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Stella Boess, Ming Cheung, Rebecca Cain

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Empowering artisans through design: a case study on the dynamics of collaborative projects

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Abstract: A growing stream of design research investigates collaborations between artisans and designers, making the case for balanced and systemic approaches. In reality though, such initiatives rarely provoke new understanding or open new perspectives. This research enquiry seeks to address the gap between theory and practice by analysing the dynamics of co-design projects. A guiding framework was built from the literature, composed of three structuring poles: know-how, materials and concepts. Field study was conducted at a French association offering an insertion program to immigrant artisans, which includes a collaborative project with designers. Data was collected through participatory observation and phenomenographic interviews. Results are expressed in form of a typology of projects' dynamics, leading to recommendations. They relate to preparing the co-design approach, following-up and managing projects, and finally empowering artisans to play an active role in their professional path.

Keywords: artisanship; collaborative projects; project dynamics; empowerment

1. Theoretical frame

1.1 *Artisanship and design*

Sustainable development can be defined as a model that would not sacrifice the possibility of future generations to meet their needs. This concept has become a global objective since the late 20th century (WCED, 1987), with its understanding evolving from a standard to a comprehensive and systematic view, fostering specific and situated pathways. Echoing this global/local tension, balancing tradition and innovation is a topical debate in such context, particularly exemplified by the situation of crafts. Artisanship builds on systematic learning and repeated practices, to integrate embodied knowledge, skills and experience (Polanyi, 1974; Sennett, 2009). Today, the loss of traditional handcrafted techniques around the world (Walker, 2018) goes along with distributed efforts to re-value them.



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Among these initiatives, design interventions may aim at developing market access, skills, products, processes and/or strategies, each with different missions and collaboration modes. A growing stream of design research investigates cross-disciplinary collaborations between artisans and designers (among which Vencatachellum, 2005; Kaine and al., 2010; Walker, 2018).

The literature generally converges in two directions. Firstly, whatever the nature of partnerships, taking into account the mesh of actors, processes, techniques and markets in which handicrafts are embedded is key to ensure the relevance of a design intervention. Secondly, collaborations between designers and artisans should not subordinate the latter to the former but support an empowering purpose. This entails promoting the culture of crafts (heritage, know-hows) while developing artisans' ability to act and develop future projects on their own (imagination, creative skills). Even more holistically, Kaine and al. (2011) propose a conceptual framework meshing design (methodology and project), transmission means (education and concertation) and human development (individuals and communities) in order to reach artisans' empowerment.

Yet, the outcomes of several studies in different regions of the world are at odds with these principles. For instance, Zhang (2016) critiques the dominant role of external designers, calling on Chinese artisans as 'manual worker' to achieve their concepts. Conversely, Bhatt (in Vencatachellum, 2005) points out that collaborating with designers only rarely provokes new understanding or open new perspectives for artisans.

1.2 Tacit knowledge

Though it is considered the highest level of skill acquisition within professional practice, expertise is largely sustained by tacit knowledge, which is particularly tricky to make explicit and articulate (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Collins and Evans, 2009). The outcomes of expertise are to be evaluated in context, since the knowledge involved is domain specific. It is also highly personal, developed through physical engagement with the world building up experience (Polanyi, 1974; Crawford, 2015).

The practice of artisanship entails such personal involvement, along with a certain incommunicability of experience. Making and thinking are closely intertwined, creating a form of knowledge and know-how akin to the Greek *metis*, or practical wisdom (Sennett, 2009; D tienne and Vernant, 1974). For example, in the process of working with silver, a silversmith relies more on sensory feedback than on numeric values to assess whether the sheet of wire is about to break upon bending. Practice may be informed by defined and codified information, which in turn can only be understood through practical experience (Niedderer, 2013). Both types of knowledge are important and complementary in the decision-making process, which inevitably bears a subjective dimension (Lawson and Dorst, 2009; Berger, 2018).

Design as creative practice inevitably builds on experiential knowledge but can also be used as a reflective approach to access and elucidate the tacit recognitions, judgements and skilful

performances (Schön, 1983, pp. 49-50) occurring in practice. In this case, designers act as mediators or translators, deploying interactional rather than direct contributory expertise. This form of contribution appears particularly relevant in collaborations between artisans and designers: the formers physically work with materials, forming them into artefacts; while the latter aim at “articulat[ing...] findings or judgement, and sometimes to translate the expertise of one domain into the language of another” (Collins and Evans, 2009, p. 37; Nimkulrat and al., 2015). In terms of the T-shaped model of skills, designers would personify the horizontal stroke of the T with their “disposition for collaboration across disciplines”; and artisans the vertical stroke of the T with their “depth of skills” (Brown, 2010).

1.3 The dynamics of projects

Ingold (2012) qualifies the practice of making as “correspondence” between a material and human consciousness, imagination, through the means of a tool. Such reciprocal exchange supposes perpetual answer to one another, in an open-ended and dialogical process compared to a conversation. In this line, designing means engaging in a material – tool – human interplay.

It could be objected that this framework focuses on intimate practice, leaving aside designers’ projection towards an audience or users. According to Niedderer (2013), the research questions concerning enquiry into design practice fall into four categories concerning: material, process, concept or the use of objects.

Table 1 proposes a synthesis of these two conceptual models and an adaptation, which will be used as a framework to study the structuring levers driving the dynamics of collaborative projects between artisans and designers.

Table 1 Conceptual model

Ingold (2012)	Proposition	Niedderer(2013)
Material	Materials Properties, abilities, behaviours	Material
Tool	Know-how Mediation, manipulation, strategies	Process
Human	Concepts Imagination, emotions, culture	Human
(-)	(Users) Projection into needs, desires, aspirations	Use

2. Research aim and method

The literature review allowed to identify a gap between theory and practice, impeding the generalization of balanced and fruitful collaborations between designers and artisans. This empirical study aims at contributing to the current stream of research by analysing the dynamics of such projects, with a focus on the tacit dimensions of skills deployed by

designers and artisans. Theory and practice were articulated through abductive reasoning (Thomas, 2010), both serving as complementary elements to frame and conduct research.

Rather than outcomes or actors, this empirical enquiry addressed the process, with a guiding conceptual model adapted from the literature in order to fit the specific context of the field study. This conceptual model would not allow analysing the design process as a whole, nor its context or network. It rather focuses on the explorative and experimental part of projects associating design and artisanship, in order to study the dynamics by which an artefact emerges. As the projection towards potential users was not addressed in the case studied, only the three structuring poles of know-how, materials and concepts were retained for this research.

Fieldwork was conducted at a French association offering a 6-month program to immigrant artisans. This aims at upgrading their skills, fostering their adaptation to the French economic and cultural context and developing their autonomy. Besides administrative support, coaching and professional training, a core component is the co-creation of a yearly collection. Each artisan is paired with a French designer over a period of 3 months, in order to design and prototype one or several objects demonstrating the artisan's expertise, ability to innovate and to collaborate. This process is managed and followed-up by several supporting actors: artistic director, production director, technical referent and social coordinator. Each of them bears a specific role and intervenes at various steps of the pairs' projects, depending on individual situations. Embedded as a designer in the 2018 session, the author was paired with a Togolese jeweller.

Practice as a process took a role in the generation and collection of data, through participatory and self-observation (Schön, 1983). This approach allowed to root the investigation in concrete experience, and to gather insights from the confrontation of perspectives shared in a trusting environment (Archer, 1995). Being introduced as a designer rather than an outside scholar helped overcoming several kinds of distance and fear, some endemic to most research, some particular to this project involving persons in vulnerable situations (Gaver and al., 1999).

Besides, interviews adopting an experiential perspective were conducted among the participants (6 artisan/designer pairs) and supporting actors of the program (3), as they experienced turning points in the project. The methodology followed the principles of phenomenography, focusing on the various ways people perceive, conceptualize and understand their experience, from which arise different overarching conceptions (Marton, 1986).

The three structurally significant poles of material, know-how and concept were used as a framework to cluster and analyse data, following the precepts of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). They were interpreted in order to be expressed in form of a typology of projects' dynamics.

Due to its situation-specific character, this research does not amount to generalizable findings. The framework proposed rather aims at contributing to knowledge on the dynamics

of collaborative projects with its generative potential for future projects. It provides hypotheses for later testing on more numerous and varied cases (Archer, 1995), in a context of reflection in and on action (Schön, 1983) for managers and participants involved in projects articulating design and artisanship.

3. Three levers to analyse projects' dynamics

Participatory observation helped approaching the “momentums” experienced by artisans and designers in the project, which allowed them to move forward. Scarcely conceptually thought, known or verbalized, these key moments were felt as concrete awareness, carrying strong implicit meaning. Each pair experienced and articulated them differently, which set a particular tone to each project phase, and each design outcome. In a psychological perspective, such breakthroughs can be considered as felt-sense (Gendlin, 1961). They are more intricate than logic and can be conceptualized in a variety of ways: theoretical, creative or narrative – hence deeply embedded in the design project. In line with the three-poles framework, such achievements of experiencing were of three different types:

- Mastering a technique reinforced artisans' self-confidence and know-how (not only technical skills but also creative, communicational, strategic...)
- Discovering surprising reactions of materials allowed for novel experiments able to raise new ideas and/or protocols
- Sharing a story or a confidence allowed for meaningful concepts to emerge

The following sections successively analyse these dimensions and their influence on the dynamics unfolding throughout collaborations.

3.1 Know-how driven approach

Since “the first vocabulary we share is technical” [designer 1], most conversations between designers and artisans started by identifying and reviewing the processes, techniques and tools mastered by each. To this end, artisans started by showing samples and pictures of finished products. But the barrier of language and certain shyness impeded discussion. Although he had years of experience as a ceramist and teacher in China, [artisan 6] was reluctant to show his sketchbooks. His partner designer had to build trust before he could share his designs inspired by Chinese cosmogony and imaginaries. This example shows that know-how cannot be reduced to a level of expertise but bears strong affective involvement. Some artisans needed support to become aware and self-confident enough to step in and make propositions. The supporting actors of the association helped overcoming the bridles often met by immigrant artisans: “socio-linguistic barriers, isolation, unrecognized qualifications or experience, ignorance of local market” [association founder]. As for designers, most of them preferred using drawings, mock-ups or even gestures to engage conversation.

“First I thought our issues were due to misunderstandings between French and Arabic

languages, but the help of a translator made me realize we just had different conceptions and expectations for the project.” [designer 1]

“The communication issues we might have had are not exclusive to the language barrier, I already experienced almost the same with French artisans... At least here, when we didn’t understand each other, we could laugh about it!” [designer 6]

Such discrepancy is not limited to verbal communication; it also reveals different ways of understanding and experiencing the project process. In later phases, some tensions developed in most pairs. For instance, the merits of prototyping were not quite clear for artisans, who rather relied on experiential knowledge to anticipate the sequence of actions needed to obtain expected results in an intuitive manner. They hence felt no need to systematize work or justify choices. On the contrary, designers’ test and learn approach was based on early materialization of ideas, in an iterative manner involving constant feedback loops. An off-the-record dialog gives a humorous look at this gap between artisans’ pragmatism and designers’ search for meaning:

“ - “Why is it asymmetrical?

- You see, I was running out of rattan here

- Be careful, they will ask you why. Always why this, why that... they all are mahboul here!”
[artisan 3 + artisan 1]

Although the designers did not consider themselves as project managers calling on artisans for technical execution, occasional misunderstandings made some feel as such. The program includes two one-week workshops, conducted within weeks of each other. In the meantime, designers leave and artisans prototype on their own, supervised by the association’s technical mentors and art director. Some of them felt a shift in their role, towards mere “agents under pressure and control” [artisan 4].

For designers also, articulating workshops and remote follow-up was a challenge. Their status as volunteers did not allow them to work full-time on the project. Each of them unevenly engaged in its management, and the lack of shared progress report did not allow for alignment. Capitalizing on know-how while exploring outside of comfort zones is a delicate balance that each pair had to discover for itself – regarding which artisans had not been prepared.

“It’s not for us but for their own benefit that we push them forward to innovate. Yet I’m not sure every artisan feels committed to such objective. Some might give up in the face of fatigue and difficulties. How to accompany them through this, I still can’t figure out.” [designer 4]

The expected quality of finished products was another shared concern. Whereas some designers valued variation as signs of their handcrafted nature, others aimed at perfection. “Looking at the finalized carpet, I am unsatisfied with the gradient effect which doesn’t follow the pattern I designed” [designer 5]. Technical mentors provided support to increase artisans’ mastery and make the most of available tools, but it remains highly complex to assess to what extent the final result depends on the loom or the weaver. The limitations

may be due to insufficient or inadequate equipment, uncontrolled conditions, combining with artisans' lack of practice in this specific workshop.

The participants experienced the prototyping phase in contrasting ways. Whereas the artisans feeling technically at ease became sources of proposals, pushing the project further, those who faced difficulties almost came to disengagement. For instance [artisan 4] reported feeling "insecured, tired and discouraged", contrarily to her designer partner, used to working in an environment of uncertainty and ambiguity. The psychological difference between mastering or enduring the design process was underestimated by designers, which raised doubts regarding the potential impact of such projects on the artisans' pathways. Moreover, some designs had to be simplified or crafted by designers themselves in order to achieve a satisfying outcome, which added to the paradox:

"If we are able to make the products ourselves, it is probably a sign that we failed empowering the artisans. I was supposed to reinforce [artisan 4]'s expertise, but I placed her in difficulty. Had I known her better before, I would have followed a different approach to the project." [designer 4]

3.2 Material driven approach

Some pairs started by adopting a material-driven approach, in order to explore the range of possibilities offered by materials. They approached experimentation as "alchemists" (Ingold, 2013, p.220) interested in seeing what happens when materials are manipulated. Such exploration did not aim at testing hypotheses (as in the Natural Sciences) or measuring characteristics and performance (as in a techno-centred approach), rather at serendipitous discovery. This approach was mainly fostered by designers, possibly due to their profile of skills. As non-specialists, they would be used to exploring from unexpected reactions of materials (connective competencies, interactional expertise), while artisans would preferably rely on proven techniques to reduce hazard (depth of skills, contributory expertise). All pairs had to develop a shared strategy to bridge the gap between different approaches to experimentation.

One of them succeeded in building clear initial intentions: "outside from a logic of results" [designer 3], they explored the palette of fabric weaving techniques, in order to widen it. They strived to delay the moment to transform free experiments into specified products. The designer's ability to demonstrate a serene attitude combined to the artisan's ability to adapt were key in navigating uncertainty, and reassuring the organizing team on their progress.

Apart from this example, the material-driven approach proved deceitful for the other pairs adopting it as a starting point. The technical limitations of the workshop probably impeded experimentation for some part. For instance, [artisan 6 + designer 6] had to wait for weeks before receiving a kiln. [artisan 4 + designer 4] had to face another challenge. The jeweller was used to cast gold into cuttlefish bones, but this ancient technique couldn't be set up in the workshop. She had to work with brass and copper wire and sheets, materials she was unfamiliar with. This was not felt as exciting but endangering, deeply questioning her

expertise. As she strongly identified with her technical mastery, stepping out of her comfort zone made her unsecure.

The pairs concerned with such mental block or inconclusive technical results had to change their approach, for instance by adopting a more conceptual one:

“Design accompaniment was almost a coaching mission, to spot potentially transferable skills and encourage her overcoming frustration and demotivation. Our relationship also built on sharing personal stories, which brought some levity and provided inspiration for the project.” [designer 4].

Another pair had to abandon a lamp project for a more feasible option. This was a source of frustration for [artisan 6], who was in demand for challenge. But he maintained an autonomous and open-minded attitude until the end of the project.

“Above all, I was curious about the design process. Now that I learnt, I want to apply this approach in my future projects as a ceramist.” [artisan 6]

3.3 Concept driven approach

In this configuration, a conceptual idea drives the project. For instance, [artisan 4 + designer 4] revisited a traditional Togolese pattern in their jewellery design: “oval shapes of nails symbolize the jealousy of a woman when one gets too close to her husband” [artisan 4]. The designer brought the image from documentary research, in order to root the design project into something that would make sense and value the artisan’s culture. Although this does not directly echo her experience, [artisan 4] easily appropriated the metaphor. In another case, the concept directly stemmed from the artisan’s analogical thinking:

“When [designer 3] brought me a moodboard with fungus pictures, I immediately saw how much they looked like silk ruffles. I shared my vision and right away we started experimenting with fabric.” [artisan 3]

On the contrary, some pairs did not meet on the ground of poetic ideation.

“I asked [artisan 1] in many ways about his dream projects, in vain. As we couldn’t come up with ideas that we both liked, we moved towards technical experiments with rattan.” [designer 1]

This verbatim raises the issue of subjective choice, which is inevitable since no design project is solely ruled by an analytic or rational approach. Judgement is subtle and based to a large extent on intuition, experience, tacit knowledge – and sometimes also on ego! Even though none of the designers were in a selfish approach, the visibility and value added by their intervention was still a matter of concern.

“My role was minimal: I just suggested allying two materials through existing marquetry techniques. No big deal, which could be a little disappointing... But what matters is that the product ‘works’ and the artisan made the process his own.” [designer 2]

Incidentally, as designers worked as volunteers, most of them did not consider important

to claim ownership on the products created in the program. More than on the result, they took pride in “the experience shared; the relationships built with artisans, other designers and supporting team; the impact on the artisans’ professional attitude and practice” [all designers]. On the artisans’ side, partnership with designers was hardly evaluated in itself but as part of the whole program, following the same human criteria:

“The design project, the teaching, the encounters, the visits... opened my eyes and allowed me to let out a creative part that was hidden in me.” [artisan 3]

Demonstrating a true designerly way of thinking and communicating (Archer, 1979), this artisan was hired in a luxury workshop soon after the end of the program. A couple months later, the other artisans of the 2018 session were mainly working as subcontractors. The empowering effect is hence mixed, as only few of them have been reinforced in a project management expertise. Though, all of them recognize the transformative effect of this experience. It firstly strengthened their ability to “communicate and put ideas forward” [artisan 2]. Secondly, working alongside designers also revealed to some artisans the pleasure of ideation phases. “I feel stronger now. I dare to be creative because I believe I can have worthy ideas” [artisan 4].

Table 2 *The dynamics of projects*

Project	Dominant dynamics	Assessment
1 Wicker-work	[M-] > [K] Material experiments gave way to a know-how driven approach. Little concept due to distant relationship between designer and artisan	Difficult alignment in the project
2 Wood-work	[K + C] Mostly know-how driven until a concept based on material combination emerged. Artisan strongly implied as an expert (know-how + material)	Process and outcome considered satisfying
3 Sewing	[K + M + C] Balance between free material experiments, know-how, and concept based on analogical thinking. Artisan strongly implied in the design approach	Empowering project for the artisan
4 Jewellery	[M- x K-] > [C] Material experiments impeded by artisan’s difficulty to master technical processes gave way to a concept-driven approach. Little reinforcement of artisan’s know-how but empowering impact	Outcome does not fully reflect artisan’s expertise
5 Tapestry	[C] / [K] Concept-driven approach sustained by know-how but little dialog between these dimensions. Distant relationship between designer as project manager, artisan as technical expert	Little alignment, outcome does not fully satisfy designer

6	[M- x K-] > [C]	Outcome does not fully reflect artisan's expertise
Ceramics	Mostly material-driven until a concept based on material combination emerged. Artisan strongly implied in the design approach, but modest promotion of his technical skills	

4. Discussion and future directions

When evaluating their experience, all designers highlighted human encounter as paramount. Regardless of the outcome, the most satisfied participants were those who created a personal connection with their partner – who also happened to be those following a concept-driven approach. Although, creating conditions to nurture the relationship between artisans and designers was not a major concern for the executive team, who focused on professional profiles. Yet, personality traits are also in play. Using an explicit matching tool would certainly help raise participants' awareness, clarify their expectations and engage them both as professionals and individuals. Yet, as the relationships evolved throughout the project under the influence of internal and external factors, initial pairing is not sufficient to ensure smooth collaboration. Besides, the scope of this research enquiry did not cover actors' trajectories, solely the dynamics of their projects. A complementary approach, for instance under the lens of actor-network theory, would provide an additional perspective.

As per our know-how, materials and concepts framework, the analysis showed that there is no ideal configuration per se. All projects combined different approaches and dynamics, unfolding with obstacles encountered and stages passed through. Yet, certain correlations and patterns emerged, which allow formulating a few directions for the future of the program. Following sections propose recommendations at project scale as well as in a broader view, so as to foster balanced and fruitful collaborations, in purpose to empower artisans during and after the program.

4.1 Preparing the collaborative approach

Artisans start the project with very little knowledge of the design approach. Conversely, designers have few information about their life paths and know-how. The preparatory phase needs to be reinforced and better structured. Until now, the initial assessment of artisans' expertise relies on self-declaration. A more objective process would certainly reduce gaps between perception and reality. First of all, artisans should be given time to practice freely in the workshop, in order to get familiar with materials and tools that might be slightly different from the ones they used to master. When evaluated, the feeling of being judged is particularly embarrassing for immigrant artisans with rough life paths. Preparation to the co-design project should hence focus on positive accompaniment, to capitalize on past experience and prepare them for the upcoming one. From a management point of view, being aware of the cultural backgrounds and life paths of artisans would allow designers to adopt a more strategic view and play a maieutic role.

From a methodological point of view, this would involve better awareness of the design

process and the designerly way of thinking (Cross, 2011), in particular its abductive and iterative dimensions. Revealing and discussing the elements of tacit knowledge which occur in practice could also be helpful for participants to better articulate their contributory and interactional expertise (Schön, 1983; Collins and Evans, 2009). This last recommendation involves designers as much as artisans, since both rely on experiential knowledge. It would also allow them to better know their partner better before starting to work together, and hence to smoothen communication.

4.2 Projects' dynamics and management

Considering that, for practical reasons, the workshop cannot offer high-end equipment for all crafts, technical constraints and limitations would need to be stated from the beginning. In the current state, the experimentation phase appears blurry to most participants, be they designers or artisans. Framing the expectations to some extent would maybe reduce "writer's block" anxiety for some, as well as fixation on early ideas for others.

The study showed a correlation between the success of a material-based approach and the artisans' self-perception of their know-how. Only those feeling confident of their expertise are able to take pleasure in experimentation. Ultimately, they take an active role in the design process, articulating ideation, testing and storytelling in an iterative manner. In cases studied, this is conditioned by the initial degree of autonomy and secureness felt by artisans. One recommendation is hence to advise against a material-based approach for those with low self-confidence.

As for the concept pole of our framework, it appears to act as "glue", bringing partners together – particularly after having experienced the failure of another approach. This is in line with the general demand for more occasions to connect, before and outside the scope of the co-design project. This could be achieved for instance through visiting exhibitions together, cooking typical dishes of artisans' native regions, playing design serious games, sharing an inspirational sketchbook and/or a project road book... All initiatives contributing to build a common repertoire, which would probably offer inspiration for the project.

Besides, keeping a project road book would also allow to better elicit the path followed by each pair, their iterations and decision criteria. Indeed, mutual understanding between stakeholders regarding project management is currently poor. Artisans do not have a comprehensive knowledge of the design process. Designers are often wary of interventions from the supporting team, which they perceive as interference. Ultimately, the balance between technical, cost, market and aesthetics criteria remains largely tacit. A framework inspired by the Double Diamond (British Design Council, 2005) or the d.school Design Thinking model (Hasso Plattner Institute and Stanford University from IDEO's work, 2001) could serve as a basis for project follow-up, completed with an assessment grid to support decision-making at each stage.

Table 3 *Synthesis of the approaches*

Pole	Impact on the dynamics of projects	Obstacles
Know-how	Employed to comfort artisans in their expertise and make the most of it. Conditioned by a high degree of autonomy.	Low self-confidence. Iterative exploration is challenging for those with little awareness of the design process.
Materials	Serendipitous approach to experimentation fostered by designers. Conditioned by artisans' confidence in their skills.	Not sufficient to drive projects (maybe due to technical limitations faced in the workshop).
Concepts	Stories and ideas shared create a personal connection, acting as "glue" for partners.	Mismatching personalities and character traits (mediation needed).

4.3 Empowering artisans

The co-design project is only a part of the program deployed by La Fabrique Nomade, aiming at immigrant artisans' professional integration in France. Its accomplishment lies in a training period. Yet, two artisans from the 2018 session could not find a host company. This calls into question the actual empowering effect of the collaboration with designers, supposed to highlight artisans' expertise and stimulate them to take an active role in their professional path. All participants acknowledge that the co-designed collection artefacts are more of a pretext to learn communicating and working together than an end in itself. In this line, the main challenge is to use and develop connective competences, in order to bridge the gap between different ways of thinking and doing. Ultimately, a key success factor of the program is the expansion of artisans' transversal capabilities and interactional expertise. Developing transversal capabilities in artisans through partnership with designers is hence a key success factor for the program (Brown, 2010; Collins and Evans, 2009; Nimkulrat and al., 2015).

This falls into the scope of design management, addressing the whole network of actions and relationships in which artisans are embedded, with potential impacts beyond the mere project. According to Kaine and al.'s conceptual framework (2011), design may represent an empowering agent impacting the artisans' development as individuals as well as a community, their concertation practices and educational pathways. In its current state, the collaborative project fails to encompass these concerns. As a step towards deploying a more global approach, the association has been developing since 2019 an online network aimed at connecting all the artisans, designers and technical mentors who participated in the program. This initiative may help moving in such direction, provided actors are given the human, strategic and operational means to appropriate it.

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