

Press Release  
Birzeit University  
PP7  
SWOT Seminar  
7th of September, 2014



Within the framework of the project “Mediterranean Cultural Network to Promote Creativity in the Arts, Crafts and Design for Communities’ Regeneration in Historical Cities” also known as MEDNETA, Birzeit University’s Architectural Engineering Department held on Sunday 7th of September 2014, 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, and a number of representatives of local and national bodies in Hebron. part in this workshop attended.



The workshop was opened by the Chairman of Architectural Engineering Department and the project communication officer Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Hadi. He welcomed the Governor of Hebron, representatives of municipalities, local bodies and the audience. Dr. Abdul-hadi talked about the craft sector and its role in the development of the local economy, providing employment opportunities, in addition to its contribution in moving the wheel of tourism, culture, economy, imports and export operations activities.

Dr. Abdul-Hadi added that "The craft sector is an important factor in raising the level of production, and development of the local tourism sector, attracting tourists to visit the region and investing in it, which contributes to create new job opportunities, and reaching a balanced development that provide an economical and cultural diversity that affects the social life".

After that, Mr. Hmeid, mentioned the role of Hebron governorate in hosting such workshops in its premises allowing to develop the city. Also, he 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.

Mr. Hmeid called to stop the marginalization of traditional crafts sector, and he asked the project team to distribute the results of the workshop, the field survey and all studies conducted by local institutions, in order to use these documents to develop the traditional craft industry in the city and the governorate.

After that, the project leader Prof. Sofia Kolonia from the National Technical University of Athens ( NTUA), in a recorded speech, talked about the cultural and historical ties which can form a propitious framework for

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rapprochement and cooperation between we both, in order to face the problems of interstate relations devised for former generations, encouraging the taking of problems having risen in the Mediterranean especially in Palestine through target developmental initiatives contributing essentially to the development of local economies. Prof. Kolonia added, that through a more enforced cooperation in the fields of culture and education we will bring the people of the Mediterranean closer.

Also, she added that the Mediterranean civilizations have highlighted and maintained the stability of the values for the respect of human values and rights for the cultural heritage of humanity and the natural environment. We therefore believe that they can continue to loyally serve these values and to create a common future of peace, democracy, prosperity, social and cultural understanding.

Then, the project director Dr. Shadi Ghadban, presented a summary of the project, where he confirmed that the project is based on the framework of rapprochement and cooperation, friendship and scientific cooperation, within the spirit of harmony of the Euro-Mediterranean collaboration. He mentioned that the general objective of the project is increasing the competitiveness of contemporary creative ACDs, improve cross-border cultural dialogue among multiple stakeholders, revitalize local communities, web of economic activities, exploit partners' comprehensive experience to spread knowledge and know-how. He presented a summary of SWOT workshops in a number of Mediterranean cities participating in the project, such as Tunisia, Beirut, Athens and Valencia and 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, including programs for the regeneration of the Arts , Crafts and Creative designs (ACDs), and drafting of a permanent new forms of cultural and economic cooperation across the border.

Later on Mrs. Andalib Atawneh delivered a presentation in which she provided the results of the field survey conducted by the project team. The results showed that the most important problem facing the handicrafts sector is the Israeli occupation measures on borders and checkpoints, concerning import and export of raw materials. Also, she mentioned the lack of suitable venues used for some of the crafts, as they need large areas to perform the work. In addition to the waste, smoke and pollution caused form manufacturing are major challenges for these sectors. Furthermore, some craftsmen don't introduce modern technologies that help in increasing the diversity, quality and quantity of production, where most of the artisans in the pottery sector, are still using traditional methods at work while only 37.5% of them use modern technology in conjunction with the traditional methods. Also, marketing is a major problem facing these sectors, caused by the lack of experience in marketing. Yet the delay in delivering the raw materials on time due to the practices implemented by Israeli occupation on borders and checkpoints, and imposing obstacles to prevent marketing of products, due to the delay in the delivery of these products in the markets. She explained that around 49% of

these products go to internal Palestinian market, while 51% go to foreign markets, as 42% of this external share goes to the Israeli markets. After that, Eng. Baher Idkideik talked Creativity and Innovation in Traditional Industries, discussing the innovative ways in the development of these industries. He presented a new ideas and suggestions to create new attractive designs, explained the new ways to market these traditional products, how to meet the needs of domestic market in ways that satisfy consumers tastes regards the price and quality and how craftsmen can create new ideas in their work. After that, he discussed the most important ideas that can contribute to the development of traditional crafts in Hebron and marketing the products outside Palestine, suggesting new ways that can be utilized in the development of these crafts.

At the end of the workshop, the participants discussed and defined the priorities that the project will work on during the coming activities.