangible heritage of museums and archives (such as taxidermy and bookbinding) are supported through the same of accreditation which conservators follow - meaning that cultural institutions prefer to work with those who have paid a large fee for their skill to be judged sufficient to work with collections (a route to sustainability not possible for those crafts without such a legislated and professionalised market).

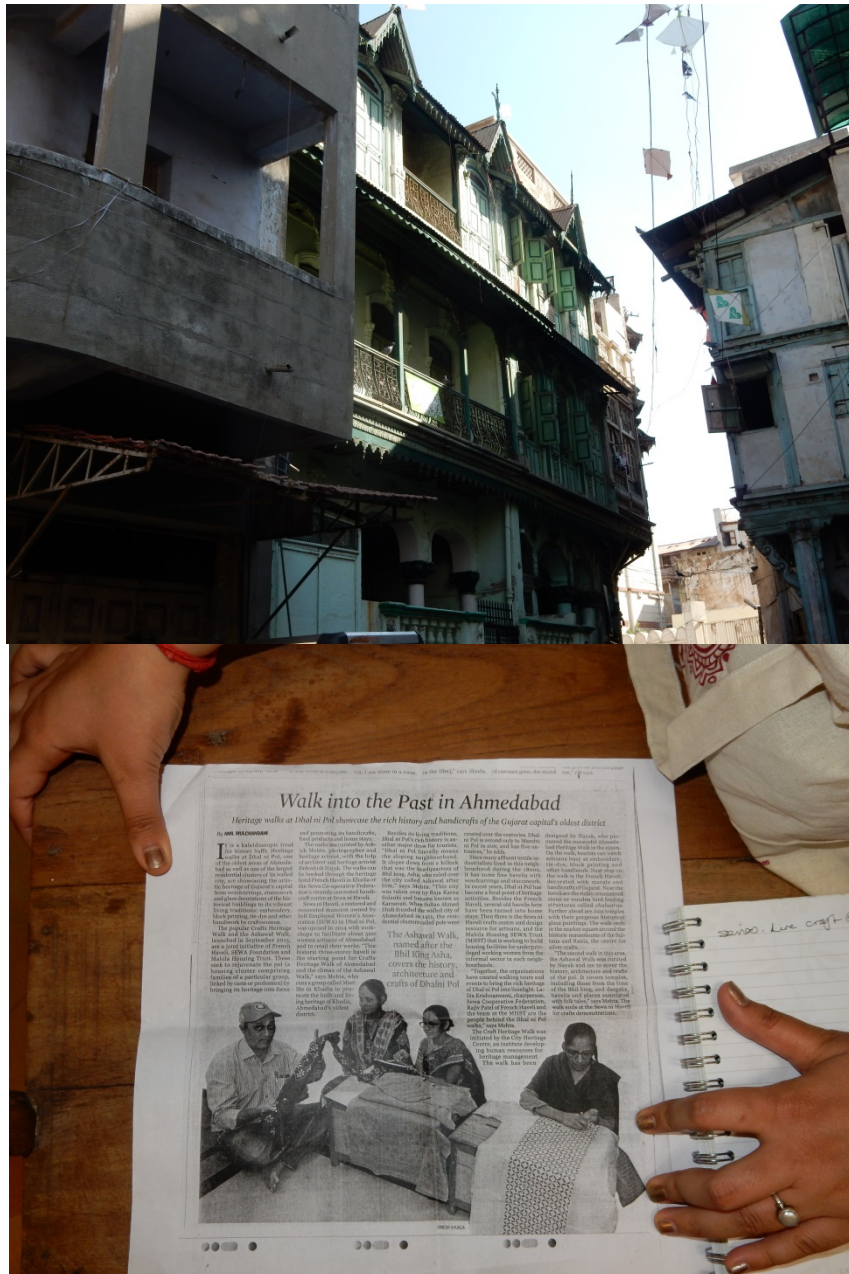


Figure 5 Historic buildings in Ahmedabad - now the focus of tourism



Figure 6 Building crafts? Plaster moulds, Pol Standaert, Bruges and light shades at Design SEWA, Ahmedabad

A further division in the frameworks of support exists in a distinction between ‘studio crafts’ and ‘heritage crafts’ – that is, between crafts which use the same techniques, but in the former the products are prized for their artistic value rather than their practical use. In general, in studio crafts innovation is viewed as a self-evident virtue, while in traditional crafts, a necessity which is either overlooked (leading to the end of a craft tradition) or diminishes the authenticity of the craft. Studio crafts (in all countries) associated with practical training at the higher educational level, and with the allied field of design. In the UK studio crafts are – even in comparison to building crafts – well supported through the Arts Council. If further support for the currently excluded crafts is best achieved by expanding a current framework, then in the UK we have not one choice (as in India) but two. However, the Belgian model suggests that starting again has its advantages. Belgium ratified the UNESCO convention in ICH in 2006. This led to a Visienota (white paper) in 2010, which may be implemented in the new heritage decree in 2016. Preparing to sign the UNESCO convention in Belgium led to a reorganisation of the government support framework for cultural heritage (Flanders definition). There were associated budget savings in this re-organisation, which are always welcome, but in the UK’s case could be used initially to ensure adequate funding was available for previously unfunded areas.

The Flemish framework for support for heritage, and the institutions which implement that support, is innovative, and should be considered adoption elsewhere. Support is first by large grouping (e.g. cultural heritage), where there is a single non-governmental organisation (FARO) which works closely with a small section within the relevant ministry. FARO distributes funding to, and supports the development of, two groups of support organisation: one group of support organisations each provides support for a type of heritage institution, such as museums, archives, and local history societies. The second group are thematic ‘expertise centres’ (Kenniscentrum). These are not huge organisations but small NGOs, typically with 2 or 3 permanent staff members, plus

project members. The expertise centres do not cover the entire range, but elements of particular importance for Flanders – for example there is support for organisations of / working with Young People, but not other demographic sectors. An individual organisation thus has one source of advice, networking support and funding which is very knowledgeable about the kind of institution they are. But additionally they can choose which of the expertise centres they wish to engage with. So a museum might choose science/technology heritage. Or an archive might choose intangible cultural heritage. The work of the Expertise centres was praised and highly valued by virtually every organisation (of all kinds) which I visited. It is therefore regrettable that it seems possible that funding for the centres will be reduced – or even eliminated – later this year, as the Government has indicated this may be the case under the next Heritage Decree, announced later this year, operational from 2019 onwards.

This framework is noteworthy, as it manages to accommodate ‘non-professional’ heritage managers – including those who are curating their own craft skills, performances, games, etc. In their specialist group, local societies have support tailored to their own circumstances, but in any thematic group they choose, they are able to participate with an equal footing with ‘professional’ institutions. The approach also seems to have led to better cooperation with other frameworks – Design Vlaanderen and UNIZO (a business organisation) took on a craft focus in 2009. One craftsman (Michel Mouton, Blacksmith) observed that contact with FARO made his group conscious of their own philosophy, and lead them to address the idea that blacksmithing was only a museum piece.



Figure 7 Using a photograph and video of a smith to put the craftsperson into a museum display, Tools Museum

Some people found great value in the UNESCO convention: staff at Bokrijk (park and open-air museum complex), Flanders, observed “The Convention makes investment credible. It is both an inducement to push on, and an acknowledgement of what you do.” Others – the staff of ETWIE, for example - observed that the language of the convention adds to the burden of heritage jargon which makes conversations between craftspeople and heritage managers more difficult. Colleagues from Kant in Vlaanderen noted that crafts were more expensive to support than other kinds of intangible heritage, and political expectations of cost were formed by those other forms of ICH. Others – typically

those not in the heritage sector, found that it was not useful as a tool, as noted earlier, it has had a huge impact on the involvement of other sectors.

The tools of UNESCO, such as the concept of ‘community’ used by ETWIE, are available to those who have not signed the convention. A colleague at INTACH’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Division stressed the need for craft to be viewed as part of intangible cultural heritage, as this puts it into a context of wider sustainability. A colleague at SEWA Lucknow noted that, in advocacy, it is important to ensure the voice of the artisans is heard. They are able to make government aware of responsibilities, and in their terms.

In conclusion, I feel that while there are significant advantages to signing the convention, including well established methodologies and an international network of expertise – advantages already recognised in Scotland – an independent approach could be more flexible, and particularly if grounded in educational, environmental and/or economic co-operative frameworks, could still have an international dimension.

Research Frameworks

ETWIE has found that craftspeople are less inclined to be included on a list where there is no quality framework in place (and, indeed, where the inclusivity of the community approach works against such a framework). Inventory work is part of the heritage management tradition of Flanders, and documentation is the first step: this is done on a website (www.immaterieelerfgoed.be). I visited a great number of projects organisations which were developing inventories, and their experience (covered in a case study) could be useful in developing the Heritage Craft Association’s inventory wiki (www.redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk) and other Intangible Cultural Heritage inventory projects in the UK.

Educational Frameworks

The opportunities for craft skills to be learned – or appreciated – at all stages of the educational curriculum in both Flanders and India are far greater than in the UK. At the primary and secondary level, Belgium has a long tradition of arts education which compliments the main schools, with teaching taking place on Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays. Craft can be taught on an equal footing with Arts (ask at IKA Mechelen), although the setting in an Art School context may result in a ‘studio craft’ approach to traditional craft. Crafts are taught in most Indian schools. In all three countries, craft is seen as more a ‘primary’ than a ‘secondary’ subject, as is the case in the UK. In India, a colleague from the Craft Revival Trust noted that craft is seen as an activity “for the challenged” rather than mainstream. The existence of the art schools in Flanders does help to counter this trend. The UK trend to make individual schools thematic could be used, in areas of high population density, to allow young people to try out and make choices between themes in addition to learning core subjects in a more convenient locale.

Assessment at IKA Mechelen is by an external jury at the end of the fifth and seventh years. This accreditation doesn’t have official recognition apart from in photography, where it is accepted by the profession, but not by the state.

A colleague from the Craft, Community and Heritage Division of INTACH stressed that it was important for bodies charged with working to sustain crafts worked with organisations with opportunities (people who can benefit enormously from becoming craftspeople/improving craft skills) who do not have the skills and experience to develop and support craftspeople. By working with partners to identify the opportunities and

beneficiaries, craft support organisations can have an increased impact: growth in the support for crafts infrastructure in the UK could thus ensure that the valuable contribution of crafts to many aspects of life here could be maximised.

I did not find an example of a university level course which was aimed at providing training leading to high level craft skills and associated business skills which could be compared with some courses in the UK (MA musical instrument making at Lincoln, for example). However, there were numerous opportunities which could be taken in the UK. In India, I met many academics in anthropology/archaeology and design departments and institutions, who were documenting craft and (to a lesser extent) participating in interventions.

The National Institute of Design (NID) has – since inception - seen craft as an important sector that designers work for and with. The student is introduced to craft in order that they can work with craftspeople in their career as a designer, both as inspiration and as producers – for example students attend Design SEWA to learn the practicalities of clothes production. NID undertakes outreach and consultancy in social, cultural and economic development in India and beyond. The International Centre for Indian Crafts is part of the outreach aspect of NID and works for both government and non- government sectors, and works throughout India and internationally. Its services include documentation, diversification, skills development and management programmes. There are opportunities here in the UK to enhance design education in this way at all levels.

The association of ICH with ‘primitive’ peoples may be behind the anthropological/archaeological interest in India – almost all those I talked to were working in so-called Tribal areas. On the other hand The Centre for Community Knowledge (Ambedkar University Delhi) is an interdisciplinary centre, which has a wide scope, including the heritage of Delhi, which is detailed in a case study.

To a certain extent, craft in all three countries is part of informal learning and Adult or Community Education. IKA Mechelen, for example, participates in a Day of Part-time Arts Education which involves taster sessions, leading to class enrolment. While in all three countries, the value of this activity is acknowledged, a number of common concerns were voiced. The level of craft taught is very basic – often what can be learned in a day, or under 100 hours of teaching and learning. This leads to devaluing of craft skills, and the assumption that there is no need for any other level of education needed which focusses on craft skills (as opposed to the ethnography/anthropology of craft or development of studio practice).

Outside of education which leads to the acquisition of craft skills, two other themes became evident: education for business and education for sustainable consumption.

Education in business skills in both India and Belgium was a concern of some organisations, particularly those which existed for a non-heritage reason, such as the Indian Trade Union, SEWA and the Belgian business organisation UNIZO. In India, it has been appreciated that business skills can be lacking at the most basic level - one example are the reading schemes which are part of the work of several organisations. One of these organisations, Dastkari Haat Samiti, makes it very clear that learning to read does not mean leaving a craft and taking a desk job. Further, they promote literacy in local languages, as part of the principle that local trading is more sustainable than global trading. In all cases, having a craft-supporting organisation that was able to work with an existing deliverer of training was crucial to the success of the projects, but also without the craft-supporting organisation, the training organisation would not have been able to reach the communities concerned so effectively.

Other Frameworks

In all three countries, the role of crafts within fast-changing economic contexts is widely discussed. This is often expressed as a growing recognition of craft as enterprise – enterprise growth being important in all three government's agendas. In India, some supporting organisations are taking this as an opportunity to become enterprise development agencies rather than aid agencies (SEWA Gujarat, for example, stresses the need is for sustainable livelihoods in a sector that is characterised by self-employment).

The idea of environmentally and socially sustainable production is widely understood, with marques such as Fair Trade having global brand status. Implied in this is that there is sustainable consumption – the less well known Slow Movement being perhaps its most recognisable form. Lack of consumer understanding of the value of the craft product – and hence the higher price – is often mentioned in all three countries as a reason why craftspeople are among the lowest earners. Since incomes do not reflect investment in training (for either the trainer or the trained), there is a strong disinclination to train outside the family.

Interventions – similarities/differences

Interventions are therefore, extremely sensitive to context (colleagues from ETWIE observed that each needs to be tailor-made). Nevertheless my fellowship allowed me to meet people delivering or participating in numerous interventions which may be used in planning interventions in the UK.

Failure to successfully incorporate craft into mainstream education and training

A number of interventions use alternative methods to provide education in craft production and craft consumption.

In India, the web is seen as a good way of reaching and educating (potential) consumers. A number of those I spoke with who were engaged with marketing programmes (see below) spoke of the importance of including educational materials as part of those programmes. Their marketing websites were seen as an opportunity for consumer education. In India, the association of craft with fair trade suggests that craft teaching in school could have an international consumer dimension.

There was acknowledgement that development of accreditation frameworks and quality control needs to involve craftspeople. Indian efforts to accredit craftspeople, and accredit prior learning should be used to create recognised qualifications, which build on the work done by the Heritage Crafts Association and the partners in the Apprenticeship Trailblazer. The HCA should be funded to take a lead on this work.



Figure 8 Improving and maintaining quality was key to reviving Chikan embroidery - SEWA Lucknow

In Belgium, as in the UK, there are efforts to use museums to provide opportunities for family based craft learning. As in the UK, there is a danger that such efforts suggest that craft is something easy, for children, and do not give an indication of the difficulty and length of time needed to learn the skills. As a colleague at UNIZO (Belgium) noted, the lack of transitional programmes leads to a gap between craftspeople working with low skills as a hobby or part-time employment and those working with high skills, as their main source of income. The use of museums as sites for family based crafts activities appears to be rarer in India, but The National Ethnographic Museum of India in Bhopal provides a possible solution in that the courses run for a number of weeks, rather than hours, and are run separately for adults and children but no evaluation has been done to the impact this has on the attendees compared with more traditional craft learning in museums. Bokrijk (open-air museum) in Flanders is putting in place an innovative new use of their estate and collections: the 'Branded By Bokrijk' renewal programme. Interpretation is being led by the craft heritage of buildings, with conversations around sustainability being as important as historical context. Craft education space is being expanded. Most interestingly, the museum is exploring new ways of engaging visitors in making through developing gift shop items which the purchasers (or those receiving a gift from the museum) must make themselves. These were developed through a competition for designers. A case study on craft as gifts covering three Belgian initiatives is in development.



Figure 9 Handmade in Belgium - an example of a quality mark (UNIZO)

Recreational learning of crafts is rare in India (the National Ethnographic Museum and Aadhar's spinning project are rare exceptions – crafts are learned in the household, for the household, or within the family, for the family business. In Belgium, recreational learning mostly runs along lines familiar in the UK (internet based learning, club/social learning, evening classes, etc.). Kant in Vlaanderen works in homes for the elderly, and would like to work with migrants, creating opportunities for language learning and addressing social poverty, alongside sustaining the craft. IKA Mechelen and similar institutions in Belgium provide a focussed learning environment which parallels Adult Education Colleges, but with some differences in that their curriculum is restricted to the arts and crafts, and they take children from primary school age onwards.

In both India and Belgium, many institutions delivered training directed at craft producers, and included skills such as the use of traditional dyes and spinning, product design and a full range of business skills. The work of Design SEWA in teaching product design is particularly interesting as the work of the organisation is based on the understanding that in the past, artisan women were designers, and that makers today therefore do not need to rely on external designers. Their motto is “artisans become designers”. In India, expertise in English was added to these, by some, while others stressed that digital fluency in local languages was more important. In some cases, the business skills were generic, but UNIZO (Belgium) and others report that it had been necessary to develop delivery and content specifically for traditional craftspeople. All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA), for example, have developed a programme to promote digital literacy (Indian Artisans Go Digital <http://www.aiacaonline.org/indian-artisans-go-digital>). Several organisations mentioned enterprise development and building brands. This was both in an economic sense and in a non-economic sense: a colleague at the Craft Revival Trust spoke of the need to “get beyond the photographs of hands to the craftspeople behind”. In India there was a particular emphasis on giving pride to crafts people, who tend to view their work as labour and not as high skill.

Failure of familial and caste transmission

Caste, in India, has two elements: varna and jāti. The former are broader groups than the latter. Each Jāti community are usually associated with a job function, and can share religion, ethnicity, and other similarities. As marriages can only take place within jāti,

each family member is of the same jāti (Smith, 2005). Thus crafts and jāti are strongly inter-woven, and familial transmission is doubly expected.

In many ways, India is 'behind' the UK in addressing access to awareness of craft as a career, because it is so strongly associated with household work and with particular jāti, each dedicated to a single craft. Further, in India, there has been strong criticism of the caste system, which has become an important element of political debate since the 1980s. In India, therefore, the entry level, 'taster' opportunities which are commonplace in Belgium and the UK are innovative, and Aadhar's project to introduce spinning as a recreational activity should be highlighted in this context. Additionally, the concentration of many organisations on interventions (in all three countries) which focus on skills, quality control, and innovation (i.e. shifts induced by market influences) rather than on craftspeople and their aspirations tend not to deal with this failure of transmission. Yet it is recognised (by a colleague from NID, for example) that it is an excellent indicator when people say that they want their children to continue the craft – "it means they are fulfilled by the work, and hopeful for the future".

The result, as colleagues at the Craft Revival Trust and NID both noted, can be that demand outstrips supply for a craft, and craftspeople earning good money, but still endangered because the community keeps the skills to itself.

The situation in the UK and Belgium is similar. IKA Mechelen allows higher development skills at a reasonable cost, but without business skills. As recent research by the Crafts Council (2014) has highlighted the vulnerability of existing provision at all levels in the UK it seems likely that this area of failure needs to be addressed.

Failure of supply chains

In India the cost of raw materials is a concern, particularly for premium products. Colleagues from Ambedkar University, Delhi and from Sumi Mothers' Association, Nagaland, both observed that the resulting rise in cost of products leads to a decline in consumption, or a profound change in consumption, from objects made for use within a family or local community, to wider, more elite use. Government schemes provide loans at minimal rates, which may help with temporary changes, but implementation and access to these are an issue. Implementation of schemes is by the individual states – some such as Gujarat and Rajasthan are working well, other states not so well. The government is now interested in start-ups and there are a lot of novel schemes. There is a National Policy Round table charged with producing tangible solutions. AIACA's Varanasi silk project sponsors raw materials and production during training. A colleague at NID felt that supply of materials was a minor concern, but noted that failure of craft processes earlier in the supply chain could lead to failure later on.

Legal changes

– particularly legal changes relating to working practices and the environment

In Belgium, health and safety legislation, and environmental legislation were mentioned as being particularly problematic. The latter, for example, made difficulties for blacksmiths who traditionally were working in an urban or village centre setting but their smoke and noise of their work no longer met their neighbours' expectations. The response to this was to consider the development of out-of-town centres where co-operative or collegiate smithies could be set up. In India, the government funds Common Facility Centres (CFC) – where processing can be done in common, and training often takes place – although arising from a different need fulfil a similar function. Some

colleagues expressed dissatisfaction with the practical experience of CFC, but these overseas expressions of the idea of co-working spaces and joint entities for craftspeople could provide useful information for those already established, or being considered, in the UK.

Environmental legislation was similarly mentioned by colleagues in India. Projects to address this include AIACA's 'Going Green' project (<http://www.aiacaonline.org/going-green>) and the Department of Culture, Government of India's Parampara project, inventorying green practices among craftspeople (see case study).

Lack of access to Capital

The Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Ltd., a development of SEWA Gujarat, provides savings and loans options for very poor women who are members of the SEWA Trade Union. The close connection with SEWA means that not only can craftswomen get loans, but the knowledge gained by the bank can feed into development: for example Design SEWA was established because a senior bank official observed women getting loans for sewing machines they didn't know how to use, and which did not make use of their existing, under-valued skills. The potential for similar close connections between financial institutions (particularly in the social banking sector) and craft development agencies could be developed in the UK.

Market failure

(lack of demand for type of goods)

There was widespread understanding that there is a divide between producers and consumers, which is called a 'lack of demand' but is created by a lack of knowledge – both of the goods themselves, but also of their value. A remarkable number of colleagues in India responded to a question asking 'where else should I go, who else should I talk to?' with recommendations of shops and markets. I followed up several of these with what I began to realise was participative action research⁴ into consumer education in crafts. A colleague from NID observed the spiritual quality of crafts means that their value can be seen as purely religious: neither tangible nor intangible heritage are generally recognised as concepts in India – a very thin section of society appreciates heritage.

Both Belgium and India have introduced brand marques as part of marketing crafts. The brand is both an aid to marketing, and an aid to education. The two Belgian marques (UNIZO's Handmade in Belgium and Tapis Plein's Handmade in Brugge) and India's Handmade in India (AIACA) share the same form. 'Handmade in India' requires that holders also have the Fairtrade marque suggests that there is potential to do the same in the UK, to show those products where craftspeople are paid a fair recompense.

"Handmade in ..." should be adopted as an international format, with common standards, such as quality control methods, environmental impact, and fair trade.

⁴ Participatory Action Research is normally carried out in community, rather than personal settings. It involves an iterative cycle of research, action and reflection (Kindon, 2007) In this case, the 'action' was 'go (window) shopping'. I particularly appreciate the contributions of Bindiya Kamboj, my companion in India, to all parts of this cycle.

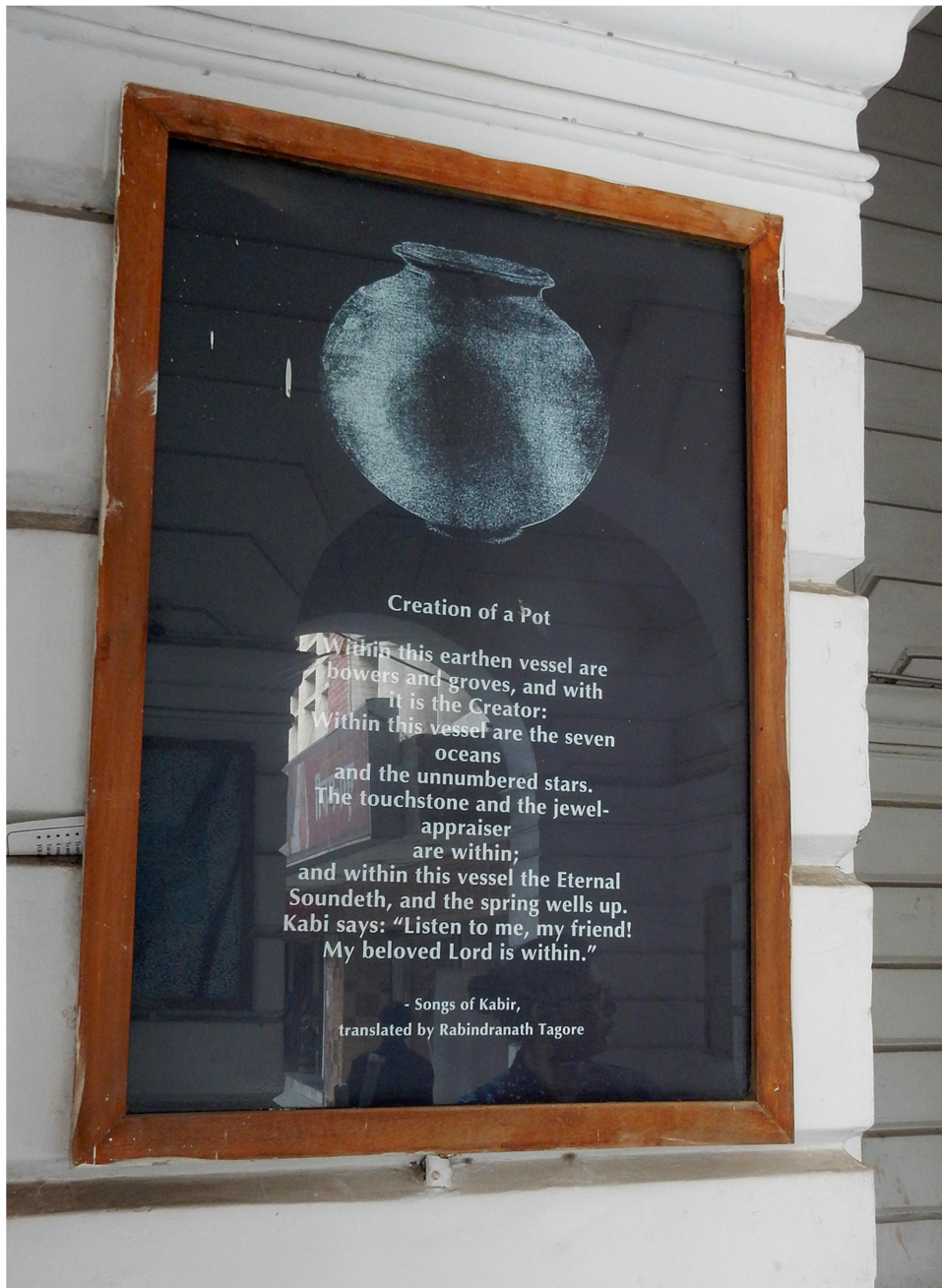


Figure 10 Poster displayed at Connaught Place, New Delhi (home of many craft shops)

The role of those marketing crafts in promoting consumer education has been noted above. This also takes place with those promoting craft as culture. The Craft Maps (state maps, illustrating typical crafts) produced by Dastkari Haat Samiti are now displayed in the Delhi metro – this and other examples of the inclusion of crafts when heritage or the arts of India are presented to India or the wider world are the result of the dynamism of organisations promoting them, but also because the mind-set there is that craft is a part of the cultural and economic life of the country – which is only possible where government institutions for craft exist, and have equal or superior weighting to other organisations.

Dastkari Haat Samiti developed an urban version of the private craft markets (Haat) in small towns – the first being ‘Dilli Haat’-which allows craftspeople from all over India to meet buyers, from both Delhi’s urban dwellers and tourists. This initiative is considered in a case study.



Figure 11 Learning in Retail in India - clockwise, Dilli Haat, Dilli Haat, Hansiba and Crafts Museum, Delhi

The NGO Aadhar in India has developed a number of initiatives (which are considered in case studies) to promote traditional crafts. These include an annual Heritage Film Festival which focusses on crafts, publishing the critical magazine *Samvaad- a dialogue on Heritage*, revitalising the traditional spinning and pottery industries.

Design SEWA has established a design library to allow artisans access to their heritage as a means of development.

The Craft, Community and Heritage Division of INTACH has been instrumental in promoting the value of buildings craftspeople to those who have previously been concentrating on the re-use of buildings, and principles of conservation architecture.

In India, National and State Government support for crafts in India includes the provision of Common Production Centres and Common Facility Centres (the latter bringing together testing, quality, marketing and other business functions), funding for exhibitions, permanent shops in Delhi, and awards for Master Craftspeople,

A colleague observed that the Government of India is interested in economics and heritage. “But even the government fails to understand that scaling up isn’t the only solution, and it’s one that leads to the loss of skills and equality. It is necessary to look at the entire cycle to get the right and appropriate solution.” This needs to be appreciated in the UK.

Market failure

(competition from cheaper producers for type of goods)

Many conversations in both Belgium and India included discussion of the issue of competition from other countries where either cheaper production costs, lower quality goods, or a mixture of the two were identified as problems to be addressed. A number of individuals and institutions view education as a key part of marketing crafts.

Many projects were mentioned in India where improving quality was a key element.

The value of the Geographical Indication protection was also discussed with several Indian organisations. This is a scheme whereby a product's name is protected in one of a number of ways, and only those products made in that place (sometimes, using specified materials and/or production methods) can legally bare that name (World Intellectual Property Organization, undated (b)). The scheme has not been used greatly in Europe (Harris Tweed is one for example). Ashok Chatterjee noted that while a useful tool, there are problems for GI protection of crafts: the craft belongs to the craftspeople, not a locality (as exemplified by the jamdani controversy⁵); and that it requires scholarship and marketing management. Work on Geographic Indication is taking place in a partnership between the International Centre for Indian Crafts and the Craft Revival Trust. A member of the partnership acknowledged that they “may not understand enough” to make decisions on Geographic Indication.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (undated (c)) notes that GIs can support the sustainability of traditional crafts only indirectly⁶, because they are in the public domain. One way they can do this is through the process of describing processes in order to create the standards for a GI product. WIPO note that “Two other aspects of Products identified by a geographical indication are often the result of traditional processes and knowledge carried forward by a community in a particular region from generation to generation. Similarly, some products identified by a geographical indication (GI) may embody characteristic elements of the traditional artistic heritage developed in a given region, known as “traditional cultural expressions” (TCEs).

The GI controversy on jamdani indicates that while GI can be a useful tool, it requires marketing management skills plus scholarship. And geography is only one factor toward respecting artisans and their heritage. Equally relevant is the movement of craft knowledge and practice over boundaries that have little relevance to craft history. Countries can't ‘own’ crafts. Colleagues at SEWA Lucknow felt that GI should be given only for environmentally friendly production.

Market failure

(arising from increasing distance between craftsperson and market)

In India a third form of market failure is acknowledged, which is not talked about in the UK or Belgium. This should be considered when thinking of about interventions in other

⁵ See <http://garlandmag.com/threads/craft-ethics-finding-a-moral-compass-in-a-harsh-terrain/> for details.

⁶ “Traditional knowledge (TK) is a living body of knowledge passed on from generation to generation within a community. It often forms part of a people's cultural and spiritual identity. WIPO's program on TK also addresses genetic resources (GRs) and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs)” WIPO (undated (b)) states that TK and TCE are not protected by IP, but on the same web page as the above quote state: “WIPO's Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) is negotiating international legal instrument(s) on intellectual property (IP) and GRs, TK and TCEs.” (World Intellectual Property Organization, undated (d))

contexts. The failure arises when a craft with a (potentially) viable market (for example, selling products to people in a 50km region of the centre of production, with no middle-man or only one middleman per satellite market) is encouraged to change to a wider - often international - market. While in the local market, changes in styles are not unknown, and can involve both innovation and revivals alongside continuing styles in products made by the same craftsperson. Continuity and change in the local market is therefore a conversation between a very small number of people, who converse in a common language which, if not their household language, is one they are familiar with. As a result, an increasing chain of supply exists between the craftsperson and the market, making change in response to changing market demand a game of 'Chinese whispers'. This is particularly problematic because the global market is fashion-driven, and the distance between craftsperson and end-purchaser means that not only is there little opportunity for the craftsperson to converse with the end-purchaser, the craftsperson cannot observe or overhear the changing fashions in the end market. News of the market change thus arrives late. In many cases, the fashion changes in terms of materials and methods which the craftsperson is unable to respond to with their current skills; the fashion also changes for place of production – something which is impossible to respond to and retain craft skills in a locality. This situation has arisen because of India's drive to be a global economy, so encouragement has been to engage in global markets, and particularly western markets.

In India I met several colleagues who were critical of the involvement of organisations in selling craft goods – they argued that these organisations were simply taking on the role of middle-men, and making the industry vulnerable to this kind of market failure.

Innovations which are designed to close the gap between craftsperson and consumer, and provide benefit to both include Dilli Haat (mentioned above), the Government-funded Common Reception Centres where buyers can meet craftspeople, Aadhar's Media for Artisans service, which provides low-cost branding and web design services. AIACA provides direct links to those who can cope with taking large orders, or acts as an intermediary, and helps with quality control, for those who find this challenging. Being an association of craftspeople it means that AIACA is able to act as a middle-man, while minimising the risk of market failure. This is a role that could be developed in the UK by individual craft organisations, or the HCA.

Change management: where could we go from here?

As noted above, change is viewed very differently by those within the two worlds of studio and traditional craft: for studio craft innovation is a virtue, for some within traditional craft (lack of) change is a virtue. Yet in a changing world, traditional crafts do change, and the interventions described above all involve change of one kind or another.

Involving complex relationships between economic, environmental, social, cultural and personal sustainability (all with their own government departments) leadership from government is not easy, and it is understandable why, in the past, the UK government departments have acted as they have done. Taking the best of what I have observed in Belgium, India, and current best practice in crafts in the UK and the rest of the world, crafts offer a superb opportunity for governments in the UK to join up working across areas that are among the highest on their agendas.

The practical application of the UNESCO and other approaches all stress the importance of the craftspeople in desiring, designing, and managing those changes. Further, to be successful, interventions must address the causes of endangerment – current or anticipated, and they must do so in a manner which does not diminish the value of the craft. For example, if a craft is endangered because the supply chain is threatened (a recent example from India is the Cow Policy which has made leather from buffalo difficult to obtain), then an intervention which provides funded training in leather-working is not likely to make the craft sustainable – an intervention which takes the existing skills and uses them on new materials, or one which addresses the supply chain issues is more likely to be successful. Another example of an intervention which diminishes value is the change from handloom to power loom weaving – it allows greater productivity, but the power loom is noisy, and requires its own building. Part of the value of traditional handloom weaving is that it can be done alongside other tasks such as childcare – thus the adoption of power looms makes craft work less desirable.

A colleague at Dastkari Haat Samiti warned of the situation in India, where advocacy is undertaken by many NGOs – some as small as an individual village – many of which do not work collaboratively, leading to poorer outcomes for the craftspeople they purport to represent.

I asked those I met about their organisations use of volunteers – as with UK institutions, in Belgium and India the replies varied widely, with at one extreme volunteers rarely or never being involved, to a small core salaried staff (2 or 3 people) supporting the work of large teams of volunteers.

Core funding came from governments, patrons, foundations and trading. Project funding came from these, and additionally from international funding. It was noteworthy that the most dynamic, most vibrant of the projects I visited tended to be those which were led by organisations which had been established with funding which did not originate in craft production, but with governments, trade unions, non-specific business organisations, patrons or foundations. In deciding what level of UK government funding would be appropriate, account should be taken of the availability of core funding from other areas, and funding be provided to obtain such funding. Similarly, trade unions, non-specific business organisations, patrons and foundations should be encouraged to see the potential of funding craft infrastructure.

Many of those I met with spoke enthusiastically about the potential to collaborate with individual craftspeople, and organisations including the Heritage Crafts Association within the UK, with marketing, skills training, and research being mentioned as key areas. The Crafts Revival Trust was willing to share their experience of GI. Ashok

Chatterjee and the Crafts Revival Trust particularly highlighted the need for India to learn from the UK on the support needed, and interventions possible for building crafts – this should be taken up by the National Heritage Training Group and the Building Crafts College among others. The potential for collaborations to be taken forwards depends in part upon how willing UK governments are to support the infrastructure needed here, but also on the global frameworks that may – or may not – be in place when such collaborations are considered in the future.

As uncertain as life is, in the UK, at the present time, it is clear from the examples I have seen in India and Belgium that traditional crafts are a national asset, and the current situation means that more than ever, they should be supported.



Figure 12 Discussing innovation with Pol Standaert and Robin Debo

Key recommendations

- Leadership is needed from UK and home nation governments, including joined-up delivery of:
 - Practical recognition of the cultural and personal value of Intangible Heritage through delivery of support in inclusive ways to heritage and the organisations supporting heritage, and wellbeing.
 - Practical recognition of the social and economic importance, and vulnerability of crafts through delivery of support to enhance quality, consumer knowledge, business practices and change management.
 - Development, in partnership with craftspeople, of progression routes from Community and Adult Education. Neither these routes, nor their delivery should rely upon community volunteers as policymakers, teachers/trainers, or examiners.
 - Engagement of craftspeople and other intangible heritage practitioners as equals in developing environmental safeguards and delivering environmental behaviour change, including sustainable consumption.
- Cooperation between organisations of craftspeople as bridges between government and individual craftspeople to ensure the sustainability of the cultural, personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of crafts.

- Consideration by museums, universities, and other institutions comparable to those I met with in Belgium and India of how they might support craft sustainability as part of their mission.

Case Studies

Detailed findings from my research will be disseminated to targeted audiences through additional case studies, published in appropriate journals, blogs or as working papers. Provisional titles:

It's a Gift: craft and corporate, museum, and other products for tourists – a study of initiatives by Bokrijk, UNIZO and Handmade in Brugge in Flanders and the Craft Revival Trust, Dastkar, Dastkari Haat Samiti and a range of shops in India.

Knowing What's What: inventory work as an element in supporting sustainability – a study of initiatives by Ijzer en Vuur! - Feu et Fer! and ETWIE, www.immaterieelerfgoed.be, and the Museum of Old Techniques in Belgium and Aadhar, The Centre for Community Knowledge (Ambedkar University Delhi), the Craft Revival Trust, Jaya Jaitly and Dastkari Haat Samiti, Gaatha, the Parampara project, and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) in India.

Made Here: Crafts and Experiential Tourism – a study of initiatives by Bokrijk, Handmade in Brugge, Museum of Old Techniques, Aadhar, Craft Museum Delhi, Dastkar, Dastkari Haat Samiti, Design SEWA, Hansiba (SEWA Gujarat), SEWA Lucknow and a range of shops in India.

Innovative Ideas for Promoting Craftspeople and their Crafts – a study of initiatives by Aadhar, Design SEWA, Gaatha, INTACH and Hansiba (SEWA Gujarat) in India.

Online crafts marketplaces – a study of initiatives by UNIZO and Handmade in Brugge in Belgium, and AIACA and Gaatha in India.

Structured Support for Craft Sustainability – a study of the co-ordinated development for crafts in Belgium

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