



MEDNETA ASM SWOT SEMINAR REPORT

As part of the MEDNETA project, ASM organized its ACD SWOT seminar as per WP4, at Dar Lasram ASM headquarters, Saturday, June 7, 2014.

In this document, kindly find a summary of topics presented, discussed and proposed during this seminar.

Invited to ASM ACD SWOT Seminar:

- Municipality of Tunis representatives
- National Handicrafts Office (ONAT)
- Tunisian National Heritage Institute
- Ministry of Commerce & handicrafts (representative was not able to attend due to personal reasons)
- Tunisian-Spanish Chamber of commerce
- Private sector representing institutions (UTICA, INFOTICA ...),
- International organizations (UNIC and UNIDO),
- Museum of the City of Tunis representative
- Tunisian Association for the Protection of Archaeological Sites and Museums,
- Street Art Association (Dream Festival City)
- Active Civil societies in the medina – Medina welrabtine Association -
- Medersa El Bechya, Vocational institute based in the medina
- Madrasa El Slymanyia,
- Medersa El Achouriya,
- Modern Ceramic Art museum of Sidi Kacem Jellizi (manager was not able to attend)



- ISSBAT, Higher Institute of Fine Arts Tunis
 - ESSTED, Graduate School of Science and Technology of Design
 - Historians, planners, craftsmen, designers, developers, and project coordinators
 - MEDNETA represented by researchers from the School of Architectural Engineering
National Technical University of Athens (NTUA)
 - ASM staff and partners.
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Media Coverage

The event got media coverage by journalists from:

- La Presse
- Afrique Presse News Agency
- Archibat magazine

On-line media coverage

- Tunisie.co
- Webmanagercenter.com

Also Radio coverage through:

- RTCI French program
 - RTCI English program
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Seminar content summary

The following topics were presented in the morning of the seminar:

1. An overview of MEDNETA project and its objectives were presented by NTUA team
2. NTUA team presented an overview of their SWOT seminar held on June 4th in Athens and came to the following conclusions:



- a. The Athens survey focused on goldsmith which is the main ACD in the city
 - b. The existence of a correlation between private sector, institutions, urban environment and cultural heritage;
 - c. The ability to integrate new technologies in the process of artisanal production
 - d. A need for cooperation with artisan-business in various stages of production.
3. ASM team provided an overview of the creative industries in the central Medina of Tunis; preliminary field research data, were presented and discussed. The research highlighted the state of ACDs in central Medina which covered an area of 100 ha, this included:
- a. A historical overview of the development of ACD production and trade in the Medina of Tunis was presented, mainly referring to ASM's 1987 souk study highlighting the artisan corporation system which dominated ACD development throughout medina's history.
 - b. A presentation of the methodology that was adapted by ASM during the 3 months research, as well as challenges faces and objectives, methodology, field observations and mapping studies
 - c. A presentation describing the scope of selected urban studied boundaries; including various maps including ACD locations, urban planning and medina's historical inventory
 - d. A presentation of the preliminary report related to ACDSWOT findings including: inventory of existing Medina ACDs, SWOT analysis per craft groups as well as a general SWOT summarizing Medina's potentials and challenges in hosting ACDs within its historical walls, which are:
 - i. The Medina of Tunis is a major tourist attraction
 - ii. The Medina has always had a strong craft culture that have always been the main economic contributor
 - iii. The Medina is favorable to ACDs due to the proximity of suppliers, distribution channels as well as whole sale and retail markets within the medina
 - iv. Nevertheless the artisans face difficulties finding needed raw materials due to price and quality volatility which causes unstable supply of production
 - v. There is an urgent need to improve the visibility of ACDs to overcome their degradation or loss, which could potentially be through integration



with existing heritage sites, launching craft festivals, documentation of production techniques, and developing an artisan directory

- vi. There is a strong need to encourage cooperation between designers and artisans, to promote innovation and new production technologies.

The 2nd session in the evening included those topics:

Mr.A.Daouletli,

President of the Monuments and Sites Association,

"The artisan's dilemma to find the balance between the duty to respect traditions and the need to innovation"

Mr. Daouletli stressed the fact that innovation is not synonymous to failure but rather is the intelligent assimilation of new knowledge dictated by our time. The designer, who is the symbol of creativity, carries the challenge of allowing the craftsman to serve his/her cause, with respect for cultural heritage.

Mr. A Jrad,

Director of Research and Innovation

National Office of Handicrafts (ONAT)

Mr. Jrad referred to a Spanish study in the Medina of Nabeul, where results similar to ASM's survey results were found. After describing the 20 years after Tunisia's independence as the bygone golden age era; Mr. Jrad highlights ONAT's unsuccessful attempts to revive the sector. Nevertheless, he mentioned 1 successful attempt of ONAT to bring out best artisan talents, which was the Khomsa initiative, where best artisan designs got an award yearly, and some export benefits. He also mentioned that the initiative was copied by Morocco.



Ms. Sana Tamzini

Designer artist and teacher at ESSTED

Ms Tamzini described the challenges of the educational system approach to the teaching of art and design disciplines in Tunisian universities; which are mainly due to lack of communication between institutions nationwide. She also highlighted the fact that high school students with lowest score end up in craft institutes. She also referred to a new discipline at ESSTED specialty is handcrafted designs, which is the first nationwide and also the first in the Arab world. She mentioned that "the university's challenge is to contribute to the economy" in generating functional skills taking into account both the economical and artisanal aspects of the ACD industry. In order to help ACDs from getting frozen in history, academia should focus "on forming entrepreneurs rather than employees, which develop new ideas and products that meet the needs of the consumer".

Mrs.M.Taktak

Architect designer

Mrs Taktak showcased DOREMAIL's experience in industrial reproduction of traditional ceramic tiles; the process of production based on research and development required a close collaboration between designers, chemists, artisans, interior designers working together towards one goal. The results were positive and created an international demand for Tunisian tiles.

Mrs. M Errais.

Historian and teacher at ISSBAT

Mrs Errais highlighted the positive impact of introducing ACDs in historic districts stating the European experiences in the 19th century which manifested the will of integrating crafts in the modern cities as a response to industrialization. She presented the successful experience in Tunisia, especially in the Medina of Tunis, where several initiatives helped revive the Medina by making it both a place of trade and reflection while respecting its architectural heritage.



Beneficiary

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End of Seminar debate recommendations

- 1. The importance of collaborations between all relevant sectors related to ACD were highlighted to ensure heritage sustainability through artisan-business development.*
- 2. The need to cooperate with digital and tourism industries to capitalize on MEDNETA findings through integrating the GIS data onto tourism's digital platform due for 2015.*
- 3. Collaborate with UNIDO to develop an artisan clustering project in the medina to improve artisan business sustainability and reinforced Medina's ACD shared economy.*
- 4. Improve crafts vocational training, which requires better collaboration between artisan community, educational professionals as well as institutional and civil society*
- 5. Developing a Crafts Charter to clarify the terminology and definition of ACDs, which would improve their legal and institutional frame of work;*
- 6. Develop an Artisan Manual publication as a reference handbook for professional, artisans and production specialists to improve the preservation and penetration of ancestral know-how;*
- 7. Completion of the Crafts Museum project;*
- 8. Initiate an Academy of Crafts and Craftsmanship in charge of harmonizing and enhancing the field of vocational training*
- 9. Initiate the "City of Craft" which would encamps craft museums, creative workshops, retail outlets, vocational training and professional institutions such as ONAT and artisan unions.*
- 10. Create a national label for master artisans with important know how of national crafts. Allow private sector investors to rent public owned historical spaces to improve their maintenance and accessibility by public*
- 11. Develop a MEDNETA communication project targeting general public & schools.*

