

Revival Of Dying Art Forms

BRIDGING THE GAPS



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Loss of Traditional Seminole Knowledge because of shifts in wider Cultural practices	As more members of the Seminole community migrate to urban areas, traditional patchwork practices are being lost. Younger generations are disconnecting from their cultural heritage, leading to a lack of interest in preserving this iconic textile art.	Collaborate with The Seminole Tribes of Florida and educational institutions to establish formalized apprenticeships for younger Seminole members. Programs like 'The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's' cultural preservation initiatives can support this knowledge transfer, ensuring the craft remains relevant to younger generations.
Reduced Market Exposure due to being limited to small communities	Seminole patchwork clothing and accessories often remain confined to niche, local markets. The lack of broader market exposure prevents artisans from reaching consumers outside of their local communities, limiting both economic and cultural sustainability.	Launch an e-commerce platform focused on Indigenous textiles and crafts, partnering with online marketplaces like Etsy or 1st dibs Collective . Expanding sales online will connect Seminole artisans to a global customer base while preserving the uniqueness of the craft through storytelling and branding efforts.
Costly and Skill Intensive Production along with Scarcity of Materials	Seminole patchwork requires high-quality fabrics and materials that are becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to source. The rising cost of raw materials puts pressure on artisans to either increase prices or compromise on quality, affecting the sustainability of their craft.	Work with organizations like First Peoples Fund to secure grants that subsidize material costs and maintain high-quality production. Additionally, introducing partnerships with eco-friendly fabric suppliers could help reduce costs while promoting sustainable practices.



Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Limited Supply of High-Quality Raw Materials	Access to traditional clay with alkaline glazing used in Edgefield pottery is diminishing fast. Artisans face supply chain issues and the risk of clay over-extraction, which could halt production indefinitely.	Collaborate with environmental agencies to ensure sustainable clay sourcing. Develop partnerships with local universities to explore alternative eco-friendly materials that can mimic the properties of traditional clay, ensuring a consistent and sustainable supply.
Declining Representation in Younger Generations due to lack of Formal Training	The number of skilled artisans is dwindling, as there are few formal apprenticeships and training opportunities for younger generations. Older artisans are unable to transfer their skills effectively due to lack of robust vocational infrastructure.	Create formalized training programs through partnerships with cultural institutions like The Smithsonian , supported by federal grants. These initiatives should focus on teaching the full range of skills needed for Edgefield pottery, ensuring that younger generations can take up the craft.
Lack of Market Visibility beyond the United States	Edgefield pottery has a limited presence in modern art markets. Its heritage status is underappreciated, and the craft lacks promotion to attract international buyers who have genuine interest in African-American heritage items.	Establish cultural tourism routes that focus on heritage crafts, including Edgefield pottery. Collaborate with international galleries to host exhibitions and engage in strategic online marketing campaigns that raise awareness about the craft's historical and cultural significance.

Sweetgrass Basketry

Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Reduced Access to bulk quantities of Sweetgrass due to Environmental Factors	Environmental degradation, such as coastal development and climate change, is limiting access to sweetgrass, the primary material used in this basketry.	Collaboration with environmental groups such as 'The Nature Conservancy' and local government bodies to preserve sweetgrass habitats. Programs like the 'Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival' can also focus more on conservation efforts than celebrations.
Cultural Erosion Due to Commercialization and Cheap Imitation	The influx of mass-produced imitative "African-American inspired" baskets have undermined the authenticity of Sweetgrass Basketry craftsmanship, flooding the market, reducing the value of the craft as well as the cultural significance of sweetgrass baskets entrenched in Gullah Geechee traditions.	Strengthening of intellectual property protections, working with entities like 'The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor' and 'The American Folklife Center' to advocate proper labelling and Geographical Indication (GI) protection of authentic sweetgrass baskets. Similar initiatives have been successful in protecting Native American crafts under the 'Indian Arts and Crafts Act' .
High Knowledge Gap between Master Practitioners and Young Artisans	Sweetgrass Basketry faces a lack of professional interest from younger generations, leading to an aging population of artisans without clear successors to pass on the tradition as well as the mastery needed to keep the art intact.	Educational programs with institutions like 'Charleston's Avery Research Center' and 'Coastal Carolina University' can help formalize basket-weaving skills into community curriculums. Similar initiatives have been successful for the preservation of African-American pottery at the 'South Carolin Humanities Program' .

Cowichan Sweaters

Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Copycat Products flooding the market due to Fast Fashion e-commerce	Mass-produced sweaters that mimic the style of traditional Cowichan sweaters are being sold at lower prices, undermining the authenticity and value of Indigenous-made garments.	Work with government and Indigenous-led organizations to secure ' Geographical Indication ' (GI) protection for Cowichan sweaters. Collaboration with entities like the Cowichan Tribes and ' Canadian Intellectual Property Office ' could help protect these products under Canadian law, similar to initiatives that protect authentic Indigenous crafts under the ' Indian Arts and Crafts Act ' in the United States.
Current Generation's limited capacity to invest time to Learn and Retain the Craft	Fewer young Cowichan members are engaging in knitting due to a perceived lack of economic viability and modern cultural disconnect.	Collaborate with local education centers like ' Vancouver Island University ' to establish knitting workshops and formal apprenticeship programs. A set of Youth-focused initiatives have achieved some progress in bridging the generational gap by integrating the craft into high school and university curriculums.
Limited Capacity to maintain consistent demand due to Seasonality of Winterwear	Cowichan sweaters are primarily sold through local markets and Indigenous craft fairs, with limited access to buyers outside North America. Without significant marketing or robust e-commerce, the market remains small and localized.	Expand Cowichan sweater sales through partnerships with Indigenous-owned e-commerce platforms such as ' Shop First Nations ' and international fashion markets. Initiatives like the ' Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto ' have successfully introduced Indigenous fashion to global audiences, creating opportunities for increased sales and cultural visibility.



Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Decreasing Availability of Ethically Sourced Raw Materials	Porcupine quills, the essential material for Mi'kmaq quillwork, are becoming harder to source due to habitat loss and other environmental changes affecting porcupine populations, severely limiting the ability of artisans to produce quillwork.	Partner with environmental conservation programs like 'The Nature Conservancy of Canada' to ensure sustainable sourcing of porcupine quills. Expand quill farming initiatives, similar to the 'Quill Artisans' Cooperative' established in Nova Scotia.
Diminishing Academic and Professional Interest due to Generational Gaps	Fewer younger members of the Mi'kmaq community are interested in learning quillwork, as the art form is time-intensive and provides limited financial reward. Without new artisans to carry on the craft, the tradition is at risk of disappearing.	Introduction of government-supported apprenticeships through partnerships with 'Indigenous Services Canada' and the 'Mi'kmaq Cultural Foundation' , modelled on successful apprenticeship programs in the 'First Peoples Cultural Council' that focus on transferring cultural knowledge from elders and master practitioners to the youth.
Market Constraints due to Production Capacity and Lack of Access to Overseas Markets	Mi'kmaq quillwork has a limited presence in mainstream art markets and galleries, reducing the visibility of artisans. Without better marketing, Mi'kmaq quillwork remains confined to niche audiences, limiting its economic potential.	Work with cultural and heritage organizations like 'Indigenous Tourism Canada' to build awareness around Mi'kmaq quillwork through exhibitions, online platforms, and storytelling. The success of initiatives like the 'Native Arts and Cultures Foundation's' promotion of First Nations Peoples' art forms, can serve as a model for expanding market access.



Thank You

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