

# Planning for an Ethical Future in Fashion Fabrics and Accessories

**Keywords:** textiles / accessories / fair-trade / education

## **Abstract**

*As ethical values become increasingly important in the market place, students need to be responsive to alternative commercial approaches in order to develop their future design practice with full awareness of global issues. In order to build an ethical perspective into the Fashion Fabrics and Accessories course at De Montfort University, a partnership with a local fair-trade importer called Just Trade has been established. Based on the intention to marry the craft skills that are embedded within the importer's manufacturing bases, with the contemporary design aesthetic in which our students are engaged, a live project is being developed. The paper will present a case study on the development of the project to date.*

## **1. Introduction**

This paper describes the development of a collaborative project between a new Fashion Fabrics and Accessories course at De Montfort University and a fair-trade importer working within the area of fashion, jewellery and accessories. The project has been used as a case study to explore; the possibilities of incorporating a fair-trade perspective into an educational context, specifically textiles and accessories; the potential to use craft and design skills to build partnerships that encourage social equity; the marrying of global craft skills with a contemporary design led approach to develop products for fashion led markets.

The paper presents the context for the work by reviewing the notion of 'ethical consumerism' and outlining an educational response to this notion. The methodological approach taken is then outlined and the case study findings are presented, discussed and conclusions drawn.

## **2. Ethical Consumerism**

Greater awareness within society of our individual and corporate social and environmental responsibility on both a local and global level has led to an increase in what has been termed as 'conscious consumerism' (Lee and Sevier 2007, p.7). Conscious consumers think about the roots and sustainability of the products which they buy. An initial focus on foodstuffs has now expanded to included clothing and accessories. In 2006 a survey undertaken for Marks and

Spencers (Marks and Spencers, 2006 in Lee and Sevier 2007, p.7) found that 78% of shoppers would like to have more knowledge of the way in which the products they buy are made, including the use of chemicals in manufacture and the working conditions in the factories that they come from. This increased sense of consumer conscience relating to the environmental and social issues surrounding consumption is referred to 'Ethical Consumerism'. According to the Co-operative bank, ethical consumerism was worth £29.3 billion in 2005, which was 11% more than in 2004 (Co-op, 2006 in Lee and Sevier 2007, p.7) and research by global market information company TNS World panel Fashion (TNS Global in Lee and Sevier 2007, p.7) suggests that 27% of all people would pay more for ethically produced clothing.

Within this climate high-street brands and retailers, as well as niche retailers, are quickly introducing ethical clothing ranges, such as 'Choose Love' by Catherine Hamnett at Tesco, that include organic and fair-trade products (Chyzy, 2007, p.7). The current move to increase ethical production is not only driven by consumer demand on the high-street but is being propelled forward, and often led, by a number of high profile designers and niche labels. The second successful year of 'Estethica', a showcase of the best ethical designer labels at the Design Exhibition at London Fashion Week, proved that, as Orsola de Castro and Filippo Ricci (2007, p.19) write, 'in an industry that places so much emphasis on change, innovation and the 'next big thing', and in a business where looks and trends can alter in the space of a week...the movement towards sustainability was not a passing trend'.

In contrast to the climate of consumer consciousness, however, the ability of retailers to offer continually cheaper 'fast fashion' through offshore production creates a tension for consumers. The report 'Well Dressed – Present and Future Sustainable Clothing and Textiles in the United Kingdom' revealed that the amount spent on womenswear has greatly increased in recent years (Chyzy, 2007, p.6). The report highlights the need for consumers to buy fewer more sustainable products to 'reduce environmental impact and promote social equity' and recommends that further consumer education is vital' (Chyzy, 2007, p.8). In order to be successful, therefore, such products need to be designed to last in terms of quality, design and style.

### **3. Educational Response**

It is within this context that the staff developing a new Fashion Fabrics and Accessories (FFA) course at De Montfort University (DMU) felt the need to respond by building in an ethical element to the curriculum. The emphasis upon craft knowledge, technical awareness and

contemporary aesthetics within the design ethos of textile design area formed the direction of the response and a live project has been put in place with a local fair-trade importer called 'Just Trade' who work with artisan groups in Peru and Cambodia<sup>i</sup>. From a research point of view, planning the project has raised a number of avenues for exploration.

Using the project as a case study the purpose of the research outlined in this paper is to explore; the possibilities of incorporating a fair-trade perspective into an educational context, specifically textiles and accessories; the potential to use craft and design skills to build partnerships that encourage social equity; the marrying of global craft skills with a contemporary design led approach to develop products for fashion led markets.

#### **4. Methodology**

The methodological approach is qualitative and uses a case study as the central research strategy to enable a detailed study and wide interpretation to be made of the collaborative project in question. The work, at this stage is essentially exploratory and the strategy used has allowed the research design to evolve and emerge as it has progressed over the past twelve months.

##### **4.1 Methods**

Within the study; semi-structured interviews, observation and documentation of student work, and the collation of visual and textual documentation have been used as methods of data collection.

##### *Interviews*

Interviews with Just Trade's buying and design team allowed in depth information to be gained in relation to the company's background, ethos and values, design approach, manufacturing methods and capabilities, limitations and market position and growth. This has enabled the value of such projects in developing the use of craft and design skills to build partnerships that encourage social equity to be confirmed and explored in depth.

##### *Documentation*

Review of the FFA academic validation documentation has allowed the relevance of the project to be confirmed in relation to the course rationale, industry's needs and graduate career paths

and has also enabled the possibilities of incorporating a fair-trade perspective into an educational context, specifically textiles and accessories to be explored.

### *Visual Materials*

The collation of visual materials from both Just Trade and current students studying within the textile's area at DMU has allowed, along with the information gained from the interviews and document review, students craft knowledge and design aesthetic to be mapped against the capabilities of Just Trades manufacturing bases and their design approach. This has enabled the idea of marrying of global craft skills with a contemporary design led approach to develop products for fashion led markets to be explored within an education context.

### *Theory*

Theory relating to a craft approach to design, craft knowledge and the value of the hand made has been reviewed.

### *Analysis*

The approach to analysis is rooted in qualitative research methodology and has evolved around a concurrent process of data reduction, data display and data analysis (Miles and Hubberman, 1994).

## **5. Craft Practice, Craft Knowledge and the Value of the Handmade**

The focus within this paper on craft knowledge and skills combined with a contemporary design led approach arises from both the ethos of the Fashion Fabrics and Accessories course and the roots of the collaborative Fair Trade Importer. The value of a craft approach within design has become increasingly significant as consumers become increasingly aware of the roots of products which they buy. It is therefore important to understand concepts within this area of material culture.

The term 'craft' in its widest or traditional sense is used to describe a trade or skill. In industrialized society, however, the 'craftsperson's' role and context has changed. Dormer (1990, p.150), wrote that craft has changed from being a working class commercial occupation to a middle-class creative art-like activity. Within a contemporary context, craft incorporates activities or creative practices that embrace aspects and values of both Art and Design (Lees-Maffei and Sandino, 2004, p.207).

### *Textile Craft Practice*

Craft practice within textiles informs design for industry but also functions as a distinct category of textile practice. Gale and Kaur (2002, p.63) write that textile craft practice is 'commonly perceived as multi-media, exploring the inherent qualities of different textile materials' and that a 'craft approach to textiles is very much process-led; the actual pursuit of making by hand is of paramount importance'. The nature of hand work enables personal interaction with the making process and an instinctive response to materials which is central to design within craft practice. Textile products produced through craft practice usually function in niche, high-end market areas due to their exclusivity. Craft objects derive their value, as Yair (2001, p. 78) notes, from a sense of quality, tradition and customization. Since the 1980's the notion of 'designer-maker' practice, which has grown out of notions craft practice, has become established (Taylor, 2001). The term designer-maker is applicable to a range of design disciplines including Textiles. Designer-maker practice can be described continuum between industrial design practice and craft practice and involves the interaction of designing, making and manufacturing in a small business setting. As textile production for the mid-volume and mass market areas is becoming increasingly competitive due to the ability of offshore manufacturers to provide cheap production, as Ronald Weisbord (2003, p.2), noted in his paper 'European Textile Designers in a Changing Global Environment', the development of textile products for niche, high-end markets is of growing importance within the European textiles industry.

### *Craft Knowledge*

The knowledge produced through the personal interaction with materials and process, that a craft approach to design requires, has been described as 'craft knowledge'. Dormer (1994, p. 11 and 1997, p.140) described craft knowledge as practical knowledge that requires both technical knowledge and 'know how'. Yair (2001, p.60 and p.289) notes that it is often discussed in terms of an understanding of or feel for materials and describes the thought processes that produce craft knowledge as 'context specific and non-rational, drawing on practical knowledge gained through experience and stabilized in the bodily domain'. Dormer (1994, p.11) highlights that notions of local knowledge, as opposed to general knowledge, relate to craft knowledge. Yair (2001, p. 62-61) summarizes that craft knowledge enables the maker to predict how an object will respond to manipulation even in situations outside the immediate working context and provides knowledge relating to the medium's affordances and constraints.

The application of this knowledge, as Pye (1968, p.47) notes, relies on judgment and contextual awareness.

### *Craft Aesthetic*

Dormer perceived (1990, p.160-169) an aspect of crafts value of lies in the 'textures and forms of a lumpen, organic, richly textured aesthetic' as apposed to a smooth 'machine' look and the imperfect being perfect. This is not always applicable or desirable, however, within the context of contemporary design. Rees (1997, p.122–123) suggests a more subtle interpretation of what a craft aesthetic might be, writing 'that the relationship between craft process and product is likely to be, if not quite transparent then relatively, accessible to most of us'. She suggests that industrial design conceals the making process but that craft objects enable a connection between the making process and consumer. Rees (1997, p.117) discussion implies that craft objects subsequently derive high value from association with a creative individual

## **6. Case Study**

As outlined above, in order to explore the emerging research interests prompted by the development of collaboration between the FFA course at DMU and Just Trade a case study has been developed. The information gained through the various methods of data collection used is outlined in the text and images that follow. The first section documents the rationale of the FFA course, the industry needs that it aims to meet and the skill and knowledge set within the textiles area that it aims to exploit and develop. The second section outlines information gained from interviews about Just Trade's fair-trade ethos, projects, products and approach to the design development process.

### **6.1 Fashion Fabrics and Accessories**

The Fashion Fabrics and Accessories course at De Montfort University was established in response to the needs of industry and a quantifiable demand for designers who bridge the gap between fashion and textiles with specific reference to the accessories market.

#### *The UK Clothing, Footwear and Accessories Market*

The validation documentation prepared for the FFA course documented that the UK clothing and footwear market was worth an estimated £44.45bn in 2005, accounting for just fewer than 6% of total consumer expenditure. It explains that the historical perspective is important, showing that this proportion of the typical household budget was 10% back in 1960, so that

clothing (worth £38.35bn) and footwear (£6.1bn), although among the basic human needs, are now less of a spending priority. The ability of consumers to spend less has been partly due to falling prices of these products. Between 2001 and 2005, average clothing and footwear prices fell by 14.4%, while the general cost of living went up by 12.6%, so that shoppers are buying far more in volume terms, even though their spending is increasing only modestly. In current terms, between 2001 and 2005, 21.2% more was spent on clothing for women, girls and infants, taking the market to £24bn in 2005. Much less (£12bn) was spent on men's and boys' clothing, which also grew more slowly between 2001 and 2005 (14%). Accessories and other clothing costs (hire, cleaning, dressmaking, etc.) contributed a value of £2.35bn in 2005 (DMU Documentation, 2007).

In the Keynote (2005) market summary of customer spending in 2005 on the accessories market it is noted that the declining prices for most clothing items mean that expenditure has risen by 7.1% in real terms since 2000 (i.e. there has been a 7.1% increase in the apparent 'volume' of demand). This is also supported by the National Statistics publication Family Spending, shows that accessories accounted for 50% of total expenditure in this sector in 2004. The purchasing pattern for handbags was stable for much of the 1990s, but there was a strong upturn around the turn of the decade. This has continued into 2004, when 47.9% of women bought a handbag, compared with 39.4% in 2002 and 36.8% in 2000.

#### *A Focus on Luxury and Small Niche Businesses*

The recent trend of less spending but greater volumes in regard to consumption has led to the flourishing of niche markets for luxury goods within the Fashion Accessories market in the UK. Although manufacturing output has declined it is now focused on specialist clothing or luxury products. Significant changes in the fashion and textiles industry were highlighted in October 2005 by Skillfast UK, in their report 'Skills Needs Assessment for Apparel, Footwear, Textiles and Related Businesses', in which they highlight enterprise as one of the key drivers in the sector with: 'New firm formation in areas such as fashion design and small scale craft activities...' (Skill Fast, 2005). Such research indicates potential opportunities to link both aspects of fashion and craft skills, such as some of those currently practiced within the textiles area at De Montfort.

It is within this context that consumer awareness of the importance of understanding the ethical roots of products and an appreciation of handmade design led products, even if purchased at a greater economic cost, has been propelled.

### *Building in an Ethical Edge*

The FFA course aims to provide students with the opportunity to design and create innovative textiles and fashion accessories. The emphasis is on creative development of contemporary and cutting edge collections of textiles and products to be worn on and round the body; building on the combined knowledge of textile and fashion design with reference to menswear, women's-wear and children's apparel. The course is structured to enable a student to engage in developing their own creative signatures using a diverse range of textile processes and fashion skills. The student has the opportunity to be cross disciplinary within their approach to their work allowing for experimental and innovative surface design to develop. Opening and exploring the boundaries and overlaps of Mixed Media Textiles, Printed Textiles and Constructed Textiles offers innovation in new niche markets and undiscovered techniques with the potential to create ground breaking and unique work.







**Figure 1.** Images from the constructed, printed and mixed media textiles areas at DMU

The aesthetic direction of the FFA course is design led and is intended to have transparent currency in taste with the intention that graduates will lead the field and not to follow it. Essential to this is the understanding of seasonal trends and acknowledgement of global issues. This will assist in anticipating and meeting the needs of the consumer, industry and in identifying and establishing new markets. Both craft knowledge and the evolution of high levels of skill in making are key factors for success. Understanding of processes and production in an out-sourcing situation is important as the fair trade industry grows. Part of the ethos of the course is cross fertilization, interdisciplinary and focused on niche markets in which craft and small scale production allows for the customization of goods. The specialized production and consumption of goods, as Jackson (1998, p. 96) writes, “allows for the construction of particular lifestyles that define themselves against the consumption of widely available mass-produced objects” . Figure 2 shows images of the work produced by the first Cohort of FFA students.



**Figure 2.** Accessories made from re-constructed second hand garments by the first cohort of Level 1 FFA undergraduates

As part of the curriculum planning, it was considered that an ethical perspective should be built into the student's experience. This has provided the motivation and context for a collaborative project with Just Trade discussed within the paper. The approach to production and design within the company was considered compatible with philosophy and ethos of the FFA course and the preparation for a live brief is underway.

## 6.2 Just Trade

Just trade was established in 2006 after the directors had spent a number of years working to provide design advice for a jewellery making project called Achkiy in Lima Peru which was set up to provide work for unemployed women. It now works with companies in Cambodia, Africa, India and Nepal as well as Peru and has been recognized as a fair-trade importer by the British Association of Fair Trade Shops.

Just Trade aims to provide a route to market for small fair-trade businesses in the developing world and provides professional advice on design, marketing and business management where required. The company's ethos is such that it builds on skills present within local communities within the countries in which it works and develops design awareness in relation to the UK and European market. Through this, partnerships are established and developed which enable local people to build stable and sustainable means of income, helping to encourage social equity within the fashion and textiles industries.


### *Fair-Trade*





The British Association of Fair Trade Shops describes Fair Trade as a ‘trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect which seeks greater equity in international trade and contributes sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to secure the rights of marginalized producers and workers...’ (BAFTS, 2007).





As a movement, Fair Trade started in Europe about 40 years ago with the aim to alleviate poverty in the ‘Global South’ (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean) by building direct, sustainable relationships with disadvantaged producers and providing fair access to the developed ‘North’. It has now become a powerful force which is symbolized by a high level of European Co-Operation (BAFTS, 2007). Fair-Trade sets a minimum price paid to producers based on the actual costs of sustainable production. It also involves supporting producer organizations for community, social and environmental projects. Gender equality in pay and working conditions is also upheld and partnerships commit to long term relationships to enable stability and security for employees.





### *Different Company’s and Products*

Just Trade work with 12 different projects. Table 1 shows the projects, including locations and products, that Just Trade work for. The level of involvement in the design and product development process within each varies. The greatest level of input, to date has been with the Hagar, Mama Ursula and Zoe projects .Information on the craft techniques, processes, level of skill and materials used within the Mama Ursula and Zoe projects gained through an interview with Just Trade’s designer and buyer is summarized in Table 2.

Project	Background	Location	Products	Product Example
Achkiy	Provides employment for 20 women living in shanty towns on the outskirts of Lima	Peru.	Intricate silver jewellery Gifts	 Set of 5 silver rings



Project	Background	Location	Products	Product Example
Ascension Clothing	Produces clothing made from organic cotton and produced in fair trade factories. Employs local people and supports social projects.	Andhra Pradesh, Northern India.	Clothing aimed at the street wear/youth market	 <p>Women's trousers</p>
Cred	Champion fair-trade in all aspects of the jewellery supply chain. Cred work with small scale mining communities in Colombia. Work with cutting and polishing so-ops and master jewelers and stone setters in Asia and Africa.	Colombia Asia Africa	Jewellery	 <p>Flat silver bangle</p>
Dialog	Design hub supporting micro businesses in impoverished areas in Asia. Emphasis is placed on recycled materials and the use of craft techniques in modern designs.	Hong Kong, Vietnam and Malaysia.	T-shirts Jewellery Purses	 <p>Smile T-shirt</p>  <p>Purse</p>

Project	Background	Location	Products	Product Example
Etc.	The Ethical Trading Company works with charities supporting vulnerable people and using environmental conscious processes	India and Zimbabwe.	Handmade clothes and accessories and gifts.	 <p>Leather bound notebook</p>
Hagar Design	Enabling vulnerable women to overcome past traumas and gain skills to become independent and productive. A well-respected commercial company that currently employs more than 80 disadvantaged women.	Cambodia.	Silk scarves, purses and bags. Bags and purses made from recycled materials.	 <p>Rice bag back pack</p>
Hosanna	Needy women learn to make jewellery	Kathamandu, Nepal.	Jewellery.	 <p>Spring bracelet</p>
Kazuri	Ceramic jewellery handmade in Nairobi, Kenya by hand one of the 150 local women employed by Kazuri.	Nairobi, Kenya.	Jewellery.	 <p>Ceramic bead necklace</p>

Project	Background	Location	Products	Product Example
Lazy Baby	Clothes made by a fair trade certified factory called Craft Aid on the island of Mauritius which was founded to provide paid employment for disabled people and to help in their rehabilitation. There are currently 125 employees, 40% of whom are disabled.	Mauritius	Clothing.	 <p>T-shirt</p>
Made	Incorporates the talent of established designers such as Sam Ubhi, Beatrix Ong and Olivia Morris, a unique brand that is about profitable trading which benefits impoverished communities.	East Africa.	Jewellery	 <p>Choker</p>
Mama Ursula	Beautiful hand-woven belts in plain or patterned designs.	Lima, Peru	Belts aimed a the surf/street market	 <p>Belt</p>
Zoe	Employs women in the shanty towns of Lima, Peru to make jewellery, cards, and gift tags using traditional crochet, beading and chain making techniques.	Lima, Peru	Jewellery Cards Gifts	 <p>Necklace made from seeds</p>


**Table 1** - Summary Information about Just Trade Projects<sup>ii</sup>.



Mama Ursula			
Number of Employees	Craft Techniques and Processes Used an Level of Skill	Available Equipment	Materials
1	Weaving Warp is measured and set up using domestic equipment Designs are woven by hand using pencils. Striped and simple graphic motifs can be woven in a range of colours. Width and length of fabric can be varied. Finishing is difficult as no sewing machine – this has to be outsourced.	Home made loom - wood and nails. Pencils.	Cotton Hemp
<div>   </div> <p>Measuring and Weaving</p>			

**Table 2** - Information on the Mama Ursula Project

<b>Zoe</b>			
<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Craft Techniques and Processes Used (inc skill level)</b>	<b>Available Equipment</b>	<b>Materials</b>
Up to 30 part time.	Crochet (hand). Silver link jewellery work. Beading and stringing. Hand sewing and appliqué. Machine stitch. Cutting (one employee can cut straight). Basic drawing skills.	Very low-tec. One sewing machine. Pliers. Hole punches. Gas blow torch.	Silver Seeds Wire Papers Beads Fabric Wooden beads Shell Found objects



Beading

**Table 3** - Information on the Zoe Project

### 6.3 Developing New Products

Interviews with Just Trade revealed a number of insights into the design and product development process that are specific to the type of production in question within the Mama Ursula, Zoe and Hagar projects. Insights were gained into the limitations of the original products produced by these projects and how, through skill and design training, the products



have been developed and improved for the UK market. The process of design development described by Just Trade highlighted the need for a cross cultural and conceptual understanding of objects and possessions and their value within different cultural settings to realize successful products. Further insights were obtained into the production process and supply chain within Fair Trade partnerships of this nature.

### *Limitations of Original Products*

When discussing the development of Fair Trade partnerships established by Just Trade it became clear that the products produced by the small businesses in question possessed desirable qualities in relation to the ethical values behind production but were limited from an aesthetic perspective in regard to the UK market. It was noted that the products often lacked a consistent 'look' and the sense of a coherent range, the direction of development was broad rather than focused and colour palettes not suited to fashion-led markets in the UK. In order to make the products suitable for the UK market training, particularly in terms of design, was provided by Just Trade.

### *Design Process - Product Development and Training*

Just Trade's designer suggested that there are a number of approaches to the design and buying process within a fair trade context;

1. the project makes independently and the importer buys;
2. the importer designs and the project makes and;
3. the importer works collaboratively with the project to design and make ranges of products.

Just Trade works using all three approaches, but is particularly focused on the third. Although most costly and labor intensive, this approach provides a more sustainable future for the projects and workers involved. To implement this approach, Just Trade has introduced workshops that provide employees with foundations in design as well as the skills to make specific products. An example of such a workshop involved the construction of an installation of London Tube tickets (an object the employees in question placed great value upon) to communicate the way in which different things are valued within different cultures and the re-contextualization of things. The employees were then encouraged to take a ticket to keep but only if they replaced it with a drawing, the same size as a tube ticket, of an object from their own

everyday existence that they thought others might value. Other workshops have covered colour perception, idea development and skills training.

In regard to craft skills, the approach taken by Just Trade has been to focus on craft skills and equipment already present in the communities in which they work. It was noted, that investment into skills training can sometimes be problematic within this context. Due to the difficult lifestyles of many of the employees skills can often be quickly lost, wasting time and resources. Further to this employees are often reluctant to share skills due to a protective view of employment, which can limit production rate and progression. New products are therefore often developed by the introduction of new materials, colour palettes and sizes. The variation of skill level within the projects means that products have to be developed for each level to enable inclusive employment.

#### *Production and Supply*

Through discussing the buying and supply process it became evident that considerations specific to working with the type of projects in question need to be taken. Issues of quality control and the desire to establish long term partnerships impact upon buying and supply strategies used. In regard to quality, it was noted that often, due to a lack of understanding of the target market, sizing and colour matching/application is not consistent, which can create problems within the supply chain. In terms of supply, the desire to establish sustainable partnerships means that Just Trade commit to a set number of ranges and orders per year regardless of buying trends. This means that designs need to be accurate in regard to trends to enable business progress.

### **6.4 Process and Technique Mapping for Collaboration between Just Trade and the Fashion Fabrics and Accessories Course**

To begin to establish a successful collaborative project between the Fashion Fabrics and Accessories course and Just Trade, the techniques and processes currently used within our Textile Design area were mapped against the Just Trade projects that employ similar processes and techniques or which have the potential to do so as shown in Table 4.

Through this mapping process it has been possible to identify areas of potential development within each of the projects and to match this with the skills and expertise of our students. Having done this we felt that the collaborative project should be based around a woven textiles design brief to feed into the product development process at the Mama Ursula project. It was

considered that the focus of the brand would be relevant for the Fashion Fabrics students as would the processes and techniques employed. It was felt that the universal language of weaving would enable ideas developed within the student's work to be smoothly translated for production by Mama Ursula.

The brief will aim to further the design scope of the Mama Ursula project by introducing new woven design to current products and by developing new product ideas and prototypes.

<b>Fashion Fabrics and Accessories Students</b>	<b>Potential Just Trade Projects for Collaboration</b>
<b>Printing</b> inc; flocking, foiling, devore, pigment printing, digital print, open screen work, dye sublimation, heat transfer printing	Zoe
<b>Coloration</b> inc; dyeing and coloration of cloth, shibori and resist techniques	Hagar
<b>Embroidery</b> inc; stitch sampling by hand and domestic and industrial machine including digital embroidery, hand appliqué techniques together with hand and machine reverse appliqué, couching and smocking, drawn thread work,	Zoe, Hagar
<b>Fabric Manipulation</b> inc; cutwork, embossing, felting, use of digital plotter and cutter, bonding, coating	Zoe, Hagar
<b>Fabric Construction inc;</b> hand weaving, dobby weaving, CAD design for jacquard and dobby, knit using domestic and industrial sampling machines	Mama Ursula, Zoe
<b>Design Skills inc;</b> visual research and concept development, drawn design work, experimental sampling with materials and process, colour development, range/collection building	Can be developed in collaboration with Just Trade designers

**Table 4 - Process and Technique Mapping**

## 7. Conclusions

The case study to date has provided substantial evidence to suggest that collaborations between niche design courses within the fashion and textiles subject area and small fair-trade importing and manufacturing projects are highly appropriate. The craft based roots of many small scale fair-trade manufacturing projects works in parallel to the roots of textile and accessory design making. The combination of craft skills and contemporary awareness in regard to aesthetics and market trends taught on such courses, and practiced by professional designers and makers, provides the combination needed to achieve potentially successful products. The introduction of such collaborations within courses will provide students with an in depth understanding of fair-trade, product development and the supply chain as well as providing insight into broader ethical issues within the global fashion and textiles industry.

The insight gained through the case study to date has highlighted the importance of developing conceptual design thinking as well as developing production skills within small fair-trade manufacturing businesses. By facilitating a greater understanding of issues relating to colour, quality control and use of materials, the investment made in this area by companies such as Just Trade provides a sustainable route to market for such businesses which encourages social equity within the fashion and textiles industry.

The collaborative project between the FFA course at DMU and Just Trade is planned to run during the 08/09 academic session with our first cohort of students at level two. The design brief that has been planned will focus initially on woven accessories for potential production by the Mama Ursula project. We hope that through the project, working relationships will be further established to encourage long term links between our students and small fair-trade businesses around the world.

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## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to: Melanie Cave and Laura Firth at Just Trade for their enthusiasm, passion and time and to Lindsey Chambers for permission to use information complied for the FFA validation documentation.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.justtrade.co.uk/about/> accessed 07.11.07

<sup>ii</sup> For further reference please see <http://www.justtrade.co.uk>