



RAVENSTHORPE COMMUNITY LADIES TRADITIONAL ASIAN WEAR UP-CYCLE SERVICE



A TCBL CASE STUDY: UK

28 MARCH, 2017.

BACKGROUND

There has been a substantial Asian community in Yorkshire for many decades and this has given rise to a real diversity of cultures and styles. Textiles and clothing is at the heart of much of this multi-cultural activity with a ready and ever growing market for its products. The Community Centre in Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, was set up in 2000 in order to provide space for activities, childcare and skills development opportunities for its local people; one of these groups comprises Asian ladies who wanted to develop their skills in textiles and fashion whilst encompassing today's multi culture.

THE PROBLEM & THE OPPORTUNITY

TCBL Design and Making Lab manager Ruth Farrell made time to get to know the group and find out what they wanted to achieve as individuals and potentially as a group. She found that they wanted to up-cycle existing Asian garments to create more wearable styles or to explore western influences on Asian fashion whilst still holding to the integrity of the wearers' cultural requirements. The idea was driven by their desires to utilise items that cost a substantial amount of money yet were often left hanging in the back of the wardrobe; fairly quickly it became evident that there might be a wider, local market of people willing to pay for this service. Not only were these exciting concepts but Ruth thought they had the potential to be rolled out into a business. Design and making skills in the group ranged from little to those with many years of experience of sewing; what they needed to find was an organization with the ability to help them to turn their ideas into something more than a hobby. In addition, although the ladies knew each other socially none of them had worked together before on a project like this.



TCBL SOLUTIONS

TCBL helped by offering expert advisor support from the beginning. The package devised by Ruth had to cover two separate but interconnected areas: clothing design and manufacture alongside business skills. In addition, Ruth planned sessions to allow for both group and individual training needs.

Ruth designed a bespoke training package that was meant to provide all the basic skills required to research, design, develop and produce a finished garment and at the same time learn how to cost, cut, spec and grade. Essentially, she planned for the whole of the training package – from concept to finished product – to be delivered in ten sessions, one per week, in bite-size chunks. A copy of the basic training plan can be found towards the end of the case study.

TCBL ADVICE & SUPPORT



The programme needed to be well thought through and planned in detail as Ruth wanted to ensure the whole of the business process was learned in a limited amount of time. Accordingly, the programme was divided into easy-to-follow steps from concept to finished sales item in the order that they would be in industry. It allowed the ladies to learn together and work both independently and in groups as their knowledge and skills progressed. During the process each person discovered their own best skills and preferred area of expertise for the business and, most importantly, Ruth ensured that the objective

of upcycling and duplicating the process was seen to be eminently achievable, which meant that everyone's confidence increased.

TIMESCALE

The ten week training programme was undertaken at the Community Centre in Ravensthorpe. Work commenced in October 2016 with completion in January 2017 after a short break over Christmas.

IMPACT

The success of the programme was evident from the sense of enjoyment and fulfilment shown by the ladies. The development of design and manufacturing skills led to increased self-confidence and a sense of belief that this was just the beginning. The Manager of the Centre was extremely interested pleased with the result and hopes that the model can be replicated with more local groups. He even mentioned a desire to turn the programme into an accredited qualification course.



LESSONS LEARNED

By keeping an open mind whilst piloting and delivering the training Ruth was able to listen to feedback when it was given. As a result she was able to tweak the programme to motivate and drive the ladies through the course and ensure they completed on time.

Ruth also realised that an old adage is true: 'you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink' a few of the group did not complete the course as they did not think they needed to learn to do things a different way or were not willing to push themselves, she quickly understood that it was better for the rest of the group to not worry about the fall out as they would have been a negative influence on the rest. They would not have been open to sharing and working together.

The students learned that the results were much better when they didn't just settle on their first idea but researched further into it. After they completed all stages they understood the value in each part of the process and how necessary it was to fulfil them in the correct order.

They also realized how much better the end results were after completing the sampling/toile stage which they had not done before. They also understood that by working together they didn't have to do every part of the process themselves and that by working as a team in future they would be able to play to one another's strengths.



FUTURE PLANS

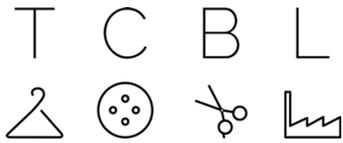
Four of the students intend to start a Co-op offering a made-to-measure and up-cycle service in their local area.

TESTIMONIALS

Ruth Farrell: Delivering the programme was a challenge and I really wanted it to be successful, it turned out better than I could have wished for. Working with the ladies and seeing them grow in confidence and expertise pushing themselves to work beyond their comfort zone and think outside the box and witnessing their sense of achievement was very inspiring, a joy in fact!

Two of the participants gave video interviews and these can be found on TCBL's channel on Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/209722747> and <https://vimeo.com/209714479>



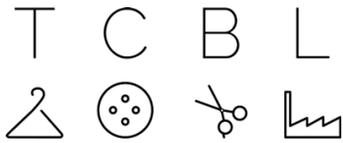
Course: Fashion and Accessories Business Enterprise Programme to deliver a traditional Asian-wear up-cycle workshop.

Output: Upcycle existing Asian garments (often formalwear) to create everyday styles to reflect western influences whilst maintaining the integrity of the wearers cultural requirements.

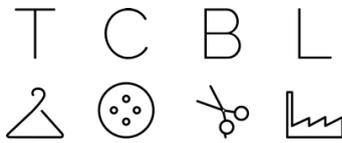
Deliverable: Teaching and practical support from initial garment through to up-cycled product encompassing the whole design and make process as in business, i.e. establishing customer requirements, trend research, design, pattern cutting, specification charts, cutting out, stitching and costing.

Aim: A Community Co-op/Artisan style business or SME's established.

week 1	>Show and tell, each person to hold up their items and explain why they purchased them and last wore them. >A briefing on Trends and the outline of 5 x key ones to choose from. >Group to discuss current trends in the community clothing choices and how their chosen trend might be commercialised for their customers.
week 2	>Help and guidance on researching and creating trend/mood boards. >Individuals to start to create their own boards to the trend they have selected. >Includes magazine work and the use of the computer i.e. Pinterest and Cad i.e. Illustrator
week 3	>Finalising mood boards and further boards to research the silhouettes/details/trims . >A lesson on colour palettes and how to create them. >Individuals to start to discuss and formalise their own palettes.
week 4	>Finish colour palettes. >A quick lesson on starting to Design their up-cycle outfit. >Guidance and training for both hand and CAD sketching. >Pupils are encouraged to thoroughly explore the design technique so not to limit their creativity.
week 5	>Individuals to finish their designs. >Lesson on pattern cutting fundamentals. >Individuals to pattern cut their designs both on the stand and on the flat. Practical guidance and technical advice given throughout the process.
week 6	>Individuals to finish pattern cutting. >A lesson on creating specification charts. >Subject to time Individuals can create their own 'how to measure diagram and measurement charts to match their design.



week 7	>A lesson on cutting out includes lays, grain line etc. Each to cut out their garment(s) and chart the consumption for use in week 9. >Individuals to start to sew their pieces.
week 8	>Individuals to finish making their pieces with practical help and support.
week 9	>Individuals to finish making their pieces with practical help and support. >A lesson on costings and lead times. >Individuals to cost their own pieces
week 10	>Appraisal of finished projects from research/Design through to finished items. >Individuals to discuss the parts of the process they preferred and the parts they found the most challenging. >Guidance and discussion on how the new skills could be utilised in future autonomously or as a group. Hopefully as a business or businesses.



DOCUMENT INFORMATION

REVISION HISTORY

REVISION	DATE	AUTHOR	ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION
V.1	28.03.2017	Ruth Farrell	TCoE	TCBL Lab case study

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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