

Birzeit University

Open Day

27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2014



Under the patronage of the Governor of Hebron Mr. Kamel Hmeid, and within the project Mediterranean Cultural Network to Promote Creativity in the Arts, Crafts and Design for Communities' Regeneration in Historical Cities ( MEDNETA) The Department of Architectural Engineering organized an "Open Day" for traditional crafts in Hebron and Bethlehem areas, on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2014 this event came as a culmination of a long period of work with craftsmen in Hebron.



The Open Day was attended by Dr. Daoud Zaatari Mayor of Hebron, Dr. Ahmed Rajoub, General Director of Tourism and Antiquities directorate in the city, Eng. Ghassan Idriss, Director of Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, and representatives from Directorate of Education in the city, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hebron, Union of traditional crafts, Hebron Women Association, Dar Al-kalmah College/ Bethlehem , as well as the Universities of Hebron, Palestine Polytechnic University, and Al-Samou' charity Association.



The open day was held in the municipality hall, and it included an exhibition for many traditional crafts such as ceramic, pottery, embroidery and other handicrafts.

The exhibition was opened with a welcoming speech from the project director Dr. Shadi Ghadban, who pointed out that the project of promoting the Creativity in the Arts, Crafts and Design for Communities' Regeneration in Historical Cities, comes as a result of cooperative efforts among a group of institutions located in the Mediterranean Basin either from European or Arab countries, such as Greece, Italy, Palestine, Lebanon and Tunisia, in order to develop creative design, regenerate and strengthen of the relationship between local communities and the craftsmen.

From his side, Mr. Kamel Hameid thanked all those who helped in organizing the open day, stressing on the status of Hebron and its history, and valuing the role of artisans in order to develop their crafts and transfer it to the whole world, considering them as artists and creators. Mr. Hameid pointed the attempts of the Israeli occupation in obliteration of Palestinian identity by stealing a Palestinian heritage and adapting it as a part of the Israeli heritage, calling on all relevant ministries and institutions to maintain and support the development of these handicrafts.

Dr. Daoud Zaatari talked about the history of the traditional industries in Hebron, and the role of the project in developing of these industries and disseminate them globally, thus to support the economic return of these crafts on their owners and Hebron in general. Mr. Zaatari asked the official institutions to work on developing of this sector in order to become one of the most important national industries in

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Palestine, which will contribute in creation of job opportunities for future generations.

Dr. Ahmed Rjoub focused in his speech on the existing political situation in Hebron, and the impact of this situation on the city economy. He stressed on the role of traditional industries in the consolidation of Palestinian identity, and their ability to attract tourism and moving the wheel of economy in the city, despite of the Israeli attempts to steal the Palestinian cultural inventory. Dr. Rjoub mentioned the role of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in the development and support of traditional crafts, and its contribution to the economic and social process.

In his speech, Mr. Atef Al-Jamal, Technical Director of the Directorate of Education in Hebron, pointed out the efforts carried by the Directorate to support this sector, through vocational ceramic school in Hebron, and the role of its teachers in transferring heritage to future generations,. Also, he asked the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to issue leaflets and booklets showing and promoting the archaeological areas in the city Hebron.

After that, Eng. Ghassan Idris, talked about the role of the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee in preserving historical buildings and monuments in Hebron, through their restoration. he added that the committee is doing all efforts for reviving the old city of Hebron and for this purposes . they established an academy to teach the traditional building crafts Arab carpentry, adding that such events contribute to the development and promotion of tourism in the old city of Hebron.

Then, Mr. Mohye Aldeen Sayed Ahmed, member of Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Hebron, explained the role of the chamber in marketing handicrafts products all over the world, and its role in the development of these products, whether locally or globally or on the Internet.

During his speech, Mr. Nader Tamimi spoke on behalf of the Traditional Crafts Union, mentioning the existence of more than 17 registered crafts in Hebron. Also, he presented a brief history about these crafts, and pointed out the obstacles which face the traditional crafts in Hebron. He mentioned the Israeli violations against the craftsmen, demanding the official bodies to organize a national day for traditional crafts in Palestine like what is happening in the Arab Maghreb countries, as well as in the world.

It should be noted, that the governor of Hebron Mr. Hamid supports the idea of organizing an annual day for traditional crafts in Hebron Governorate, and asked Birzeit University and the authorities concerned to coordinate among themselves and with the Governorate in order to embody this idea on the ground starting from the next year.

On behalf of NTUA and the whole consortium of the MEDNETA project, Mr. Stratakis thanked everyone for this active participation in the Open Day. He congratulated Birzeit University for the whole organization of activities as a partner in this project. He noted that the first year of the project is about to end, and it was

very successful year, and he also expects the second year to be as successful as the first one.

Its worth to mention that 35 craftsmen 5 organization and participated in the Open day, by displaying their products, and some craftsmen were producing samples for the visitors during the day. The handicrafts sectors that participated in this day were Ceramic, Pottery, Mosaic, Wood, Embroidery, Accessories, Sand Drawing and Brassware. Despite the bad weather conditions in Hebron, over 800 persons visited the Open Day; these visitors were from the school and university students, people of Hebron and representatives from the different governmental and civil society institutions.

The open day included in addition to the exhibition of handicrafts, an activities such as national Palestinian folklore "Dabka", singing and poetry. The open day contributed in supporting Palestinian traders and improving their economic conditions throughout increasing the demand and supply on their products.