

## MEDNETA NEWSLETTER October 2014-10-27

### Editorial:

Dear readers, I present you with great pleasure the second newsletter of MEDNETA. In the intervening period there have been several interesting and encouraging for our continuation events.

First of all, our partners from the six cities participating in the project carried out successfully 6 different SWOT Seminars, as was scheduled. Each partner managed to give the special touch of each city and to highlight specific problems and prospects.

The opening of the SWOT Seminars took place at NTUA Premises in June 4<sup>th</sup> and you can read details below.

But let me present you briefly the experience we drew during our visit in these cities:

- We are impressed with the attention given by the ASM regarding crafts and arts in Tunis in order to promote it, enrich it with new elements and possible synergies in this direction
- We admired the detailed research done in Valencia on the ACD's and the relationship it is attempting to be developed between the creators and the traders by the IVC + R
- We saw with lot of attention the visual of GAIA-h for dealing ACD's in combination with the effects of gentrification and receding public space on its ACDs in Beirut.
- We supported the effort of BZU in Hebron to bring together artists with stakeholders so to explore the possible ways to promote ACD's as part of the city regeneration
- We expect a lot of material in the future that will arise from the substantive discussion of the seminar held in Florence and organized by ISIA.

In June, we submitted successfully and on time the first semi-annual report of our project and the comments we received from the Officer, R. Botti were very encouraging. We are excited by his essential comments and provide us with strength and courage for the continuation of MEDNETA.

Henceforth we enter into new activities:

- In a few months we will have completed urban interventions in all cities. In this context, the open workshops are being prepared intensively in order the products and activities of local ACDs to be promoted.
- The Med-Forum already is being prepared by the BZU and we expect critical conclusions from its application

- The workshops (training programs) will be organized by the MPC cities' partners (BZU, ASM, GAIA-h) will have duration of 3 days. During them, the EUMC partners (NTUA, CRESM, GIC, ISIA and IVC+r) will provide training material for the transfer of experience and knowhow that will be presented by selected professionals, academics and experts.
- Alongside all horizontal activities are in progress such as communication and management of the project. We move together with collegiality and we are confident of the excellent cooperation on new challenges lied ahead.

We deeply believe that each partner has an important role in our project and is an integral link in the chain. Everyone alone but rather together make every effort to support the project and the successful completion of which we are confident.

## **BENEFICIARY NTUA:**

The SWOT Seminar in Athens (held in June 4<sup>th</sup> at NTUA Premises) - entitled "Interactive SWOT Seminar between stakeholders to reset the creativity in the historical center of Athens" - managed to involve all stakeholders of jewelry and clothing industries in a productive dialogue. The effective participation of the directly and indirectly involved parties was ensured.

Representatives of bodies of culture, traditional expertise and skills, education and new technologies, entrepreneurship, tourism, as well as interesting individual and / or collective initiatives of creativity participated in the discussion.

The contributions were moved around thematic of Historic Center, Traditional know-how and culture, Creative Enterprises & Entrepreneurship, Education and New technologies. Due to a) large participation (over 100 participants), b) representativeness, c) quality of participants' contributions we evaluate the SWOT Seminar, highly positive.

One of the special moments of the SWOT Seminar was the honorary awarding of "mentors" of jewelry in Athens. Namely, professionals who contributed in various ways to the development of the sector and helped in earlier decades to establish the jewel as a unique product that can be found in Athens.

NTUA's Team as Beneficiary of the project, closely attended all seminars in Mediterranean cities, except Hebron's SWOT Seminar where there were some difficulties that could not be overcome. We have gained great experience from those visits and we actually empowered our collaboration with our partners.

Currently, NTUA is under preparation and implementation of the next steps that are planned in the project. We are ready to implement both our own activities and to lead with care the activities of our partners.

## **PP1 GIC:**

GIC is the Coordinator of WP2 and also participates to WP1, WP3, WP4, WP6, WP7 and WP8. Within this framework GIC continues with the activities related to the role assumed to the MEDNETA Project. In particular GIC:

- Promoted the MEDNETA business networking and dissemination of results with local ACDs stakeholders, local authorities, chambers, associations and NGOs.
- Completed the Communication Plan that covers in detail all areas of communication and acts as a guide for all partners, according with the JMAs instructions.
- Assisted to the coordination, under the directions of the Beneficiaries Communication Manager the communication actions for each WP of the Project.
- Contributed to the formulation of the communication and dissemination strategies of the MEDNETA observatory (WP3).
- Assisted to the provision of training material for the transfer of experience and knowhow to be presented in the workshops in the MPC cities (WP6). In

cooperation with WP8 Coordinator (GAIA-h), GIC with CRESM assisted in the process for signing mutual agreements between the parties involved and provide the framework for the cooperation (WP7, WP8).

- Contributed to the enrichment and keeping up to date of the MEDNETA Web Site and Portal that is launched by the GIC and includes all relevant information, in order for all target groups to have an informed view of what is happening, in regards to MEDNETA Project.
- Contributed to the production and dissemination of all necessary information materials needed for the partners, with a view to enlarge the project visibility through the dissemination of communication and informative material which will contribute to the best explanation of the MEDNETA objectives and results to all concerned actors.
- Developed the design and production wherever necessary of visuals and templates to be used in the communication areas of the Project
- Additionally to the above, GIC continues to support all Communication Actions for the relevant Events due to the promotion of the Project. More specifically, the Events that have been supported by the GIC members during the referred MEDNETA period, are:
  - Steering Committee and SWOT Seminar in Valencia (period from 02/07/2014 to 05/07/2014). GIC has participated to the MEDNETA Steering Committee in Valencia and to the respective SWOT Seminar. GIC participated in meetings with stakeholders in Valencia and visited ADS Firms in their local establishments.
  - Beirut SWOT Seminar (period from 15/07/2014 to 18/07/2014). GIC had cooperation and meetings with Gaia-h and NTUA on the progress of the project. GIC made a presentation to the SWOT Seminar on the role of the Chambers Network to the project and on the evolution of the Communication Plan. GIC participated in meetings with stakeholders in Beirut and visited ADS Firms in their local establishments.

### **PP3 ISIA:**

The SWOT Seminar in Florence took place on September 11<sup>th</sup> and it was fully successful.

Stakeholders from Toscana and representatives of ISIA Finenze carried a rich and meaningful dialogue regarding the ACD's and the long tradition in Arts Crafts and especially Design was presented. ISIA, remains available and plans to visit the countries of the South to transmit new techniques and introducing new technologies to the traditional creation.

### **PP4 IVCr:**

During the month of May, we finished the general report on data collection in Valencia, the stock of historic buildings able to host ACDs, the list of the ACDs participants and stakeholders, and the maps for the WEB-GIS.

On June, we collected the questionnaires, divided in different crafts, and analysed them in order to expose the conclusions at the SWOT Seminar.

On July was celebrated with great success in Valencia the SWOT seminar on the Arts and Crafts of the Valencian historical centre.

The seminar was hosted in the Management Consortium of the Arts and Crafts Centre of the Valencian Community. We had also a great support from the Commercial Association from the Historic Centre.

There were many participants from different associations related to the ACDs activities, and also a representative group of artisans and ACDs shop owners, who were very involved and participated actively.

To end the seminar, there was an open debate where all the participants felt free to express their opinions, and important and practical conclusions came forward, as concrete petitions to the administration.

The main conclusions of the debate were the following:

- Need to coordinate in the field of the urban planning process, the local administration with the artisans and traders.
- Need to create an integrated management of all the attractions of the city, linking heritage, history of the city, and craftsmanship.
- Raise the profile of the image of craft, particularly using the existing official logo of the certifying artisan value. Create a particular and care corporate image according to the artisan character of the shops.
- Enhance networking among the craftsmen and the designers, architects and decorators, to achieve a fruitful professional synergy in the handicraft market.
- Value the creativity of the craftsman, and his versatility to adapt to the new materials, new trends and new technologies without losing that artisan character.
- Help young artisans, creating nest artisans places, established in local rehabilitated buildings, and involving the universities and other centres of art and craft lessons.

The Steering Committee took place July the 4th., with a profitable exchange of ideas and proposals for the immediate future. It ran in a very friendly atmosphere and participants had the chance to visit the city.

Finally the Project to restore the “Colegio del Arte Mayor de la Seda” has been finished and the works have been tendered. They will start in October at the main building, maintaining the courtyard and the warehouse free for the MEDNETA exhibition.

Valencia, September the 30, 2014.

Alvaro and Natalia Gómez-Ferrer

#### **PP5 ASM:**

The Medina reinvented itself throughout its 1300 years as live, craft industry and trade continuously adapt to dynamic socio-economic factors. The MEDNETA study, brought out the specific factors impacting Medina's ACD status today, and was an important comparison to the last such study which was also made by ASM in 1987.

MEDNETA study found over 500 artisan workshops practicing more than 20 different crafts. Even though the numbers are considerably high for the area covered, they demonstrate a decline when taking into account that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the medina housed over 27000 artisans and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were more than 13000 artisans. The study shows an important growth in the number of shoe-makers (100)

and metal coating artisans (86) as well as an important decline in saddle making (1), arms and musical instrument making (1 each). Crafts such as wool and cotton weaving as well as leather tanning have completely disappeared, whereas silk weaving is still practiced but under threat of extinction. Only one ceramist remained in the medina, and most have migrated outside of the medina for lower rent and in respect of environmental regulations.

MEDNETA study also focused on the urban environment at which the artisans operate, which revealed that 34% of artisan workshops are currently located in abundant residential homes, converting them into 'oukala' or multi-workshop spaces. Most oukala are badly maintained; artisans work in unhygienic environmentally unfriendly spaces, located near Medina's 100s of national registered historical monuments, causing an urban threat to Medina and historical monuments.

Surveyed artisans highlighted several issues threatening their business sustainability, but 2 issues were common to all interviewed ACDs: know-how documentation and know-how transfer.

Medina today houses 100s of master-artisans with over 40years of experience in their crafts. Despite this know-how wealth, very little has ever been documented. To ensure *savoir-faire* preservation, ASM is currently investigating the development of a cluster aimed at documenting and publishing Medina's traditional craft patterns, artisanal techniques and architectural *savoir-faire*.

Youth involvement is another key factor threatening ACD preservation. ASM is currently investigating a potential new artisan apprentice model, with National Handicraft office and Vocational training institute based in the Medina, which will include a more structured practical apprentice module.

#### **PP6 GAIAh:**

GAIA-heritage has been completing WP4 'Regeneration planning of ACDs' throughout the last few months. The district of Mar Mikhael where our intervention takes place was studied from different angles. Our team interviewed 39 of the 72 identified ACDs in the chosen neighbourhood of Mar Mikhael. A socio-economic survey of the neighbourhood complemented this study: a random sampling of 300 residents was interviewed to analyse their perception and attitudes towards ACDs and recreational industries and the changes taking place in their neighbourhood. An overview of the leisure activities was also undertaken. A morphological study of Mar Mikhael was completed to identify the public spaces, structure and transformation of the urban tissue and impact of regulations on the urban morphology and economy of the neighbourhood. These studies are currently being collated in order to present a holistic perspective of the area and facilitate the development of a Joint Integrated Strategy with the project partners.

GAIA-heritage also launched a local Facebook page for the MEDNETA project in Beirut named 'Mar Mikhael Creative District' and is in the process of finishing a printable map promoting the district's ACDs.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of July GAIA-Heritage hosted the "Creativity and Regeneration in Mar Mikhael" SWOT conference, held at "the Grande Brasserie du Levant" in Mar Mikhael, an important relic of the industrial past of the place. The conference brought together a public of more than 250 attendants. The panels included creative business owners, financial experts, urban studies specialists, and civil society actors to assess

the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to urban regeneration and the creative economy in the Mar Mikhael district.

The conference addressed two key issues pertaining to the transformations occurring in the neighbourhood: the state of the Lebanese creative economy in light of the limitations of the local market, laws and protection texts, funding schemes. The conference secondly addressed the broader urban environment of Mar Mikhael discussing the effects of rapid gentrification and receding public space on its Arts, Crafts and Design sectors. In addition to the panels and the roundtables organized during the conference, the venue also included an exhibition of various artists, designers and architects of the neighbourhood.

A wide range of critical and significant proposals were made throughout the conference proceedings. In the closing session, H.E. the Lebanese Minister of Culture, H.E. Raymond Arayji issued a strong call for the establishment of a working group to address the issues discussed. A consensus amongst panellists and audience members was made in order to appeal to local governing bodies to strengthen the application of the rule of law in the neighbourhood and the eventual connection of ACDs with much needed funding schemes.

GAIA-heritage has also proceeded in the establishment of the Urban Observatory for the capitalization of the project and has been preparing the content of the Pilot Urban Intervention and MEDFORUM workshop that will take place in Beirut.

#### **PP7 BZU:**

At the 5th of June 2014 organized a tour for media staff and journalists to visit the traditional crafts factories and workshop in the city of Hebron. The tour was attended by 30 journalists and photojournalists from various Palestinian media agencies in addition to MEDNETA staff, and included visits to workshops and factories operating in the following crafts: ceramics manufacturing, glass, mosaics, drawing on copper, wood and seashells, potter , sand painting and folk embroideries.

At the 9th and 17th of August 2014, Architectural Engineering Department at Birzeit University's held two pre-workshop with the owners of pottery, ceramic, glass, mosaics, embroidery, wood and copper factories and workshops in the city of Hebron. The meetings were attend by the project director Dr. Shadi Ghadban, the Chairman of the Department of Architectural Engineering and the project communication officer Dr. Mohammad Abdelhadi, the coordinator of the project in Hebron Mrs. Andalib Atawneh, the project research assistant Arch. Mohammed Abualrob, GIS expert in the project Eng. Moayad Rimaw, the project media coordinator Mr. Eyad Jadallah, in addition to the owners of pottery, ceramic, glass, mosaics, embroidery, wood and copper factories and workshops in Hebron. Dr. Abdelhadi opened the workshops by welcoming the attendance, then Dr. Ghadban presented the project goals, aims, the areas where it will be implemented and the expected outputs of the project, after that, Mrs. Atawneh presented the primary results of the field survey conducted by the project team, the meetings concluded with drafting the strength, weaknesses, challenges and priorities in each sector to serve as a platform for the general SOWT seminar scheduled for 7/9/2014.

At the 7th of September 2014, Architectural Engineering Department at Birzeit University's held a SWOT workshop in Hebron, under the patronage of his Excellency the Governor of Hebron Mr. Kamel Hmeid. Owners of workshops and factories of traditional crafts, a number of representatives of local and national bodies

in Hebron attended the workshop. Dr. Mohammed Abdelhadi opened the workshop by welcoming the attendance and talked about the craft sector and its role in the development of the local economy, in addition to its contribution in moving the wheel of tourism, culture, economy, imports and export operations activities. Mr. Hmeid thanked the project team, local and international partners pointing the role of such a workshop in the development process of culture, heritage and preserving the identity and the land, and developing relations with the entire world, he called to stop the marginalization of traditional crafts sector. After that, the project leader Prof. Sofia Kolonia from the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), in a recorded speech, mentioned that through a more enforced cooperation in the fields of culture and education will bring the people of the Mediterranean closer. The project director Dr. Shadi Ghadban, presented a summary of the project and a summary of SWOT workshops in a number of Mediterranean cities participating in the project, he pointed out that the expected results of the project centered on the development of sustainable urban strategies, stimulation of the development of social and economic environment in the historic cities, later on Mrs. Andalib Atawneh presented the results of the field survey conducted in Hebron. After that, Eng. Baher Idkideik talked about Creativity and Innovation in Traditional Industries, discussing the innovative ways in the development of these industries. At the end, the participants discussed and defined the priorities that the project will work on during the coming activities.