



MIDDLE EAST SOCIAL INNOVATION LAB
EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR DESIGNING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES:
THE CASE OF AJLOUN IN JORDAN
JUNE 2019

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Higher Education Dialogue
with the Muslim World

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Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature ,
Ajloun Forest Reserve, Ajloun Governorate, Jordan



MESIL Project Coordination:

Nürtingen-Geislingen University

School of Business Administration
and International Finance
School of Design, Therapy and the Environment
<http://www.hfwu.de>



Project Partners:

Jordan

German Jordanian University

The School of Architecture and Built Environment
<http://www.gju.edu.jo>



Lebanon

American University of Beirut

Department of Landscape Design
and Ecosystem Management
<https://www.aub.edu.lb>



Palestine

Birzeit University

Department Of Architectural Engineering
<https://www.birzeit.edu>





View of Golan Heights | Picture Author : Dirk Funck

WELCOME FROM NÜRTINGEN - GEISLINGEN UNIVERSITY

The DAAD-funded project Middle East Social Innovation Lab (MESIL) has strengthened ties between universities in Germany and the Arabic world to encourage the academic and cultural dialogue of students and young academics.

The MESIL didactic approach is a combination of online seminars and on-site project work. This brochure documents the learning process of forty students from Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Germany. They worked in interdisciplinary groups on challenges of the Khufranja community (Ajloun Governate) in the northeast of Jordan from June 21-30, 2019.

Partners involved were the Ministry of Tourism in Jordan and the Khufranja Municipality. Besides that, the project work allowed for a close collaboration with the local community. Within this framework, the MESIL teams addressed topical sustainability issues of high practical relevance such as landscape quality, design of public spaces, rural tourism, waste management and agriculture. The students had to act as entrepreneurs and finally succeeded in presenting results with an appreciable impact on the local sustainability challenges.

The MESIL programme as a whole is obviously successful and represents a future-oriented approach to innovation in higher education teaching and learning.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to our partners from the German-Jordanian University (GJU), the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon, the Birzeit University (BZU) in Palestine and the Royal Academy for Nature Conservation (RSCN) in Jordan. I further thank the German Academic Exchange Service for providing this funding opportunity. We are looking forward to continuing this fruitful cooperation.



*Prof. Dr. Andreas Frey
Rector Nürtingen-Geislingen University*

WELCOME FROM THE GERMAN JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY

The German Jordanian University is a unique university in Jordan that follows the German Fachhochschule model of education. Our aim is to bring up highly skilled and well-trained graduates and professionals. One of the ways to achieve this is by multi-disciplinary projects with different partner universities. This way, our students acquire the knowledge needed to compete for future careers nationally and internationally and to contribute effectively to economic and social development.

The Middle East Social Innovation Lab (MESIL) is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). DAAD supports the higher education dialogue with the Muslim world. This programme strengthens the ties between universities in Germany and the Muslim world and encourages academic and cultural dialogue. This is well in line with the German Jordanian University's vision and action. As a member of the DAAD Board of Trustees, I am proud of this great opportunity for the 15 promising students from the School of Architecture and Built Environment. Participating in the MESIL project allowed them to shape their visions into practice. Working in a rich community such as Kufranja allowed them to apply practical, innovative and a sustainable business tools to benefit society and to create an essential social

entrepreneurship model for the community.

Working with different partners from Lebanon, Palestine and Germany has not only given a great opportunity for our students but also to our staff. They were able to share their knowledge with other students from different cultures and disciplines. Tackling different issues like landscape identity, sustainable tourism and women empowerment, working in parallel with governmental and none governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Tourism, the Kufranja municipality and the RSCN (the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature) exposed them to a wide range of tools and learning experiences offering a non-traditional program with strong theoretical and practical orientation focusing on regional needs.

The project tried to develop future leaders to help us overcome our regional obstacles. I hope that this project will truly contribute to qualifying students as leaders who are able to reshape the future and to develop our society. In this context, the German Jordanian University is proud to consider itself a gate of hope towards a better future and our students are definitely our hope for tomorrow!



*Prof. Manar Fayyad
President, German Jordanian University*

WELCOME FROM THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE

The mission of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature is to create, manage and advocate for a national network of protected areas to conserve Jordan's biodiversity and support local community development, while promoting wider public support and action for the protection of the natural environment within Jordan and its neighbouring countries.

The approach of MESIL, the Middle East Social Innovation Lab, is very relevant for the work of the RSCN. Jordan is a country facing many societal and economic challenges. In this context, it not easy to bring nature conservation and biodiversity programmes into reality. We therefore always aim at generating new development perspectives for the local population along with our conservation measures.

We believe that the RSCN, and in this case in particular the Ajloun Forest Reserve, benefit greatly from the many international, interdisciplinary and especially young perspectives on the communities in which your reserves are located. This way, cooperation with the higher education sector becomes definitely a mutually reinforcing approach.

It is extremely enriching for us to get an external perspective on the context in which we are working on a daily basis. This way, we can identify what might be the needs of the future generation and the nature-based business models of tomorrow. We very much hope that this exchange will continue and spread into the many other reserves we are managing.

My specific thanks go to our eco-tourism expert Osama Hasan for his success in linking the MESIL process most effectively to the local communities of Ajloun and Kufranja.



*Yehya Khaled
Director of The Royal Society for the
Conservation of Nature*

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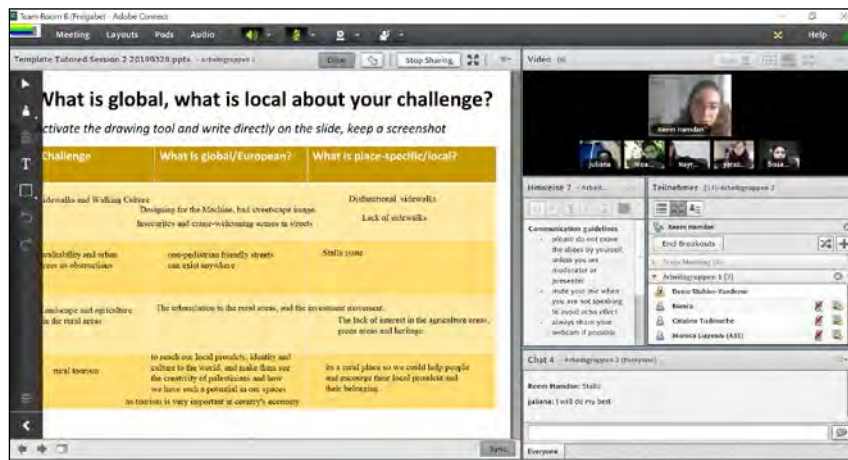
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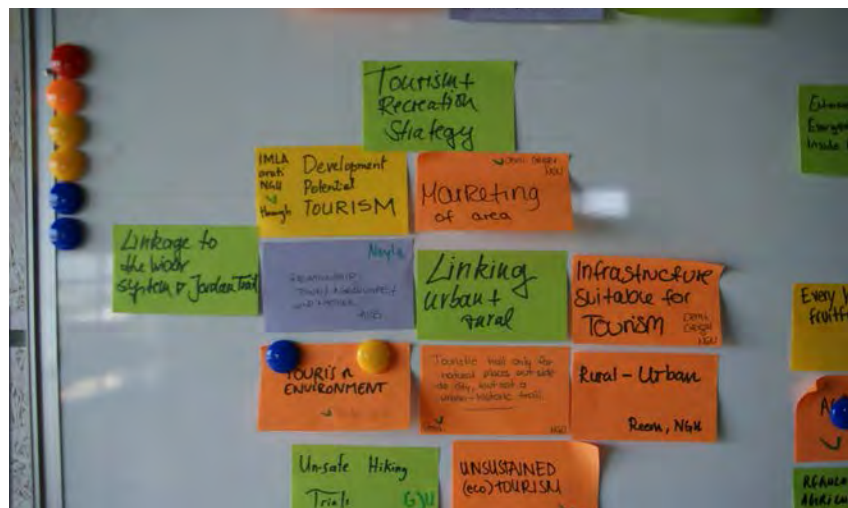
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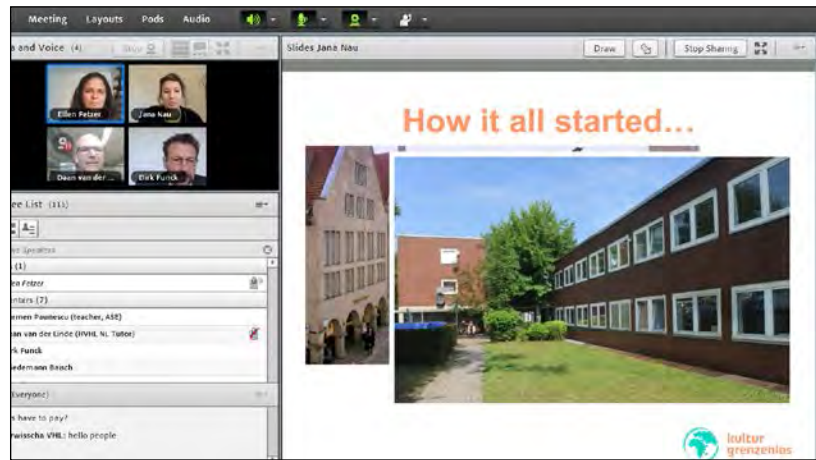
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WHAT IS MESIL?

The overall goal of the Middle East Social Innovation LAB (MESIL) is to advance education for sustainable development. Our specific objective is to support social entrepreneurship education in the Middle East by transfer of good practice and intercultural dialogue on social innovation. Social entrepreneurship aims for the exploitation of opportunities for social change rather than for maximum profit in the traditional sense. We attempt to target unfulfilled social needs with (more or less) marked-based approaches, aiming for sustainable solutions.

Against this background, social entrepreneurship initiatives can obviously contribute to the further development of countries in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, by addressing social challenges through innovative services and products. The development problems of Jordan as a desert nation are primarily rooted in the lack of natural resources. Water is in short supply and the large number of refugees is further increasing pressure on water resources.

Climate change and environmental pollution are other key issues as well as unemployment particularly of the young generation.

So far, social entrepreneurship has appeared in various higher education programmes across the globe and confident individuals have primarily driven this positive development. However, many disciplines in which entrepreneurial thinking is 'traditionally' less present are still lacking this theme, even if they bear much potential for business ideas with a social and/or environmental target.

This is the concrete need to which this project aims to respond. The establishment of a sustainable enterprise for social innovation requires a complex set of competences. Classical entrepreneurial knowledge alone is indispensable but not sufficient for reaching this objective. In addition, a broad understanding of socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental factors is required as well as creative use of communication and project management skills for multipolar systems. The specific competence of a social entrepreneur or innovator is to combine these skills in an innovative way in order to find solutions for social issues.

However, the status quo is rather that study programmes operate within their disciplinary limits: priority is given to subject specific competences; theory is primarily applied to disciplinary practice cases. This context makes it difficult to trigger holistic approaches for social innovation. Given these circumstances, the purpose of this project is to establish a new educational framework in which different disciplines would combine forces, knowledge and skills for addressing local challenges of the Middle East countries.

Social Innovation Labs (SIL) are real-life experiments in local communities supporting networking, social and reflexive learning for joint visions, capacity building and co-designing beyond hierarchies, unequal power relations and the dominance of economic interests. Within this framework, the MESIL teams have addressed topical sustainability issues of high practical relevance such as landscape quality, design of public spaces, rural tourism, waste management and agriculture.

The MESIL didactic approach is a combination of online seminars and on-site project work. The online course 'Community Learning for Local Change' has introduced the main theories, methods and tools in the fields of



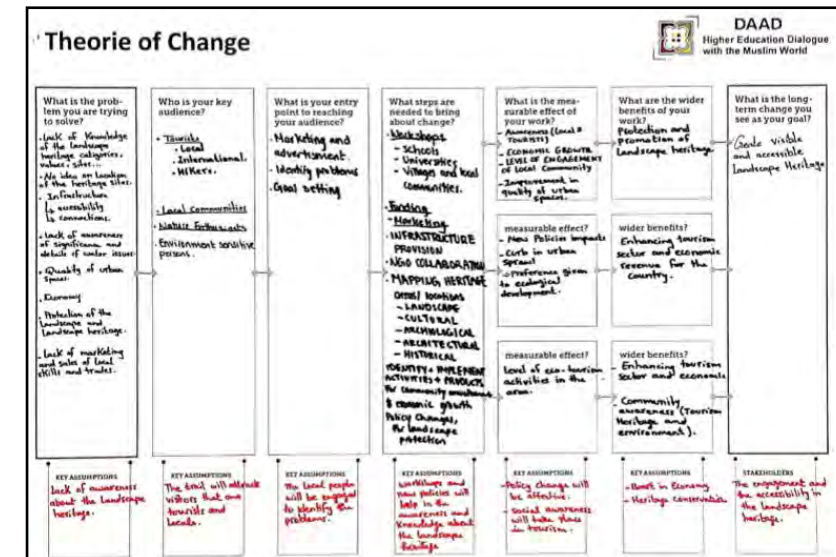
ENGAGING WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS



PROTOTYPING



ENGAGING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY



STRUCTURED APPROACH TO PROBLEM SOLVING

community learning processes and social innovation. This course was offered from March – June and had an even broader audience including ERASMUS partners from Estonia, Romania and The Netherlands. This allowed the Middle East students to engage with many international perspectives. We then implemented a social innovation lab directly in Jordan. During the 8-days MESIL intensive study programme from June 21 – 30, 2019 forty students from Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Germany worked in interdisciplinary groups on challenges of the Khufanja community (Ajloun Governorate) in the northeast of Jordan. This included a capacity building component aiming at qualified teaching staff to implement interdisciplinary teaching events in the context of social innovation and transformation.

Main partners in this cooperation are the business and planning departments of Nürtingen-Geislingen University (NGU), Germany; the German-Jordanian University (GU), Jordan; the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon and Birzeit University (BZU) in the West Bank, Palestine.

In order to address the local challenges with sufficient depth it is of great importance to involve local stakeholders. The Jordanian

project network involves the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), the Ministry of Tourism in Jordan and the Khufanja Municipality.

Ellen Fetzer & Dirk Funck

References:

More information on this programme can be found here:
<http://www.localchange.eu>



Walkway from RSCN building to Ajloun Forest Reserve | Picture Author : Arati Amitraj Uttur

THE MESIL TEAM

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Olive Trees in Khufanja | Picture Author : Nayla Al-Akl

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East is known for its arid to semi-arid environment where fresh water is a scarce and precious resource. One often associates the Middle Eastern landscape with historic examples of Islamic gardens and culturally iconic landscapes such as the lush palace gardens of the Timurid Empire, the early hunting parks of Mesopotamia and the hanging gardens of Babylon. Often perceived as green 'oases' in an otherwise dry setting, these examples highlight the concept of 'Paradise', an enclosed, protected and serene environment that is set apart from its harsh surrounding and that provides a soothing, pleasant and intensive sensorial experience. These gardens are also known for their metaphorical meanings and symbolism, referring to landscape features from the Quran; features such as the four heavenly rivers, the refreshing fountains as well as the shade and fruit trees, all of which serve as guiding principles for the highly designed and managed landscape.

Although the struggle against aridity is shared to a variety of degrees across the area, the landscape of the region nevertheless

is quite rich and diverse, and its physical features are highly heterogeneous varying from mountain ranges, seas and rivers with a variety of soil, plant cover and microclimates. The local geomorphological and ecological heterogeneity accompanied by a vast vernacular horticultural knowledge, witnessed in conservation measures of plants and soils, as well as efficient water-management techniques, have extensively shaped the visible landscapes through the widespread and the recognizable palm orchards and olive groves, cultivated terraced mountains, managed river valleys and seasonal watercourses, and desert rangelands.

A variety of striking landscape heritage sites also range from rural, pastoral and nomadic landscapes. While these remain less recognized than the precedents mentioned earlier, they are equally impressive and highly meaningful and would benefit from being more critically researched and documented be it for stronger recognition, better understanding as well as informed guidance in regional strategies. This variety of landscape features brings with it an array of landscape

issues, challenges and opportunities that are critical for the future of the region and are yet to be addressed.

Like other regions in the world, the Middle East is not immune to concerns of climate change and the mitigation of global warming. A stressed fresh water resource and rapid population growth increases the vulnerability of the region to future climate change and leads to serious sustainability concerns. Predictions of future temperature increase, decrease in precipitation in most of the areas and increase in the length of the dry season all carry severe impacts on the local landscape and its community. It is important to note that 'landscape' here is recognized as environment, habitat, resource, livelihood, activity, territory and scenery. While a singular Arabic word that encompasses the multitude of meanings accompanying the English word 'landscape' does not exist, there is a strong local conception of the landscape, one that is multilayered and comprehensive in its valuation, and which is highly experiential by nature. This is especially embedded in the long tradition of human-nature relationships influenced by the needs to work the land, tame the environment and create a comfortable microclimate.



Landscape of Ajloun | Picture Author : Nayla Al-Akl

These concepts of landscape may be different from the more scenic and pictorial imagery portrayed in the English word itself and in the western way of seeing landscape as a view of the countryside. Here landscapes are man-made and tamed and highlight the ways in which the local community approaches its local natural environment.

Urban landscapes and open spaces as well as gardens in the region are often sheltered and enclosed, providing shade, privacy and relying on a planting and spatial strategy that is designed to minimize water consumption. The struggles against aridity in the Middle East have shaped many aspects of the spatial, social and political life of the region and continue to be a leading factor in decision making today. The modelling of the local environment in the past decades has been influenced by, a rapid urban expansion and settlement growth, a cultural disconnection from the past, and tensions between local and global aspirations in the practice of landscape architecture which have led to a strong disconnect between the cultural, natural and ecological practices and a weakening of the relationship between people and their local natural environment.

A need for contextualization in landscape development strategies is critical today, and the growing awareness of the fragility of, and the threats faced by, the natural resources and ecosystems of the region call for the need for more sustainable future developments and holistic approaches to the landscape. Holistic projects and initiatives are increasingly emerging in the region, imbedded in practices of nature conservation, community engagement and empowerment and agricultural production.

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Landscape of Ajloun | Picture Author : Reem Hamdan

CHALLENGES OF THE JORDANIAN LANDSCAPE

Jordan is situated at the junction of the Levantine and Arabian lands of the Middle East. The country is bordered by Syria from the north, Iraq from the east, and by Saudi Arabia from the eastern and southern sides. To the west lies occupied Palestine and the West Bank. Jordan's only outlet to the sea, is the Gulf of Aqaba which is located at the most southern part of the country. Jordan can be divided into three main geographic areas: the Jordan Valley, the Mountain Heights Plateau, and the eastern desert, or Badia region. It is relatively a small country, but its diverse terrain morphology and its location amidst four biogeographically climate zones demonstrates a vast variety of landscapes. Situated east of the Levantine plate boundary, the country is endowed with beautiful and dramatic landscapes. The Great Rift Valley includes the Jordan Valley, Dead Sea and Arabah Valley. The adjacent mountain range runs from the Ajloun Mountains (biblical Gilead) in the north – receiving most precipitation in the country – to the Edom Mountains in the south. The Aqaba area along the Red Sea and the inselbergs of the Wadi Rum region in the hyper-arid south are also of extraordinary splendor. The other landscapes

of Jordan comprise the Al-Jafr Basin, the Central Plateau, the Azraq–Wadi Sirhan Basin, the Northern Basalt Plateau, also known as the Black Desert, and finally the Northeastern Limestone Plateau towards Iraq. (Edwards, 2008)

Western Jordan has essentially a Mediterranean climate with a hot, dry summer, a cool, wet winter and two short transitional seasons. However, about 75% of the country can be described as having a desert climate with less than 200 mm of rain annually.

Rapid population growth and uncontrolled urbanization in Jordan is causing pressing issues around the country. Jordan's population has reached 10,312,219 inhabitants in 2018 (Jordan's Department of Statistics, 2018). Jordan's rapid urban sprawl has been concentrated in the Amman-Ruseifa-Zarqa conurbation where more than half of the Jordanian inhabitants reside. Amman, Jordan's capital, according to the recent department of statistics' 2017 report, contains the highest number of population, which is 4,226,700, Ruseifa with a population

of 508,250 and Zarqa with a population of 1,439,500. Jordan's urbanized populations became more significant during the 1960s, reaching an urbanization rate of over 80% in 2011 (Ababsa, 2013). The reasons were the rural population regression, the arrival of numerous Palestinian refugees and the settlement of the displaced people in the bigger cities of Amman, Ruseifa, Irbid and Zarqa (Ababsa, 2013). With these high displacement levels due to politics in the Middle East region, pressure on land and natural resources has never been greater in Jordan.

The continuous urbanization and influx of refugees have further created numerous challenges, such as informal settlements, overcrowding, and degradation of agricultural land. Hence, a lack of open and green spaces with low quality urban services (Alnsour, 2016). Over the past decades, a large number of green areas were converted into construction projects and urban parks took place in the remaining vacant gaps, so that Jordan and its main cities now, have uneven distribution of parks and open spaces in general. Therefore, alternative scenarios for the sustainable landscape development of the country are required.



View of Khufranja | Picture Author : Reem Hamdan

The lack of urban planning strategies and uncontrolled development of built-up areas in the Jordanian cities has resulted in elevated expenses to secure services and infrastructure.

This scattered and uncoordinated development that is expanding over the country's most limited resources is becoming very expensive to appropriate services for. The cities are still developing around urban cores with residential/commercial uses being given priorities over agricultural land uses. Unsustainable practices are being implemented for the sake of immediate expansion and rapid provision of social services. The urban food insecurity and the hunger elevations around the country with 14% of the local population living under the poverty line is yet another major matter of contention. With thousands of people living in many urban neighborhoods, the practices of the poor communities are also influencing the landscape.

Jordan is also one of the ten most water stressed countries in the world due to diminished rainfall and increased temperatures. The population continues to increase, and the water resources continue to be strained. If such practices continue, Jordan

will be in absolute water shortage by 2025. The urbanization and industrialization have exploited some of Jordan's most important aquifers and are still putting many other water reserves under pressure. Along with Jordan's agricultural practices using 77.5% of the water, the stress continues and further heightens Jordan's water scarcity issues.

Jordanian cities are faced with unprecedented challenges with the urbanization and increasing population. The management of lands along with their development plays a crucial role for a better sustainable development of the country's landscape. (UN Habitat, Jordan)

Author: Reem Hamdan
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MAP OF JORDAN SHOWING THE LOCATION OF AJLOUN GOVERNORATE

THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE LANDSCAPE OF AJLOUN

Geographical Location:

Ajloun Governorate is one of the 12 governorates of Jordan, located 76 Kilometers to the northwestern corner of the capital city Amman.

Ajloun covers an area of 420 KM2, which makes 5% of Jordan's area. It is bordered by Jerash Governorate from the south east, Irbid Governorate from the north, Balqa Governorate from the south and the Jordan Valley to the west.

The administrative Divisions System of the Ministry of Interior, divides Ajloun Governorate into two departments, as follows:

1. Capital Department: includes 50 towns and villages, with its administrative center in Ajloun. (Total area 312 km²)
2. Khufranjah Department: includes 19 towns and villages, its administrative center is in Khufranjah (total area 108,928 km²).



AJLOUN GOVERNORATE AND ZOOMED IN MAP OF KHUFRANJA

The Socioeconomic Profile

Ajloun Governorate has the fourth highest population density in Jordan with a population density of 420 inhabitants per square kilometer. According to the Department of Statistics, the total population of the Governorate has reached 176,600 by the end of 2015, about 76% of them are urban and 24% are rural.

The male population forms 51% of Ajloun population, meanwhile the female population forms 49%. The largest age group in Ajloun consisted of the age group between 15 and 64 years old. 37% of the population are less than 14 years old, 59% are between ages 15 and 64 years and 4% are above 65 years. The figures below show population of Ajloun by gender and age group.

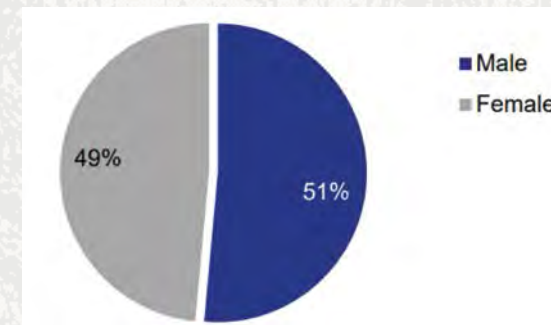
The total number of households is 34,950, the average number of individuals is 6.3. Ajloun is home to more than 5,231 low-income households (DoS, 2018). Ajloun Governor, Mr. Ali Al-Majali pointed out that one of the most important challenges facing the governorate is the high poverty rate which is (25.6%) compared to the Kingdom (14.4%). This is due to the existence of 3 poverty pockets in the province, which are; Arjan district, Qasabat Ajloun district and Sakhra district,

with a poverty rate of 33.9%, 28% and 22.9% respectively.

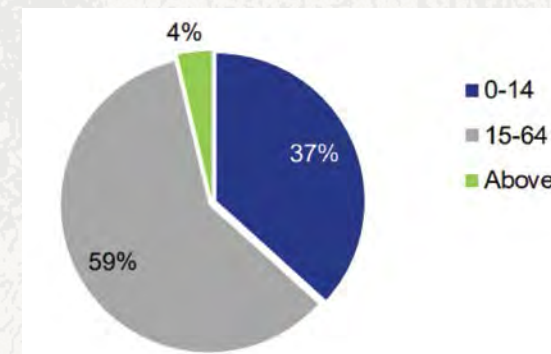
Al-Majali also pointed out that the unemployment rate in the governorate was 19.4%, according to the Unemployment Rate report issued by the Department of Statistics (2018), where unemployment among females reached 38.6% and 13.1% among males. The Agriculture sector in Ajloun is considered one of the major income sources for the Ajlouni families. In 2008, Olive, grape and fruit farms constituted a total area of 141.4 km² that is 34% of the area of the Governorate.

The high rate of poverty and unemployment among the province attributed to:

- The dependence on the public service and service jobs
- The absence of investment and employment projects
- The reluctance of the private sector to invest in the province
- The high proportion of graduates from universities and institutes in comparison to the weak employment opportunities.



POLPULATION OF AJLOUN BY AGE



POLPULATION OF AJLOUN BY GENDER

**PINE FORESTS OF AJLOUN****AYYUBID CASTLE AT AJLOUN****AJLOUN FOREST RESERVE****ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE, AJLOUN**

The Ecological Framework of Ajloun's Landscape

Ajloun, a confluence of highlands, people and cultural heritage covering 1% of Jordan's total land area, hosts 60% of Jordan's green land cover and is home to the country's most pristine and traditional village landscapes. It boasts some of the most impressive antiquities in the Middle East.

As it has a Mediterranean weather; rainy and snowy in winter season and pleasant in the summer time. It's one of the country's most beautiful regions. The Ajloun Mountains are famous for their lush vegetation and thick green forests, making it a favorable destination for tourists who seek relaxation and tranquility in the midst of green.

Just a short journey from Jerash governorate through pine forest and olive groves, the area boasts of scores of ancient sites, including watermills, forts and villages all in the beautiful hills and valleys of northern Jordan. The marvels of nature and the genius of medieval Arab military architecture have given this city two of the most important ecological and historical attractions in the Middle East, namely, the sprawling pine forests of the Ajloun-Dibbine area, and the towering Ayyubid castle at Ajloun. Therefore,

Ajloun embraces the potential of becoming one of the Middle East's most celebrated natural and cultural landscapes.

In pursuance of protecting the large, unplanned, fragmented, and complex natural and cultural heritage landscapes of Ajloun, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) has established the Ajloun Nature Reserve and The Royal Academy for the Conservation of Nature. Located on its Highlands, this small (just 13 sq km) but vitally important nature reserve was established in 1988 to protect oak, carob, pistachio and strawberry-tree forests. The reserve also acts as a sanctuary for the endangered roe deer as well as wild boar, stone martens, polecats, jackals and even grey wolves.

Far from Jordan's deserts or congested capital, the landscape of rolling hills and mixed forest is lovely and has inspired the RSCN to develop a good network of hiking trails, with a variety of paths, to promote hiking in the rural areas of Ajloun and support local community development.

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 - <http://www.rscn.org.jo/overview>



RSCN Building | Picture Author : Jamshed Omary

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE (RSCN)

RSCN is an independent national organization devoted to the conservation of Jordan's natural resources. RSCN was established in 1966 with His Majesty the late King Hussein as Honorary President. It has the mission of protecting and managing the natural resources of Jordan, for it is responsible for protecting wildlife and wild places. Thus, it is one of the few national organizations in the Middle East with such a public service mandate.

As a result of its pioneering conservation work, the RSCN has achieved international recognition and acclaim. Managing the nature resources of Jordan is done by setting up protected areas to safeguard the best wildlife and scenic areas as well as breeding endangered species to save them from extinction. In addition to enforcing governmental laws to protect wildlife, control illegal hunting and raise awareness in environmental issues through educational programs. Ultimately promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. In its short but rich history, RSCN has established many achievements. The foremost

of which is establishing seven protected areas covering over 1200 square kilometers. These areas comprise of wild plants, animals and other natural resources, while including some of the finest natural landscapes in the country.

The successful captive breeding of the magnificent endangered Arabian Oryx, gazelle and ibex and their re-introduction into the wilderness is considered a pioneering step of conservational activity in the region. Hence, controlling illegal hunting throughout the Kingdom to preserve these wondrous creatures.

Setting up over 1000 Nature Conservation Clubs in schools raises children's awareness regarding environmental issues by making them practically involved in conservation activities and projects.

The development of large-scale conservation programs designed to integrate environmental protection with the socio-economic development of local people is another task for RSCN's team.

Mission:

"RSCN will create, manage and advocate for a national network of protected areas to conserve Jordan's biodiversity and support local community development, while promoting wider public support and action for the protection of the natural environment within Jordan and neighboring countries."

Author: Osama Hasan



Ajloun Forest Reserve | Picture Author : Arati Amitraj Uttur

AJLOUN FOREST RESERVE

Ajloun Forest Reserve covers an area of 12km² located in the Ajloun highlands north of Amman established in 1987. It consists of Mediterranean-like hill country, ranging from 600 - 1100 m above sea level, with a series of small and medium winding valleys. It is dominated by open woodlands of Evergreen Oak, Wild Pistachio and Wild Strawberry tree. These trees have been important to local people for their wood, scenic beauty, and quite often for medicine and food.

Ajloun area has a long history of human settlement, due to its mild climate, dense forests, and fertile soil. This rich history is reflected in the many archaeological ruins scattered in the wood-lands and surrounding villages. The reserve itself supports a wide variety of wild plants and animal, there are more than 100 kind of animals and more than 400 kind of wild plants.

Ajloun lays in a typical Mediterranean region, with a shrubland ecosystem dominated by the evergreen Oak (*Quercus calliprinos*), which forms dense stands on the slopes and in the valleys, other trees and shrubs frequently

found among *Q. calliprinos* include the Strawberry tree (*Arbutus andrachne*), wild Pistachio (*Pistacia palaestina*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.) and another oak species (*Quercus infectoria*).

The reserve partly encompasses the village of Um El-Yanabee' and its vicinity includes the villages of Tiarah, Ba'un and Rassun, Orjan and Mehna all of which are surrounded by orchards and other cultivation. There are also a few small pockets of privately owned and cultivated land within the reserve. Grazing in the area is not causing a real pressure on the vegetation cover. Other activities such as woodcutting and leaf (litter and upper soil layer) collection are controlled by the forestry rangers and the reserve rangers. Forests around the reserve are used by visitors as picnic areas.

Ajloun Forest Reserve is managed as a pilot model reconciles between oak forest conservation and local development requirements. (General Objective)

Educational program:

Development of educational programs in Ajloun reserve involving children around the reserve effectively to become children of the local community pioneers in changing the

perception / views of local community around the reserves and become more committed towards the protection of nature.

Ecotourism:

As protected areas are costly to run, Eco-tourism and Socio-economic projects are needed to generate income to support conservation programs, and to create “nature based” jobs to change local people attitudes towards conservation and to help understand and value their natural heritage.

The development of eco-tourism project began since 2004 through building 10 tents and small restaurant (local meals), setting up many hiking trail inside the reserve and rehabilitating local houses, which located along the trails, to provide a good service of food and beverage. Ecotourism product depends on natural and cultural resources, low level of technology with low negative impact to nature through identify the caring capacity. Now, the reserve has 23 Eco-lodges accommodates 100 guests. The reserve has become a destination for internal tourism, where the percentage of Jordanians is 70% of the total number of tourists. It receives about 25,000 tourists every year.

The success of the conservation programs depends on the local community participation through a steering committee to create a state of communication with all stakeholders through their representatives, reach a good level of cooperation and coordination and merge reserve programs within local plans.

Author: Osama Hasan

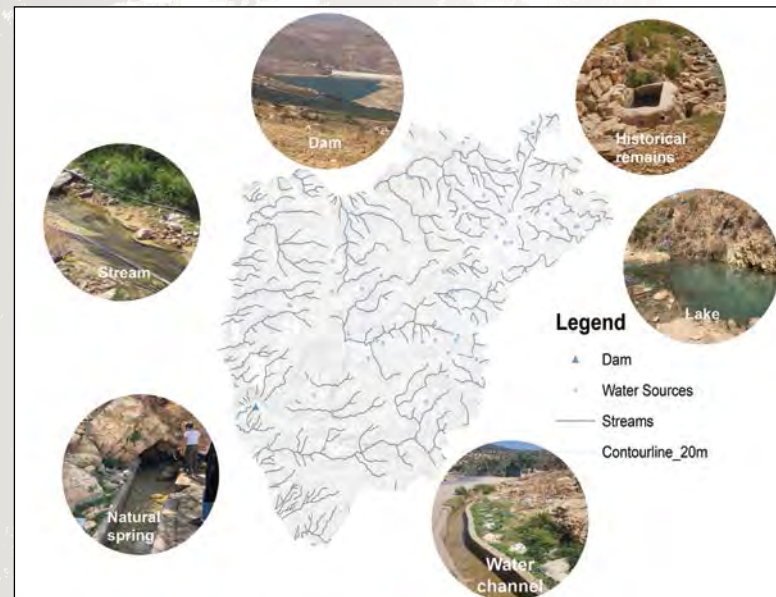


IMAGE 01 : WATER BODIES, NATURAL WATER SOURCES AND STREAMS IN AJLOUN

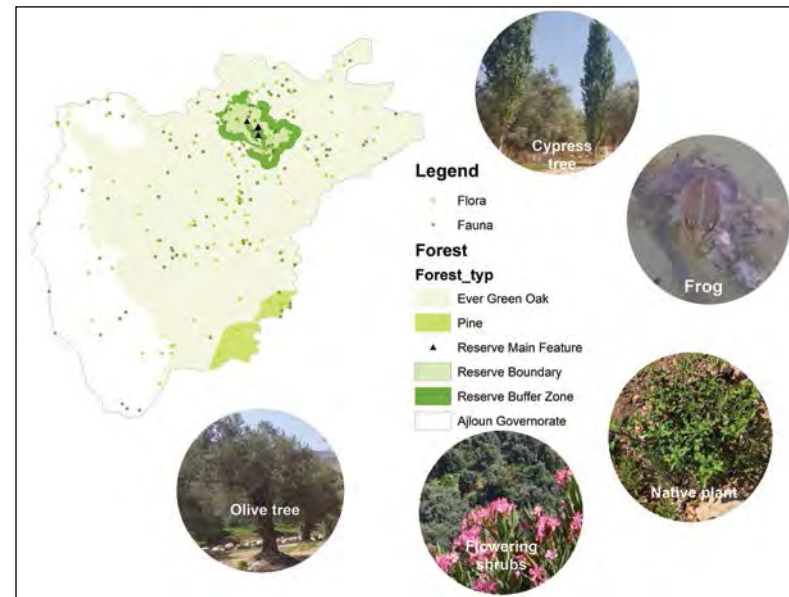


IMAGE 02 : FLORA AND FAUNA IN AJLOUN

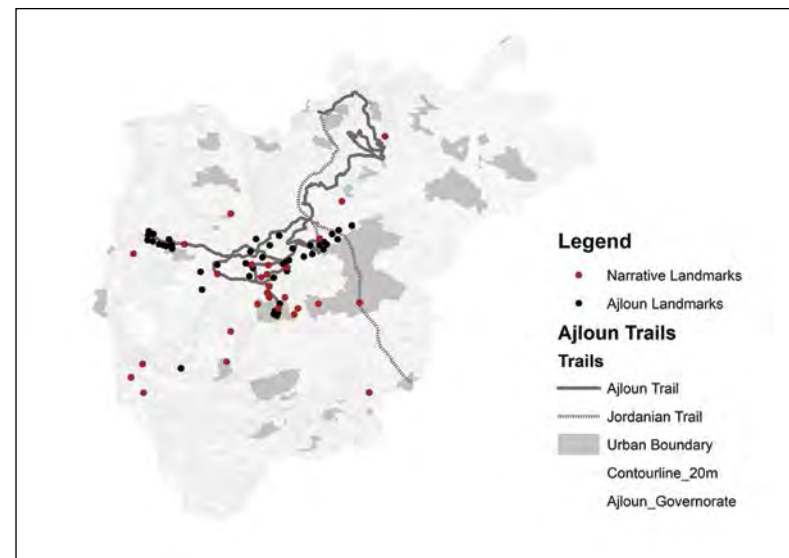


IMAGE 03 : NARRATIVE LANDMARKS AND TRIALS IN AJLOUN

THE TRAIL CONCEPT IN JORDAN : FROM LANDSCAPE HERITAGE TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

In 2018, PFK ProGroup conducted a comprehensive analysis on the Market Assessment for Community based Tourism in Ajloun and Jerash Governorates. As a result, Nature-based attractions such as Ajloun Forest Reserve, and Tourism Hiking Trails showed a high demand due to the unique nature and terrain in Ajloun, as well as the historical attractions of the region. Image 01 illustrates water bodies and water sources, some of which are already on trail routes and some that are potential additions onto trail routes to bring out the ecological and historical value that water holds in this area.

A new tourism intervention in the form of Rural Life Experience service offered by 'home stays' is fast proving to be a succesful feature as tourists are exposed to cultural exchange while learning new habits and traditions, while locals benefit economically as well as emotionally as their cultural heritage is apprciated and recognised. This circle of interdependence strengthens the age old eco-friendly practices and helps to deter globalisation from over taking the heritage.

Ajloun enjoys several community-based

tourist activities that are at individual initiatives level and promoted through personal network of the local community. One of these activities are the adventure tourism activities, in which hiking trails underlies, due to its historical and natural assets, as it is home to several endangered species of Flora and Fauna. Image 02 illustrates the forested and protected area of Ajloun, in addition to some of its flora.

The Ajloun Governorate embraces a large number of active hiking trails that provide rural life experience which is provided by number of camps and homestay service providers, also serving the tourists the ultimate rural experience between the amazing site views of the nature as they are being served by women and young workforce. These Trails are illustrated in Image 03.

Jordan Trail

A hiking trail that allows hikers to travel the length of the country and enables a chance to peel through the different layers of culture. As you encounter locals while walking and spending your nights in their home-stays, you get the chance to taste the varied cuisines of

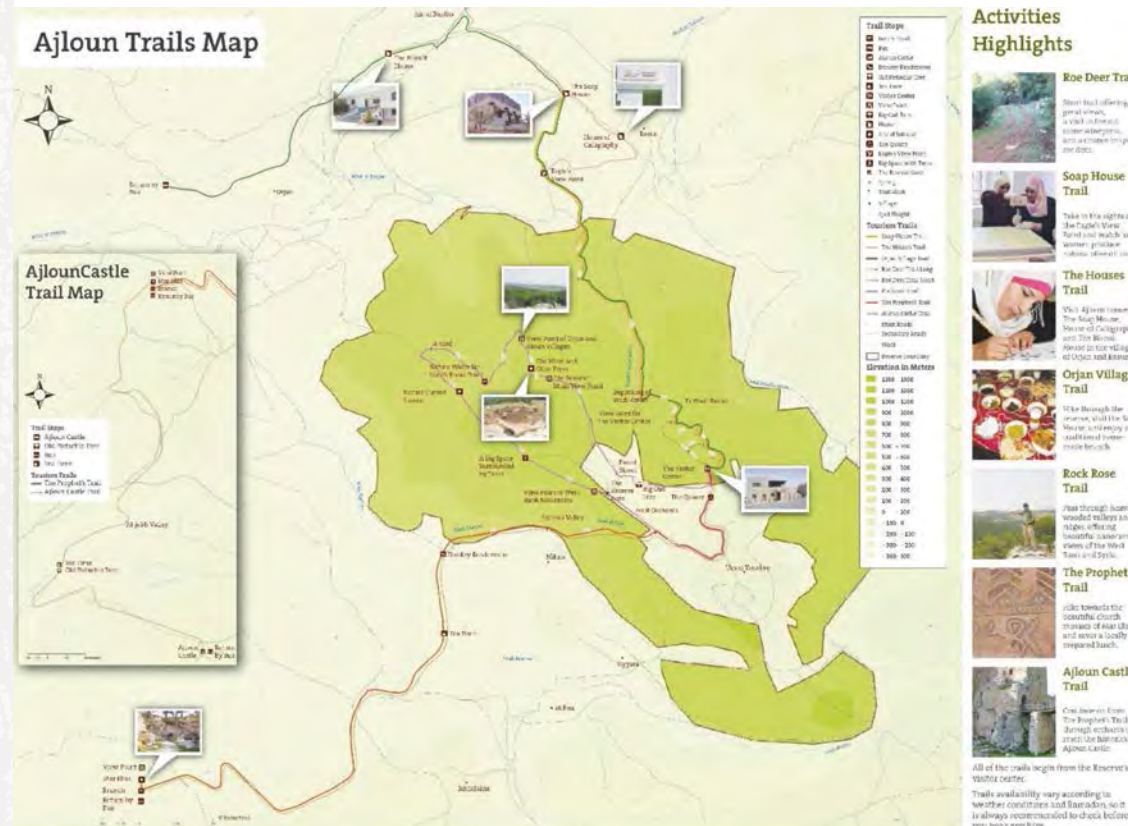
Jordan. It is also an opportunity to learn the history of Jordan, the different civilizations that have made their marks on the land. The trail moves through major historical sites in the region such as Um Qais, Jerash, and Petra, while also harboring hidden ruins resting amongst the land.

Khufranja Trail

The Jordan Trail association aims to expand towards the west of Ajloun city, to include the village of Khufranja. This is with the view that Khufranja area holds several archeological, historical, agricultural, natural and urban places of high potential touristic value. During the MESIL workshop, the students were able to celebrate the marvelous cultural landscape during a hike to Khufranja. On a spontaneous decision to go off the marked trails, the students were guided on an un-marked raw natural route from the south west of Ajloun, right upto Khufraja village. During this hike they and enjoyed the spectacular panoramic view of Khufranja from the hilly mountains. They were also shown natural sites of value like a historical cave, olive tree orchards and Jabool trees growing in the wild that are indegenous to the region. The route taken was seen as a ne prospective trail that will allow visitors to experience the rural areas of Khufranja, encounter natural landscape, local



JORDAN TRAIL



EXISTING AJLOUN TRAIL GUIDE

heritage and archeological sites along the way with the expertise of local community members acting as guides and enjoy a rural life experience.

Ajloun Forest Reserve Hiking Trails

The RSCN has developed a good network of hiking trails, with nine paths of different difficulty levels, that start from the visitors' center of Ajloun Reserve³. One of these nine trails is the Ajloun Castle Trail with a distance of 18 km (Roundtrip).

Once you have reached the historical site of Tell Mar Elias, 7 KM far from the reserve, you have the option of continuing on this challenging trail, which takes you by small farm house and their adjacent orchards on your way to Ajloun Castle, built between AD 1184-1188. In the first section of the trail you can enjoy views of the West Bank and Syria, before you descend into a wooded valley. The final difficult uphill is rewarded by the incredible castle and the marvelous views that accompany it. The hike also includes a locally prepared picnic lunch, to support the local communities². Nevertheless, all tours are guided by trained locals.

Author : Nawar Sabeeleish

Edited : Arati Amitraj Uttur

References:

1. https://jordantrail.org/thru_hike/
2. <http://www.rscn.org.jo/sites/default/files/publication/Ajloun%20trails-EN.pdf>
3. <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/jordan/ajloun-forest-reserve>
4. Work output of MESIL Team 03 who developed concepts for Landscape Heritage and Ajloun Trails : IMAGE 01; IMAGE 02; IMAGE 03



View of Khufranja | Picture Author : Ellen Fetzer

THE LANDSCAPE OF KHUFRANJA

The village of Kufranja, Ajloun Governate, lies in the upper part of Wadi Kufranja, a mountainous landscape unit based on limestone that declines westwards down to the Jordan Rift Valley. We spotted Kufranja for the first time during a hiking tour with our group. RSCN staff and some local community members, including the major and an archaeology expert, accompanied our tour.

We started somewhere south of Ajloun Castle from where we continued through century-old olive plantations, pastures and evergreen oak trees. We proceeded along one of the upper cretaceous riffs framing Wadi Kufranja. Looking east-southwards at about xx meters above sea level we saw the village lying in front of us, stretching over the southern side of the valley, nicely nested and organically woven into its steep limestone topography. Much of the built structure of the village is concentrated around the central core.

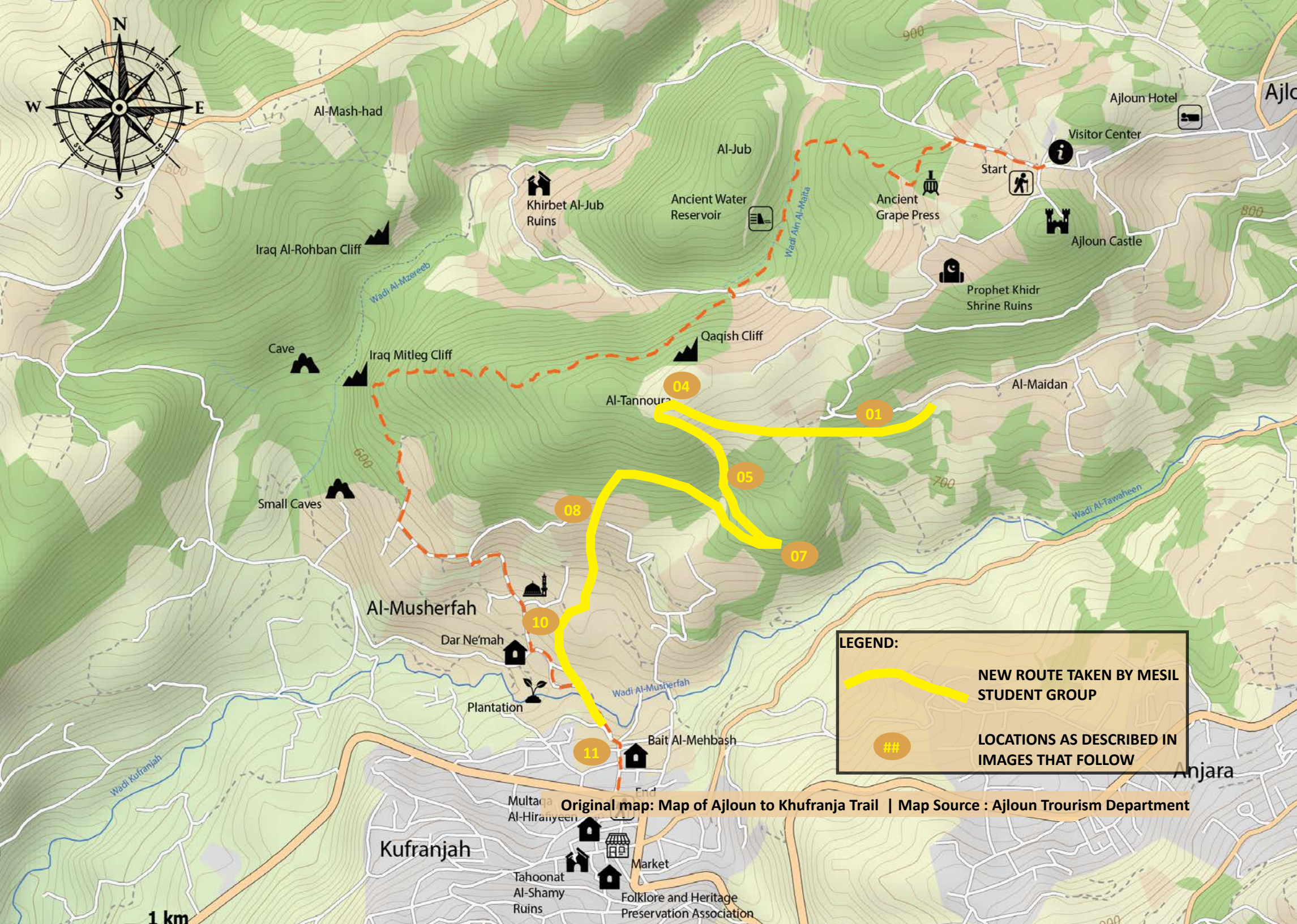
However, irregular construction activities at its edges give obvious evidence for ongoing urban sprawl, which seems to be a widespread phenomenon in Jordan. Seen from this distance, Kufranja is characterized

by a scenic and accentuated urban morphology based on the rock structure determined by its geological foundation. The lower edge of the city leads gradually down to the fertile grounds of the valley, served with water all through the year and fed by the 25 springs originating in the upper parts of Wadi Kufranja. The abundancy of water is the main reason for the long settlement history of the valley, leading back to Paleolithic times. The vertical sequence of landscape layers is as follows: bare rocks in the highest parts and on the cliffs, evergreen oak forests with open pastures, olive tree cultivations and, eventually down at the bottom of the valley, where water abounds: green meadows, vegetable cultivation, various orchards and natural river vegetation. Irrigation has a long tradition dating back to Roman times when various water mills appeared all along the valley building the foundation for rich agricultural production over centuries.

After descending from the cliff, we experienced for the first time the warm hospitality of the local population. Reaching a small farmstead we were invited for tea, flavored with salvia, accompanied by the first apples of the year. Contemplating the landscape from this wonderful spot, in company of a warmhearted family, inspired

us to imagine how the future of this place might look like. We were then picked up and continued by bus down to the village. Entering the built environment of Kufranja was in sharp contrast to our calm walking tour in the open landscape: busy streets, crowded traffic, vegetable shops extending over the streets, noise, motion and an overall disordered streetscape – many of the stereotype attributed to the oriental city prevail in Kufranja. But this was immediately contrasted again when we entered a private house to which we were invited by a local cultural activist. We passed through a hidden door, followed a corridor, another door and another corridor – to enter a large hidden courtyards garden full of flowers and fruit trees, where we were again warmly received and introduced to the community. The courtyard is privately owned but various cultural events are being organized there, so it is already a good example for the punctual development of Kufranja towards tourism.

We continued our walk through the streets of Kufranja. Their edges open from time to time to enchanting views into the open landscape of the valley and to the landmark of Ajloun Castle. Even if the central streets of the village are crowded and the walkability is poor, the views into the landscape help balancing the



01. EXPLORING OLIVE TREES



02. LANDSCAPE FORMED BY LIMESTONE EROSION



03. AJLOUN CASTLE AS LANDMARK



04. KHUFRANJA AND JORDAN VALLEY



05. WALKING DOWN TO KHUFRANJA



06. URBAN SPRAWL



07. EXPLORING WITH THE MAYOR OF KHUFRANJA



08. QUESTIONABLE LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT



09. RURAL LIFESTYLE

**10. RURAL HOSPITALITY****13. URBAN HOSPITALITY****16. ROMAN MILL IN KHUFRANJA****11. LANDMARKS IN KHUFRANJA****14. URBAN LANDSCAPE****12. THE CHALLENGE OF LOST HERITAGE****15. WADI KHUFRANJA**

impression of being enclosed.

The central square of the village has seen some design attempt in the past, however, the abundance of traffic and the absence of shading elements make this public space largely unusable. Next to the square we find one of the very rare heritage buildings of Kufranja, currently lying in ruins. At the eastern entrance of the village lies the old cemetery, which appears from the distance as pure rock, but it is obviously a sacred space for the local people. It is also one of the few larger open spaces in the centre from where the visitor can enjoy a panoramic view over the valley.

At the neighborhood level one can observe that the streets and buildings are very condensed, adjusting themselves organically to the topography. Although the urban form suggests intensive community relations, these neighborhoods lack accessible open space in walkable distance. There are however various plots lying vacant, probably because of fragmented landownership, as we were told. Furthermore, informal densification is happening for example by adding new floors on existing houses, blocking the views of residences in the upper parts. Urban sprawl appears primarily in two directions: downwards to the valley: here it seems that

former agricultural land transforms into housing following the decrease of agricultural practice along with generational change. Likewise, new houses appear in the upper parts of Kufranja and the adjacent higher plain. Both processes are substantially transforming the morphology this place.

At present, tourism does not play any relevant role in Kufranja. The path towards building it up as a new economic pillar seems to be long. The local population appears in general positive about such perspective, especially since the local society is still transition from an agricultural background towards a somewhat uncertain future. However, there are various entry points for sustainable tourism that might lead towards positive change: The establishment of a new trail connecting the Kufranja landscape to the existing Ajloun trail and the overall framework of the Jordan trail seems very promising. The rehabilitation of the built heritage including the central streetscape could create a new environment for welcoming not only visitors but also new businesses, initiatives and cultural activities serving the local community. Despite the obvious challenges of the public space in Kufranja, the visitor of today has the chance to explore a very authentic environment with many charming details such as vernacular

staircases and a general openness of the population. The population considers the wadi itself as an integral part of their local identity. The valley and its stream form a fantastic environment that is very different from the wider surroundings. The transition of land use is already in full course. Grazing, fruit and crop production are still shaping the valley. At the same time, the meadows along the Kufranja stream are used by the local population for recreation. They provide fantastic natural playscapes for children that can hardly be found elsewhere. The Kufranja case with all its potentials and challenges provides us with a very inspiring background for envision social innovation for local change. In the following, we will present the approach we have taken and the results of our interdisciplinary student teams.

Author : Ellen Fetzer



Interaction with Stakeholders | Picture Author : Dirk Funk

THE MESIL LEARNING PROCESS

The basic concept for a project-based intensive programme (IP) on social innovation has been developed within the framework of the ERASMUS+ project Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change (2015-2018). A corresponding documentation titled “Teaching and Learning Social Entrepreneurship – A Blended Learning Model” supports university teachers in establishing similar learning environments. The MESIL team made use of this didactic approach and its methodology and transferred the model to the specific context of the Middle East.

The didactic concept consist of the following key elements:

Blended learning:

The students prepared themselves for the project work in Jordan during an international and interactive online course. Lectures and in-depth tutorials familiarized the students with methods such as design thinking or business planning. We added two special sessions introducing the social, economic and ecological context of the municipality of

Khufranja in the North of Jordan, which was to become the project environment.

Interdisciplinarity:

Various disciplines were involved in the project groups and at the level of lecturers and coaches: Architecture, Business and Administration, Economics, Energy- and Resource Management, Landscape Architecture, Organizational Design and Urban Planning. The interdisciplinary approach aims at providing a wider framework for understanding the local challenges and for designing sustainable solutions,

Interculturality:

The workshop included 40 students in total coming from Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, India, Mexico, Italy, France and Germany. When compiling the project teams, we tried to make them as diverse as possible. The nine teachers came from the cooperating universities in Lebanon (AUB), Palestine (Birzeit), Jordan (GJU) and Germany (NGU). The intercultural experience was further supported by accompanying activities and events: joint visits to historical places, hand-craft workshops (e.g. baking biscuits together) and a final evening with traditional music.

Community-based Learning:

The central element of the didactic conception is the close cooperation with the local community. The ecological, social and economical challenges of the region can only be understood if they are explained from the point of view of the affected and responsible people on the ground. Against this background, employees of the RSCN, the Ministry of Tourism and the city administration were involved in the learning process as well as social entrepreneurs, pupils and other citizens of the region. This was done as part of guided tours through the countryside and the city of Khufranja, in round-table discussions, in-depth one-on-one discussions and further field visits of individual project groups. Representatives of the community were also present at the final discussion, and there was lively discussion about the proposed solutions.

Project orientation:

The eight days on site were organized as project work. The students were divided into eight interdisciplinary and intercultural groups, and after the intensive exchange with the community, they defined a specific challenge in order to develop solutions and present them finally. Project work in this framework also involves developing



DISCOVERING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE LANDSCAPE



IDENTIFYING LOCAL CHALLENGES BASED ON FIELD OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS



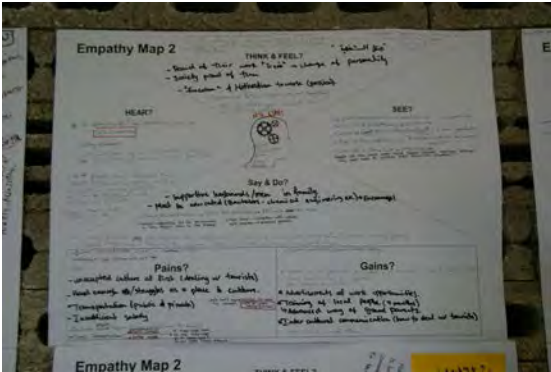
COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS LOCAL EXPERTS



FIELD OBSERVATIONS INTO LOCAL CHALLENGES



EMPATHY MAPPING DURING STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE



EMPATHY MAPPING DURING STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

innovative solutions, which is why part of the process draws on design thinking and commonly used methods (challenge mapping, empathy maps, theory of change, business canvas model).

The role of the teachers: While the teachers in the online course take a classic role as lecturer and partially as tutors for small groups, this changes during the project work. Now, with the exception of a few and short input phases, the lecturers largely act as a moderating coaches, supporting the students in the learning process and in the project work. This includes, above all, asking critical questions, discussing models of action and providing feedback. In addition, peer feedback is organized during which students give each other feedback on their project progress. The high self-dynamics of eight parallel projects makes it necessary to react with flexibility on new findings or requirements and the initially planned process is continuously adapted. One lecturer was assigned to each of the groups. Depending on the need for information and advice and in the sense of team teaching, however, the colleagues have repeatedly supported each other. A team meeting was held almost every day to coordinate needs and to discuss changes of the schedule. For a better understanding, please find below

Community Innovation Lab Jordan, Ajloun Forest (June 21-29, 2019)								
June 21	June 22	June 23	June 24	June 25	June 26	June 27	June 28	June 29
Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	10.00 - 10.45	08.30 - 09.30	08.30 - 10.00	08.30 - 09.00	08.30 - 09.30	08.30 - 09.00	08.30 - 09.00	09.00 - 13.00
Arrival	Welcoming Organisation, Outline <i>Dirk, Ellen, Osama</i>	Review & 1st results Outline of the day <i>Dirk</i>	Team-Presentations of Challenges (3 min.) <i>Ellen</i>	Outline & Organisation	Outline & Organisation	Outline & Organisation	Outline & Organisation	final presentations 1-5 each: 20 Min. presentation 10 Min. questions & discussion <i>teams, tutors, local community, experts, guests</i>
	10.45 - 12.00	10.00 - 13.00	10.00 - 11.30	09.00 - 13.00	09.45 - 11.45	09.00 - 13.00	10.00 - 11.30	
	Local context presentation and introduction of challenges <i>Osama, Nawwar</i>	Understanding of Challenges (2) Round table discussions <i>Osama, Nawwar</i>	Theorie of Change (1) working session <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Field Visits Teams spread out according to their own agenda <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Businessplan (1) working session <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Field Testing Teams spread out according to their own agenda <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Businessplan (3) working session <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	
	Input: Design Thinking and Context Mapping <i>Dirk, Ellen</i>	12.15 - 13.00 students, tutors, local experts and stakeholders <i>Osama, Nawwar</i>	Peer-Review Theorie of Change two teams (20 min. presentation; 10 min. feedback) <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	12.00 - 13.00 preparing of field-testing for thursday <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	12.00 - 13.00 preparing of field-testing for thursday <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	12.00 - 13.00 preparing of field-testing for thursday <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	12.00 - 13.00 preparing of field-testing for thursday <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	
14.00 - 16.00	14.00 - 17.15	14.00 - 15.00	14.00 - 15.15	14.00 - 15.00	14.00 - 20.30	14.00 - 17.00	14.00 - 19.00	14.00 - 16.00
IP Staff meeting <i>Dirk, Ellen</i>	Understanding of Challenges (1) Tour of the area by coach hosted by local experts <i>Osama, Nawwar, local experts</i>	Topic Choosing and Team Formation <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Theorie of Change (2) discussion of feedback <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Input Business-Modell Canvas (Ariz)	Excursion	Businessplan (2) working session <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Teams prepare the final presentation <i>Teams (Tutors until 16.00)</i>	final presentations 6-8 feedback
	15.15 - 17.15	15.15 - 17.15	15.30 - 17.30	15.15 - 17.15		17.00 - 18.00	16.00 - 19.00	16.15 - 17.00
	17.30 - 18.00	17.30 - 18.30	17.30 - 19.00	17.30 - 18.30		Peer-Review Business Plan two teams (each 20 min. present. & 10 min. feedback) <i>Teams & Tutors</i>	Review of the week further steps planning of next term <i>Staff only</i>	17.00 - 18.00
	18.00 - 19.00 Review of the day <i>Staff only</i>	18.00 - 19.00 Review of the day <i>Staff only</i>	18.00 - 19.00 Review of the day <i>Staff only</i>	18.00 - 19.00 Review of the day <i>Staff only</i>		18.00 - 19.00 Review of the day <i>Staff only</i>	18.00 - 19.00 Review of the day <i>Staff only</i>	18.00 - 19.00
	19.30 - 22.00	19.30 - 22.00	19.30 - 22.00	19.30 - 22.00		19.30 - 22.00	19.30 - 22.00	19.30 - 22.00
	socialising	socialising	socialising	socialising		socialising	socialising	socialising
Version 4 13.06.2019	Outcome of the day understanding of local context	Outcome of the day defining challenge	Outcome of the day first ideas to solve challenges	Outcome of the day first ideas to solve challenges	Outcome of the day first draft business plan	Outcome of the day business plans further developed	Outcome of the day business plans finalized presentations prepared	Outcome of the day final presentations and well-being:-)

SCHEDULE OF MESIL INTENSIVE PROGRAMME, JUNE 21-29, 2019.

the schedule with its change of speaker input, community work, project work as well as feedback units and the final presentation.

Assessment

Depending on the university and the study programme, students were able to acquire up to eight academic credits. The course requirements were therefore handled in

a flexible way. For eight academic credits each student had to individually prepare a best practice case referring to problems that are relevant for the local context. At the end of the project week, the students presented their results and received written feedback. The results of the groups had to be summarized in the format of a written business plan (group work) for which a



DEVELOPING 'HOW MIGHT WE'-QUESTIONS



TEACHERS AS COACHES ASKING CRITICAL QUESTIONS DURING THE PROCESS



SYNTHESIZING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ON MAPS



FIELD-TESTING OF IDEAS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS



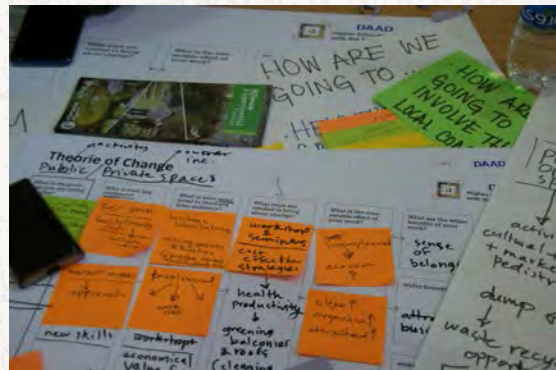
PRESENTING IDEAS

template had been provided. The final grade was the average of the two assessments for the case study and the business plan. In addition, students received oral and written feedback from the teaching team.

Author : Dirk Funck

References:

Community Learning for Local Change (https://localchangewiki.hfwu.de/index.php?title=Guidance_Reports_Social_Entrepreneurship_for_Local_Change)



DEVELOPING A THEORY OF CHANGE



RAPID PROTOTYPING FOR SHAPING IDEAS



FROM PROTOTYPING TO BUSINESS CANVAS MODELLING



HARVESTING FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY



STAFF TEAM REFLECTING THE WORKSHOP PROCESS



TOURISM IN AJLOUN

Tutor : Nawwar Sabeeleish

Group members:

Mohammad Ghosheh Demi Geiger
Yasmine Rizk Jana Abou Nasr
Qais Ismail



CHALLENGES

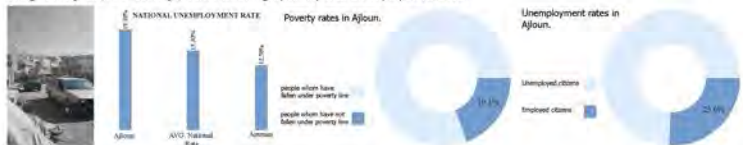
SOCIAL

Towns in the city of Ajloun undergo difficulties surrounding the provision of acceptable social living qualities, like affordable waste management systems and other infrastructure (housing, road, water, communication).



ENVIRONMENTAL/ECONOMICAL

The narrow roads of towns in Ajloun are occupied by many vehicles, including big trucks; contributing to a lot of air pollution. Also, villages in Ajloun, like Kufranja, suffer from high poverty and unemployment rates.



NEED FOR TOURSIM

Current Situation of Tourism

- Poor touristic presentation
- Land ownership
- Poor infrastructure
- Lack of funding resources



Why Do We Need Tourism?



Bridging a Gap in the Market

Eco & Nature Tourism	Cultural and Religious Tourism	Adventure Tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ajloun Forest Reserve Desert Forest Dana Biosphere Reserve Shamir Wildlife Reserve Azraq Wetland Reserve Mt Ajloun Biosphere Reserve Aqaba Wadi Rum Protected Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jerash Ajloun Petra Um Qais Aqaba Madaba Um Al-Jimal Karak Pella (Taqat Fahl) Um Al-Rasas Showbak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wadi Rum Wadi Mujib Aqaba

Theme

The area of Ajloun offers a great variety of possible activities and inherits a beautiful and unique landscape. Although there is a lot of potential, the area lacks infrastructure, facilities and faces a severe threat through pollution. Moreover, the local population cannot accommodate tourists on its own. The challenge, therefore, is to protect the ecosystem and support the locals in accommodating tourists. This region needs awareness, thus our goal is to introduce Ajloun as a touristic destination and improve its popularity.

Approach

To better assess the current status quo, we did two field visits to the respective area and figured out points of interest along the trail. We also evaluated the current state of tourism in this area- which includes evaluating the given infrastructure and facilities. Most importantly, we firsthand experienced the condition of the trails. Moreover, we talked to locals to benefit from their knowledge and put their perception of the situation into perspective. As our activities are directed to benefit them, we have to ensure to act in their interest and respect and consider their wishes and concerns.

Solution

We want to give tourists an authentic experience of Ajloun's rural heritage. They will be able to actively explore both natural and cultural points of interest and indulge in

a unique and personal way of learning about Jordan's heritage. This is complemented by the possibility to do adventure activities for those who seek adrenaline. Those activities might include Ziplining, rock climbing or even Bungee jumping.

Our target group is the youth, for the first 5 years, we want to mainly target the Jordanian youth. As popularity increases, we also want to attract a more international target audience. As we want the local community to benefit from this incentive the most, they will be strongly involved throughout all activities. All locals involved in tourism will be hired staff, so they benefit financially. This shall also reduce unemployment, especially among the youth. As our approach is promoting cultural exchange, we wish to see also educational impact for both parties involved. This consists of farm and homestays, kiosks offering local food and the possibility to learn about traditional crafting.

The narrative approach and the personal one to one interactions are to be highlighted within this experience. We strongly aim to involve higher authorities to gain legitimacy. This includes the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the Royal family, the Ministry of interiors and eco proposed NGO's like the RSCN. Our main source of revenue will be the fee's paid for guided tours. Additionally, we will get revenue from additional activities that will be offered to perform along the trail. This includes fee's for extra activities located in the

adventure sector and fees for accommodation offered at certain spots. Ajloun has a high rate of poverty (25.4 %). Ajloun has a high rate of unemployment (19.6%)

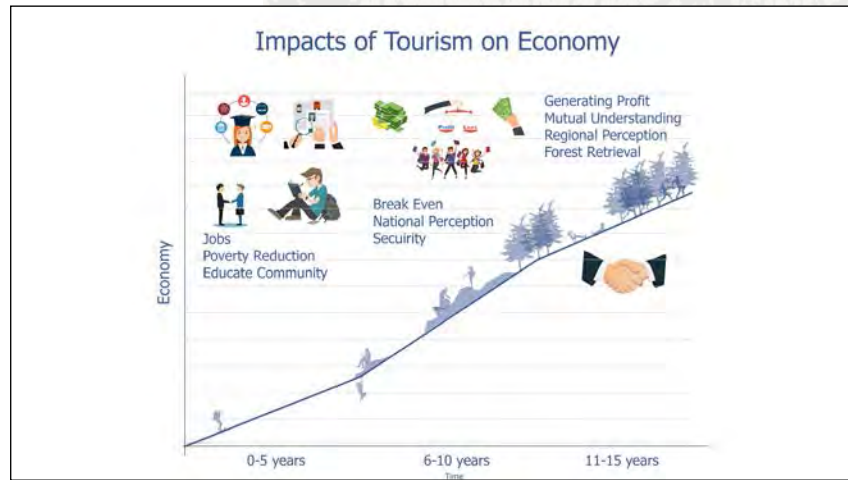
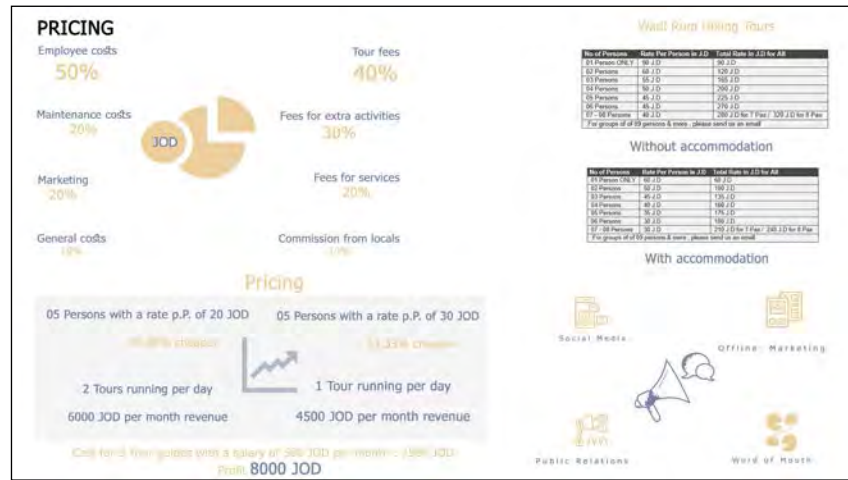
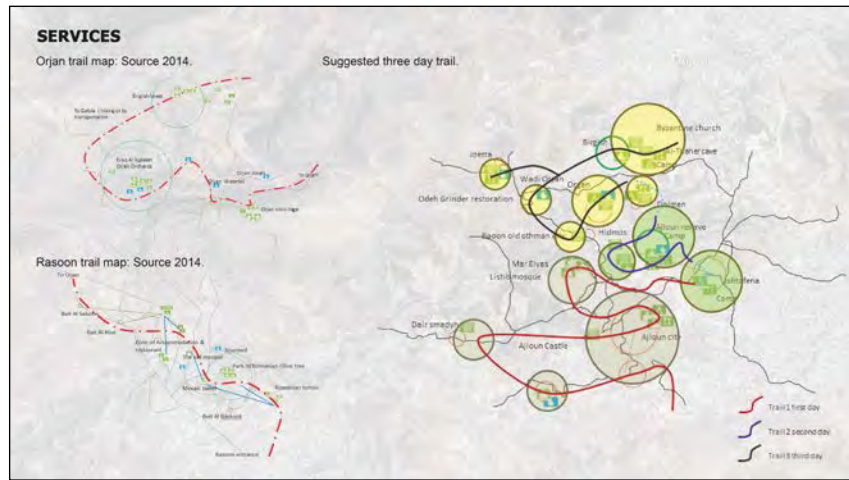
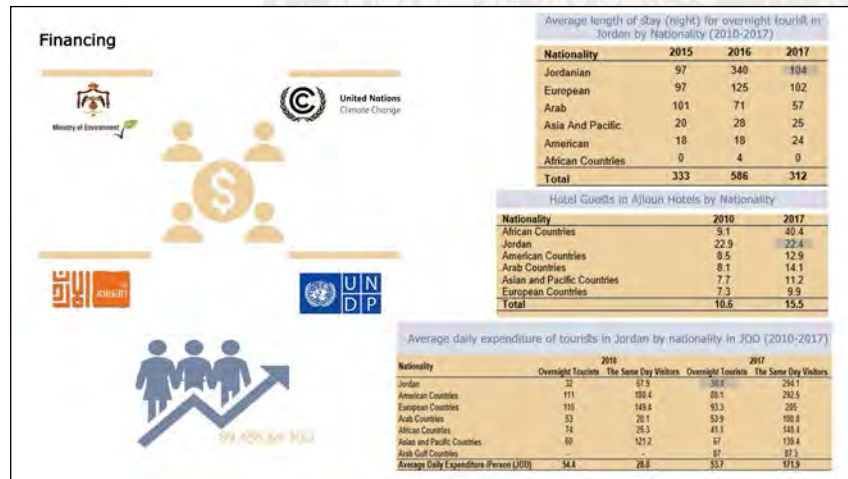
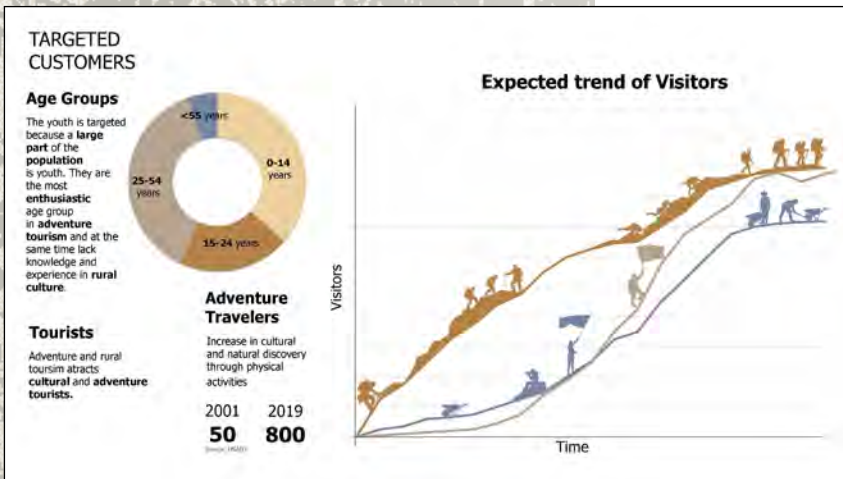
Impact

The social impact we wish to achieve is to strengthen the economic situation of the local population and decrease unemployment. We also want to protect nature. Although small interferences will occur, the main benefit will be the protection against illegal activities and insured cleanliness and maintenance of the area.

To conclude, our impact will be both social and environmental, helping the society living in this area to sustain themselves while protecting a unique piece of nature.

First steps

Our first steps will be to acquire funding and donations as investments are strongly required. The existing trails need to be maintained and be labeled with signage. Along the way, we need to install restrooms, areas with shelter and opportunities to sit. Further, there need to be kiosks to serve tourists with drinks and food. One of the very first actions will be the mobilizing off he locals. This contains hiring local tour guides, get the permission of private landowners and staff fort he facilities. As this area is meant to promote ecotourism, we need also employees who maintain the tracks and clean the area.



URBAN HERITAGE

Tutor : Tala Awadala

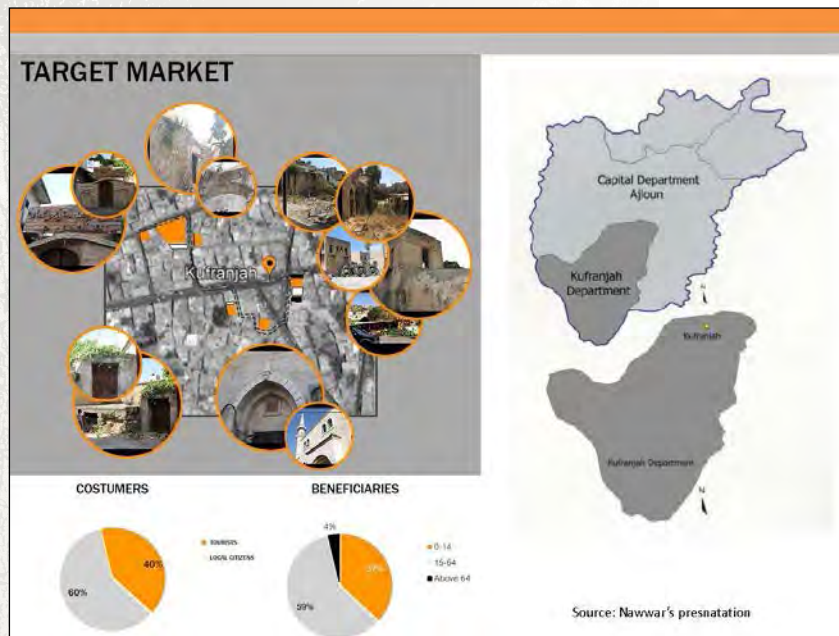
Group members:
Fayez Shantier
Veyarel Vazquez
Raghad Ziyadeh

Bissan Abu Muhsin
Ali Abu Aleid

Middle East Social Innovation Lab Final Presentation Template

Urban heritage

Group members:
Bissan abu muhsin
Raghad ziyadeh
Veyarel Vazquez
Ali Abu Aleid
Fayez shantier



Product and service



Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change



Theme

We worked on the urban heritage in Khufrajan which includes the heritage building and the left-over spaces around it. This challenge came up as a result of turning the heritage building into a dumb site full of trash and rats. As statics shows that 9% of the heritage sites are abandoned and 25% of the building is not inhabitant. As a result, our challenge is to transform all the abandoned sites in Karanja into sustainably active, economic, cultural hotspots that serves community needs.

Approach

To be able to understand the context of Khufrajan we did a site visit, it included different interviews which reflected different people perception and observations. First, we did an interview to see how people reflect to the services in Khufrajan and what they know about the history of these building. Answers were different depending on ages as the old ages were satisfied by the services and have a big knowledge about this building, but youth were less satisfied about services and shared their needs. We also did an experiment which we called "Lakuna Belsaha" which means follow us to the plaza and we sticker these notes in the walls to observe people behavior, adults were more curious and the started to ask us to remove the stickers and about what we are doing in a friendly way, kids were more accepting and they walked with as to the plaza were round 20 kids gathered and asked us to play

and telling us how they hate the abandoned sites because it full of trash and they are not allowed to be there. The other observation we wanted to focus on to understand the culture and if there's an acceptance of employing women and by interviewing many women around Khufrajan, we were able to notice that the answer is yes.

Solution

Our idea of change for Khufrajan is to rehabilitate and restore the building to accommodate different functions that help the community financially, socially and culturally. Rehabilitant process will contain both building that works as a community center, library and markets, its surrounding by adding more greeneries and plazas in left-over spaces and alleys which in the long term will be connected as a tourism trail between these hotspots. These hotspots will be able to sell homemade and local products which made by employed women and local commerce around Khufrajan.

We will also work in involving people in the maintainance of these spaces and the surrounding by cleaning voluntary campaigns, training workshop for local community and seminars provided with certificate that gives them the opportunity to raise there community up. These products, fees will take a place in rehabilitating more buildings and sites.

Impact

This project will give the people to interact with each other and strengthen their belonging to the space with much recreational areas that allow them to have a better sensory experience which encourages them to maintain and develop the community even more.

First Steps

Our first step will be rehabilitating the main house "Ananbeh house" in front of the core plaza which is a significant figure, turn it to a community center which as a hosting house for workshops and seminars which work in calibration with different cultural institutions. In addition, the house will also be a selling point for the homemade products made by community women which will be an economical revenue. It will also contain a recreational area for public with a small market owned by a person from local community that sells fresh juices.

Product and service

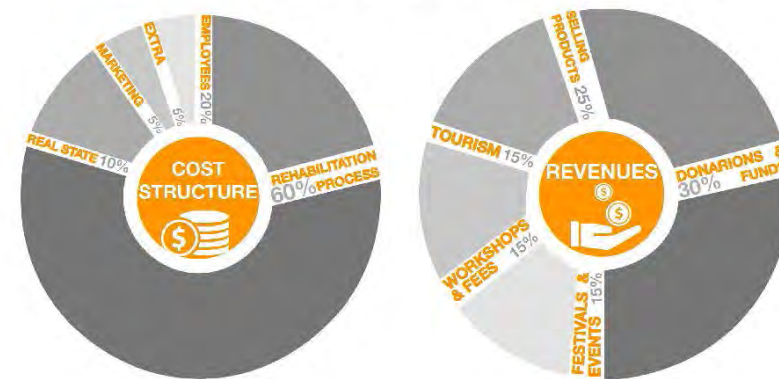


Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change

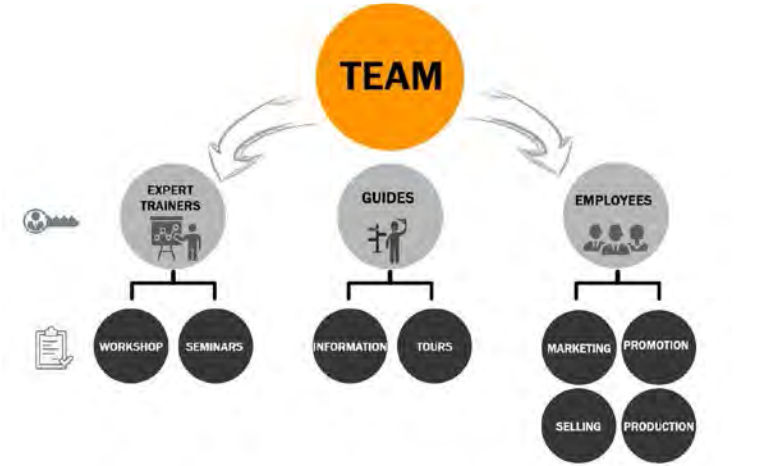
Product and services



Financing and the revenue model

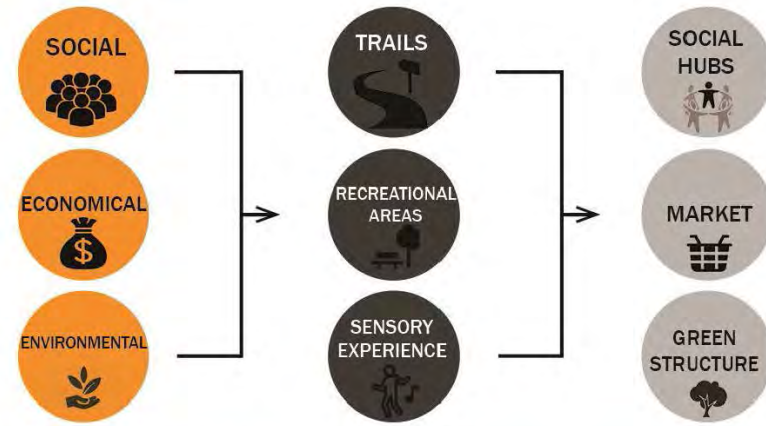


Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change



Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change

IMPACT



Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change

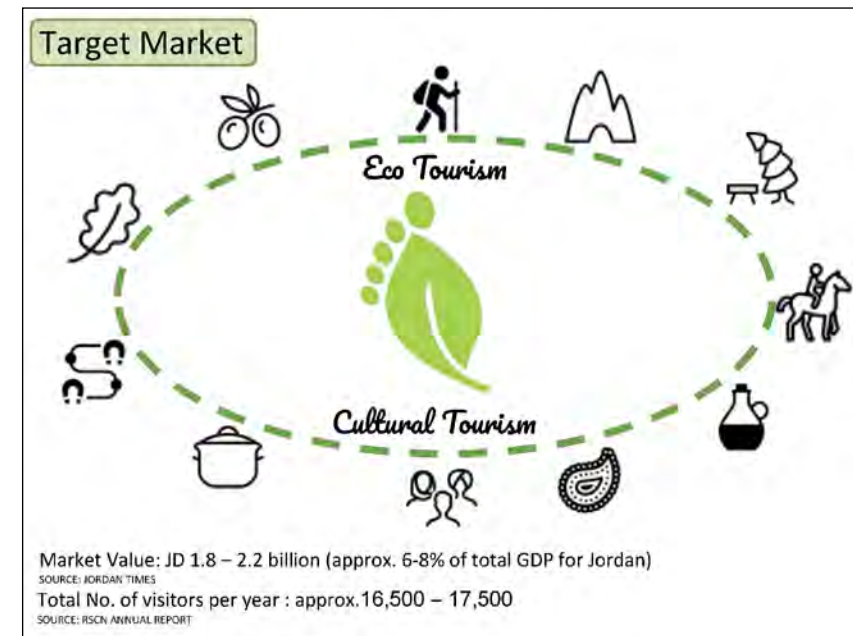
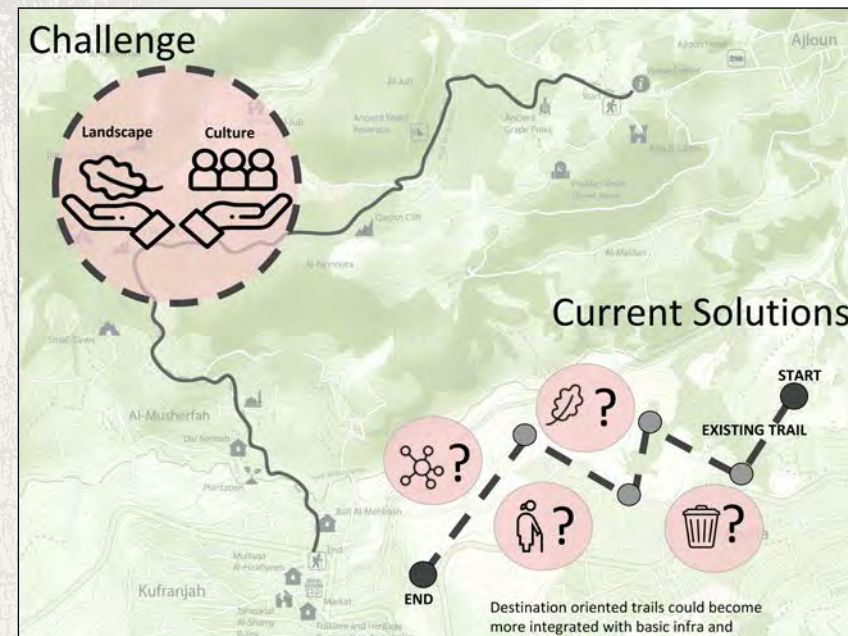
THANKS TO KAFRANJAH'S PEOPLE



LANDSCAPE HERITAGE AND AJLOUN TRAIL

Tutor : Nayla Al-Akl

Group members:
Arati Amitraj Uttur
Maha Abu Maria
Yasmeen Freihat
Juliana Asbah
 Also in pic:
 Nayla Al-Akl (Tutor)



Theme

Ajloun Governorate is spread over an area of 420 sq.Km. The RSCN with Ajloun Forest Reserve operates 6 major trails within Ajloun with several off-shoots. The trails range between 1Km to 25Km long. In an effort to promote the conservation and awareness about Ajloun's rare cultural and landscape heritage, we take the path of least impact to promote eco-tourism through an integrated trail network. We divided the narrative of the trails into 3 broad classifications: KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE and SUSTAINABILITY. Under these heads we categorise the trail interventions with respect to the impact they make with the local landscape heritage and the experience they offer for the tourist with an in-grained speciality of authentic experiences along the diverse topographic and cultural terrain that is indigenous to Ajloun.

Approach

The most effective approach that we derived is to design a series of workshops with various stakeholders, divided into 2 broad phases. The first phase of workshops will be primarily with the local communities, student communities, local women and designers for information gathering and statistics along with identification of problem areas. In the second phase, we will include ministries, science and research departments, conservation experts and archaeologists, with the designers, local communities, local youth and women to develop strategies for trail integration

with cultural and landscape heritage. These workshops will be directed towards training and preparing the locals to be equipped as guides and hosts. Additionally, gathered data in phase 1 will contribute to valuable research information. This phase will also initiate necessary policy changes and statutory decisions that will ensure the conservation of the raw heritage in this region.

Solution

The development of an integrated trail network as the basis of eco-tourism will be the most effective way to bring awareness on the landscape heritage and re-establish its dying importance. The idea is to develop a new model on existing trails into a sustainable system to exchange authentic cultural, economic and ecological knowledge and learn to conserve the same as well. This is a crucial step to visually open the various landscape identities of the region into the experiential value of the trail system. This would mean development of hard and soft infrastructure to support the system. Apart from definite developments like trail development and human resource, one of the most crucial support centres would be the launch point. From here the narrative to this exotic region starts its journey as the traveller's companion into the trail. Instead of being uninteresting visitor centre, it will take on diverse responsibilities and contribute to the new job market, exclusive to the locals. A valuable set of by-products to this network is the extent of scientific and

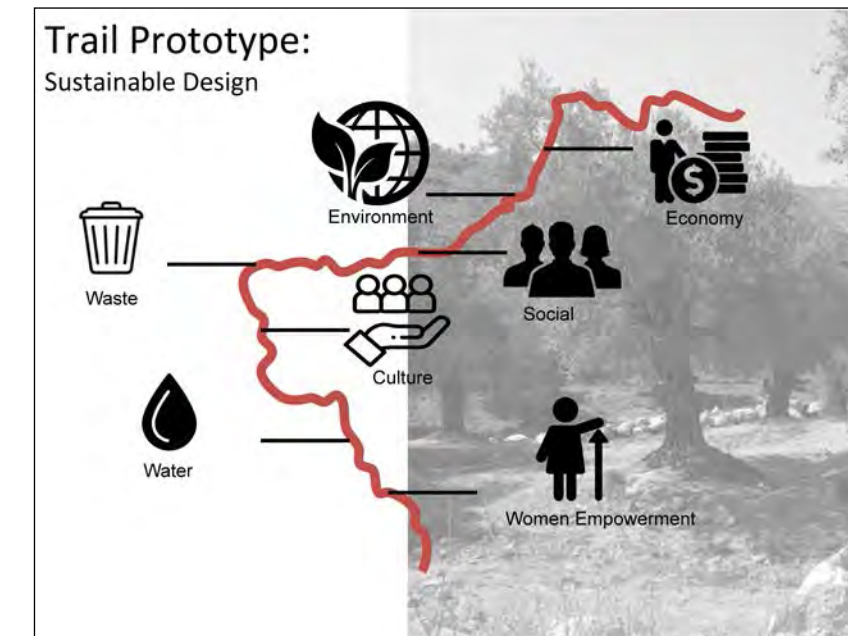
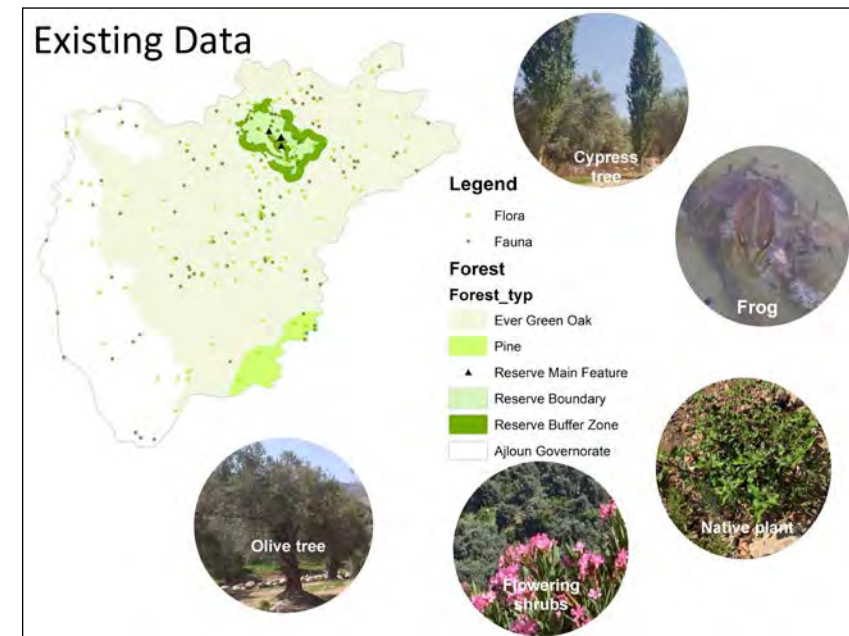
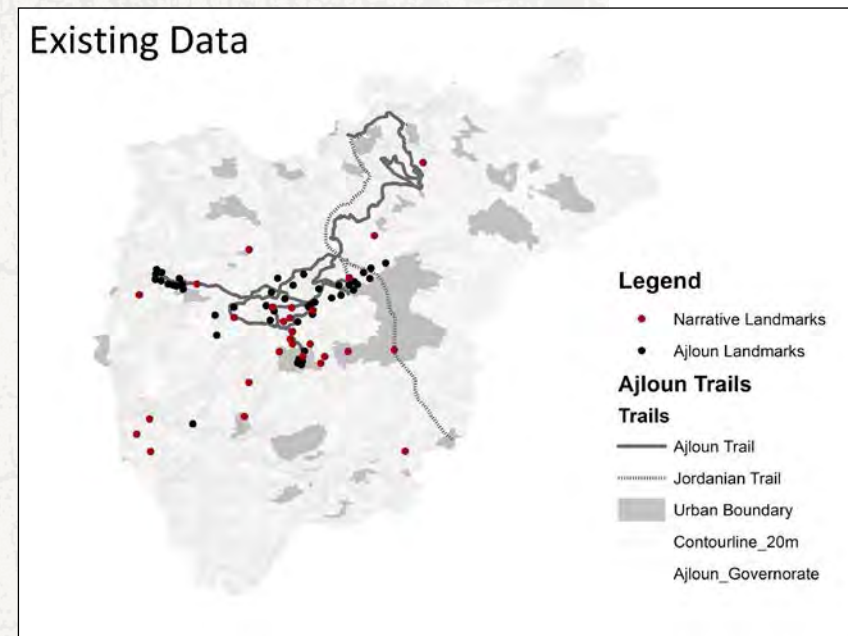
ecological research in the region that will help to generate much needed funds and sponsorships in the interest of sustaining the new trail system.

Impact

On a social level, the locals are impacted by much needed education, first-hand experience and knowledge. On an Economic level, this platform creates job opportunities and source of income for the locals, strengthens foreign ties and local communication apart from boosting economic and real estate value in the region. Finally on the Environmental Impact we bring necessary infrastructure, conserve the natural heritage and promote it.

First step

After integrating the necessary teams to work forward, the first workshops and trail design charrettes can start taking place for information gathering and identifying problem areas. The villages around the existing trail maps will be integrated into these intensive workshops. Gathered information will be categorised and documented for further use in the next levels of interactions between locals, design experts and governing bodies



FUTURE OF AGRO INNOVATION

Tutor : Reem Hamdan

Group members:

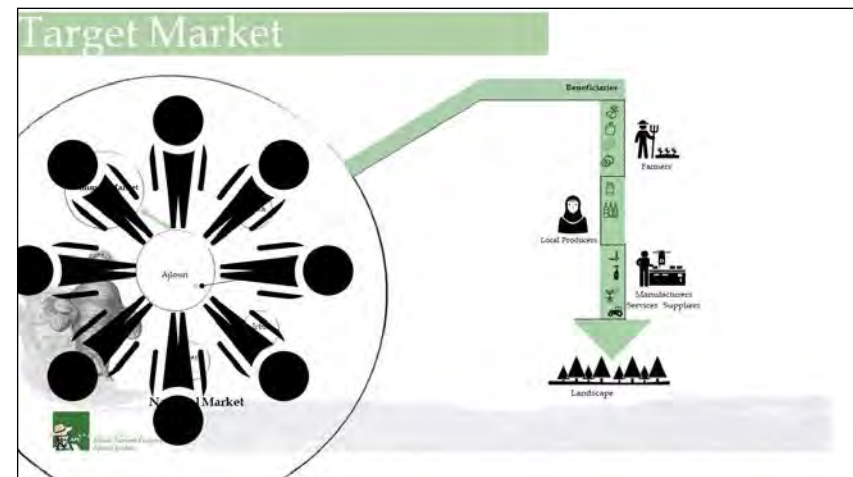
Nayan Jee

Mayes Zeggane

Ranim Al Hariri

Omar Al Jaberi

Moayad Najjar



Theme:

We aim to provide the farmers with sufficient and stable income from agriculture practices by the integration of farming with marketing and agro-based tourism in the long term. Better income will further attract youths and entrepreneurs to join this agriculture revolution and expand the business. Hence strengthening food production, security and distribution; also increasing the potential of land and preserving the landscape identity of Ajloun

Approach:

Majority of the population in Ajloun practices farming. The farmers here prefer to work in their farms without employing outside workforce. Farming faces scarcity of water and lacks an efficient connection between farmland and the market. Olives rule the landscape along with oak and many native species of fruits such as grapes, oranges, lemons, pomegranate etc. The farming occupation is plagued with meagre and irregular returns and is accompanied by high risks due to harsh weather and ongoing effects of climate change. Farmers here face similar challenges and problems, therefore a collective effort in the shape of a co-operative is the need of the hour

Solution:

A strong democratic voice of farmers covered under a single umbrella, Ajloun Farmers' Co-operative with a motto of "unity is strength" is our idea of change. It is a co-operative of the

farmers, by the farmers and for the farmers. Farmers are the key players here. Our aim is to increase agriculture production and income generation hence impacting the local community. The overhauling of returns from farming furthers expands the involvement of food processing industry, big and small shop owners, restaurants and hotels, transportation, researchers and technicians, tourism industry and youth. Increase in income boils down to more revenue for the governate as a whole. Farming is the core activity in our plan. The Ajloun Farmers' Co-operative caters to the needs and demands of the farming community. Water is essential and it is required to involve in water conservation and water-efficient agriculture practices. This change in stance requires technical and scientific knowledge, which can be easily gathered and shared when farmers work in a group as a co-operative. With this enhancement of technology, agriculture production is expected to increase. To capitalize on the return of the farm produce, linking to the market is equally essential. Here comes the role of the transportation business, shop keepers, and exclusive farmer markets. Excess food can now be stored in local cold storages, which helps to fight inflation while also proving new jobs and food security. With the co-operation in place, branding becomes easier. Food processing by small scale industry (for example fruit jams produced by women) and its export, opens doors of new possibilities. A successful farming practice attracts agro-based tourism,

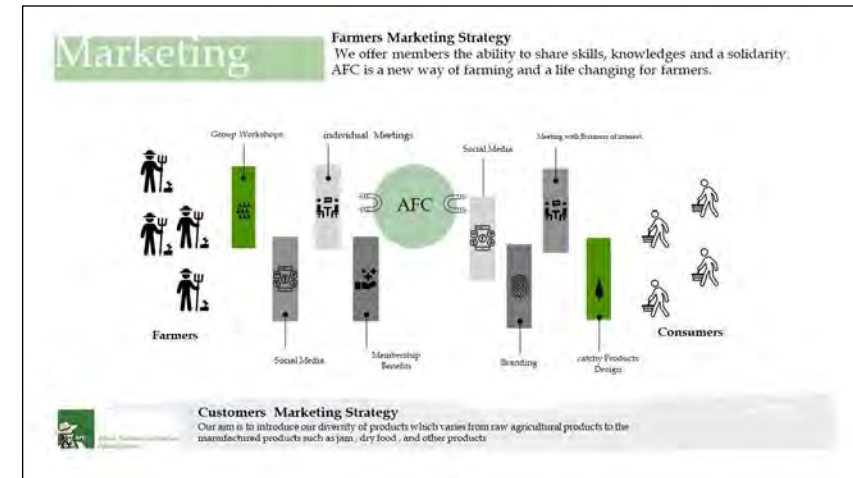
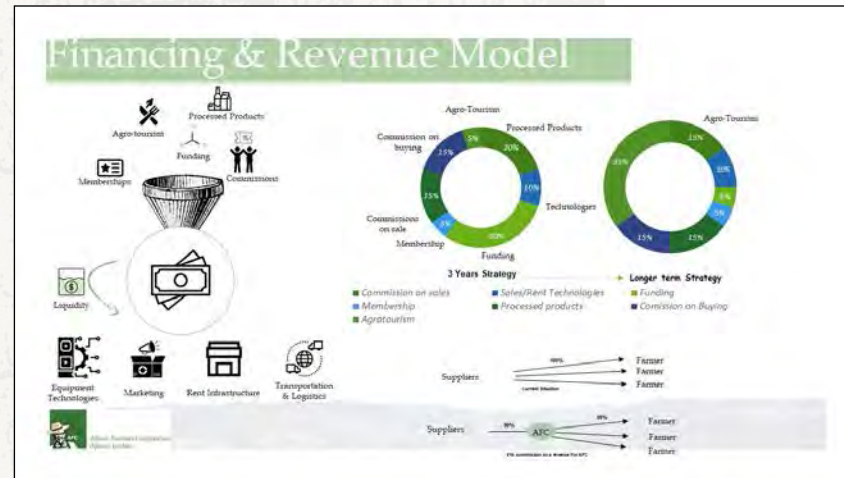
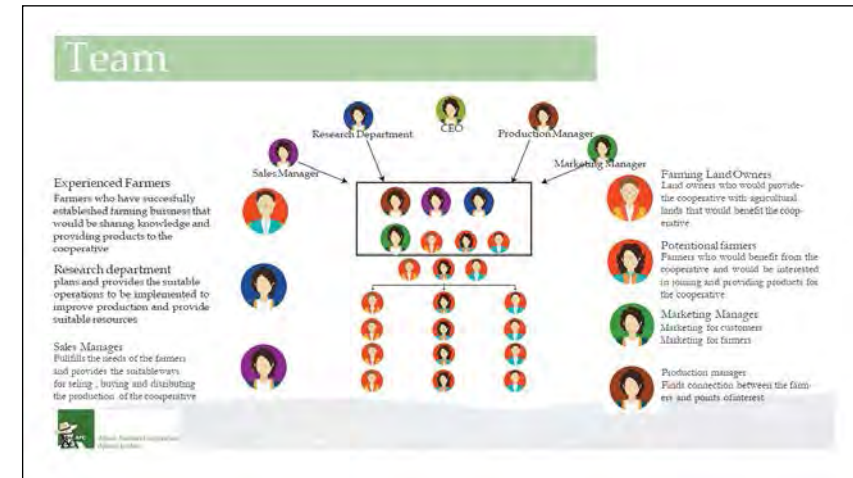
hence an opportunity to tap into new horizons of income for the locals. Revenue sources include selling of fruits, vegetables and crops in the local market and processed food for the export market. Additional revenue is generated by the tourists and enthusiasts of agro-based farming. A co-operation can negotiate for more subsidies from the government. Sponsorships during farming events such as food festivals, workshops, corporate advertising etc.

Impact:

Bringing in farmers together in the form of a co-operation for common good. Transforming agriculture to a sustainable and profitable business via introduction of better technology and efficient connection to the existing and new markets and diversifying income. Increasing employment opportunities in farming and related businesses. Sustaining the landscape character of Ajloun and enhancing green cover and agro-tourism in the region.

First Step:

Convincing and bringing atleast twenty to twenty-five farmers of the neighbourhood to join the Ajloun Farmers Co-operative. For the management of the co-operation, a team of managers is voted to the post. This team constitutes of 10-20 % of the total strength of the cooperation. The co-operative is then registered with the Ajloun Governate. Hence, begins meetings with associations and partners, online and offline marketing of this vision and fundraising.



COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

Tutor : Simon Leberl

Group members:
Michael Perschke
Doris Ansu Holz
Abdulhalim Hiari

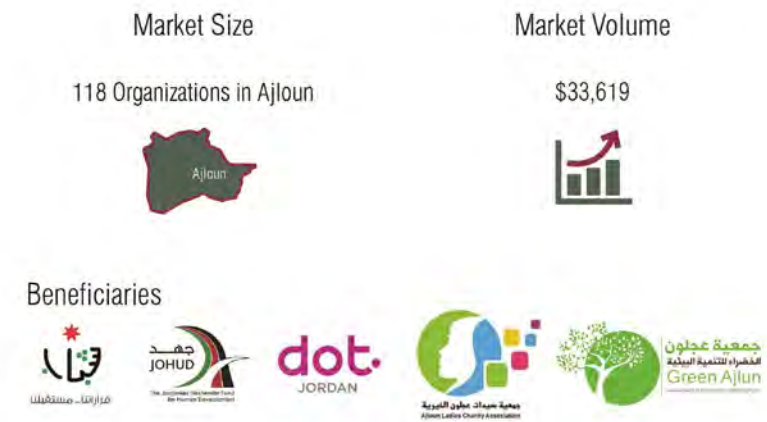
Muna Bata



Our Challenge



Our Market



Theme

The challenge we addressed is named “Community Activation”. We want to engage the local community to be part of projects that directly affect their local society positively. People should be enabled to live in a healthier environment, engage with tourists that are attracted to their region and be financially supported by participating in those projects. To ensure this, social projects need a realistic, fitting market entry approach, that economic growth and wealth in the city of Khufra njah can be driven sustainably.

Approach

To develop an understanding a possible theory of change, we first identified who our main stakeholders are. To know more about this, we interviewed the mayor of Khufra njah Nour Abu alnaser, Tribe influencers like Sahel Abu Anab, Osama Hasan and other members of the local community who actually have a deeper understanding of societal, formal and informal power structures. Second, we identified the direct benefits we want to provide the local community of Khufra njah by the collection of ideas which third were mapped in concrete approaches to address the problem of community involvement in social and economic matters.

Solution

We want to activate the local community of Khufra njah through the support of social organizations by consultancy services to NGOs, SEs and start-ups who already exist or

want to establish a new business model. The basis of our activities is research. On the one hand, we employ local community members that gather information on the mentioned structures and topics concerning the improvement of the local community’s life. On the other hand, we employ experienced consultants that analyze and evaluate this raw data to gain information out of it.

Building on the research we provide consultancy services to lead the organizations’ approaches in a realistic direction. Our first step is to mutually look on the market they want to enter and the customers they want to address, to ensure the project’s potential. The second step is to adapt their business model to the local conditions by working with the “Business Model Canvas” tool. Assuming the organization decides to realize their approach, we provide tools to improve it. (That’s also the point where already existing organizations can be served by our services, not only non-existing ones.) This fourth step consists of a PESTEL and a Key Success Factor analysis to address as well external effects as internal factors. In the fifth step a SWOT analysis is generated out of the results of step four so we can see what entry barriers our organizations may face. To fulfill these identified gaps, we mediate matching organizations being registered in our network database in the sixth step, that they can combine their forces through alliances. Our revenues are gained from these consulting and mediation services as well as through a registration fee to be

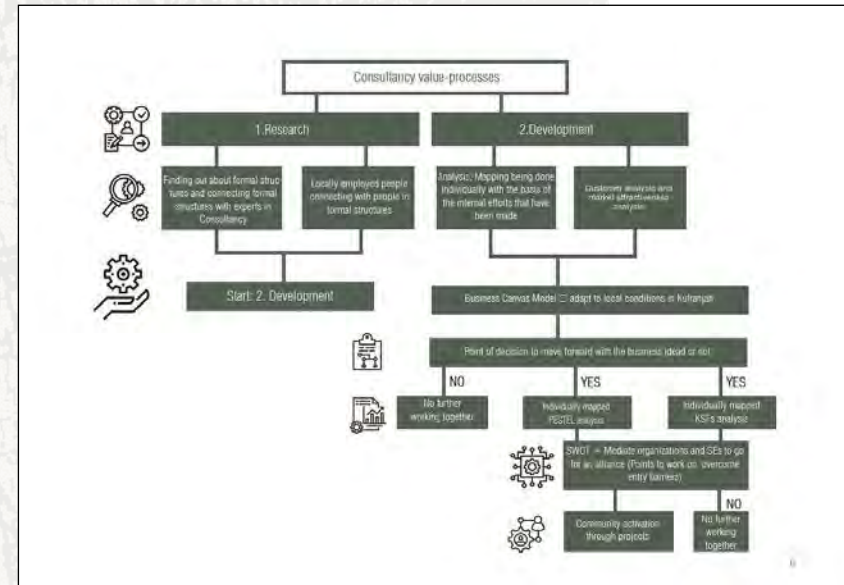
listed in our network.

Impact

The proposed value is to increase economic growth and the wealth of the city’s society by enabling projects with social purpose. The main impact we are creating is for our customers: grassroots organizations, NGOs and social entrepreneurs. The local community will benefit from our organization by employment in the research area and by our served organizations’ projects.

First Step

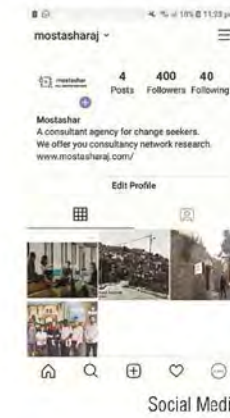
A feasible first step would be the creation of a database where research data is stored and can be evaluated in the next step. Volunteering people of the local community could collect data through interviews and their already existing networks in the society of Khufra njah.



Served Organizations' Projects



Our Campaign



Our Channels



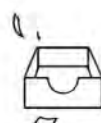
Types of Research Demands



How to get funding?



How to contact experts?



How many abandoned spaces?



Who they belong to?



What kind of open spaces do we have?



Geo data information?

Our Financing



Our Solution



Local Community



mostashar FULL SERVICE PROVIDER



Change Seekers

Be the most transparent point of intersection for locals and change seekers.

Our Impact



Local Employment

Social Capacity

Enabling projects

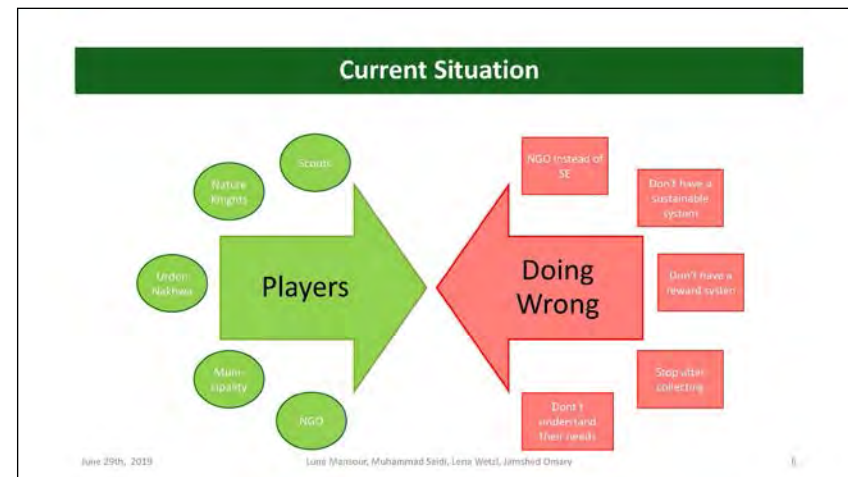
Economic Growth

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Tutor : Omaimah Al Arja

Group members:
Muhammad Saidi
Jamshed Omary
Lena Wetzl

Luna Mansour



Theme

Khufranja is a heavily polluted city in the heart of Ajloun that suffers an inefficient waste collection system. Littering amongst its community members is a common behavior, and conducted surveys showed how locals lack incentives to operate in a good behavior regarding waste. Some found it easier to throw garbage on the street, than in its designated place while others believe the municipality is the one to blame. Regardless of the cause, Khufranja is in desperate need for a sustainable waste disposal system. To deeper understand the issue at hand, we talked to the locals of Khufranja, from which we derived what is believed to be the issue and the possible outcomes that might improve the current circumstances.

Approach

To further develop a strategy that is both beneficial to the socio-economic circumstances, we began with analyzing the littering behavior and the reason behind the lack of cooperation with the municipality. What we propose is minimal interference with the municipality's waste disposal methods, we offer a system that depends on its own, depends on the people of Khufranja to collect organic waste in return for organic fertilizers as a reward, since most if not all have something to do with agriculture. Our idea of change starts with each and every mindset living in the area, to make sure our proposed system is fully sustainable, an alternative solution with awareness campaigns need

to take place simultaneously, collaborations with NGO's, Campaign Clubs and even the Municipality are needed to spread awareness quickly and efficiently, volunteers are also needed to start the initiative, meetings with different stakeholders showed a very high demand for locals to participate in workshops that are aiming to clean and improve Khufranja as a whole. The Mayor stated, that his office is willing to provide necessary resources to clean up the area since the government isn't providing sufficient funding.

Solution

Our solution is the following, offer a cost free rewards waste disposal system, a system that will take in organic waste, recycle it, and give back organic fertilizers as rewards, to initially operate with machines and cover costs, the system will depend on advertisements, targeting companies that want to fight pollution and chain franchises that seek further advertising. We believe that with incentive the people of Khufranja will walk the distance to throw their garbage in our designated hotspots. To generate revenue, we offer the following, after studying the need of the locals and their demands we found it suitable to offer something that would help in agriculture and aid in cleaner streets and neighborhoods. Therefore, collecting organic waste will drastically reduce the bad odor and eliminate rats and un-welcomed animals that are the result of unmanaged organic waste. We'll receive a bin full of organic waste, give back a bag of compost in return, and sell the

remaining for interested parties, this ongoing cycle will at some point generate enough revenue to break even and stop relying on advertisements and outside funding.

Impact

The mere concept is to enhance the quality of life for the people of Khufranja. Our system aims to raise awareness and assure a better life and environment, change the mindset of people and their behaviors, reduce waste and create job opportunities via the above mentioned hotspots. We aim to generate money for the community, and work hand in hand with the locals to circulate the economy.

First Steps

Being cost free is our goal, which is why for our first phase, our goal is to involve volunteers, and reach agreements with the Municipality to provide rent free plots of land to establish our hotspots. After gathering the basic funds from advertisers, and providing the necessary rewards it is expected from individuals to dispose organic waste in return for a rewards. Phase one of the system will focus on organic waste and the later on phases will gradually implement recycling various materials such as paper, plastic, and glass.

2. Business Model Canvas

Key Partners & Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipality - Local community - Sponsors - NGOs - Scouts - Volunteers 	Key Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trash collection - Cleaning Campaigns - Fundraising - Awareness of workshops 	Value Proposition Provide a sustainable system for locals that manages the waste problem to achieve satisfaction and health	Competition & Substitutes Sustainable reward system that will guarantee and maintain the local interest	Beneficiaries/Customers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Community - Municipality
	Key Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bins - Volunteers - Manpower - Spots 		Channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advertisements - digital/social media - cleaning campaigns 	

June 2019, 2019

Lana Mansour, Muhammad Said, Lena Wadi, Jamsheed Omary

2. Our Solution



June 2019, 2019

Lana Mansour, Muhammad Said, Lena Wadi, Jamsheed Omary

2. Reward System



June 2019, 2019

Lana Mansour, Muhammad Said, Lena Wadi, Jamsheed Omary

4. Marketing



June 2019, 2019

Lana Mansour, Muhammad Said, Lena Wadi, Jamsheed Omary

2. Waste Collection Process



June 2019, 2019

Lana Mansour, Muhammad Said, Lena Wadi, Jamsheed Omary

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2. Composting



June 2019, 2019

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3. Finance and Revenue Model

Second Year			Third Year		
waste kg/day	5	kg	waste kg/day	5	kg
organic waste	40%		organic waste	40%	
organic waste/day	2	kg	organic waste/day	2	kg
people in Kufanja	3000		people in Kufanja	3500	
revenue after rewards	20%		revenue after rewards	20%	
organic waste after rewards	4800	kg	organic waste after rewards	5600	kg
net profit/kg	0.07		net profit/kg	0.07	
net profit/day	336 €	JD/kg	net profit/day	392 €	JD/kg
net profit/month	10.080 €	JD/kg	net profit/month	11.760 €	JD/kg
net profit/year	120.960 €	JD/kg	net profit/year	141.120 €	JD/kg
net profit/5 year	604.800 €	JD/kg	net profit/5 year	705.600 €	JD/kg

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5. Impact and Outlook



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14

POCKET GARDENS

Tutor : Ellen Fetzer

Group members:

Husam Maayah

Chiara Loffredi

Tala Adlouni

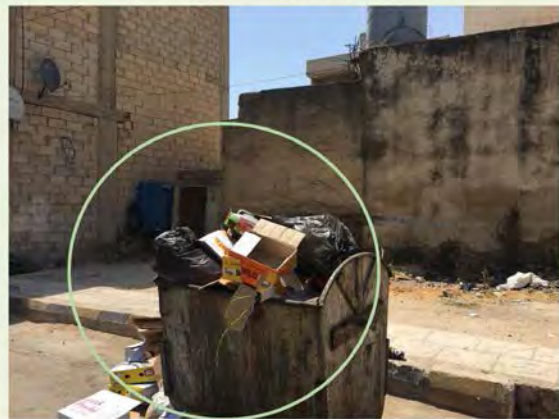
Serene Marie

Dalia Harhash



CHALLENGE

LACK OF HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC AND URBAN SPACES.



CURRENT SOLUTIONS

CASE STUDIES: KUKUK GMBH STUTTGART



Theme

Upon arrival to Khufranja, a lively atmosphere was first noticed. However, the foul smells and low quality urban spaces lowered the potential of the area. Streetscape was rarely existent, and any form of gardening or green intervention occurred only on a private basis and were therefore hidden. Hence, the thematic challenge being tackled in this case is titled “Public Spaces and Urban Quality”. The aim is to improve Khufranja’s streets and create public spaces which benefit and include local involvement.

Approach

Multiple steps were taken in order to understand the area and its needs better. Firstly, we walked around the area in order to have a spatial understanding of the area. Issues noticed include: abandoned areas/waste, high congestion, lack of greenery and an excess of people on the streets. Next, problems were noticed after speaking to locals. Like, the lack of representation for certain groups For example, after speaking to the Khufranja Valley Organization for Special Needs we were made aware of the issue of representing disabled children and their need for a proper space to spend time. Through these methods, long term goals were set which eventually helped develop a theory of change.

Solution

The Green Pocket Organization was to developed to solve these issues. The idea

of change is to create high quality public spaces which cater to the needs of different groups within the local community. This will be done through the implementation of new pocket spaces within abandoned land, voids and available public plots. These pocket spaces will cater to different groups of the local community including: children, elderly, entrepreneurs/farmers, female entrepreneurs, the youth, and many others. The community will be highly involved through the process of creating these spaces. They will be involved in different spaces including the co-designing, maintaining, and monitoring phase. The community’s involvement is important in order to create a sense of responsibility, and green identity. Other parties which are involved in this project include NGO’s who are willing to invest or collaborate in the production of this service. Some activities which this organization offers is the hosting of events and creating market spaces for the selling of products. For example, a pocket garden which could be beneficial to the community is a space focused on the selling of agricultural products to the public. Other activities include social gatherings and educational activities like workshops. Revenue will be obtained mainly through the renting of booths and kiosks and through fundraising in order to expand and maintain. Since some of the functions of the pocket gardens will be treated as a marketplace, the public could showcase their product by paying a fee ranging from 10JD to 20JD. This will be determined by the day of the week

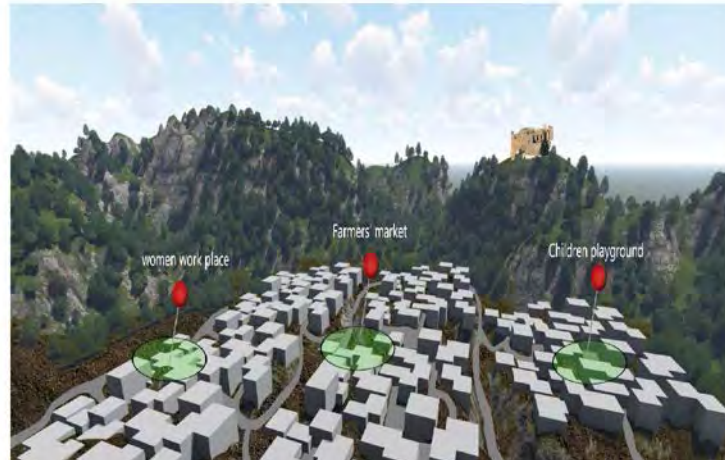
or occasion. For example, the renting fee will be higher on weekends and on event days as opposed to working days. Price could also range based on the size of the booth.

Impact

The project will have a great social and environmental impact on the Kufranaja area and its people. On the social level, the Green Pocket Organization will provide the local community with safe spaces to gather. The different functions of pockets spaces will allow for certain groups to gather however the events which will be hosted can bring the entire community together. On an environmental level, the organization will improve the environment physically by the introduction of more vegetation which will provide better air quality. More importantly, the pocket gardens can be an educational forum that can raise awareness on the issues of the environment.

First Step

The Green Pocket Organization depends on the idea of a catalyst effect, which is the expansion of one space to many more. Therefore the first feasible step would be to provide the community with a prototype space which will show and convince the community of the idea of these garden pocket spaces.



"We at the green pocket organization help the community create and develop high quality public spaces."

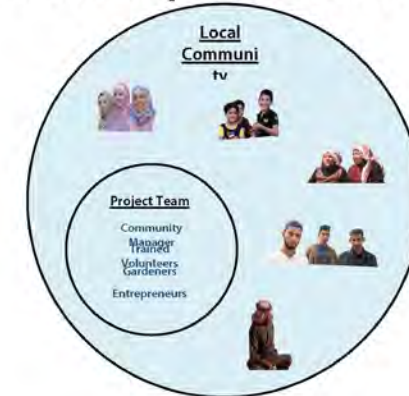
Proposed Green Pockets



Proposed Green Pockets



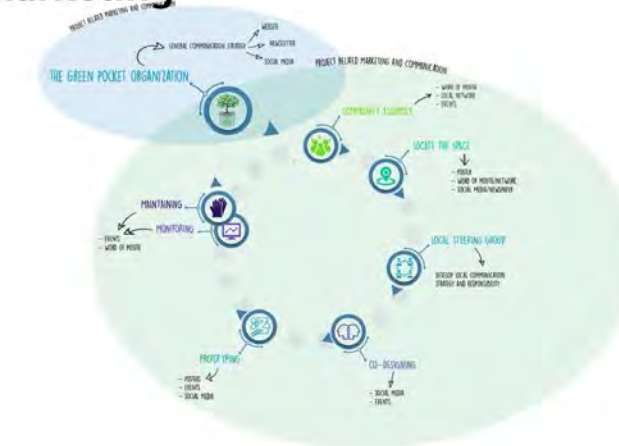
Team after Implementation



Costs and Revenues x Operations



Marketing



LIVE LOVE KHUFRANJA

Tutor : Kawthar Rayyan

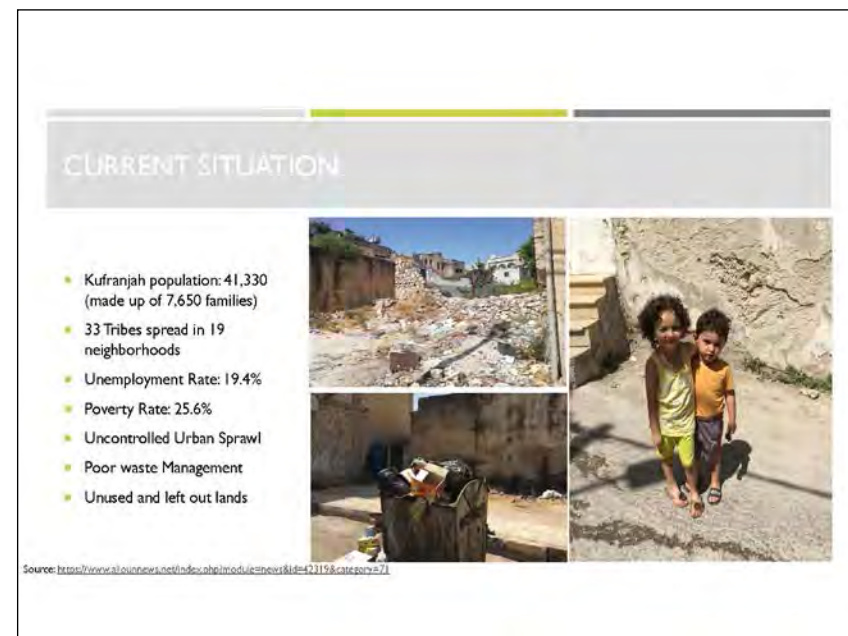
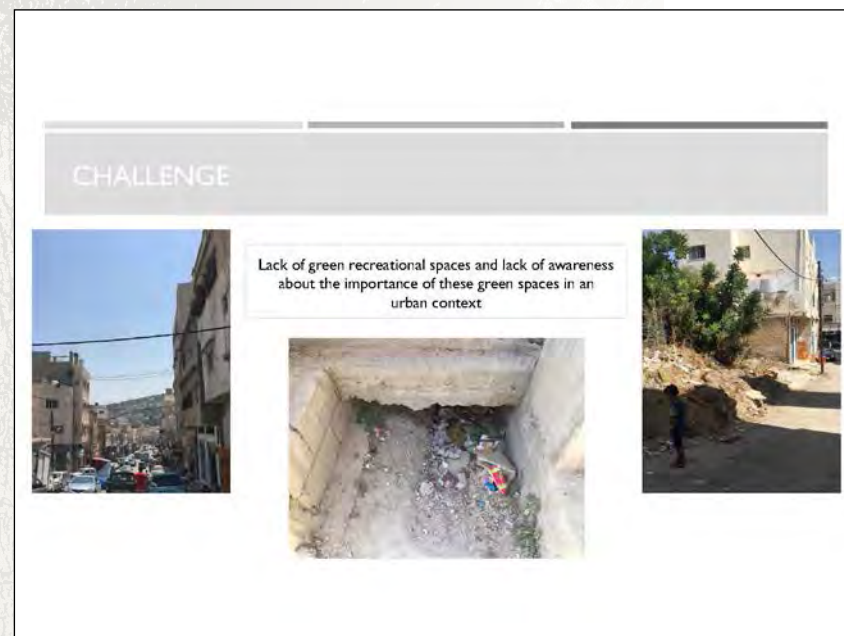
Group members:

Ahmad A-Hayali

Yara Sleem

Clarissa Schaible

Noor Baarah



Theme

The Khufranjah department located in the Ajloun governorate has 41,330 inhabitants with a population density of 420 inhabitants/km². This dense population has caused an uncontrolled urban sprawl that led to a lack of green public spaces. Today, despite the Khufranjah department having a total area of 108,928 km², it only has one main public garden on the edge of the built structures and a variety of empty spaces among the whole city. The reason behind the lack of sustainable green public spaces is the lack of awareness of their importance as well as the missing funding.

Approach

The first aim was to understand the theme that is the implementation of a network of sustainable green spaces. This later on led the focus on to the inhabitants who are the most important factor in the process and who are part of the reason behind the challenge which is the lack of sustainable green public spaces. To tackle this challenge, it was important to study the factors that lead to this issue and the procedures taken to solve it. This led to define the ones to be targeted and the different types of possible solutions. Finally, the last step focused on finding the different investors and helpers that would help the community in implementing the work.

Solution

With the initiative LiveLoveKhufranjah a network of green, safe and accessible spaces

will be implemented throughout the whole city. Depending on the size and the location of the empty spaces, different recreational solutions will be found. Examples such as a community garden or a playground can be executed. The focus would always be on the benefit of the community. The solution first lies in raising awareness and showing the community the importance of this network of sustainable green spaces by involving them from the beginning which can be done through workshops, trainings, crash courses and community meetings. However, to gain a longterm benefit the community needs to feel included and responsible for the prettified spaces. On another note, to save money yet increase the sustainability, existing resources will be used such as plastic bottles and tires. Therefore, the overlook of the cityscape will be changed to a greener and cleaner city and the quality of the inhabitant's life would increase. The project will mostly depend on donations, sponsorships and volunteers. Therefore, the collaboration with NGOs such as RSCN and CSBE as well as the tribes, the Ajloun municipality, Ajloun schools and universities, local firms and initiatives would be essential. The main aim of LiveLoveKhufranjah will be to support, encourage and fund small green sustainable solutions for all the empty spaces but also create new sustainable green spaces. This work will be implemented mostly through the help of the community (children, women, youth...), local and foreign volunteers, fresh

graduates and most importantly donations.

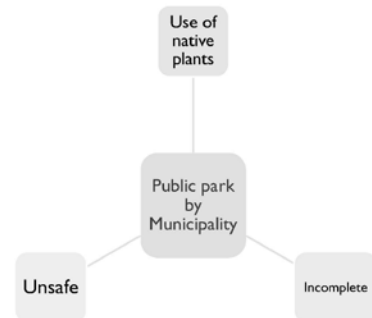
Impact

Socially, by creating a network of green spaces within the city, safe places of retreat will be implemented, especially for children and women. Environmentally, by planting trees and establishing a functional use for existing waste materials there will be less air and solid pollution as well as a better cityscape.

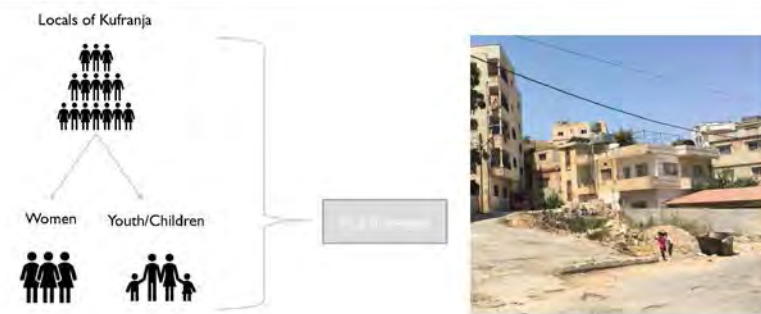
First step

Trust will first be established by finding, evaluating and changing one of the empty lands into a sustainable green recreational space and showing the inhabitants possible cheap, sustainable solutions in other voids with posters and prototypes. Furthermore, the mindset and motivation will be set through the help of different activists, workshops as well as crash courses in schools and universities.

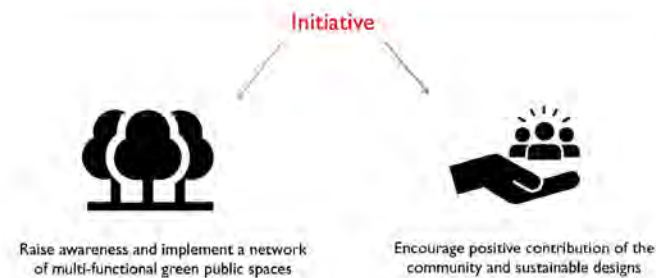
CURRENT SOLUTIONS/ATTEMPTS



TARGET MARKET



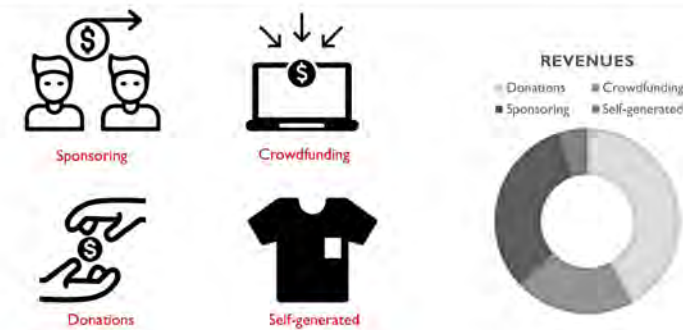
LIVELOVEKUFRANJAH



PROJECT OPERATION



FUNDING ASPECTS



SPREADING & PROMOTING CHANNEL

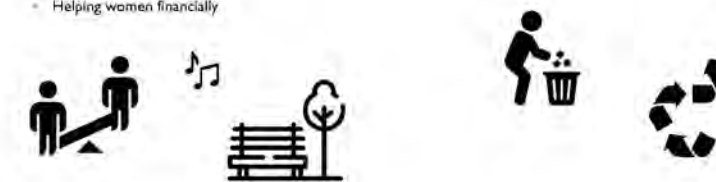


SOCIAL IMPACT

- Establishing safe and accessible public spaces for women and children
- Encouraging and including the community in the work process
- Helping women financially

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- reusing existing waste materials/ upcycling
- Reducing air and solid pollution
- Healthier lifestyle



“It taught us that real challenge and impact springs from the very core of society itself”

Author : Luna Mansour
Student AUB; Lebanon

Looking back at the week we spent during the intensive program, I cannot but consider myself especially lucky to have lived through it in its many ups and little downs. The way the IP served as a melting pot to students and scholars from different countries, universities, disciplines, and cultures must’ve been one of its biggest strengths – and also one of the biggest reasons why it was such a beneficial experience, both on the personal and the professional levels. An exposure to such a variety of backgrounds and mindsets during such a short time period engraved in us all a huge sense of tolerance, understanding, and cross-cultural communication skills. It is perhaps not just the cultural backgrounds that we thought would serve as a barrier at first, but also the fact that we come from drastically different disciplines. With interdisciplinary dialect being at the core of the IP, I believe that being a part of it successfully provided me with a chance to both interact and learn from fellow students and colleagues that think and learn in ways that I never thought I could – and I also believe that had it not been for this program, I still wouldn’t be capable of truly understanding or accepting the methodologies that these other disciplines act upon. Not only did MESIL provide us with the perfect environment to learn and

grow, it also taught us all that there is no solo understanding of any challenge – nor is there a solo approach or solution to solving it. In fact, we eventually came to the understanding that real sustainable development is not but a collaborative of these various solutions that we all thought of, and that would it not have been for all of these different approaches and solutions, the impact would’ve been very limited. Thanks to MESIL, we also learned how to spot opportunity in every challenge, and how to spot solutions and ideas where we least expected them. It taught us that real change and impact springs from the very core of society itself and not from exotic, introduced solutions that work against the flow of culture or environment. I am very grateful to have been a part of this program; to have been exposed to a new culture and way of thinking... to have learned as much in such a short period of time, and to have met such amazing people from all around the world.



“...this intensive workshop was an exceptional route to discover more about myself, my abilities and others ”

Author : Moayad Najjar
Student Birzeit University; Palestine

This workshop is one of the best life lessons for me, held in Ajloun Forest where we spent several days in the Royal Academy for Nature Conservation. It is a remarkable, unique, well-designed and equipped working space. We were almost 50 students divided into eight groups, mixed from different cultural backgrounds and fields of study. The local challenge was by itself, a real challenge for me, and to my team, since we have never worked on a business plan, and the subject of Agriculture is not directly related to our fields of study (architecture, landscape architecture ,urban planning and design, economics). However, I was excited to get out of my comfort zone to deal with new people and new subjects, in a challenging new environment despite the limited timeframe. Being in multidisciplinary team has enriched our business plan as each of us has seen the challenge from a different angle.

In the first two days I was disappointed with the 3-mins pitch that we had to present alongside the concept model. To overcome this challenge, I went with my team to the site in order to have a better understanding of the challenge, and we were able to analyze and figure out the factors behind it. I could relate my initial concepts in parallel with reality

and context. Consequently, our final business model was appreciated by tutors and staff as the best model. Through this workflow I gained knowledge and developed many skills. I highlight these related to: communication in an intercultural group in a foreign language, analytical skills and interviewing skills. Now, I have a clear understanding of new introduced methods (theory of change, design thinking, business model canvas) that I can apply into any other challenge I may have to tackle in my future career, and I developed skills of how to present myself and my ideas graphically and verbally.

Despite the busy schedule, we had to respect tight deadlines to provide expected deliverables. It included various and interesting cultural activities, excursions and hikes. We visited Ajloun, Khufanja, Yarmouk, Amman and other great historic sites. I was happy to meet new people and learn other cultures. Every day, these relations were getting stronger as we had meal breaks together in breezy panoramic views. I was extremely interested with the calligraphy session. One of the moments that will last longly in my memory, is seeing my home “Palestine”. Sea of Galilee, Golan heights, and Lebanon’s Mountain of Sheik summit, in a point near Jordan’s river. It was astonishing landscape of mountains, plains, and water, rendered by trees and small villages, they all

were in open horizon from where we stand, but can’t be crossed due to man-made borders and politics. I hope there will be a day when we all can be free to follow the sounds of nature just like a bird; without any borders or boundaries.

To summarize my experience, this intensive workshop was an exceptional route to discover more about myself, my abilities, and others. I’ve learned about cultures, landscape, business plan, social enterprise and their impact on short and long time. I have developed many skills. I ended up having international great friends and connections!. Hence, I would not hesitate to recommend this event for future students and participants.



“... a journey of self-discovery while connecting with nature and being authentic with what you are passionate about”

Author :Muna Bata
Student GJU; Jordan

As an Architecture student at the German Jordanian University and an individual who values extracurricular activities, I am forever grateful for this whole experience. The Ajloun Camp experience was immensely self-enriching. I had the opportunity to mingle with the local community of Ajloun and meet important people who are passionate and devoted in what they do. A particular person I had the privilege in meeting was Mr. Mohammad Asfour, who also became one of the many highlights of my experience.

The numerous activities I went through reinforced my interests in what I study and eventually what I want to do after graduation. I learned more about the different communal projects held in Jordan. Moreover, as an architecture student I benefitted a lot from the systematic approach towards various courses. The atmosphere was very calming, and the space was very welcoming which allowed me to think and learn efficiently. The courses and workshop were conducted in an unconventional classroom manner which reflected positively on my colleagues and I. The resources and the field trips offered have maximized the outcome of our performances. I truly valued the collective effort put to bring

us all here and the time invested in education. A particular concept that struck me and made me fall in love more in the field of architecture and urban planning was the Ajloun Forest Reserve building. The whole concept was that they did not want to destroy more land and cut trees, so the site they chose was already damaged. And they used the existing material in the building in which all of this supports their message.

In addition, because of the Ajloun camp I made friends from all over the globe. They have added and taught me so much in just little time. I really appreciate cultures, and learning new things about different cultures just boosts the atmosphere I am in. And it helps me engage more confidently with people, especially the Germans. I took advantage of the situation, broke my fear of speaking, and tried to speak German with them. At the end of the day I was impressed with how far I have progressed in my German language studies. It is prudent to mention how diverse the backgrounds of my colleagues were, which consequently enhanced the overall shared creativity among us all.

The preparation, resourcefulness, diversity, and well-structured activities all contributed to my comfort and experience. I overcame different obstacles and enhanced many

skills. I would do it all again if I can and I will recommend it to anyone who needs more insight on the Architecture/Urban planning field. The Ajloun experience isn't a class you take at a lecture hall. It is more of a journey of self-discovery while connecting with nature and being authentic with what you are passionate about.



“ The intensive program at Ajloun brought out a side of me that was dormant for a very long time”

Author : Arati Amitraj Uttur
Student : NGU, Germany

I was pleasantly surprised that IMLA would offer a course of such a different discipline in a landscape architecture masters program. It reconfirmed the interdisciplinary and cross cultural approach of IMLA's learning methodology. When I signed up for the IP I was excited with the thought of being able to get hands-on with a project and work on site – something I prefer over theoretical approach - and I thoroughly enjoyed the whole process. I have organised and participated in intensive design charrettes for schools before, and I thought I am well prepared for another interdisciplinary engagement. But what I experienced as a student and not as the moderator, changed my perspective of “knowing” completely. The intensive program at Ajloun brought out a side of me that was dormant for a very long time. After working in the professional atmosphere for many years, the pressures of working for tight deadlines was not new - but bonding with people from numerous cultural, educational and professional backgrounds was an emotional journey that made a deep connection with myself and the people I met. I am grateful for having received this opportunity to contribute to and learn from the landscape heritage of Ajloun. In my view, the best part about this program

was the collaborative and hands-on learning environment and the location. RSCN tourist centre was a neutral yet iconic platform to bring together all stakeholders. The building itself is an inspiration and bench mark to achieve the example it sets. This environment contributed immensely toward creative thinking and supported the cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration that was necessary for the IP to be so successful. A good balance of classrooms, open spaces, semi-outdoor and outdoor environment provided the flexibility to accommodate the various requirements of all groups, for their different topics, work culture and disciplines. The hospitality provided by RSCN and Ajloun Forest Reserve was humbling and ensured that we were well taken care of and comfortable throughout the stay. I extend a huge thank you to Mr. Osama Hasan and team for taking care of our comfort and safety. The people of Khufanja and Ajloun are warm and hospitable and the interaction with the local communities were mutual learning experiences.

Our wonderful academic team of highly motivated and experienced teachers supported and encouraged us while pushing us to cross our comfort zone and give our best. With the tribe of our student community, working and living together over these ten days was one of the most intense

emotional bonding experiences I had and made some friends that will remain special wherever we are. Our team was able to interact very closely with the head of tourism, Mr Ali, the Mayor of Khufanja, Mr Osama and Mr. Mohammad Asfour who took through intricacies of the physical and cultural values of trails in Ajloun. The excursion to Yarmourk reserve was exceptionally thrilling with its view sheds and unique international natural boundary. The layers of history under a single space can be overwhelming at times and we were humbled to see the desert landscape adapting to the test of time. The IP was an exceptionally enriching learning experience and I feel privileged to have been a part of it.





Students at Yarmouk Reserve, enjoying the Viewshed of the Golan Heights and 3-country border | Picture Author : Dirk Funck



Work in Progress | Picture Author : Dirk Funck

OUR LEARNINGS

The Middle East Social Innovation Lab (MESIL) is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) based on the programme *Higher Education Dialogue with the Muslim World*. The idea is to strengthen ties between universities in Germany and the Muslim world and to encourage academic and cultural dialogue between students and young academics from Germany and the partner countries. In addition, the project has four specific objectives:

1. staff capacity building,
2. curriculum development,
3. local cooperation of the university with societal partners and
4. the intercultural dialogue on social innovation.

In the following, we will reflect in how far our first learning activity has contributed to these aims.

The reflection builds on various sources. The student perspective is documented by feedback discussions were held in the project groups, a follow-up online survey (response 27 of 39 students = 69%) and four experience reports, one from each participating university. We captured the staff perspective

Item	1	2	3	4	5	Ø
overall IP	16	10	0	0	0	1,4
methods (useful)	15	9	3	0	0	1,6
overall quality of teaching	12	13	2	0	0	1,6
content	12	11	4	0	0	1,7

TABLE 01 : OVERALL EVALUATION FROM STUDENTS, N=27

during various feedback rounds held on site and another online survey (response: 9 / 10 = 90%). Finally, the examination results of the students were evaluated with regard to the learning objectives: eight project groups on different topics with final presentations and a business plan to be drawn up afterwards.

Overall Evaluation

The student online survey showed great satisfaction with the event. As the following table shows, average values between 1.4 and 1.7 were assigned on a scale of 5 for the items “overall IP”, “methods (useful)”, “quality of teaching” and “content”. In addition, the “working environment at the RSCN-academy”

was evaluated with 1.3. A similarly positive picture emerges from the teachers’ point of view: in the online survey, the overall quality of the event was rated by the teachers with an outstanding value of 1.1 (very good).

Cultural Dialogue

Cultural dialogue is one of the central objectives of the programme. It should be noted here that these goals were achieved with the help of the project stay in Jordan. The central motivation for participation as indicated by the students was to seek “cultural exchange” and “international experience” (each with an average grade of 1.2 on a scale of 1 to 5). The two most highly ranked learnings of the programme were “other cultures” and “ability to work in intercultural teams” (average grade 1.4 each). The very intensive exchange with the community within the framework of “discussions with community members” (grade 1.3) and a “stakeholder round table” (grade 1.5) were also counted among the special learning experiences. The best individual grade in the entire survey was finally given for the statement: “I found new friends” (grade 1,1). We organized various side events in order to promote this cultural exchange, such as excursions, handicraft workshops and a joint farewell evening with traditional dance and music. The personal feedback confirmed the success of this approach: 30 cards confirmed as the “gains of participation” the “cultural” or “international” experience

Luna Mansour, a student of landscape architecture from Lebanon, writes: “I am very grateful to have been a part of this program; to have been exposed to a new culture and way of thinking... to have learned as much in such a short period of time, and to have met such amazing people from all around the world.”

The teachers also reconfirmed the success of the cultural exchange. They were asked to assess their personal development according to seven aspects in total. The best rating was given to the question of “ability to teach in an intercultural context”. (6x increased significantly / 3x increased / 0x remained).

Staff capacity building

Ten teachers participated in the programme (4x NGU, 4x GJU, 1x AUB and 1x Birzeit). There were seven full-time professors, assistant professors or lecturers as well as three students from higher semesters or Master programmes. Eight women and two men took part. The following disciplines were represented: Architecture, Business and Administration, Economics, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design. Most of the teachers were coaches who moderated and

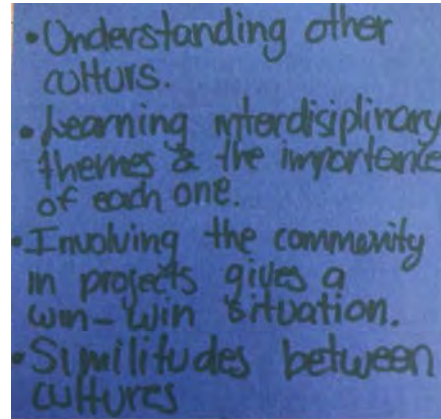


IMAGE 01 : STUDENT FEEDBACK CARD: GAINS AND LEARNINGS OF THE PROGRAMME

supported the project-based learning process of the students. In addition, there were short presentations on content and methodological inputs. The personal development of the teachers was assessed according to a total of seven aspects (increased significantly / increased / remained). As mentioned before, the best rating was given to the question of “ability to teach in an intercultural context”. The competences “community collaboration” (5x increased significantly / 3x increased / 1x remained). “ interdisciplinary teaching” (4/5/0), “other disciplines” (4/4/1), “social innovation” (2/6/1) and “work in virtual teams” (2/6/1) could also be clearly promoted by the programme. Some more experienced colleagues were involved in the programme, especially on the subject of “Social Entrepreneurship”, which is why the evaluation was somewhat weaker (2/4/3). All full-time teachers rated the programme as a great enrichment of their teaching activities and would like to be involved in the further course of the project.

Curriculum development

Altogether 39 Students from the seven disciplines Architecture, Business and Administration, Energy- and Resource-Management, Landscape Architecture, Organizational Design and Urban Planning

studying in seven different programmes at four different universities in four countries were involved in MESIL so far. Depending on the university and the course of study, students have been able to acquire up to 8 ECTS. The examination requirements were handled flexibly. According to our online survey after the IP all students from Germany, Lebanon and Palestine received academic recognition. Some students from Jordan (GJU) took part in the programme even though they received no recognition. For the lecture in the upcoming winter term our goal is to increase the recognition rate in Jordan as well. The integration of the event into the various curricula is mainly carried out via flexible project modules in the various programmes. At NGU, there is also a selection of modules that are recognized across all study programmes and in which MESIL has been integrated.



Round table dialogue with the local community | Picture Author : Dirk Funck

Local cooperation of the university with societal partners

Without the remarkable support of the local community, the implementation of the programme would not have been possible. The didactic concept is based on understanding the situation on the ground and the resulting challenges in close cooperation with the citizens, groups and institutions in the region and integrating them into the subsequent project work up to the final presentations. This took place in lectures, round table dialogues, interviews, guided tours, handicraft workshops, etc.

During the IP the following persons, groups and institutions from the local community were involved:

- RSCN: Project manager Osama Hussein accompanied the project throughout the week and repeatedly involved various colleagues from the NGO in the project work.
- Municipality: Based on the mayor of Khufanja, who took part in the round table dialogue and the final presentations, further employees of the city administration supported us during the course of the week.
- Ali Alzeidan, employee of the Ministry of Tourism in Jordan: Lecture on the tourism

situation in the region, accompaniment of various hikes and excursions as well as further support of the project work.

- Muhammad Asfour, responsible member of the Green Building Council Middle East: Lecture and accompaniment of a hike through the region and the city.
- Others: representatives of tribes, social entrepreneurs, citizens of the city, pupils, etc.

Due to the participation of important multipliers (mayor, responsible persons in the RSCN and the Ministry of Tourism) in the closing event and the presentation of the results, it is ensured that the findings and results of the week will flow into the further development of the city and the region.

Intercultural dialogue on social innovation :

The students have come together in eight project groups and, in cooperation with the local community (see above), have thought about possible social innovations on a variety of topics. They ranged from the design of public spaces and urban heritage, the development of trail concepts and concepts for waste reduction to the establishment of a farmers co-operative and a consulting firm for social projects.

The students were able to deal with these

challenging topics in a comparably short time because all members of the interdisciplinary teams contributed to the process. In addition, we continuously introduced methodological knowledge for the development of innovative ideas and the design of change processes. Representatives of the community were always present.

As Table 02 shows, the students assessed both the “methods used” and the “lessons learned” quite positively.

Impact on students’ perspectives and employability

The entire stay and the joint project work left an impression on the students. When asked to what extent participation in the IP will influence future developments and decisions, a clear majority of students see new study and work perspectives, and advantages for further study and professional development. The diagram on the right shows the exact numbers.

In this context, the seminar concept has also improved the perspectives of students on the job market in another way: working in real projects together with the local community and accompanied by experts as well as intensive coaching has led to a high workload in a limited time. Almost 2/3 of the

students rated the workload of the course as comparatively (very) above average. In the feedback round, 14 cards were written with comments such as “too much work”, “not enough breaks” and “time pressure”. However, these were also contrasted by 21 cards, which highlighted the professional project work. The students rated positively that they were able to move out of their comfort zones. Two quotations illustrate this, as shown in IMAGE 02.

The lecturers also regarded the degree of difficulty and workload as comparatively high but nevertheless just right to prepare the students, who were all in higher semesters of their bachelor’s and partly in their master’s studies, adequately for the world of work. The evaluation of the eight final business plans showed that the overwhelming majority of students achieved a considerable level of achievement. With an average grade of 1.8, three groups were evaluated with “very good” or “very good(-)” and two groups with “good(+)”. Only one group was in the satisfactory range. The best concept delivered an immediately implementable plan (content, organization and finance).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	Ø
learnings						
ability to work interdisciplinary	15	9	3	0	0	1,6
social innovation	8	17	2	0	0	1,8
social entrepreneurship	9	12	5	1	0	1,9
methods						
business canvas	18	8	1	0	0	1,4
theory of change	15	10	1	1	0	1,6
peer reviews	13	8	3	3	0	1,9
"how might we"-questions	8	11	5	3	0	2,1
empathy map	9	7	9	1	1	2,2

TABLE 02 : STUDENTS’ LEARNINGS AND SATISFACTION WITH METHODS APPLIED

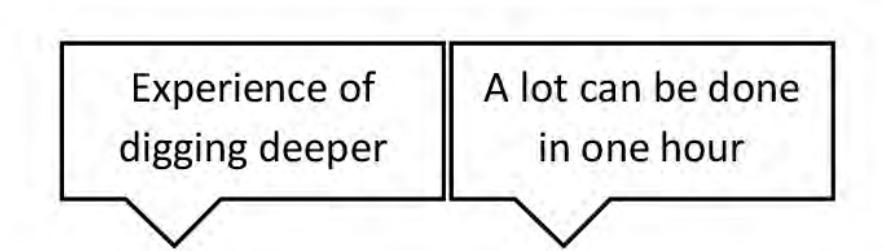


IMAGE 02 : STUDENTS’ QUOTES ON THE SUBJECT OF PROFESSIONALISM AND DEMANDS IN THE PROJECT WEEK

Learnings and possible improvements:

The evaluation has led to a number of positive conclusions. It becomes obvious that the central objectives of the MESIL project were addressed and achieved to a high extent. However, there is still room for improvement and we can highlight four topics in this respect:

1. The online course needs to prepare students more specifically for the methods and contents of the project work. This could also reduce the workload during the week.
2. We could make better use of the different competences of the interdisciplinary teaching team if we coordinate ourselves better during the process. The (too) fixed assignment of a teacher to a specific student group should therefore become more flexible. This requires additional coordination during the week.
3. Although the seminar group was interdisciplinary, there were considerably more (landscape) architects and urban planners than students from other disciplines. During the preparation of the business plan, it became particularly clear that a higher proportion of business students would be beneficial. This also applies to the team of lecturers/coaches.
4. Fast and flexible access to the community

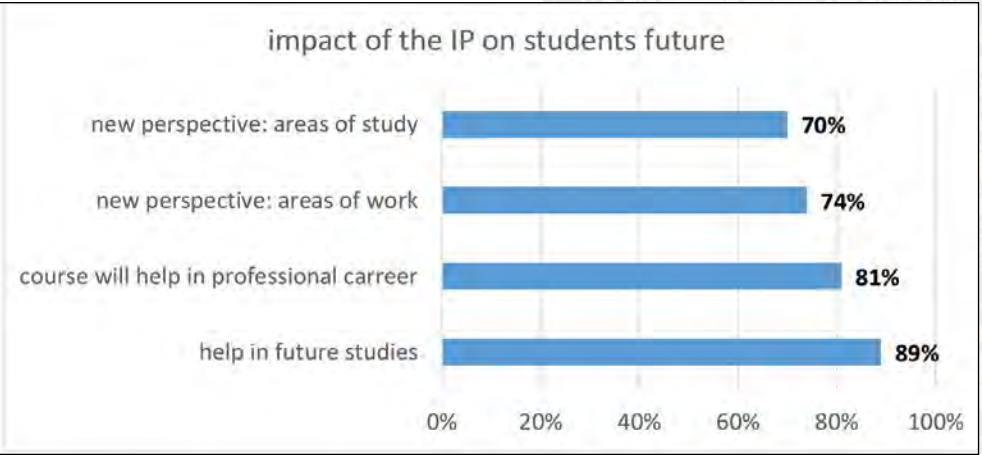


IMAGE 03 : IMPACT OF MESIL WORKSHOP ON STUDENTS’ FUTURE

is a central success factor for the seminar. For the field visits or spontaneous visits of stakeholders or interview partners, time corridors and longer trips had to be planned. If possible, the seminar location should be closer to the community during future project weeks.

Author: Dirk Funck



DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service



Higher Education Dialogue
with the Muslim World



الجمعية الملكية
للمحافظة والتراث
RSCN



Hochschule für
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الجامعة الألمانية الأردنية
German Jordanian University

SABE SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE
AND BUILT
ENVIRONMENT



AUB
American University of Beirut
الجامعة الأمريكية في بيروت



جامعة بيرزيت
BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

OUTLOOK

Engaging with the outstanding landscape of Khufanja in Jordan has been an extraordinary experience for everyone involved. The power of this project emerges from the fact that we are constantly crossing boundaries: between cultural identities, languages, knowledge fields, generations and mindsets. Crossing these limits has not always been easy. Everyone got stuck at some point: Do they understand me? Why did they say this? How to continue now? We all had our reflective moments of stop-and-think. Then we found our ways to overcome the real and the imagined divides. It is probably somewhere beyond our limits where life gets fundamentally rich and rewarding.

While we are finishing this documentation, the preparations for the return visit of the MESIL partners is in full progress. We are looking forward to another exiting learning event in collaboration with a local neighborhood in Nürtingen, Germany. It will be interesting to see how we are going to react as an intercultural group to this very different environment. More to follow soon!

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