

**REPUBLIC OF SOMALILAND**

**Ministry of Trade and Tourism**

**Survey of blacksmith workers in Hargeisa**

*Final Report*

**10/09/2020**

**Department of Planning and Development**

## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary .....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. The objectives .....	5
2.1. Overall goals .....	5
2.2. Specific goals .....	5
3. Methodology .....	5
4. Results.....	6
5. Conclusion .....	12
6. Recommendations.....	13

## List of Figures and Tables

### Figures

Figure 1. Age of respondents.....	6
Figure 2. How were you introduced to the Blacksmith profession? .....	6
Figure 3. What do you produce? .....	7
Figure 4. Where is your business located? .....	7
Figure 5. Years of experience.....	8
Figure 6. Impact of imports on production.....	8
Figure 7. Do you face social stigma? .....	9
Figure 8. Production tools used in production.....	10
Figure 9. Do you work alone? .....	10
Figure 10. Who works with you? .....	10
Figure 11. Do you get Any help from the private or public sector? .....	10
Figure 12. Do you know any lost or forgotten crafts? .....	11
Figure 13. Are you worried about the viability of your business in the future? .....	11
Figure 14. Are you a member of craftsmen union or Association business in the future? .....	12

## **Executive Summary**

Traditional craftsmanship is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of cultural heritage. This report is mainly concerned with the skills and knowledge involved in craftsmanship rather than the craft products themselves. The objective of this report is to shed some light on the situation of craftsmen in Hargeisa, and particularly their need (or not) for financial and technical support. The results can be summarised as: (i) most craftsmen learned the blacksmith skills through their families and this indicates the relevance of heritage in the profession, (ii) the craftsmen face social stigma, (iii) they receive no support whatsoever from private or public actors, (iv) they are not members of any organization that can voice their needs and help them seek support when needed. Consequently, this report recommends to create a trade union or association of craftsmen, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism must help them seek financial and technical support. Lastly, the government should have a strategic policy for craftsmen.

## **1. Introduction**

There is a very diverse understanding of the crafts sector, depending on the country, the historical and context-specific development in recent decades, and the national conditions. As a result, the sector developed and is still developing in a different way in each country. Crafts are important and have a long tradition in Somaliland.

The crafts sector is key for sustainable development: the production of crafts relies on local knowledge and heritage, and the sector makes an essential contribution to local development and social integration. They create jobs, provide vocational training, and ensure the transfer and continuous improvement of specific knowhow. They often employ people with disabilities hence providing them with social integration opportunities.

Partly, the traditional craftsmanship has always followed sustainable criteria, yet without promoting it to the general public. Self-employed craftsmen are in close contact with their customers, they usually use high-quality, locally available resources and produce predominantly domestically, instead of outsourcing parts of the process to a foreign country. Local production of crafted commodities contribute to the security of supply of much-needed goods as well as to the national welfare and to life quality. Moreover, the sector preserves the unique traditions and historic cultural heritage of countries.

Craft products are usually long-lasting and high-quality goods true to the motto "better than more". Compared to industrial mass-production, the higher prices of crafted goods generally reflect the true costs of the product as it includes the use of high-quality resources and auxiliary materials as well as manpower.

There are craft products that are close to disappear or become forgotten, such as knives and many construction tools. The latter are facing strong competition from foreign Chinese imports, which are having a great impact on the viability of the craftsmen's businesses and their production.

This report sheds light on the present situation of the craftsmen and how this ancient mode of production is in danger due to competition from imported products. This report is arranged in different sections. The next section outlines the main and secondary objectives of the study. Section 3 explains the methodology followed. Section 4 shows the main results. Section 5 and 6 conclude by summarising the main tenets and proposing a set of recommendations.

## **2. The objectives**

### **2.1. Overall goals**

The overall goal that motivated undertaking this study is to increase the sustainability of the crafts sector across the community of Somaliland, so as to continuously support their mission, promote the upskilling of the workforce, and create a crafts sector program for Somaliland's crafts' community. From this, the specific targets below follow:

1. Gain more knowledge about the current state of the crafts sector.
2. Upgrade the talent and skills of crafts sector workers.
3. Increase the production of crafted goods in Somaliland.
4. Ensure the viability and permanence of the traditional crafts culture in Somaliland's society.
5. Find complete crafts equipment to catch up with international community

### **2.2. Specific goals**

The specific goals of the survey are:

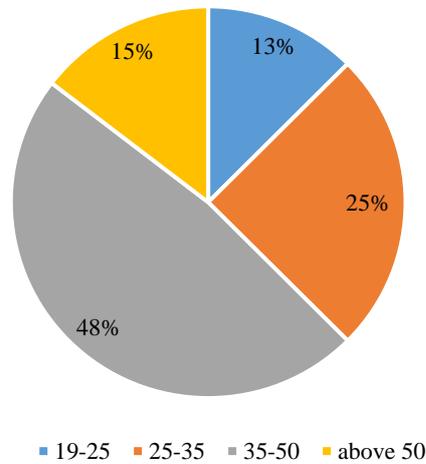
1. Understand the profile of craftsmen people.
2. Understand the most basic features of the crafts sector.
3. Understand the main challenges the sector faces.
4. Inform policy action aimed at supporting the crafts sector.

## **3. Methodology**

This report is based on a survey undertaken in January 2020. Due to the lack of a sampling frame, and the informal nature of the sector, the survey followed the purposive sampling method. Therefore, the survey is not representative of the whole sector but only of those who responded. The survey targeted the main areas of Hargeisa where craftsmen are located. Target respondents were the chiefs of the establishment. Interviews were conducted using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) software KoBo Toolbox. A total of 48 interviews were conducted.

## 4. Results

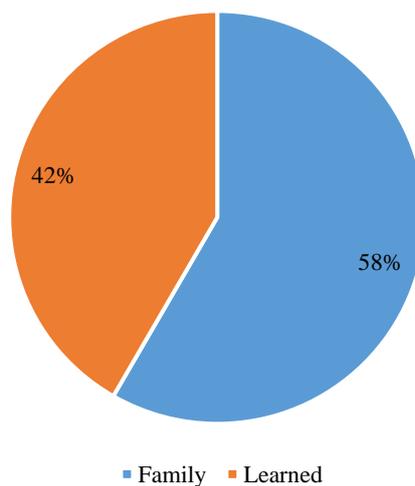
Figure 1. Age of respondents



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

As Figure 1 shows, 48% of respondents were between 35 and 50 years old. 25% of respondents fell within the 25-35 age group. 15% of respondents were above 50 years old. Lastly, 13% of respondents belonged to the 19-25 age group. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were between 35 and 50 years.

Figure 2. How were you introduced to the Blacksmith profession?

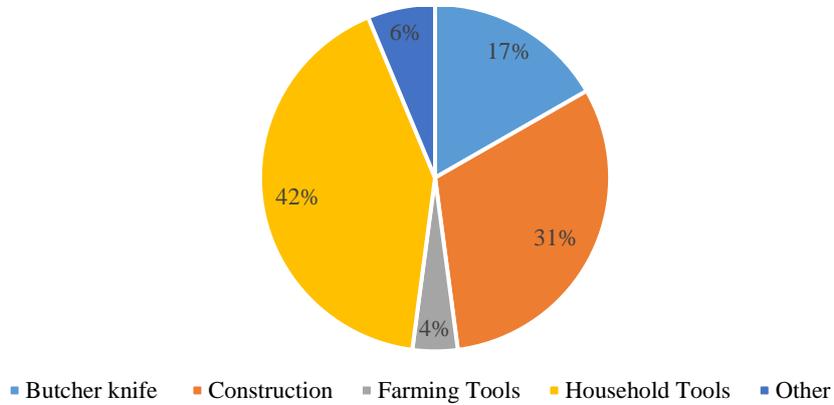


Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

Figure 2 shows that most respondents (58%) started in the blacksmith profession through family members. On the other hand, 42% of respondents said they learnt the blacksmith professions in the

workplace. This indicates that the majority of respondents learn the blacksmith skills through their families, highlighting that the blacksmith profession is rooted in cultural heritage.

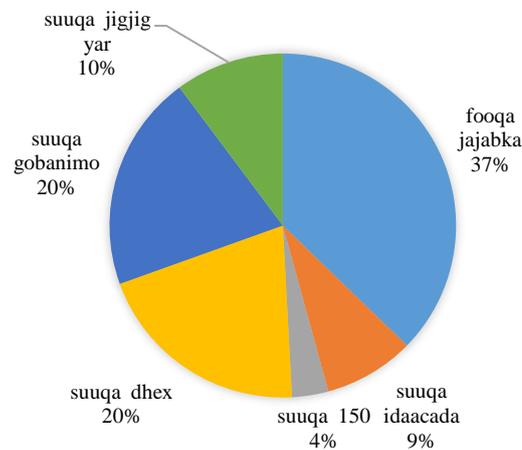
Figure 3. What do you produce?



Source: MoTIT blacksmith survey

Figure 3 shows the items that respondents produce. 42% of respondents said they produce household goods. In contrast, 31% of respondents produce construction tools. 17% of respondents answered that they produce butcher knives. 6% of respondents produce other items, and lastly, 4% of respondents said they produce farming tools. These figures indicate that the majority of the respondents produce household tools.

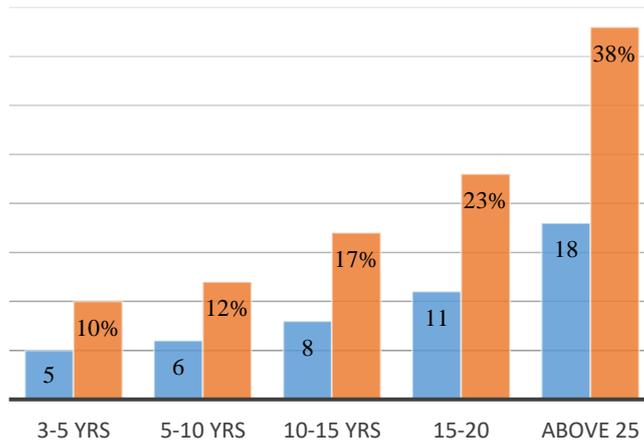
Figure 4. Where is your business located?



Source: MoTIT blacksmith survey

Figure 4 shows the location of the surveyed craftsmen. 37% were located in Fooqa Jajbka. 20% of respondents were located Suuqa Gobanimo. 20% of respondents in Suuqa Dhex, 10% in Jigjig Yar, 9% in Suuqa Idaacada and, finally, 4% of respondents were located in Suuqa 150. This data shows that most of the respondents were located in suuqa Fooqa Jajbka .

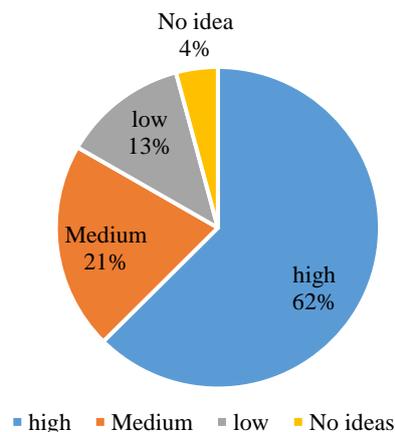
Figure 5. Years of experience



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

As Figure 5 shows, 38% of respondents said their experience in the sector was above 25 years. 23% of respondents said they had been in the business for between 15 and 20 years. 17% of respondents said their experience was between 10 and 15 years. 12% of respondents had worked in the sector for between 5 and 10 years. Lastly, 10% of respondents said their experience was from 3 to 5 years. Thus, it is clear that most respondents have been in the business for longer than 15 years.

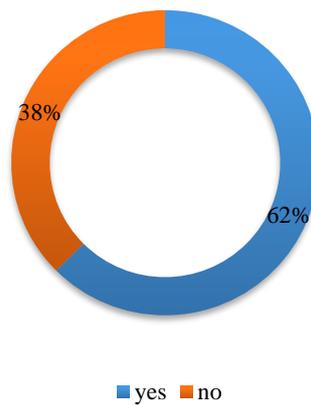
Figure 6. Impact of imports on production



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

Figure 6 shows the impact that imports are having on crafts production. 62% of respondents strongly agreed that the importation of foreign goods has a high impact on their sales. 21% of respondents indicated that importation has a medium impact. 13% of respondents mentioned that the impact is low. Lastly, 4% of respondents said they do not know what kind of impact imports are having, suggesting the impact might be minimal. This data indicates that for most respondents the impact of imports on their activity is high.

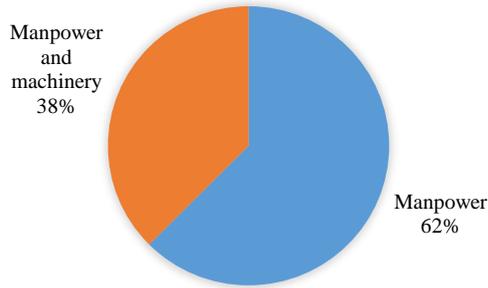
Figure 7. Do you face social stigma?



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

As Figure 7 shows, 62% of respondents strongly agreed in that they face social stigma due to their activity as craftsmen. In contrast, 38% of respondents said they did not face social stigma. This data suggest that social stigma is present and most of the blacksmith surveyed face it.

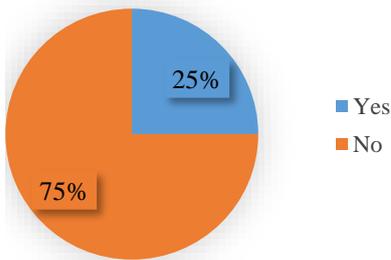
Figure 8. Production tools



Source: MoTIT balcksmith

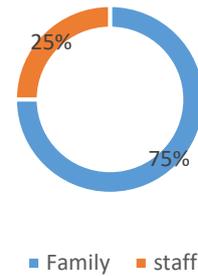
Figure 8 shows the production tools used by craftsmen. 62% of respondents use manpower capacity whereas the reminding 38% said they use both manpower and machinery. This data indicates that all respondents use manpower and an important proportion also use different production tools.

Figure 9. Do you work alone?



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

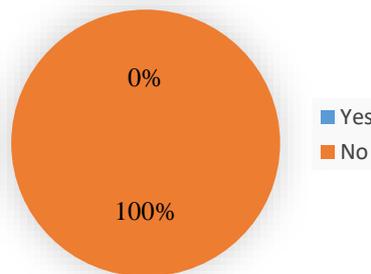
Figure 10. Who works with you?



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

As Figure 9 shows, only 25% of respondents work alone, as opposed to the reminding 75%, which work with someone else. Supplementing these features, Figure 10 shows that 75% of those who do not work alone, work with family members. The remaining 25% work with hired staff members.

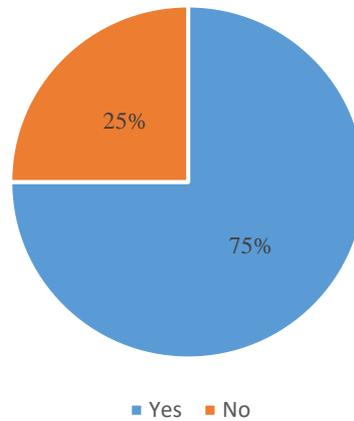
Figure 11. Do you get Any help from the private or public sector?



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

Figure 11 indicates that none of the respondents receive any support from neither public nor private institutions.

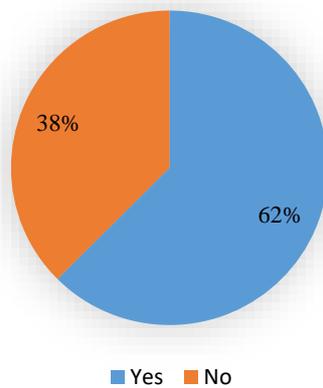
Figure 12. Do you know any lost or forgotten crafts?



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

Figure 12 shows if the respondent knows of any crafted good which production has stopped and the production technique may have been forgotten. 75% of the interviewees responded affirmatively, while only 25% responded the opposite. This may indicate that cultural heritage is being lost.

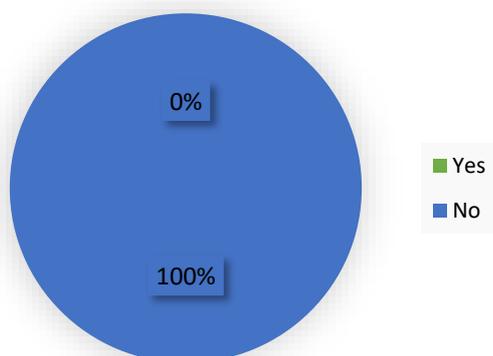
Figure 13. Are you worried about the viability of your



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

Figure 13 shows if respondents are worried about the viability of their business. 62% of respondents strongly agreed that they are worried about this. The remaining 38% said they are not worried.

Figure 14. Are you a member of craftsmen union or Association business in the future?



Source: MoTIT balcksmith survey

Finally, Figure 14 shows that none of the craftsmen surveyed were part of an association or union.

## 5. Conclusion

The list below summarises the main findings of the report:

- Most of the respondents belong to the age group of between 35 and 50 years old.
- Most of the respondents learned the blacksmith profession through their families, indicating the relevance of heritage in this sector.
- Most of the respondents produce household goods.
- Most of the respondents were located in the market (*suuqa*) Fooqa Jajabka.
- Most of the respondents had a working experience of 15 years or above.
- Most of the respondents said that imported goods were having a high impact on their sales.
- Most of the respondents mentioned that they face social stigma.
- Most of the respondents use manpower only in their production.
- An important percentage of respondents hired staff to work with them, thus creating job opportunities.
- All respondents answered they did not receive support from any public or private institution.
- Most of the respondents knew of crafted goods that were not in production anymore and production techniques that were being lost.
- Most of the respondents were worried about the viability of their business.
- All respondents argued that they do not belong to any association or union that can represent them.

## **6. Recommendations**

Based on this analysis, the report puts forth the following recommendations:

- Support craftsmen production given the relevance of the goods they produce, which are widely used in Somali society.
- Investigate opportunities for scaling up and formalising the businesses into small and medium enterprises. This could improve their competitiveness and promote economic growth.
- Limit the importation of foreign goods while encouraging local production and competitiveness.
- Organise and implement anti-social stigma programmes.
- Improve support (e.g. technical, financial) from both the public and private sector.
- Monitor the state and viability of the products and gather information about those which have disappeared or are close to disappear. Organise exhibitions that can be used as a way to preserve the cultural heritage of traditional craftsmanship in Somaliland.
- Support craftsmen in creating and joining an association or union that can represent their interests, link them with TVET education programmes, and provide them with learning and upskilling opportunities.