

Cockpit Arts / British Council Thailand - BiR Pilot Programme



The Cockpit Arts Business Development team recently hosted a London study tour for 6 craft-based social entrepreneurs from Thailand, marking the culmination of an extensive project with the British Council. The [Business Investment Readiness \(BiR\) Pilot Programme](#) is designed to enhance the quality of support services for social enterprises and create opportunities for UK social enterprise intermediary organisations to enter foreign markets and expand their overseas networks. The BiR Pilot Programme in Thailand was one of 20 in 9 different countries, two of which involved Cockpit Arts advisors (Thailand and Indonesia)

For Cockpit Arts, the BiR Pilot in Thailand gave an opportunity to build on our previous consultancy and capacity building work with the British Council, helping craft communities to develop their innovation and design thinking process, whilst at the same time developing their business models in preparation for becoming social enterprises.

Alongside the British Council, our partners for the project were the Thai Social Enterprise Office (TSEO) and the Support Arts and Crafts International Centre of Thailand (SACICT).

A total of 22 entrepreneurs and community leaders took part in the programme, representing approximately 2,000 full or part-time craft producers.

The programme ran from August 2015 through to May 2016, and included the following activities:

- A scoping visit to select the 22 participants
- Two sessions of hands-on participatory workshops in Bangkok
- The selection of 5 participants for further remote mentoring
- Exhibition at the British Ambassador's Residence in Bangkok
- Exhibition at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh
- Participation in Clerkenwell Design Week
- Study tour in London

The content of the programme reflected the twin objectives of developing the innovation and design thinking process and building sustainable business models capable of delivering positive social impact and included:

- Product design and development, combining traditional techniques and with contemporary influences
- Using business tools such as the Business Model Canvas
- Identifying current and potential opportunities for making positive social impact
- Understanding USP from a product and organisational perspective, and how to weave social impact in to brand and product messaging
- Recognising the importance of market research and how to match market demand to product potential

Impact of the programme on the participants was demonstrated in a number of ways:

- Participants developed new product within the period of the programme, some of which was shown at the exhibitions in Bangkok, Edinburgh and London
- In the latter stage of workshops, participants were able to share know-how as well as actual initiatives that they had undertaken to benefit the communities they were working with
- Participants were evaluated throughout from the perspective of their potential to fulfil the twin objectives. Whilst the five that were selected for mentoring made particular progress in designing new product and showing developed thinking about their business model, the majority of the wider group also showed that the programme had benefitted them.

Next Steps:

Alongside the impact for the participants, a key objective of the pilot was to provide learnings to inform the structure and content of future programmes, in Thailand and elsewhere. On a global level, the British Council is currently evaluating the feedback from all the pilots. In Thailand, the British Council is currently engaged with the partners to explore how to take the programme forward in general, and in particular how to scale it up to maximise its reach and impact.

To discuss this or other Consultancy Projects, please contact:

[David Crump](#) or [Vanessa Swann](#) or visit our [website](#).