
Culture, A Sustainable Industry (CaSI) Project Summary

Arts and culture are strategic national resources generated and owned by all countries in the world; a resource that helps shape identities, beliefs, and values. The importance of such a resource is further highlighted in light of the political scene characterizing the region since the onset of the Arab uprisings that started in late 2010 in response to the low standard of living and oppressive regimes. As forms of expression became more explicit, many people turned to the use of arts and culture as an alternative socio-political space. However, although such resources have a political as well as a practical industry dimension, the levels to which these resources are utilized and capitalized upon vary from one country to another. Some people attribute this to the extent of engagement of local ministries, and especially the Ministry of Culture. Within the Middle East region, some countries enjoy more active Ministries of Culture (MoC) than others.

Nevertheless, generally, budgets allocated for arts and culture across the region are low, with the lowest percentage being in Jordan and Lebanon. For example, in Lebanon, 1.56% of the total budget of the Lebanese Government was allocated to culture in 2015, amounting to 24.3 million USD. This percentage gradually dropped to lower than 1%. In Jordan, the budget of the MoC amounted to 7.9 million Jordanian dinars in 2012. This in part is impacting the extent to which new cultural trends and potentials are being explored and capitalized upon. With such low budgets, the repercussions are that in Lebanon, to date, there is neither an overarching cultural policy nor a detailed strategic plan. As to Jordan, and in concerted efforts exerted to structure the cultural sector, two National Consultative Workshops were organized by the EU-funded Regional Programme, Med Culture, working towards the development of a National Strategy for Culture.

The first draft of the strategy was developed with the active participation of the Jordanian Ministry of Culture as well as a broad participation of Jordanian cultural operators and has received the Ministry's Approval. Nevertheless, the extent to which work will progress is still undetermined. Stemming from a belief that cultural initiatives and policies do not pertain to the work of ministries alone, but are rather determined and negotiated by a variety of actors and actions, in 2009, Culture Resource, in cooperation with the European Culture Foundation and the British Council, launched a regional program for the monitoring and development of cultural policies in the Arab region. As a result of this program as well as other researches in the sector, several gaps have been identified, including (a) the persistent lack of cultural policies in some Arab countries, including Lebanon and Jordan, (b) the underutilization of arts and culture as both an alternative sociopolitical space and as a sector with economic potential, (c) the gap between the view towards culture as a public value and the view towards culture as an industry

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and how to bridge it without compromising the real value of culture, and (d) the need to 'localize' culture rather than 'westernize' it. These gaps are what Culture; a Sustainable Industry (CaSI) aims to address while bringing on board a wide range of cultural actors/operators. Accordingly, this project has been designed to give a space for actors who wish to express themselves through arts and culture.

The alternative arts industry will be developed, noting that this is not a priority addressed by mass production companies currently working in the field. In fact, during this project phase, the music industry will be selected as a pilot to examine ways of building and strengthening networks between artists and business platforms. Alternatives will be explored and lessons learned identified to be used in the near future to project the findings and replicate the project into other cultural sectors, thus promoting cultural industries in the Arab region, and more specifically in Lebanon and Jordan. Among what the project seeks to explore is the possibility of setting the framework for the establishment of manufacturing and distribution platforms, noting that revenue generation in arts, music, and culture is no longer limited to consumption; rather it has become a whole economic sector that has untapped potential. Across the project, a main focus will be on identifying ways of 'commercializing' or 'economizing' the industry to promote sustainability without losing the underlying value of culture and cultural manifestations. It is worth noting that the Arab region at large is taken as the context due to two factors; (a) Lebanon and Jordan represent quite a narrow market if taken alone, and (b) some Arab countries have advanced in the field of cultural industries to an extent where Lebanon and Jordan can benefit from their expertise. In addition to Arab expertise, experts from Europe will be invited to share their experiences as well.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overall Impact

The potential of culture and music as viable entrepreneurial options for young cultural actors fostered in Lebanon and Jordan.

Objectives, Outputs, and Activities

Objective

Grounds set for the promotion of sustainable interventions within the cultural sectors in Lebanon and Jordan.

Outputs and Activities

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This project will spread over three years, working towards accomplishing three main outputs.

Output 1: Research and Sectorial Studies 10 academic research papers and 2 sectorial studies produced in Lebanon and Jordan focusing on culture and music as well as the potential of the sector's industrialization. **Description of Activities:** To carry out a factual research, a core team of academics, professional experts in cultural industry and renowned artists will be invited to join a Research Advisory Committee (TG1) to direct the research component. Two academic universities in each of Jordan and Lebanon (i. e. a total of 4) that have active cultural departments/ music departments will be contacted to nominate academics to join the advisory committee and student candidates to be assigned to two teams per university per country to conduct the research (i. e. individuals and teams of student researchers). Once convened, a meeting will be held for this committee to (a) discuss research needs, gaps, challenges, and relevant studies and (b) determine the research format, method and guidelines. Professional experts who have studied this industry will be asked to share their findings in terms of the Arab market potential and specifically in countries like Lebanon and Jordan, markets that currently lack financial sustainability. As a result of this meeting, (a) researches and case studies will be assigned to the university student research teams through the academic departments and (b) terms of reference will be drawn for professional sectorial studies.

Thereafter, a research institute will be allocated the sectorial analysis (preferably one study in each of Jordan and Lebanon), including audience analysis. The broader aim of the research is to produce relevant data for the music sector to develop as an industry, with music chosen as a pilot. Papers should consult secondary as well as primary data generated through consultations with different stakeholders from cultural actors, artists and bands, producers and distributors, programmers, experts, and other key players (TG2) and relevant local authorities (TG3) such as the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the Ministry of Industry (MoI). In parallel, important research papers and studies available in foreign languages will be translated to Arabic. The produced papers, along with the translated resources, will form the basis for dialogue and networking. Funds will be granted to support students in implementing their research, noting that the research output will include macro and micro needs (instruments, technological devices, etc. ...). After 6 months of the commencement of this phase, a second meeting will be held inviting all those involved to review the research progress, discuss main findings and challenges, propose means to tap into potential opportunities, collect lessons learned, and set the agenda for the planned networking conference and festival (re-output 2).

Following, two seminars will be organized (one in Beirut and one in Amman), to which business people and potential business investors (TG4) will be invited in concerted efforts to bring investors on board. This stage will be facilitated by the Research Advisory Committee (TG1).

Output 2: Networking; Building Connections A festival and a parallel conference on Cultural Policies in the Arab Region organized, with the participation of at least four Arab and four European experts. **Description of Activities:** A conference on Cultural Policies in the Arab

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Region will be organized to discuss all findings. The detailed agenda of these two events will be discussed and agreed upon as part of the meetings organized under Output 1. The conference will invite business experts as well as the expertise of at least eight Arab and European industry experts to share their experiences and support the lessons learning process. As planned, discussions will culminate in the issuance of at least two recommendation papers: 1

Key recommendations from field business experts and potential investors in terms of findings and opportunities and targeting industry actors (especially actors within the music industry)

Key recommendations from the sector feeding into policy proposition(s) to the parliament and ministries (notably the MoC, MoF, and Mol) with concrete commendations on how to boost investment in culture and promote the culture industries in Lebanon and Jordan. It is worth noting that all research papers produced under Phase One will be discussed in the conference but a selection of research papers will be published in a book in both English and Arabic constituting a reference on Culture Industries and the music industry in the Levant. Additionally, in parallel to the conference, and to further publicize the outcome, encourage networking, and celebrate the potential of the alternative music industry, all actors will be invited to a festival that will present traditional/ classic music productions as well as new trends to mirror talents and provide visibility for music entrepreneurs. Some of these entrepreneurs may be capacity building/ seed grant beneficiaries of output

Output 3: Capacity building/ sectoral development – pilot Small and medium seed grants presented to cultural actors/ music entrepreneurs to enable them to fill some of the identified gaps.

Description of Activities: Having determined the challenges in the research findings and discussed them in the seminars and conference, Calls for Applications will be issued in each of Jordan and Lebanon, with each call presenting seed grants targeting one of the sectoral gaps identified under Phase 2.

The presented grants will aim at promoting the vision of the music industry as a sustainable industry. These calls serve as a pilot that will be built upon in upcoming project phases. Needs and gaps filled may encompass equipment, digital platforms, legal support, instruments....), and will inclusively support the local productive capacities. It is envisioned that support will also be oriented towards capacity building in music production and distribution, and training talents on cross-sectorial trade relationships among entities linked to the music industry (tourism, service, entertainment, communication and tech industries). This phase is expected to provide more access to opportunities for the talented, along with potential access to advanced technologies and markets, strategic alliances, and partnerships with key actors in the wide-ranging and sustainable culture industry. A lively creative sector will help to empower talents and even lonely

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individuals by using their cultural capacity - their own knowledge and creativity. This pilot program will be oriented to promote sustainability of technical cooperation and training. Following the above phases, an internal assessment will be implemented for the whole process to reflect on accomplishments, document lessons learned, and provide recommendations for the way forward.

Target Groups and Beneficiaries

The project targets academics and researchers (TG1), cultural actors, artists and bands, key players in the tech industry, and music labels (TG2), relevant local authorities (TG3), such as MoC, MoF, MoI, and the Ministry of Tourism, as well as business people and potential business investors (TG4) in both Lebanon and Jordan. Through the different project activities, the following beneficiaries will be reached:

- At least 4 academic institutions in Lebanon and Jordan, engaging 10 researchers (students and professors) in cultural research.
 - At least 4 representatives of local authorities in Lebanon and Jordan
 - 30 cultural actors and managers, musicians, music producers and programmers
 - 10 business people and potential business investors
- Additionally, the project indirectly targets culture entrepreneurs and other cultural actors eager to initiate culture-related initiatives and/ or duplicate this project under a different cultural sector than music.

Sustainability

Since its establishment in 2004, Culture Resource has been implementing a number of programs that aim to structure and strengthen the cultural sector, including training programs aimed at enhancing the skills of Arab cultural managers/leaders and creating opportunities for dialogue among actors working in the Arab region, especially the young operators, providing them with resources that could help them develop their work. Noting that this project complements the Culture Resource work and strategic direction, its sustainability is guaranteed. Other factors that contribute to the project's sustainability include:

- The dissemination of resource papers and recommendation documents in both English and Arabic that will support the sector and its actors, including young culture entrepreneurs who are contemplating initiating income-generating projects that concurrently promote the culture industry
 - The strengthening of the regional network and expanding benefit from regional expertise
 - The active involvement of potential investors and people from the business world
 - The inclusion of seed grants to kick off priority initiatives
- The project will also promote the involvement of public authorities in Lebanon and Jordan, inducing them to step

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forward and take shared ownership of the promotion of local cultural initiatives while setting/ finalizing policy frameworks. Such policies and the issued new and translated publications will remain in existence long after the project ends, supporting beneficiaries to structure initiatives that answer to the identified gaps and/ or replicate the project's interventions.

PROJECT PARTNER/ CAPACITY DESCRIPTION

The Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqaify) was established in 2004 as a regional, non-profit organization that seeks to support artistic creativity in the Arab region and to encourage cultural exchange between intellectuals and artists within this region and abroad. The organization is led by a group of 10 dynamic staff members with diverse experiences and backgrounds, a general assembly of 35 Arab cultural leaders, and an artistic board having 7 members who actively participate in decision making processes. The outcome of these fourteen years of engagement is over 1000 artists, writers and cultural managers who have received either financial support or training through the organization, a diverse audience of thousands of actors who has been engaged in proficient cultural and artistic concerts, performances and lectures, as well as expanded networks of connections between Arab artists. With such a wide outreach and a strong back-bone structure, we strongly believe that we are in a strategic position to implement the project and to support the inauguration of cultural industries in Lebanon and Jordan while making sure not to undermine the public value of culture.

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