



Promotion of Eco-friendly Creative industries



© Project Management Unit, Dahshur

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BACKGROUND

Women are the most marginalized group in the village of Dahshur, which is part of the *Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur* World Heritage Property. The JP implemented a programme promoting traditional handcraft production amongst unemployed women living in the village. In addition to empowering women, the programme had multiple objectives including generating income, creating jobs, improving environmental quality, promoting tourism, and promoting cultural values.

It was not easy to convince these local women, who came primarily from traditional backgrounds, to participate in the training. It was also challenging to find suitable trainers, venues and expertise in the rural environment.

However, the project finally managed to implement a programme with the participation of 140 women, none of whom had any previous experience with handcraft production. Women constituted 70% of the 200 total participants.

PROCESS

The project aimed at promoting culturally-sensitive handcrafts. All stakeholders and beneficiaries, including consultants, artisans and technical experts, participated in a four-day workshop. During this interactive workshop, the project designed a handcrafts programme based on the recommendations of stakeholders and community members. This methodology helped the project respect and respond to the values of the community, while also improving local ownership. Participants were trained in seven creative industries, and received intensive technical training on handcraft production, including embroidery, handmade carpets, and arts and crafts.

Local NGOs were fundamental to the implementation of the programme, particularly helping to increase the visibility and networking potential of the participants.

After intensive training, participants collected their own raw materials, preparing them for production, and actually producing the final handcraft product, which included embroidery, tailoring, flooring and beads. Their skills will be further polished over time in order to reach higher levels of quality and quantity, and their products will be sold to the tourism sector to promote tourism services.

The beneficiaries are generating their own income for the first time in their lives, and will serve as a source of inspiration to other women to become new producers. The process is entirely locally-owned, and the community as a whole is benefiting from its success through recruitment of new participants. In fact, local NGOs plan to conduct similar trainings to other groups, and to conduct follow-up assessments as needed.

Furthermore, agricultural wastes will be reduced through the use of date palm tree branches and leaves in the production process.

A flourishing community of artisans and handcrafts producers is now growing in the project area. The programme has now reached its middle phase, in which the focus will be on quality and marketing so as to further increase success and help locals generate more income. These artisans also have plans to “brand” their products in the coming stages of the project.

