

Safeguarding traditional craftsmanship : a project demonstrating the revitalisation of intangible heritage in Murad Khane, Kabul

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ABSTRACT

The paper summarises the primary activities of Turquoise Mountain's project to revitalise the craft traditions of Afghanistan within the historic quarter of Murad Khane in Kabul's Old City. It lays out the primary methods and approaches employed to safeguard intangible heritage within the commercial crafts sector in both the national and international spheres through a holistic approach to economic and educational development. Particular focus is given to the development of vocational training programmes that act to safeguard the social structures and traditional knowledge of the country's intangible heritage whilst also responding to contemporary educational systems and the demands of modern commercial markets. The paper summarises the main challenges that have been addressed during the first year's activity and lays out project-based solutions of relevance to practitioners working in similar fields. The discussion aims to set the project within established wider theoretical frameworks and indicates where advances have been achieved based on existing theory, methods and recommendations. The paper forecasts how the project may develop, how it may expand its activities in the coming years and highlights the markers of future success.

Afghanistan's craft traditions: the historical background

Afghanistan has a rich material heritage. From the Buddhist era to the present day, culture across all spheres has flourished in various parts of the country with the ebb and flow of political and territorial power. Despite the conflict of the last four decades in

Afghanistan, much material heritage survives in artistic, architectural and craft form (Krieken-Pieters: 2006). This tangible heritage is mirrored in its richness by the intangible heritage of the country, represented in large part by the traditional craft knowledge and skills passed down from generation to generation within artisan families and through the guild system.

In recognition of this type of historic legacy, heritage programmes across the world have recently begun to include a focus on intangible cultural heritage as part of their remit (see numerous case studies in Galla: 2006-2009). The 2003 UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* was key to this development and served to identify important areas for safeguarding in this field. The Convention included traditional craftsmanship as one of five important manifestations of intangible heritage, and defined the groups, communities and individuals who nurture these traditions. Such craftsmanship represents a legacy of particular importance in Afghanistan; the abundant artistic and craft traditions of the region, and the associated individual and community systems, clearly reflect the intangible heritage that the 2003 *Convention* seeks to safeguard.

Afghanistan's artistic and craft traditions have developed over centuries within family workshops, local bazaars and court ateliers. Aspects of these traditions have been documented over the last century in scattered, but nevertheless informative, surveys. Hans Wulff, in *The Traditional Crafts of Persia: their development, technology, and influence on Eastern and Western civilisations*, described the variety of local handicrafts to be found in the bazaars of Iran as comparable to those of their Afghan counterparts. Pierre Centlivres, in his survey *Un Bazar d'Asie Centrale: forme et organisation du bazar de Tashqurghan*, explored the social structures associated with the crafts sold in the bazaars of the market town of Tashqurghan outside Mazar-i Sharif in the north of Afghanistan. The development of the workshop (*karkhane*) within a courtly context has been documented in a number of academic studies of the social and economic structures of Mughal court workshops whose patrons ruled over the eastern part of Afghanistan from the early sixteenth century: these include Tripta Verma's *Karkhanas under the Mughals from Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Economic Development*. Michael Barry has explored the structures and practices of the Timurid workshops of Herat in his book *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzad (1465-1535)*. He documents the spiritual relationship between master and apprentice and the sacred nature of knowledge transmission within this elite artistic context.

Based on the observations of these scholars, and

from interviews with today's masters, a basic framework for the historic educational structures of the crafts traditions within Afghanistan has been established for further development with on-going research. It is clear that development and transmission of technical knowledge and skill has historically taken place within the workshop (*karkhane*). Here, knowledge passed between master (*ustad*) and apprentice (*shagird*) in a learning process that took place over the course of up to a decade. Apprentices were most usually the sons of masters although non-relatives were on occasion taken on for training. Apprentices learnt their craft by observing and copying their master's practice and work and through the timely passing over of trade secrets - crucial to the success of the apprentice artisan - given only when the master felt fully confident of the apprentice's readiness to receive this secret knowledge.

Craft traditions, passed on through this sacred relationship between master and apprentice, were underpinned by the wider guild structure. Each guild (*senf*) was affiliated with a particular craft and many had their own patron saints and secret codes of knowledge and conduct (Centlivres: 1972; Barry: 2004). A guild was often linked to others through the sharing of necessary technical knowledge and through its physical proximity to other trades within the bazaar or atelier. Following their induction into the guild, apprentices passed through stages of learning and associated rituals under the overall supervision of their master. Upon the successful completion of his apprenticeship, the student was formally received into the guild through a rite of passage held in the presence of all the masters and leaders of that guild.

Traditional systems of knowledge transmission placed arts and crafts manufacture within wider social and economic networks and were dependent upon those wider contexts for their success and survival. First, the guild networks functioned as community frameworks that acted as vehicle and safeguard for the effective transmission of knowledge and skills. The guilds often acted as intermediaries between craftsmen and the local government and wider trade structures (Centlivres: 1972). Second, Afghan craftsmanship traditions have historically been central to regional and urban economies in Afghanistan; demand for products drove local craft industry and markets in which artisans responded to utilitarian requirements, or to the tastes

and patronage of urban elites and royalty. The markets and their clients formed a wider group of stakeholders who provided the economic driver for development within the crafts industries and allowed a sustainable environment for artistic and technical innovation to develop. In this context, the traditional craftsmanship of Afghanistan conformed to the definition of an intangible cultural heritage as *a living process... socially articulated and consciously manipulated...* (Kurin: 2007). These records and studies also illustrate clearly that these traditions and their craftsman were deeply entrenched in wider group systems and were subject to a complex and diverse set of influences.

Despite the variety and richness of craftsmanship and its associated social structures, Afghanistan has not escaped unscathed from the long period of war under which the country has toiled, or from the conflict to which many areas are still subject. Much technical knowledge and artistic skill has been compromised and local arts and crafts-based economies have been eroded. The partial disintegration of supply chains, bazaar organisation and fabric and the general social upheaval due to war have destroyed much of the framework within which these traditions were nurtured. Families have been torn apart, threatening the transmission of knowledge through ancestral channels, and access to materials, design sources, tools and equipment has been compromised. These current circumstances define and highlight a clear need to assist Afghans in safeguarding their heritage and cultural legacy for future generations

and to revive these important parts of the national economy and social structure.

Institutional training programmes: a synthetic approach

Turquoise Mountain was established in 2005 as a non-governmental, non-profit organisation to address the challenge of safeguarding Afghanistan's tangible and intangible heritage. Its mission is to complete architectural restoration, to revive traditional craft skills and to provide new economic opportunities for artisans, as part of a holistic approach to safeguarding cultural heritage. The physical focus of Turquoise Mountain's project is a precinct of Kabul's Old City, Murad Khane, a once- affluent residential area built between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries by *Qizlbash* – a courtier class of royal bodyguards.

The aim is to restore and revive an area once known for its craft shops and impressive residences. Turquoise Mountain's restoration of historic buildings, and the associated development of the area's infrastructure, began in 2006. A number of buildings have been selected for restoration, each will be rented for a period to complete the work before being returned to their owners. Primary health and education services have also been introduced to the area.

As the physical restoration draws to a close, this historic area will also host the Turquoise Mountain

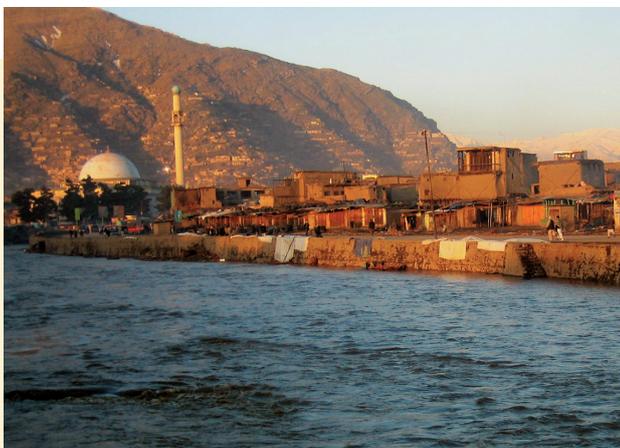


Figure 1
Kabul River and the historic area of Murad Khane, Kabul

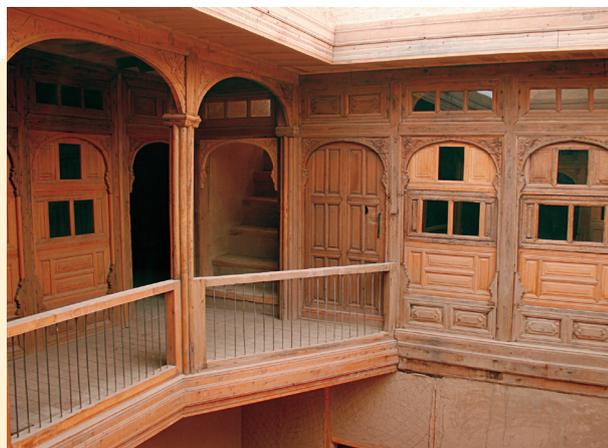


Figure 2
Interior courtyard, Turquoise Mountain Institute in Murad Khane, Kabul

Figure 3
The Institute's first graduation ceremony led by Mr Waheed Khalili (Director) and Dr Najib Omary (Trustee)



Institute for Afghan Arts and Architecture among the existing private residences. The Institute was formally established from a group of existing workshops in January 2007, and it is within this institution that safeguarding intangible heritage is directly addressed. It was registered as a non-profit, non-governmental private educational institution within Afghanistan according to the terms of an institutional Charter and under the governance of a Kabul-based Board of Trustees. The Institute is licensed for educational activities with the Islamic Government of Afghanistan Ministry of Education (TVET Section) and is officially accredited as the only City and Guilds Approved Centre in Afghanistan. It is funded through the kind assistance of private individuals in the US, the UK and the Middle East, and through a partnership between the Governments of the United States, Canada and Afghanistan.

The Institute aims to safeguard existing knowledge of traditional craftsmanship through vocational training programmes, to revive those traditions and replace lost technical expertise and to provide apprentices and artisans with access and the ability to respond to today's local and international markets. It also engages as far as possible with the crafts community and the markets it aims to support. These goals are addressed most directly through training programmes in which masters pass on their traditional knowledge and skills to their young students. Master artisans lead the teaching programmes at the Institute with the support of an Afghan management team. Masters work together to reconstruct and develop teaching content and programmes and to revive and oversee ritual rites of

passage based on their own experiences within the historic guild systems of the country. The wider governance structures of the Institute are being developed to engender as much participation as possible from institutional leaders based in Kabul, in combination with international support and with a Board of Trustees that comprises educational, financial, commercial and artistic experts who act to assure quality and safeguard the activities of the Institute into the future.

This organisational structure - although established with the assistance of foreign expertise and funding - is designed to encourage crafts community ownership under the leadership of Afghan masters, administrators and trustees. In this, it conforms to the wider concept of 'First Voice' as outlined by Amareswar Galla (2008) in his recent discussion of appropriate community engagement in safeguarding intangible heritage. The Institute emphasises community participation and leadership driven by this local community as a basis for directional strategy. The Institute's activities have corresponded from the outset to Galla's 'Model 2' of community participation, where partnership between international experts and local craftsman and managers has seen the successful establishment of the Institute and its activities. However, its activities now represent a transitional phase to 'Model 3' - in which foreign technical experts or managers have withdrawn to create a position of full community ownership - which will take place within three years of the establishment of the Institute. During this transition the Institute fosters 'local leadership'. It is a project and programme of activities that in its maturity will be led by masters and administrators drawn entirely

from within the local, in this case Kabuli and wider Afghan, community. Local leadership represents a step beyond community participation – a joint working relationship between foreign and Afghan staff – to a project run by Afghan leaders.

The Institute currently has 120 students across its four schools - Calligraphy and Painting, Jewellery and Gem-Cutting, Ceramics and Woodwork. Each student specialises in one of these four areas during a three-year course of full-time study. The four training areas at Turquoise Mountain Institute reflect only a fraction of the craft traditions that once existed within the country, and indeed only a proportion of those that still survive. The choice of programmes is constrained by current political circumstance, by access to funding, materials and technologies and by the availability of expertise. The selection of crafts to safeguard has also been subject to circumstances unrelated to the crafts themselves. For example, recent conflict under the Taliban led to the large-scale migration of millions of refugees to Pakistan (USAID (ASMED): 2007). These refugees included gem-cutters who travelled to Pakistan where they could continue their work in safety using gemstones smuggled across the border from Afghan mines. Many have remained in the city of Peshawar since the fall of the Taliban, leaving a continuing shortage of gem-cutting masters to teach apprentices in Afghanistan. Although it has been possible, working with masters who remained in the country, to set up gem-cutting training programmes at the Institute, this example illustrates the wider constraints to which programme choices are often subject.

On a positive note, this type of constraint has led to the combining of different craft departments within a single institution. This circumstance allows something of a return to a community *karkhane* system, in which artisans of different disciplines work together in synthesis on single projects depending on available skill and materials – a calligraphic panel completed in tiled ceramics, a wooden screen inlaid with local gemstones or a carved wooden panel decorated with painted illuminations, for example – a constantly-evolving inter-craft dependence that revives something of the guild systems within which these crafts once existed (Centlivres: 1972). In the case of today's Institute, the particular combination of skills within a creative environment may lead to technical and artistic developments and innovations as masters and students

interact within this new educational community.

Over the last three years the Institute has received an average of 700 applications from young people in Kabul for just 40 new places each year. Successful candidates have to pass a series of practical, oral and interview tests to win their place. In 2009 the intake process included major provincial cities in all areas of the country. It may be possible to create provincial satellite centres in the future. Thirty-five percent of the current student body at the Institute is female, giving women access to some aspects of craft traditions in which they may not historically have had involvement. Students come from a range of educational backgrounds. The current student body includes apprentices who are themselves from existing craft families, they have often had little formal education but arrive with a good level of existing craft skill passed to them by their families. They work alongside those who have no familial craft background but who often have had an academic education, in some instances to university degree level. This combination of familial craft apprentices with those with no previous craft training echoes the practice of training both family members and unrelated apprentices by masters observed and recorded in the historic bazaars of Afghanistan (Centlivres: 1972). Students are aged between fifteen and twenty-five and are from a variety of economic circumstances. Stipend and scholarship support is provided to the poorest of students and to those who come from the provinces to study at the Institute, in a system similar to the basic support provided by masters to their apprentices in previous times (Centlivres: 1972).

The Institute aims in its vocational training programmes to adhere to the traditional educational systems and artistic knowledge of Afghanistan and to relate in structure and activity to the training received by apprentices over the centuries under the guidance of their masters. However, there are a number of ways in which the traditional learning structures have had to be adapted to respond to new opportunities and constraints presented by the modern educational context. Whilst the training programmes are based on traditional apprenticeship models, they also include some modern and internationally recognised methods of teaching and learning and supplementary classes in modern subjects. Students attend classes in Art History, Information Technology, Business Studies, English and, where

Figure 4
Female calligraphy student at Turquoise Mountain Institute



Figure 5
Ustad Abdul Manon, master potter, preparing a traditional kiln for wood firing



necessary, Literacy, to provide a rounded training that will respond to the demands of a career in their chosen skill. International technical experts have also been engaged as temporary members of teaching staff to introduce new information about materials, techniques and equipment and to help improve the quality of what each apprentice is able to make. Technical experts are encouraged to intervene only as far as is necessary to respond to basic needs without bringing any surplus additions to the craft. In particular, every effort is made to preserve the design component of the craft pieces, to ensure that the overall 'look' of what students can make corresponds as closely as possible to traditional precedent. The knowledge of how materials have been used historically, for example the use of the traditionally manufactured potash frit of *ishkor* and quartz material or *hak ar-barakat* in ceramic glazes, is an important component of safeguarding traditional skills. Material information is obtained both from oral and written sources of traditional knowledge and memory or from the examination of historic craft items. Where appropriate to raise the quality of the product to conform to modern international standards, additional materials or knowledge of new materials has been introduced by visiting foreign experts; in the case of ceramics this has translated into the improvement of kiln firing and clay processing procedures to eradicate flaws in the final ceramic product.

Additional drawing and design classes focus on the principles of Afghan design. The underpinning visual

design vocabulary to which all apprentices are exposed is rigorously drawn from designs, from architectural features and from artworks and monuments across Afghanistan, collated and analysed to produce underlying design principles from within the visual canon of the country's heritage, on which all artisans can draw. This structure, although it was completed largely by Afghan masters with the assistance of international experts, represents an artificial attempt at defining 'Afghan' design. What may be termed a 'synthetic' approach may be justified by pragmatic argument: the redefinition of, and adherence to, local - and often unique - design precedents or principles gives artisans a range of distinctive designs and branding capabilities that appeal to a modern and wide-ranging market and help to breathe life back into flagging craft traditions.

This synthetic approach has also been adopted to achieve accreditation and formal recognition for craft traditions within a modern educational context. Where arts and crafts, and the traditional ways of learning to make craftwork, were once an inherent part of the social fabric and of elite systems of patronage, today's educational systems do not reflect this. The Afghan government and its ministries pursue international educational models and promote vocational training programmes that are nurtured within an otherwise academic environment to achieve the quickest and broadest results. By contrast, traditional apprenticeships were as much as seven to ten years in length and focused on a single craft with little emphasis on any

broader general education. This type of system is rarely feasible within modern vocational programmes which are constrained by cost and time. The Turquoise Mountain Institute programmes, from their basis in traditional apprenticeship systems, have therefore been adapted to respond to these challenges. Courses aim instead, within a shorter three-year period of study, to give a sound basic training and a good degree of accomplishment, with the intention that graduates will move into placements in commercial production environments or to further individual study with a master to perfect their skills and respond to quality controls. The Institute's courses, therefore, do not offer a full apprenticeship but rather a foundation for further development.

The learning-by-looking teaching method employed in traditional apprenticeships also finds no easy home in modern educational systems. Apprentices would once have watched their masters working and copied as closely as possible what they observed; it would have been many years before they themselves began to innovate and produce their own designs, responding to changing needs and fashions without compromising the essence and value of their traditional skills. Class sizes today are too large to foster this traditional one-to-one relationship between master and apprentice; modern educational methods encourage an active contribution by the student rather than learning through observation of a master's own artistic methods and masterpieces. The adoption of the City and Guilds project-based method of

recognising development in skills has provided one solution to these challenges.

City and Guilds, an international awarding body based in the UK, has over a hundred centres globally. Its accreditation structure has its origins in guild systems of learning which were adhered to for many centuries throughout Europe and Asia. These have been adapted to suit a modern educational context and framework. Carefully structured individual project work and pieces emphasise the importance of copying the work of a master successfully. The production of pieces that are then assessed by masters - who themselves sell their own work - introduces students to the scrutiny of commercial experts and to the importance of quality control. Once skills and copying projects have been mastered, innovation and independent design is encouraged. These levels of development correspond broadly to the markers of attainment within the traditional apprenticeship system, redefined within the City and Guilds model. Appropriate certification also brings wider recognition to traditional craftsmanship. Not only is this a key concern of apprentices at the Institute today who seek accredited recognition for their achievements, it also provides an opportunity to safeguard and preserve something of these artistic traditions within a modern and internationally-recognised framework.

As a private educational entity licensed for operations through the Afghan Government's Ministry of Education,



Figure 6
Ustad Abdul Hadi, master woodcarver, with a woodwork student

Figure 7
Student using traditional hand-powered gem-cutting machine

the Institute also responds to the requirements and regulations of the Ministry of Education and works closely with its Technical and Vocational Education and Training Section. A strong relationship has been established with the Ministry of Education over the last three years. Although the Ministry of Education has a more academic focus to its own vocational training programmes, governmental support for the Institute's activities has nevertheless proved vital in establishing the Institute as a prominent art school and in raising the profile and importance of safeguarding traditional arts. It is hoped that this relationship may develop in the coming years into a formal public-private partnership with the Ministry. The Institute aims to widen the range of certificates and courses offered with an ultimate ambition to offer university-level degrees. The Institute will also continue to develop its courses - under the supervision of its crafts' masters - to respond to the changing demands of commercial markets for local artistic traditions.

A question of definition: the nature of intangible heritage

Defining the nature of intangible heritage that is to be safeguarded is often challenging given the mutable essence of much of that heritage. Alterations to the essence of traditional craftsmanship are often the result of, or subject to, a number of varying factors: the changing nature of the knowledge that is passed on from master to student with each successive transmission; the changing fashions, influences and technologies to which traditional craftsmanship may be exposed; the changing market place to which artisans must respond; the inadequacy of documentation when recording a mutable intangible heritage and the nature of intervention from parties or organisations outside crafts communities and groups.

Traditional craftsmanship is dependent on the transmission of knowledge through oral channels and observation of masters' work by apprentices. Oral and visual transmissions are, by their very nature, subject to change, corruption and embellishment, they are also necessarily conditioned by the idiosyncrasies of human memory and thought processes. Crafts traditions are additionally subject to conscious alterations in knowledge and skill that respond to changes in wider circumstances, availability and demand. The learning

experience is therefore likely to differ from apprentice to apprentice as knowledge and its transmission changes over time and is subject to wider influences.

For example, Ustad Abdul Hadi (aged 78) is a wood carver who can trace his knowledge back over seven generations of father-to-son transmission. He also attended Sanayee School, the leading vocational school in Kabul, as a young man as part of his training. Sanayee School was established in 1923 under international influence and provided students with a technical training that stretched beyond local artistic traditions. Abdul Hadi's education therefore represents a hybrid despite his status as a master of a traditional Afghan craft. Ustad Abdul Fattah (aged 65), a gem-cutter from a long familial tradition, began his own career learning from his father in the court atelier of King Zahir Shah. Although Abdul Fattah learnt from his father, the atelier's foreman favoured the use of modern electric machinery over traditional hand-powered gem-cutting equipment. Consequently, he never received training on hand-powered equipment. He later established his own business in the Kabul bazaars manufacturing for the commercial market where he continues to use electric machinery. Both these craftsmen are rightly accepted as masters of their crafts, and yet neither received what might be considered a 'pure' transmission of knowledge through systems theoretically associated with the historic development of their crafts. The very definition of 'pure' intangible heritage becomes increasingly elusive as the reality of individual situations is taken into consideration and as traditions respond to changing technology, social systems and market requirements.

Written, visual or other documentation of the transmission of knowledge can only record limited aspects of a craft tradition, by its very nature falling short of a full account. This presents a further challenge in defining and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Richard Kurin (Kurin: 2007) in his reflections on the 2003 UNESCO *Convention* points out that safeguarding intangible heritage cannot be achieved by its documentation in an archive or museum. It must instead be achieved through recognition that:

... intangible cultural heritage is the actual singing of songs... by members of the community who regard those songs as theirs, and indicative of their identity as a cultural group. It is the singing by the people

who nurtured those traditions and who will, in all probability, transmit those songs to the next generation.

This statement highlights not only the importance of community engagement and ownership in any attempts to safeguard intangible heritage, it also clearly lays out the limitations of recording and documentation as a means to do this. Documentation of traditional craftsmanship is also most usually initiated by those from outside the craft community itself; masters themselves are protective of trade secrets and are naturally wary of documenting their own knowledge for fear of losing a market advantage. What masters are willing to reveal to researchers or those trying to document their craft is likely therefore to be fragmentary.

Recording the knowledge transmitted, and rituals practised within artisan communities does, nevertheless, provide an important foundation for educational activities and community discussion. Where social and economic networks have been severely compromised, as is often the case in the conflict environments of Afghanistan, the documentation and recording of individual knowledge has served to bring hitherto isolated masters back together into the wider community. From these discussions, they have formed new perspectives and re-formed knowledge and ritual practices based on their combined knowledge and memory, which has then been used within an institutional context to recreate traditional teaching methods and community ceremonies and to re-emphasise the sacred relationship between master and apprentice. All new apprentices are now introduced to the Institute through an induction ceremony in which their masters formally receive students into the training programmes, and through which the student enters into a sacred educational relationship with their master. Every new apprentice receives a copy of the *Koran* and the Institute's *Code of Conduct* at their induction, and in turn they present sweets to their new teachers as a sign of respect and as a symbolic request for their ritual acceptance into the Institute. The specific details of these rites and rituals were recollected, recorded and reinstated by the masters at the Institute. This type of activity marks a step forward in the revival and safeguarding of craft techniques and skills, but also of the associated rituals of the traditional craft community. It therefore becomes clear that it is only with this type of community engagement that the 'essence' of intangible

cultural heritage to which Kurin refers can start to be explored and that the correct emphasis on Galla's 'First Voice' can be implemented meaningfully.

A revitalised future for the craft traditions of Afghanistan

Safeguarding this intangible 'essence' in traditional craftsmanship is inextricably linked to economic considerations: economic drivers and opportunity are a fundamental component of a living craft tradition. It is also important to note that the markets and patrons – whether local populations or courtly elites – that drive the development of these traditions through economic demand are themselves subject to constant change and are often difficult to define over any period of time. Whilst changing economic circumstances to which craftsmen respond may today reveal opportunities that broadly correspond to earlier models – renewed local markets and higher-paying international clients to whom artisans may now have access because of modern communication technology and transportation – those changing circumstances nevertheless often demand a change in the technical, artistic and stylistic aspects of work to ensure that artisans are able to sell their products successfully and profitably.

The Turquoise Mountain Institute answers part of this need by providing technical knowledge and skills to young artisans. However, in the case of Afghanistan, the existence of the traditional markets themselves has also been threatened by war. For example, the city of Tashqurghan, one of the last surviving bazaar towns in Afghanistan, was bombed during the Russian occupation of the country. Here the community was subject to wider factors that jeopardised the existing economic conditions and social structures in which traditional craftsmanship had been nurtured. Although this type of social structure still survives in part within Afghanistan – the pottery village of Istalif just outside Kabul is one such example – much of the social and economic fabric that sustained these craft traditions no longer exists. This situation must be recognised in order to assist artisans in supporting themselves once their training is complete. In response, Turquoise Mountain's Business Development department aims to build local and international crafts markets for artisans, not only helping to support those that once existed but also developing new avenues for commercial activity. It is developing its own Design and

Production Studio to take on commissions and develop high-quality product ranges, setting best practice standards and providing access to elite international markets for local artisans and Institute graduates. The Studio has generated over \$1m worth of sales in the past three years. Building close links between the products manufactured by the Studio and the courses run at the Institute gives graduate artisans the ability to respond to market demands and opportunities, ensures a continued high quality of production for the Studio and engenders the wider development of, and access to, a range of local and international markets as the craft economy begins to be re-established.

Formal links are also being established between the Design and Production Studio and the Institute to provide short-term work experience opportunities for current students of the Institute's programmes. A share of production profits will later be channelled into Institute activities with the longer-term goal of providing sustainable financial support for its training programmes in the future, in combination with public funding. It is also hoped, as the industry develops and the Institute builds its reputation for high-quality training programmes, that private commercial enterprises may in the future sponsor students through a period of study at the Institute who will later join their own workshops, an echo of the earlier guild model of student support, and a further development of institutional sustainability.

The demands of expanding markets and the crafts' professions themselves must in turn influence the future development of the Institute and the programmes it can offer. Building closer links with the professional industries will allow curriculum development to respond to the particular technical and artistic demands of changing markets. Regular dialogue between the Institute administration and artisans and crafts business people will ensure that training programmes respond to changes and to market requirements, giving graduates a greater chance of employment or the opportunity to become employers themselves on completion of their course of study.

Graduate opportunities are also enhanced by the further development of career support services. In December 2009 the Institute graduated its first class of students. The Institute's main focus is ensuring that good quality economic and artistic opportunities are

open to its graduates within the commercial and educational sector. Whether graduates take up a place in the Turquoise Mountain Design and Production Studio, start their own business or continue their studies or artistic development, the Institute's activities include the continued support of its future graduates as they begin their careers. As an institution with a small number of graduates, each person can be helped on an individual basis to find promising employment or study opportunities. From the thirty students graduating in 2009, eight achieved places at Kabul University's Faculty of Fine Art and were fast-tracked to begin their studies in the second year of the degree programme, six graduates have taken positions as junior craftsmen within the Turquoise Mountain production workshops, eight graduates are pursuing workshop training or study opportunities in India, Pakistan and the UK, two have secured positions as craft teachers and six are joining independent craft businesses in Kabul.

Identifying future opportunities for each of its graduates forms a structured part of the Institute's activities; this type of institutional support is a crucial factor to graduate success. Where once apprentices would have automatically progressed within guild systems from their training into their master's workshop, before themselves establishing their own workshops, in today's market employment avenues are less clearly defined. Given the absence of these earlier guild structures, the explicit introduction of career guidance is a necessary support facility for successful graduate development. Career support activities include individual interviews with graduating students to identify suitable next steps to further their careers; providing templates for curriculum vitae, portfolios and other individual promotional materials; identifying job opportunities and opportunities for further study and, where appropriate, providing practical support during application processes; providing coaching in interview technique and organising job fairs as an opportunity for future graduates to meet prospective employers and start to build their own professional networks. Exhibitions of student work and the promotion of traditional crafts through publications and media events can also help the success of individual graduates.

The future of these artistic traditions has been changed by Turquoise Mountain's intervention and its mission to improve technical ability and to help artisans

develop the ability to respond to, and to access, contemporary local and international markets. Working from a community foundation of traditional knowledge, its projects represent an attempt to move beyond the documentation of traditional craftsmanship to the revival of threatened artistic traditions. Like the crafts traditions themselves, the project is conditioned by both conscious and unforeseen change. The craft skills being fostered by Turquoise Mountain have been subject to direct intervention made with the intention of exposing those traditions to new stimuli and expertise and of bringing about revival and opportunities for artisans. The project will continue to be subject to the challenges and constraints of the wider political and social situation within an unsettled country, and to the ability of artisans to respond to market opportunities. The overall success of the Institute's training programmes will be most clearly measured by future private sector sponsorship and financial contributions, the level of on-going government support and collaboration and the economic prosperity and artistic excellence achieved by those masters and artisans who are leading this revitalisation of Afghanistan's craft traditions into the future. 🇦🇫

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