

**medneta** 2014 2015  
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**Mediterranean cultural network to promote creativity in the  
arts, crafts and design for communities' regeneration in  
historical cities**



## SWOT SEMINAR

Seminar dialogue among stakeholders  
for promoting creativity and regeneration  
Historic Centre of Valencia

**3th July 2014 // 9:30 - 18:30**  
Centro de Artesanía de la CV, Calle del Hospital, nº 7, Valencia

## Report

On July the third, was celebrated with great success in Valencia, under the cultural project Medneta, the SWOT seminar on the Arts and Crafts of the Valencian historical centre.

In order to prepare it, there were several meetings with different authorities and associations in charge of the ACD's in Valencia City, as well as with the Autonomic Government of our Region.

The seminar was host in the Management Consortium of the Arts and Crafts Centre of the Valencian Community, which provided us a fully equipped conference room where we could developed the seminar in the best conditions. Workers of the Consortium were very efficient and helped us in the preparation of the meeting.

We had also a great support from the Commercial Association from the Historic Centre, which provided different materials and bags for the participants, as city centre maps, ACD's shops information, leaflets of various activities, etc.



**Beneficiary**  
National Technical University of Athens - NTUA  
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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.

The seminar started at ten o'clock in the morning with attendants received by Silvia Ordiñaga, General Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs of the Autonomic Government, and Cristina Cabrelles, Director of the Management Consortium of the Arts and Crafts Centre of Valencia. Afterwards, it took place the intervention of Carmen Perez, Director of the Valencian partner for Medneta Project, who presented the project and explained the events taking place in Valencia.



Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonias, architect professor at the National University of Athens, and MEDNETA project coordinator, presented the main objectives of Medneta Project, and made a little rapport about the two SWOT seminars recently held in Athens and Tunisia.



Forty answers of the questionnaires, divided in different crafts, were exposed and analyzed by the architects Alvaro and Natalia Gómez-Ferrer. The main results were the following:

- Most of the companies belong to one or two owners.
- There are normally just one or two employees apart of the owners.
- Over half have higher education, especially "fallas artisans" and jewellers.
- There is a 60% of family businesses tradition, especially among artisans shops.
- Half of the craftsmen believe that there will be family succession in the company, especially with traditional companies.
- 35% of the workshops are ownership, and the rest are rented.
- Overall craftsmen moved to more commercial and most central areas in recent years. The shops carry many years implanted at the same site.
- 95% have no intention of moving in the near future.
- The 20% of the craftsmen are not happy with the urban environment by problems of accessibility and parking.
- They would be willing to improve the environment but generally do not expose proposals.
- All artisan shops and craftsmen buy their product in Spain. Half of those who answered also purchase raw material in other countries.
- Most respondents use traditional forms of production, introducing some innovations in the manufacturing process, but all of them emphasize the handmade nature of this use. Specially "fallas artisans" use new technologies in the production.
- Some of the craftmen incorporate innovation in promoting, as web pages, online sales and social networks
- 60% collaborate with other enterprises in production, especially at the local and neighbourhood level
- All of them sell to the final consumer in their own shops. Only 25% also sells to retailers or wholesalers.
- Craftsmen sell primarily to local and regional market, many of them only locally.



- Only 25% sell to foreigners, either exporting, either selling to foreigners through their shops.
- Only 15% of respondents export to other countries.
- The promotion is made predominantly in the shops, also with walkways or exhibitions and websites. 25% of them promote themselves using internet
- Most advertise on internet and trade press. The “fallas artisans” do not advertise at all.
- Craftsmen say their businesses have reached a steady state, but is floundering with the crisis. Especially affected by the crisis and the social changes, are the wood craftsmen, the “fallas artisans” and the fan makers.

As an example of the process of implementation of a new craft workshop, there was the presentation of «Atypical Valencia», by Virginia Lorente, Architect and designer.

Next issue at the seminar, was the discussion on challenges and opportunities in the field of crafts, design and associated trade, conducted by Julia Martinez, from the Commercial Association from the Historic Centre, and Silvia Peiró, from the Consortium of the Arts and Crafts Centre of Valencia.

To end the morning session, it took place the presentation of the documentary on the restoration of the building “Colegio del Arte Mayor de la Seda”, documentary which will be witness of the whole process starting in September.

After lunch at the cafeteria of the Museum of the Age of the Enlightenment, placed by the Crafts Centre, it took place the intervention of Eugenio Jiménez, President of the Association of Merchants and Professionals of Ruzafa, who explained us the “Ruzafa Experience”, a controversial urban intervention.

To end the seminar, there was an open debate where all the participants felt free to express their opinions in front of the government members, 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. As fundamental points, there were noted the need to study and resolve accessibility, simplify the policy rules, and clarify administrative processes in licensing.
- Need to create an integrated management of all the attractions of the city, linking heritage, history of the city, and craftsmanship; in particular strengthening the tourist values of the historic centre with events on local crafts and design.
- Raise the profile of the image of craft, increasing its presence in the local craftsmen and resorts, 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.



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- 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.
- Educate children and involve schools in the knowledge of the crafts, with training workshops and visits to the ateliers.



In conclusion, the seminar was a way to raise awareness on the important fact of the artisans being united and express their demands.

Valencia, July the 20, 2014.

Alvaro and Natalia Gómez-Ferrer

