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Abstract

This report comes in response to the need to assess the Turath Empowerment Project with respect to its achievements to date, meeting set milestones as per the grant agreement with the AMIR Program and assess the level of impact the project has on direct beneficiaries, the artisans of Jordan. Three Focus Group sessions were conducted as well as in depth interviews with Turath trainers to assess the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries, the qualitative impact of the services provided by the project on their business and get feedback on project improvement.

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Executive Summary

Seven Dimensions (7D) has substantive experience in providing Internet solutions including content management and web design in addition to running its e-mall for Jordanian handicrafts. It has built internal capacity to handle activities related to raising awareness on potential benefits from e-commerce and the scope it opens to local artisans to access global markets. Through the European Project partnership, 7D has further strengthened its internal capabilities to network and has built trust with local NGOs specializing in handicraft products.

7D submitted their grant proposal to AMIR to institute the Turath Handicraft Empowerment project which aims at empowering the e-mall Turath.com.jo, building the capacity of artisan by delivering training programs in marketing, product development, and product design; and enhancing their sales through offline marketing and online marketing efforts utilizing 7D website, turath.com.jo, to facilitate internet sales, on line networking, mentoring and provision of advice and consulting services. AMIR has awarded the grant for Turath Project on **July 1st, 2004**. The grant total value is **US\$ 277,162**.

It is evident that after nearly one year into this grant, Turath has managed to lay proper foundations for a sustainable program. It is in its final stages of empowering its online mall and is about to launch its newly designed website which has been adopted as the National Handicraft Website by the National Tourism Strategy implementation committee.

Through a detailed assessment of the handicraft market it has identified the handicraft sectors to focus on for development and marketing, and currently marketing strategies for local and international markets are in their last stages of development. Those are based on sectoral production capacity and product readiness studies as well as shipping details and conditions study, all of which are being finalized. Moreover, Turath has contracted Ms. Susan Inglis to be their marketing agent in the US to open new market opportunities and be the source of export market information that feeds into the total marketing strategy.

The campaign for marketing the online mall and Turath project is under way. Promotional materials have been designed and local campaign will start this month. Also, Turath is compiling the most needed database for handicraft producers and products, as well as of artisans, NGOs and Private handicrafts organizations for Amman region.

As for capacity building, Turath has completed the development of training material, in English and Arabic, for ICT and Internet training course, Marketing training course (in three modules of Basic Marketing principles, Promotion, and Pricing), Product Development and Design (in Two modules of Product development, and Packaging) which complements the Color missing in Product development course developed with PRODECOM.

By June 6, Turath has managed to exceed the requirements set by AMIR for capacity building. It has executed 18 training sessions (vs. total of 9 requested sessions) in afore-mentioned topics, training 203 persons (vs. 160 persons as requested), most of which are women. Turath has also expanded its operation to add two new geographical outreach areas, Jarash and Salt, to its original outreach in Amman, Zarqa, Madaba and Irbid. It has conducted networking/marketing/linkages workshops in all of those areas. In specific, 6 such workshops were conducted (vs. 3 workshops as requested by AMIR) reaching and linking 302 persons, most of which are women.

Turath is aiming to continue. This is evident in all of their planning and efforts to develop connections with the local market and national program, open export markets in USA and Europe, develop the

handicraft sector, and brand Turath as the national handicraft outlet. Details of their sustainability efforts are included in the main text.

Yet it may also be concluded that Turath Handicrafts Empowerment Project is still in its design phase even though it has realized many achievements. In fact Turath's is being properly designed to responding to the many obstacles that face the handicraft sector in Jordan.

Being at this stage of its development any further assessment of Turath project can only be assessed in a qualitative manner. Reporting on quantitative results such as increase in employment or sales can be misleading and premature at this stage. Therefore, the following assessment is based on the results of three focus groups, held in Amman, Madaba and Salt, during the first week of June 2005, with 30 trainees (around 6% of Turath reached total artisans) that attended the Internet, basic marketing, color-mixing and product design, problem solving and other networking sessions conducted by Turath to date.

In general, Turath is having a very good impact on the handicraft sector, product and artisans alike. Most artisan participants, especially those that own their business, reported great satisfaction with the skills they have learnt from the training sessions. More importantly they also reported more than 75%-100% increase in their sales and markets as mentioned below.

Also many reported learning new things that are helping them in their work and production, and are looking for more advanced training especially in product development, quality control and pricing and marketing. None reported not being positively impacted by the attended training and almost all experienced an increase in their information, especially those who have attended the Internet training. The networking sessions were also a success. Participants reported hooking up with other artisans complementing their work, and increased relationships with fellow colleagues.

Almost all attendees were greatly satisfied with the Internet and basic marketing courses they have attended, and fascinated by the networking workshop of problem identification and solving which introduced a completely new topic to them. Internet has become an important tool in their daily work.

What was evident is that better targeting of trainees is needed in order to attract those who would be more impacted, namely those that are operating their businesses and are more in touch with the market, product development and players of the sector.

Also better communication of the training contents, its level, and who should attend is a must, as well as better matching between content of training and profile of trainees is needed. Training material may be adapted to reflect the expertise level of the attendees. More practical training was requested, especially in the color mixing and product design course. As for the Internet training, almost all were satisfied with the training method.

Very few participants knew about Turath's objectives and future, even though they attended the training sessions offered by it. But what is worth mentioning is that all were impressed and enthusiastic about Turath once the session moderator explained a little bit more about it. Turath is well received by the artisans of Jordan.

Summary of Impact and Achievements of Turath

Turath Impact Assessment
Turath, has reached, networked and trained more than 523 persons by June 6, 2005.
By June 6, 2005 Turath has managed to exceed the requirements set by AMIR for capacity building in ICT, marketing, and product development topics. It has executed 18 training sessions (vs. total of 9 requested sessions) in above mentioned modules, training 203 persons (vs. 160 persons as requested), most of which are women.
Turath has developed, in English and Arabic, training materials in ICT, marketing, and product development topics. Conducted TOT sessions and adopted more than 20 trainers to train artisans.
Turath is seeking sustainability through outreach to more areas in Jordan adding Jarash and Salt to its original outreach in Amman, Zarqa, Madaba and Irbid. Through establishing contacts with other capacity building and business services programs such as ERADA, Waedat, EJADA. Through connecting to the National Tourism Strategy implementation and tourism sector in Jordan. Through opening markets in Europe and USA. Through creating and promoting fully paid service packages to its beneficiaries.
Turath has completed several marketing strategy studies and is in the process of creating a national database for artisan and handicraft products
Most artisan participants, especially those that own their business, reported great satisfaction with the skills they have learnt from the training sessions.
More importantly, artisan participants also reported increase in their sales and markets from 75% to 100% as mentioned below, and sometimes even more.
Turath training has impacted sales of participants. Some reported increase in their sales and markets from 75% to 100% and sometimes even more.
Almost all Turath participants reported an increase in their information, especially those who have attended the Internet training. Internet has become an important tool in their daily work.
None reported not being positively impacted by the attended training. Many reported learning new things that are helping them in their work and production.
Trainers believe that Turath is greatly contributing to woman's empowerment through enhancement of her products and consequently of her income
Trainers strongly believe in the project and its pioneering coordination among public, NGO, and private sectors

1. Turath Handicraft Empowerment Project - Background and Achievements

1.1. Background

Seven Dimensions Inc. (7D) is a private shareholding company incorporated in 1995, fully owned, managed, and operated by women. It has a solid background in IT and software development, as well as in offering training workshops. The main Company's objectives are:

- To provide Internet services including web design, content management and e-marketing.
- To provide a specialized handicraft online shopping mall to serve as an international marketing channel for Jordanian artisan's products produced mainly by women.
- To upgrade Jordanian handicraft through preparing and offer training programs in handicraft development, marketing and sale on one hand and in IT and Internet use and e-commerce on the other.

Through its work 7D has managed to accomplish the following:

- Being amongst the pioneer Jordanian companies to introduce in Jordan, since 2001, an e-commerce activity by establishing the specialized internet-based handicraft shopping mall, www.turath.com.jo, featuring online payment and proper shipment procedures, enabling local NGOs that sell Jordanian handicraft to reach international markets.
- Being selected to be a local partner with the European initiative, The Euromed Heritage, among a chosen group of Jordanian and other Arab countries and European companies, to preserve culture and heritage in the Mediterranean region.
- Establishing partnership with PRODECOM¹, a Euro funded project, with similar mission and goals as mentioned above, through which further development of the handicraft workers, with focus on women, was made possible. This partnership enables the sharing of information and establishing the concept of the "Label of Excellence" for the handicraft sector, especially since PRODECOM has already initiated such efforts with the support of UNSECO in setting it up in the global sense.
- Attending, through partnership with PRODECOM, several workshops in different partner countries and conducting one workshop in Jordan in an effort to build and diffuse information related to the handicraft sector.
- Participating in two exhibitions abroad, one in Paris in participation with PRODECOM, and one in Kuwait as an independent effort, in the year 2002.
- Planning for the development of a website, www.womandiwan.com, specialized in women's interest, and disseminating women related information and allowing for set up of interest groups chat room.
- Partnering with a local consultancy and training company specialized in providing training programs in addition to project management and marketing, to manage and execute the offered training courses. As well as developing a roster and association with freelance training professionals.

¹ The Euro funded project PRODECOM with which 7D has partnered with, caters for a global network of partners in the Mediterranean countries and works on heritage preservation through arts and crafts globally, with the expectation of gaining multipliers effect locally in each country through its' partners and their local efforts. The project named PRODECOM is managed by a French Agency named "The French Chamber of Arts and Crafts" and is composed of partners from Jordan, Turkey, Greece, Algeria, Palestine, Morocco, and recently Egypt. Three Jordanian partners were selected to represent Jordan, Nour El-Hussein Foundation, Jordan River Foundation and Seven Dimensions Company.

- Negotiating with Aid to Artisans, an American organization, for them to offer consultancy and technical assistance in preparation of technical training material in design and marketing issues to be incorporated in the offered training programs.
- Starting services to address empowerment of Jordanian women artisans and NGOs working in handicraft products, through networking, providing direct marketing venues, documentation of motifs and designs of Jordanian handicrafts, and using the printed, Internet and electronic media in disseminating, on the local level, of handicraft related information.

Therefore, 7D has gained substantive experience in providing Internet solutions including content management and web design in addition to running its e-mall. It has built internal capacity to handle activities related to raising awareness on potential benefits from e-commerce and the scope it opens to local artisans to access global markets. Through the European Project partnership, 7D has further strengthened its internal capabilities to network and has built trust with local NGOs specializing in handicraft products

1.2. Need for Funding and Technical Assistance

Based on the above background discussion, many things become clear:

- 1- 7D, is pioneering a private sector initiative (vs. usual NGO's) in tourism product development. Turath project should be a success story that will encourage private sector participation in similar efforts.
- 2- The seriousness of the 7D's effort in upgrading the handicraft market. A market that depends greatly upon cultural issues, skills, exposure and awareness of its players, and their entrepreneurship readiness. In brief, the message that can be concluded is that: 7D is here to stay in a sustainable manner.
- 3- 7D's efforts are much in line with the National Tourism Strategy, addressing the stated obstacles to crafts, such as lack of certification and branding, lack of promotional activities and promotional materials or national crafts website, and availability of mechanisms to better develop Jordanian crafts industry and develop markets or "souks" to showcase the production process as well as sell the crafts.
- 4- 7D's efforts are in line with Jordan's strategy for pushing ICT as a daily life tool to be used by the rural and urban communities.
- 5- 7D's efforts are in line with Jordan's strategy for supporting the SMEs and the private businesses, and entrepreneurship.

Therefore, for 7D to continue and to achieve better focus on artisans, deepen its outreach into Jordan, enhance handicrafts quality and businesses through general and tailor made training programs, widen its networking and promotional efforts, satisfy a need for introduction to global standards and channels, 7D has applied for a grant to support it in building on the achievements realized, and to provide technical assistance in the mentioned issues and exposure to best practices, and international markets. More specifically, and from the technical perspective, to enable:

- Geographical expansion into Jordan.
- Opening international marketing channels for artisans in spite of limited incomes.
- Upgrading handicraft products to meet the international standards in order to compete and open new markets.
- Empowering the handicraft sector with networking, business training and IT know-how and in so doing upgrade artisans standards of living.

While from the financial perspective, to initially help 7D in overcoming:

- The low expected return of the marketing services provided by 7D against the high expenses of the marketing and mall promotion activities.
- The difficulty in attracting the NGO and disadvantaged artisans to join our mall against logical fees due to the limitation of their financial resources.
- The high cost with limited return of developing and disseminating the training and development programs among the target group for the same financial reasons as above.
- The high cost of joining international exhibitions and workshops, or through usage of high technology, on behalf of artisans with low returns to be expected to 7D as a communicator party.

As such, a grant proposal was filed with AMIR on January 21st, 2004 to institute the Turath Handicraft Empowerment project which aims at:

- Building the capacity of artisan by delivering training programs in marketing, product development, and product design. Training modules will be tailored to meet the markets' requirement, which should lead to better, more competitive empowered artisans that are capable to meet tourist, regional and international demand.
- Empowering the local artisans through on line networking and advise through Seven Dimensions' website turath.com.jo (which is a virtual mall)
- Empowering Seven Dimensions' website, turath.com.jo to facilitate on line networking, mentoring and provision of advice and consulting services.
- Enhancing direct and online marketing efforts currently conducted by Seven Dimensions to better market the handicraft products of Jordan through the internet.

AMIR has awarded the grant for Turath Project on **July 1st, 2004**. The grant total value is **US\$ 277,162**. It is contributing to part of the total project's budget amounting to JD182,040. The rest of the project budget is to be covered by the implementing agency 7D, through in-kind and shared funds utilizing the European project the agency is partnering with.

2. Turath Handicraft Empowerment Project Assessment

The primary challenge of this consultancy is to assess the Turath Empowerment Project with respect to its achievements to date, and meeting set milestones as per the grant agreement with the AMIR Program, as well as to assess the level of impact the project has on direct beneficiaries, the artisans of Jordan.

2.1. Turath Achievements to Date

It is evident that after nearly one year into this grant, Turath has managed to lay proper foundations for a sustainable program. It is working in parallel on three issues:

1. Empowering the Turath Online Mall
2. Developing a marketing strategy for sustainable growth
3. Training and networking for sustainable handicraft empowerment effort

In brief, Turath is in its final stages of empowering its online mall and is about to launch its newly designed website which has been adopted as the National Handicraft Website by the National Tourism Strategy implementation committee.

Through a detailed assessment of the handicraft market it has identified the handicraft sectors to focus on for development and marketing.

Marketing strategies for local and international markets are in their last stages of development. Those are based on sectoral production capacity and product readiness studies as well as shipping details and conditions study, all of which are being finalized. Moreover, Turath has contracted Ms. Susan Inglis to be their marketing agent in the US to open new market opportunities and be the source of export market information that feeds into the total marketing strategy.

Also, Turath is developing the database for handicraft producers and products, as well as of artisans, NGOs and Private handicrafts organizations for Amman region. It is also collecting product samples.

The campaign for marketing the online mall and Turath project is under way. Promotional materials have been designed and local campaign will start this month. Delaying the launch of the campaign to this stage of the project was done based on the reasoning that the effect of the campaign will be realized at the time Turath has consumed most of its grant, and completed its design phase and as such is more ready to handle workload and anchor itself sustainably.

Turath has completed the development of training material, in English and Arabic, for ICT and Internet training course, Marketing training course (in three modules of Basic Marketing principles, Promotion, and Pricing), Product Development and Design (in Two modules of Product development, and Packaging) which complements the Color missing in Product development course developed with PRODECOM.

By June 6, Turath has managed to exceed the requirements set by AMIR for capacity building. It has executed 18 training sessions (vs. total of 9 requested sessions) in above mentioned modules, training 203 persons (vs. 160 persons as requested), most of which are women.

Since July 2004, Turath has expanded its operation to add two new geographical outreach areas, Jarash and Salt, to its original outreach in Amman, Zarqa, Madaba and Irbid. It has conducted networking/marketing/linkages workshops in all of those areas. In specific, 6 such workshops were conducted (vs. 3 workshops as requested by AMIR) reaching and linking 302 persons, most of which are women.

The table below summarizes the Turath Project achievements under the grant in those three aspects. The table shows details of the objectives as stated in the grant proposal, the measuring indicators set by AMIR, and the outcomes achieved by June 6, 2005.

The AMIR measuring indicators and expected outcomes are in bolded font.

Turath Empowerment Project Assessment

Objective	Objective Description	TURATH Expected Outcomes	AMIR Measuring Indicator	Achieved Outcomes by June 6, 2005
<p>Empowering the Online Mall The virtual mall allows the organizations and individuals to display their products and advertise their missions in separate shop displays on the internet</p>	<p>Empowering TURATH Mall with added services as a tool to achieve the project goals of networking and online marketing. Some of the activities are to be in executing the needs efficiently or in selling ready made tools that would fulfill the mall empowerment needs.</p>	<p>Increase in 50% of mall visitors Increase in mall members at a rate of 100 member per year Indirect impact on the sales of mall members and individuals.</p>	<p>Enhanced website design and services – Arabized site, online direct payment, chatting, news page, online training, networking page, and membership services page.</p>	<p>Website design and upgrade completed by Media group on May 2005. Mall content management is underway, to be ready by mid June 2005.</p>
<p>Marketing Strategy</p>	<p>Marketing strategy for Local markets and International markets.</p>		<p>Developing a market strategy for international market Developing a marketing strategy for local market</p>	<p>Study for assessment of handicraft market completed by consultant Andrea G. Snyder. Five handicraft products identified: jewelry, ceramic, mosaics, embroidery, and glass.</p> <p>Local Market Marketing Strategy: Study for capacity assessment of handicraft producers is underway. Study of product readiness in the five identified handicraft products is underway. Collection of product samples, and building a database of potential producers is underway</p> <p>International Marketing strategy: Ms. Susan Inglis has been contracted in May, 2005 to act as the marketing agent for Turath in the US – on the basis of payment for 3 days/week work in the first 6 months, afterwards on commission basis only. Expected to generate US\$10,000 starting July 2005. Monthly reporting of potential and existing buyers contacts; and potential products required. Contact established with EJADA to develop agents in Europe – Process is underway</p>

Turath Empowerment Project Assessment

Objective	Objective Description	TURATH Expected Outcomes	AMIR Measuring Indicator	Achieved Outcomes by June 6, 2005
				Shipping Details, Costs and Regulations are under development.
Marketing Campaign				Marketing campaign deliverables have been postponed towards the end of the AMIR Grant since such a campaign will boost the Project and so contributes to its sustainability after the Grant is consumed
Marketing Campaign- Promotion of Mall in the local market.	Marketing campaign utilizing the direct and indirect channels, contacts, mail, and ads in local newspapers, as well as development of printed materials for the Mall services. Those also include advertisements, consumables and brochures about the mall and project.	Increase in the number of organizations/individuals joining the mall at a rate of 15 new clients every year.	Development of marketing materials Implementation of the marketing campaign	Brochure for Turath Project designed and printed. Under distribution. Other promotional materials are designed and produced. Under distribution. Newspaper ads ready to be published in June 2005 Established agreement with EJADA for a National Trade Show in Jordan – Process is underway. TURATH is adopted as the National Website for Crafts by the National Tourism Strategy Product Development Committee Turath to display handicrafts in the Visitors Centers around Jordan.
Marketing Campaign- Online promotion of the Mall (website)	Heavy marketing of the Mall on the internet is needed for the success of e-commerce and for the Mall to be known and visited by a large number of interested groups. -Affiliate program implementation -Search engine additions -Banner placements and exchange -Newsletter email setup -Interest groups participation	Increase in visitors to the mall to 15,000 visitor/month. (Currently they are 5000/month) 400% increase in online sales to reach 12000 JDs yearly with sales fees of 15-25% of sales.		
Preparation of Training Materials and training execution				
Course 1 : ICT /Internet Course	ICT course based on ICDL standards for basic computer skills and focus on Internet Access, search and		Preparation of ICT course material Executing 3 ICT training sessions	ICT course material developed in Arabic and conducted in a workshop environemnt

Turath Empowerment Project Assessment

Objective	Objective Description	TURATH Expected Outcomes	AMIR Measuring Indicator	Achieved Outcomes by June 6, 2005
	email/chatting tools with customized examples		Training of 60 persons by July 2005	Executed 7 sessions and trained 64 persons by June 6, 2005
Course 2: Marketing channels and activities	Training course in practical marketing for handicrafts – modular such that any subject can be used on its own. Includes a list of market resources and information on approaching new customers in specific market sectors. Provides trainer with all s/he needs to identify a market niche, approach buyers in the market and train artisans to serve it well. Course also aims to provide the trainees with the knowledge on existing global markets and marketing channels, requirements and international agreements of trade focusing on handicrafts and small businesses		Preparation of marketing course material Executing Training of Trainers Session with 10 trainers. Executing 3 Marketing training sessions Training of 60 persons by July 2005	Material for “The Art and Craft of Marketing Arts and Crafts” 7-modules Marketing course material developed in English by Dec. 1, 2005. TOT session conducted in January 8-13, 2005 with 10 trainers. Adopted 6 trainers for the program Re-adapted material into 3-modules (Basic Marketing principles, Promotion, Pricing) Translated all into Arabic. Basic marketing and Promotion: Executed 2 sessions and trained 32 persons by June 6, 2005 Pricing Training Not executed yet
Course 3: Product development and design	Training course in craft design and product development for local, tourist and international markets– modular such that any subject can be used on its own. Includes a list of creative resources for research and inspiration, and to stay current with market information. Course also aims to provide the trainees with the technical know-how on how to prepare products to meet the international needs and standards by applying the add-ons of finishing the product and quality control implementation checklist.		Preparation of product development course material Preparation of product design Executing Training of Trainers Session with 10 trainers. Executing 3 Product development and design training sessions Training of 40 persons by July 2005	Material for “Handicraft Product Development” in one module including product development and design, developed in English by March 1, 2005. TOT session conducted in March 13-17, 2005 with 15 trainers. Adopted 14 trainers for the program Re-adapted material into 2-modules (Product development, Packaging) Translated all into Arabic. Executed 3 product development session and trained 40 persons Packaging Training Not executed yet
Course 4 : Product Design	Course in color mixing, colors in designs, and colors usage in cultural		Implementation of the training	Design and Color course material developed in Arabic

Turath Empowerment Project Assessment

Objective	Objective Description	TURATH Expected Outcomes	AMIR Measuring Indicator	Achieved Outcomes by June 6, 2005
and Color Mixing	and handicraft products. Also includes design concepts especially related to handicrafts.			Executed 6 sessions and trained 67 persons by June 6, 2005
Local Networking Workshop	Increase linkage between artisans and other parties involved in handicraft. Workshops tackle topics such as How to benefit from networking, and Effect of networking on marketing.		Conduct 3 local networking workshops	<p>Executed 6 workshops in Salt, Amman, Irbid, Madaba, Jarash and Zarqa for 320 persons by June 6, 2005</p> <p>Development database of artisans, NGOs and Private handicrafts organizations for Amman region.</p> <p>Development of similar databases for Salt, Madaba, Zarqa and Jarash is underway.</p> <p>Networking workshops resulted in establishing the Quality Control Committee with members from different regions. The committee to assess quality of goods. Such goods will be included in the EJADA supported national exposition, considered for the Cultural Label of Excellence, for recommendation for international marketing.</p>
Course 5: Cultural Development Products Label	Training course aims to provide the trainees with the information on the Cultural Development Products Label implementation procedures, standards, managing parties, benefits and content. It includes introduction of the Cultural Development Products Label, content and benefits, procedures of implementation locally and globally, parties involved and methodology	One international workshop per year for the Euro funded project partners 3 Label local workshops/year to attract 40-50 attendees in each workshop, with a total of 120-150 beneficiaries		<p>Development of Label of Excellence regulations is underway. PRODECOM partners and UNSECO to introduce and legalize the label of excellence certificate through the advocacy and implementation procedures set by PRODECOM</p> <p>Implementation plans are being developed by PRODECOM partners.</p>

2.2. Turath Plans for Sustainability

Turath is aiming to continue. This is evident in all of their planning and efforts to develop connections with the local market, open export markets in USA and Europe, develop the handicraft sector, and brand Turath as the national handicraft outlet.

Their sustainability efforts are summarized as follows:

Financial Sustainability

Turath are putting plans to achieve financial sustainability through:

- Offer Networking Package: that includes provision of information to the interest of the participant, solving problems related to production (raw material, labeling, etc.), attending 2 meetings a month (one with fellow members, one with public to introduce members to other sectors), newsletter subscription, and online chatting service. All for JD 24/ year for an individual, and JD 36/year for an organization
- E-Commerce Package: including rent-a-shop online and online marketing services for JD 210/ year
- Full Training Package: 7 modules training package including Internet, Product development, and Marketing for JD 240.
- Full Comprehensive Package: that include Training and Networking, and online and offline marketing for JD 280/ year.
- Separate training courses for a JD30 per course.
- Design Consultancy Service Package: a one-to-one design consultancy services for JD 7/hour on 7D premises, or onsite service for JD 50/day
- Commission on offline sales: starting from JD25% on sales in markets opened locally and in the USA, and sales achieved through the 7D corporate marketing initiatives.
- Internet advertising: including having advertising banners on Turath website – not yet priced.

All above packages have been prepared preliminarily promoted. For the Networking Package Turath already has 25 members.

Linkages

To ensure continuity and presence in market, Turath has already initiated several linkages with other ongoing national programs and established a memorandum of understanding whereby with:

- ERADA: ERADA uses the training and marketing services of Turath
- WAEDAT: uses the training and networking services of Turath
- JOHUD/ Small Business Development Center: uses the training services of Turath
- JUMP/Ntional Linkages Problem: Turath initiates business linkage to improve the availability of raw materials for handicraft, through upgrading the manufacturing processes and products of the local factories to match the standards required by the handicrafts who would be buying from such establishments vs. purchasing the higher-priced imported raw materials.

Marketing

Turath has initiated their offline marketing services for handicraft targeting local corporate businesses as one of the more profitable markets for handicrafts.

It is also tackling the US-market through hiring their first US marketing agent operating in the USA to increase demand for Jordanian handicrafts. Moreover Turath is working with

EJADA to establish similar marketing relationships in the United Kingdom. In addition, and also in cooperation with EJADA, Turath is planning to establish the National Jordanian Trade Show for Handicrafts.

As previously mentioned, Turath is compiling regional databases of artisans, handicrafts and potential producers, as well as physical samples of such products. As such, using information as another tool to sustain its marketing and networking services.

In addition to the Nationalization of its website and putting Turath on the map where Jordan tourism and handicrafts are concerned. It has also widened its base of products through including the Salt and Jarash regions to its program's outreach.

Handicraft Sector Development

To ensure its sustainability Turath is contributing to the development of the handicraft sector through its sustainable training services, development of the Label of Excellence, and branding of Jordanian handicrafts.

Training

To achieve sustainable training, Turath is establishing a relationship with Community Based Organizations whereby full training courses will be given to few constant and regular members of the CBO, who would in turn train the community the organization is serving. Such trainers are more able to reach the women and men having their own handicraft businesses and who may benefit best from such training. This will also contribute to better targeting of trainees.

New training topics and material are being prepared in response to the need of the targeted population and based on the feedback gathered from the first round of training sessions and networking workshops. Such new training includes 'problem identification and solving', 'product quality control', 'product labeling and branding'. The practical training material is derived from the 24 members of the Networking Program.

Quality Standards

Turath is also working with PRODECOM in developing the rules and quality standards for handicraft products. Also, as mentioned in the above table, Turath is instituting through its networking workshops the Quality Control Committee which will advocate intellectual property rights of handicraft producers, document the historical significance of the product, the motifs origin, etc., and assess the quality of products for the Label of Excellence, as well as for Jordanian branding, and set the acceptable pricing structures and other rules and regulations.

3. Turath Impact Assessment

Based on above discussion, it may be concluded that Turath Handicrafts Empowerment Project is still in its design phase even though it has realized many achievements that is putting it on the right path towards reaching its goals, and has even exceeded AMIR's set milestones especially in the number of training sessions and reached trainees, and is working hard to achieve sustainability.

In fact Turath is properly being designed to respond to the many obstacles that face the handicraft sector in Jordan, such as weak market linkages for exporters and producers with importers and potential buyers, weak internal product design capacity among handicraft producers and non-existence of product development training and technical consulting services, and absence of methodological approaches for locating and opening new markets for the handicraft artisans' products which will sustain their businesses and income.

Being at this stage of its development any further assessment of Turath project can only be assessed in a qualitative manner. Reporting on quantitative results such as increase in employment or sales can be misleading and premature at this stage. Therefore, this assignment is aiming to measure the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries, and the qualitative impact of the services provided by the project on their business, and to obtain feedback on project's improvement.

Three focus groups were held in Amman, Madaba and Salt, during the first week of June 2005, with 30 trainees (around 6% of Turath reached total artisans) that attended the Internet, basic marketing, color-mixing and product design, problem solving and other networking sessions conducted by Turath by June 6, 2005.

Profile of focus group participants:

Location	Attended Training/ Networking	No.	Gender	Profile
Madaba	Internet, Color mixing and product design, Basic marketing, Networking/networking and its effect on marketing workshop	8	6 women, 2 men	Handicraft/profession: embroidery, mosaics, ceramics, sewing, photography. Only 2 were involved in selling their product/service, the rest were employees at the mosaics/ceramic workshops of Madaba
Amman	Internet, Color mixing and product design, Basic marketing, Networking/Pinpointing problems and problem solving workshop	9	All women	Handicraft /profession: embroidery, paper boxes, holy-water bottling, ceramics, tax consulting, pickle making. 5 are experts in their ceramic handicrafts, working with Bait Al-Bawadi; 5 have their own business and sell their products.
Salt	Color mixing and product design, Basic marketing; networking workshop	13	All women	Handicraft /profession: embroidery, 'Khaish' designs, ceramics, banana leaves weaving. 10 trainees were ceramic students at the Salt Center. 3 have their own business, one have a factory of pickles.
		30		

The following are the impact assessment results derived from those focus group sessions.

3.1. Focus Group Results

1) Impact on Business, and Participants' Information and Capabilities

In general, one may comfortably say that Turath is having a very good impact on the handicraft sector, product and artisans alike.

Most artisan participants, especially those that own their business, reported great satisfaction with the skills they have learnt from the training sessions. More importantly, they also reported increase in their sales and markets from 75% to 100% as mentioned below, and sometimes even more.

Many reported learning new things that are helping them in their work and production, and are looking for more advanced training especially in product development, quality control and pricing and marketing.

Almost all reported an increase in their information, especially those who have attended the Internet training. Internet has become an important tool in their daily work.

None reported not being positively impacted by the attended training.

The networking sessions were also a success. Participants reported hooking up with other artisans complementing their work, and increased relationships with fellow colleagues.

Attendees, who were not experts in the topic of the attended training, reported that the training exceeded their expectations and were greatly satisfied with the information and the practice they have gained. Those that were experts reported that they knew most of the covered topics, yet after the training their knowledge became more scientifically-based.

Below are the comments voiced out by the focus group session participants:

Internet trainees

'I have learnt how to obtain new ideas from the Internet regarding packaging my pickles; actually my sales increased 5% after this course'

'The internet opened a new world and widened my horizons'.

'Now, I use it heavily to research my work, and solve my problems'

'I have never imagined that in 4 days I will be able to use the Internet. Actually my family was laughing at me saying this is a waste of time. Now, I have my own website. It displays my work and products'.

I actually learned how to become digital and use digital photography in my work. It is fantastic'.

'We used to only know how the PC looks like. Now each of us has an email, we are also building our website to display our products'

'I used to listen to my friends and watch them chat over the Internet. I felt like the deaf guy in a wedding! Now I easily enter the world of the Internet and surf

it, I have an email that I use, and I chat with my friends, I am proud to be able to do that'

Basic Marketing trainees

'This course taught me how to open new markets and better target potential buyers. Implementing what I have learned during the last quarter increased my sales 100% more, and freed me from being monopolized by certain buyers'.

'This training taught me how to present my product to the buyer and how to get the best deal. Actually my sales of embroideries increased 75% after this course'.

'I am able now to deal better with the traders I deal with'

'This course is great. The training made me understand the proper rule-based marketing techniques. Now I market my pieces more effectively'.

Problem Identification and Solving Workshop participants

'This workshop is amazing, it has provided me with a skill that changed my life, now I implement the problem solving methodology at my work and have solved all problems I was facing, especially with my subordinates'.

'Everybody should attend this session with the same amazing and capable trainer. I must thank Turath for this training'.

'I use the concepts I have learnt in this workshop at work, and with my family, to solve my personal problems as well – actually implementing it can enable you to solve any problem'.

'This is a fantastic workshop, and the trainer is fantastic too. She was able to attract our attention a 100% of the time. All must attend this session'

Color Mixing and Product Design Trainees

'Now I can pinpoint the wrong color in the piece, or the wrong placement of the color no matter how faintly used – my eyes are better trained now to pick the wrong thing in the piece''

'After this course, I managed to enhance my embroidered products. This actually increased my sales around 25%'

'This training even affected the way I dress now. I am more conscious of the colors I wear'

'I have noticed tremendous improvement in the work and products of my ceramic workers who have attended this workshop' 2

'I have learnt so much in color mixing, color degrees, and how to connect color to product design with consideration to my target audience – all this was new to me'.

² Reported by owner of a ceramic workshop in Madaba who attended the Focus Group as a guest

‘Demand on my products increased now that I am using better colors and proper color mixing’

‘I now produce nicer pieces with nicer colors, and so can ask for better prices’

‘I only added about 10% to my knowledge in attending this training. I thought it is more advanced. Its name was misleading’

II) Participants’ Expectations and Recommendations

Almost all attendees were greatly satisfied with the Internet and basic marketing courses they have attended, and fascinated by the networking workshop of problem identification and solving which introduced a completely new topic to them.

It was evident that better targeting of trainees is needed in order to attract those who would be more impacted, namely those that are operating their businesses and are more in touch with the market, product development and players of the sector.

Better communication of the training contents, its level, and who should attend is a must. Some expert attendees reported this need as well as proper re-naming of the training session to better communicate what the session will include and avoid misconception.

Better matching between content of training and profile of trainees is needed. Training material may be adapted to reflect the expertise level of the attendees.

More practical training was requested, especially in the color mixing and product design course. As for the Internet training, almost all were satisfied with the training method.

Attendees who are still students and have no experience in business or markets reported the need to have a more simplified marketing course that will teach them how to market a small project rather than a company-like project. Better still they required training in how to start a business and become an entrepreneur, and training in how to market under a low budget using simple methods.

Above of course also ties to and reflects the need for better targeting of trainees per training topic.

The following comments reflect the difference of opinion based on the expertise level of the trainees.

Color Mixing and Product Design trainees:

'I expected this training to be rather silly, but it was fabulous'

'I expected this training to be more advanced. I was disappointed'

'I wish the training was more advanced. I would definitely attend advanced training in product design when offered'

'More practical application should be offered. The training should be more intensive'

'I have paid JD30 for this course but only benefited around 10%. I knew most of the topics which were basics in design – for the those who have no experience'.

'The level of this course was not communicated to me properly. I thought from its name that it was much more advanced'.

'This course should have more emphasis on abstract design'

Basic Marketing trainees:

'This training was way over our heads. O.K we did benefit but I wish that the training was how to market a very very small business'.

'We need to know how to start thinking of a business before marketing – everybody here will work in a factory and we do not think of our own business, it is too hard'.

'The marketing concepts were very beneficial to me. I am now using my knowledge in better targeting my customers'

III) Promotional Mechanism and Willingness to Participate

It was evident that very few participants knew about Turath's objectives and future, even though they attended the training sessions offered by it. But what is worth mentioning is that all were impressed and enthusiastic about Turath once the session moderator explained a little bit more about it.

As such, it is recommended that the trainer spend some time in explaining Turath to the participants. This will put them in a different frame of mind and will encourage them to attend further capacity building courses when they can see the planned future.

Attendees reported knowing of the training sessions through word of mouth. They wished that Turath uses a more prevalent method for announcing their courses and not only depend on certain persons in the community or organizations. This will ensure the attendance of more artisans.

Almost all reported their willingness to attend advanced courses, and almost all were willing to pay for such training.

3.2. Analysis of Trainers Feedback

Main trainers were interviewed and asked to voice their opinion and recommendations. Results are as follows.

Turath Program

Turath is a unique project that is pulling together the private sector and the handicrafts producers and increasing the participation of NGOs and CBOs in the development of the sector. From this aspect Turath is creating a new spirit of partnership in Jordan.

Turath is also contributing to women's empowerment through enhancement of her products and consequently of her income. The delivered training is having its immediate impact whether in terms of adding to the participant's information and knowledge or in improving the design of the product.

One trainer commented: *'I usually take sample of participants products before the course and then take similar samples after a time period following the course, the improvement in the product and its quality is really great'.*

Targeted Population

Turath is operating in a difficult market and is scurrying on without giving enough time to select its target group properly. This rush to reach the artisans should be tempered with proper selection. In fact, two groups of training beneficiaries should be targeted; first, those that have no experience or contact with the market and business (e.g. students at the handicraft centers, employees in handicraft workshops); second, those that are entrepreneurs and are operating their own business or have strong connection to the market. To achieve the highest impact each of the groups should have their own level of training courses prepared.

The first group, and as a first step, should be given training in how to become an entrepreneur, how to start a business, and basic orientation in marketing, instead of the more advanced marketing courses, which only serve to overwhelm them. While those who have experience in business such advanced courses will have the greatest impact on their business and livelihood. The same applies for the color mixing and product design course. This being a basic course is completely useless when given to the more experienced handicraft person.

Training Course Material and Training of Trainers Program

Trainers were in agreement that TOT they have attended was 'absolutely great'. Yet, to achieve proper implementation of the training, trainers should be differentiated according to their training experience and knowledge, such that trainers offering a certain training sessions should be selected against the audience/trainees profile, where the more experienced trainer will conduct the session with the more experienced and business oriented trainees, and vice-versa.

Also, now that the total training course material is produced and available, another TOT session should be held whereby overview of the whole courses is given to the trainers. This will enable them to better sequence the information of the training sessions since they would know what should be given in which course.

In addition, trainers were also in agreement that Turath should consider repackaging and recombining training material of both the marketing modules and product development modules into one course to be given to experienced and entrepreneurial trainees, since for those, both issues are related and run hand-in-hand, therefore such a course would have a more pronounced impact on the target group.

In order to enhance the knowledge of the trainer and equip him/her with all the training tools and course material needed to perform best, while at the same preserve for Turath the intellectual rights to the training material, certain arrangements should be carried out with the trainer. Those could include him/her signing to the proprietary of the material to Turath and committing to not using the material for another purpose and/or party. This will free information for use among the trainers and for them to readapt as they see fit to their target group of trainees.

Moreover, profiling the trainees before the actual training is conducted will enable the trainer to better adapt the material to the audience. This ties strongly with proper targeting methodologies to be adopted.

Time and Training Contents

Trainers suggested that the training course, especially those dealing with product development, include more practical sessions. The course should be longer with at least third of its time spent in practical work, to cement the information with the participants and achieve better results.