



The Role of Traditional Crafts Centers in Maintaining Heritage and its Impact on Promoting Tourism (Case Study: Foustat Traditional Crafts Center – Cairo, Egypt)

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Abstract:

Traditional crafts are one of the most creative tools for tourism promotion and enhancement of the tourist flow to Egypt; also, it could be an important means for poverty reduction in some communities, through raising the economic level of these communities by selling these unique handicrafts. These crafts, might be made and sold by the individuals at some ethnic regions (Nubia, North & South Sinai...etc.), or through crafts center, such as "Foustat Traditional Crafts' Center".

Crafts are the testimonials of the creativity of Muslim artisans and their interaction with pre-Islam civilization. Eventually, Muslims came up with crafts, which highlight the essence and values of Islam. Craft workshops were limited to the area in Khan al-Khalili. The prosperity of crafts in the area was closely associated with social and economic changes in society. For instance, mass production would reduce the price and badly affect the prospects of veteran craftspeople. A craft man and five apprentices were employed. The centre's population increased after a large number of veteran crafts people were encouraged to collaborate and a big number of apprentices was persuaded to come forward and train themselves. The well-equipped centre is planned to revive woodwork, brass inlay, traditional dresses, tent-making, ivory inlay, stucco glass, etc. The Centre also initiated an ambitious plan to market its products by taking part in many international exhibitions and fairs in different countries. It is also known that Egypt played host to the International Conference of Crafts in 1995.

Keywords:

- Traditional Crafts
- Cultural Heritage
- Foustat Traditional Crafts
- Center
- Cultural Tourism
- Community Based Tourism

Introduction:

Traditional crafts are labeled as: “folk art”, “indigenous art”, “and naïve art”. These labels often answer traveler’s question for “the other” and has sizeable impact on those who produce object of cultural value. The term handicraft is ambiguous. We do not really understand if we’re talking about an authentic work of art or a suggestive work in a preindustrial society context. Art perception is changing very rapidly. Craft is

still art when it no longer represents the philosophy of a group but rather that of an individual. During the process of creation authenticity, originality and know-how are key factors. Some art demonstrates no or little skills at using materials, but expresses something really profound. Equally, some that we define as craft expresses nothing in particular, but demonstrates great skill. However, some great art demonstrates both; great skills at using the materials chosen, and



expressing something profound. An attempt to define something or someone as art(ist) or craft(maker) is thus meaningless.[Alexandra & Rusu A., 2011] Besides the commercial value these products have also a symbolic meaning, often more important than the utility or educational purpose. Handicrafts are the mark of a community, individual works of art reflecting a group. Cultural products are derived from distinctive characteristics of social groups: material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional characteristics. These elements of artistic heritage developed by individuals reflect the cultural artistic expression of the community, either in a verbal or a material form. Often traditional arts or handicrafts do not get the rightful attention. In a world of real time information the media does not cover subjects that escape time. Crafts become the mission of “slow media”, of programs that address a small group of people.

The paper focuses on the important role of the crafts centers, as a main source of attraction for the cultural tourists, in addition to preserving the traditional crafts and to achieve the sustainability approach through helping new generations to revive and hone their skills in this field.

Methodology:

In carrying out this research, the researcher used both of primary and secondary sources of data collection. For the primary sources of data collection, participant observation and structured interview methods were used in conducting this research. The secondary sources used in this research work came from both published and unpublished works, books and articles. The data was collected through two different interviews, which had been analyzed in the form of (SWOT analysis) with the Chairman of ‘Foustat’ Traditional Crafts’ center, in addition to the craftsmen at the center.

1- Sustainability in Maintaining Cultural Heritage:

The most important quality of traditional products is sustainability. The products of “total beauty” are the source of many environmental issues. Pollution,

deforestation, extinction of species and global warming are side effects of mass goods production. Many of the beautiful products we see today have a darker side, less pleasant. Sustainable products, amongst which we find traditional textiles, for example, made using traditional technologies and dyed with plant dyes do not have a major impact on environment, are consistent with the environment throughout their life span. Sustainable products are made from organic, recyclable or compostable materials, they are safe and non-toxic. The production processes needed use renewable energy and the final product fulfils its function efficiently and has a fair social impact. Regardless of the importance of eco-friendly and sustainable products we have to focus also on the economic impact for rural communities.

Income building for small communities sustains and develops economy at a higher level. If it does not affect the quality of the products, cultural goods commerce contributes to the overall standard of life for certain areas. Benefits like food providing and health care are extremely important for families and underprivileged groups. Studies concerning traditional crafts follow two tendencies:

- 1- Denounce the oversimplified decorative elements, the loss of symbolic value or even functional value turning the artifact into tourist goods;
- 2- See in the process of commercializing craft goods only the economic aspects, the response of a group to a necessity induced from outside. [Alexandra & Rusu A., 2011]

From these two points of view tourism is perceived as a degenerative agent of craftsmanship and, by extension, of the cultural area and group that created it. Authorities’ interest gravitates around the contribution that handicrafts might bring to the national economy. Craft practicing limits migration from rural areas to peripheral urban areas. Authorities in South-American countries have embraced a new solution:

involving NGOs. Traditional products commerce is not lacking difficulties.

1-1 Local Level in Preserving Traditional Crafts:

The following local/capacity-building level interventions are proposed in the form of project recommendations aiming to increase employment among women and youth particularly in rural areas and to help them generate sustainable livelihoods.

- **Training Creating centers for crafts and trades:** Highlight the importance of the creation and promotion of training centres for crafts and trades, paying particular attention to the protection and reproduction of indigenous and/or traditional production techniques that are in danger of disappearing.
- **Educational programs:** Encourage the implementation of crafts education programs for children under 14 years old and who are at risk for dropping out of school. This artistic education helps to develop self-expression, observation, appreciation and creativity. Self-expression is the activity that satisfies the need to transmit ideas, emotions and feelings. Observation serves as a means for a person to knowingly face something new, and to consciously relate what they see with what they have stored in their memory. Appreciation develops respect and places value on the expressions of others.
- **Design training workshops:** Conduct design training workshops similar to those organized as part of this project. Workshops should be conducted to train craftspeople in designing products and also to introduce them to existing designs so that they may use these designs in their handicrafts. Recent trends should be introduced to the artisans in order for them to align their product designs and styles accordingly. Local and foreign experts should also be included to share their experiences and offer their insights in monitoring the prevailing trends. Design consultants or designers should be hired to collect the designs and patterns

from around the country or region that depict the art, culture and styles of the location. A national bibliography recording the arts and crafts of the country should be formed to preserve the designs, which are part of the cultural heritage of the nation. This would serve as a development tool for the handicrafts sector and protect the cultural heritage for future generations.

- **Development of craft products:** Develop training centers where master trainers can train poor people and facilitate the craft development process, as was done in Cambodia with the Community Learning Centers. If centers are not available, master trainers can train youth and women at home. Given that handicrafts are produced on a small scale and require simple tools, craftwork can be easily carried out by women at their convenience within their homes. [N. Richard,2007]

Equipment and other facilities need to be provided by development agencies or by the state and/or province. After the training is conducted on how to produce the specific craft, product designing and colouring methods should also be taught to ensure that the products respond to a real demand on the domestic as well as international or regional markets. Training materials should also be made available to different organizations.

Skills improvement for artisans calls for a systematic approach and a longterm vision. Poor women and youth should be given the support and training they need to help them move beyond a subsistence level of production and increase their competitiveness. For example they could be taught to develop new entrepreneurial skills. This is something that should be addressed by ministries focusing on education, vocational training and SMEs; universities; local support institutions; women's organizations; NGOs and technical assistance projects. The main problems in this area are the lack of funds, the need for experts in design and the lack of

facilitators/peer educators to sustain the trainings.

Given the migration of men to urban areas and the trend for them to shift their attention to more profitable pursuits, attention should also be given to training women in crafts normally practiced by men.

- **Marketing Proper training:** needs to be given on marketing techniques. Packaging, labeling, sizing, presentation and colour schemes are just some of the topics that need to be discussed with the craftspeople. Through these discussions, youth and women will be encouraged to produce more and they will be trained to become more outgoing and to interact more freely with their environment.

During the trainings, the artisans should be encouraged to develop links among one another and to sell their products themselves, either individually or in groups, thus bypassing middlemen. Emphasis should also be placed on creating a trustworthy network with markets/bazaars/souks. Hotels, motels and guest houses could be used to display and sell the handicrafts produced in their areas. Regular exhibitions could be organized where craftspeople from all over the country could participate. Handicrafts should also be promoted on international markets and market surveys should be conducted to find out the potential for exporting.

- **Promotion of craft villages:** Craft villages will increase productivity while also providing sustainable market access. They will act as a one-stop shop where artisans from around the country could both manufacture and market their products. They would have the option of renting shop space on a weekly, for nightly or even monthly basis. Masters trainers should take part in training workshops. In this way they are not only passing on their skills, but they are also earning additional income.

All facilities should be provided by the local/national government; and private and international donors should also contribute to covering the costs of establishing the centers.

Setting up such centers in large cities will on the one hand help in propagating the value of crafts to larger audiences; and on the other it will allow craftspeople to increase their income through bypassing middlemen.

The centre could also provide access to microcredit. Existing production techniques could be recorded, which would help in identifying areas of improvement as well as topics for future trainings. The centre would be a source of expertise on designing and packing the products, as well as on marketing and export potential. Furthermore, certain of the crafts could be displayed in local, regional, national museums, as well as in tourism offices, in order to increase the crafts' visibility and to promote awareness on local crafts.

- **Networking, confidence building and human dignity:** Marginalized entrepreneurs could network among themselves and open small outlets with a brand name and set quality standards for their products. They could also request assistance in making a website and a CD catalogue in order to promote their products. Governments and international organizations could assist with setting up the outlets. The outlets would need to be set up in main cities near the artisans' villages so that they would be able to travel to and from the outlets regularly. [N. Richard,2007]

1.2. Global level in Preserving Traditional Crafts:

One of the UNESCO projects in this field entitled "Handicrafts as a socioeconomic and cultural development factor", was part of the Cross-cutting Program on Poverty Eradication during the last two biennia (2002-2005). It was designed and implemented in order to provide decision-makers with strategic recommendations for the eradication of poverty through employment generation, especially for poor and marginalized youth and women.

The project's first objectives were to help create small craft enterprises and to mobilize social capital for comprehensive crafts training and non-formal education in literacy

and numeracy. Targeting marginalized youth, these trainings also addressed production and marketing. The project also provided education departments with a craft methodology and employment-oriented training that could be integrated into the school curriculum. Through this revised curriculum, poor students who could not pursue a formal education nevertheless had access to a viable alternative for future employment. [N. Richard, 2007]

If handicrafts are to play a key role in promoting human development, it is essential that people's cultural well-being be considered as an integral part of their social and economic well-being. Recognizing the link between culture and development will be pivotal to the success of future policies and the capacity of policy makers to accomplish results through multi-sectoral intervention.

Designed and implemented one decade after the UNESCO's Associated Schools Project and Arts and Crafts Awareness Workshop-classes, this pilot project targeted the most marginalized groups including youth no longer attending school, and addressed issues such as the cultural dimension of development, the importance of cultural identities, broadening participation in cultural life and promoting international cultural cooperation. [N. Richard, 2007]

Through the training activities, it was UNESCO's hope that the beneficiaries of this project would be able to produce and market handmade products which could compete successfully on the global market. The goal was to help them emerge from situations of poverty or extreme poverty by giving them access to materials and networks, thus helping them increase their levels of income. The training activities of this project enabled marginalized groups to learn a creative skill and in this way, contributed to their sense of personal dignity.

2- Linking the Traditional Handicrafts Sector to Tourism Markets:

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade

Organization and the United Nations. ITC's mission is to enable small business export success in developing and transition-economy countries, by providing, with partners, sustainable and inclusive development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions and policymakers.

The 'Inclusive Tourism Program' – one of the ITC's projects- was established to foster the tourism industry's potential to contribute to development and poverty reduction. It aims to reduce the negative impact of tourism and instead enhance linkages between local vulnerable men and women living in and adjacent to tourism destinations and the tourism sector. The program promotes interventions that create inclusive tourism business models, promoting stakeholder partnerships and the inclusion of local producers and service providers into tourism supply chains. It enables local producers and service providers to supply the required goods and services and provides buyers with the skills to develop sustainable partnerships with local producers. The program assesses potential local supply capacity and facilitates access to markets, thus reducing the amount of products and services imported from external suppliers.

In countries attracting a large number of international visitors, the tourism sector offers many opportunities for poor people to sell handicrafts, as tourists spend significant amounts of money on souvenirs and other craft products. Tourism is growing, increasing from a mere 25 million international tourists in 1950 to 925 million in 2008. Forecasts predict that this figure will reach 1.4 billion tourists by 2020. Worldwide, travel and tourism is expected to grow at a level of 4.0% per year over the next ten years, creating an opportunity for every country in the world to be part of this process and to share the benefits [WTTC, 2009].

Handicraft production is an important area of job creation in the informal sector. Subsistence farmers gain additional income from household-related handicraft production and for the urban poor, the

production of handicrafts is an alternative in an environment where employment opportunities are few. In Viet Nam, craftsmen are reported to generate an income which is on average 60% higher than the average income of the rural population [Ngo Duc Anh, 2005].

Key stakeholders involved in tourism and handicrafts can benefit from this training module in several ways:

➤ *Government representatives in developing countries should be interested because:*

- Tourism is a large and growing service sector, which generates foreign exchange;
- Tourism can be used to benefit poor handicraft producers as the number of international tourists increase;
- Strengthening the handicraft sector ensures that tourists choose to buy more locally produced handicraft items rather than imported products;
- Handicraft production can help diversify the tourism product to include home-stays, cultural experiences and facilitate the promotion of responsible tourism principles;
- Experience gained from pilot projects can be replicated by government organizations for large scale impact.

➤ *Development agencies and donors should be interested because:*

- Handicraft production is a labor intensive industry that can support a number of part-time and fulltime employees, both skilled and unskilled;
- Supporting and mediating partnerships between tourism enterprises and handicraft producers is a valuable role for development partners;
- Employment creation in rural areas reduces migration into cities.

➤ *Non-governmental organizations are often interested because:*

- NGOs can assist handicraft producers negotiate supply conditions with local shops;
- The handicraft sector is an important source of employment for both the

urban and the rural poor, thus encouraging the final goals of job creation and poverty reduction;

- When poor communities obtain tangible benefits from handicraft sales in areas where people's livelihoods are dependent on natural resources, they may be more likely to support and value protected areas.

➤ *The private sector is interested in handicraft linkages because:*

- It enables tourism enterprises to source more higher quality products locally, which can in turn increase the attractiveness of their product range;
- Working with local craftsmen is a marketable asset to a souvenir shop that can improve their image. Indeed, many shops increase sales based on social responsibility as a sales argument;
- There will be less criminality as tourists are seen as a source of income for the poor.

➤ *Handicraft businesses find it attractive because:*

- Existing handicraft producers may not have considered the tourism industry as a potential customer and concentrate on lower value products for the local market only;
- Craftsmen can learn how to diversify their product base and add value to their business;
- Craftsmen can learn new skills to enhance the sustainability of their business.

➤ *Community representatives realize that:*

- The handicraft sector is a major contributor to employment in their areas and the development of the tourist market has the potential to increase the communities' revenues;
- Handicraft production provides an opportunity for communities to preserve their natural and cultural heritage and exposes it to international visitors. [ITC,2012]

3- Challenges facing Handicraft Linkages with Tourism:

Handicraft producers are often faced with many challenges that prevent them from making full use of the opportunities provided by the tourism sector, such as:

- *Supply-related challenges:*
 - Limited and/or only traditional product range due to lack of innovation and new designs;
 - Poor product quality due to low skills or missing knowledge about tourist expectations;
 - Local producers find it difficult to compete with imported products in terms of price;
 - Raw material and other inputs are not available or only available at certain times;
 - Producers are not able to invest in machinery/equipment to raise the quality of their products;
 - Producers are dispersed and not well-organized leading to less continuous, slow and unsure supply.
- *Market-related challenges:*
 - Lack of suitable market outlets which are attractive for tourists;
 - Handicraft traders at tourist destinations are not aware of the supply potential in other parts of the country;
 - Different levels of middlemen and intermediary traders increase prices;
 - Mistrust between traders and craft producers prevents from better cooperation;
 - Poorly developed market linkages with retail shops in the main tourist locations;
 - Low integration in holiday packages of tour operators and hotel resorts;
 - Customers often look for useful gift items, rather than traditional souvenirs. . [ITC,2012]

4- Egyptian Traditional Handicrafts:

Egyptian art was –and still is- one of the most revelations of this deep rooted civilization which emerged from the Nile

valley. Traditional crafts boast currently a great attention, for it reflects the authenticity of ancient Egyptian civilization, being an original germ of the Egyptian land, and an area in which Egypt revealed itself remarkably. Egypt is very rich of its inherited cultural heritage, Pharoanic and Islamic heritage, with is represented through the various handmade industries, such as the following handmade crafts:

4.1. Handmade Carpets Industry:

Handmade carpets industry had flourished since the Ayyubid and Mamluk eras in the Levant region, and reached Egypt with the rise of Ottoman Empire. Through the cultural communication, different models and diversified designs for handmade carpets had emerged as the Mamluk, Turkish and Persian ones. Since then, this industry spreads all over Egypt especially in Monoufia, Qalubia, Gharbia as well as other governorates. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.2. Killim Industry:

The multi shapes and colors of killim distinguish this traditional industry in Egypt, through reflecting the nature and simplicity of Egyptian life style. “Fowah” city in Kafr El Sheikh is famous by killim for a long time ago, as being used in mosques since Mohamed Ali Pasha’s era. This craft also spreads in many other cities as Siwa, where killim is made for tents and homes. There are different uses of killim as floor carpets; furniture covers; or for wall decoration by hanging it as a beautiful piece of art. Carpets are produced using wooden or iron looms, through handy inherited techniques. The width and length of Looms differ according to the size of the carpet to be produced. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.3. Khayamia (Patchwork Industry):

Khayamia is an ethnic Egyptian art for using multi colored fabrics in making traditional pavilions. Historically, this art was linked to the fabrication of the Holy Kaaba’s cover decorated with gold and silver threads. The cover used to be produced in Egypt and then transferred to Saudi Arabia in a majestic procession “Mahmal”, until the sixties of the last century. Originally, there

was a special ceremony for the endorsement of new Khayamia craftsman, by examining his work through experienced and older craftsmen. In case of success, the new artisan used to host a banquet as a celebration party. Nowadays, entering this craft is automatically done after acquiring the required techniques. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.4. Trimming:

Trimming craft is based upon shaping colored yarns through nodes, twisting, rewinding, curling, mixing and networking to produce decorative craft items as trinkets for clothing, furniture and curtains using cotton and silk yarns. Artisans in this craft have excelled in diversifying their production of decorative and striped shape trimmings. This craft originate since the Egyptian ancient ages, where trimmings had been utilized for the production of decorative tools for royal vehicles, military cloths, church wears as well as for the decoration of Holy "Kaaba" covers. This craft was affected by the western art, with the spread of European home textiles and furniture in Egypt during the monarchy times. Trimming craft is divided into two branches traditional trimmings for strips and buttons used in clothing, and foreign trimmings for upholstery, pillows, curtains and all the decorations. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.5. Pottery and Porcelain Industry:

Pottery industry is considered to be one of the special industries reflecting the civilization and development of nations. Despite the easiness of making pottery products, yet it needs a highly skillful labor. Pottery industry in Egypt begun since prehistoric ages in Delta and Nile valley. The chronology of history and civilization of Egypt can be measured by the evolution of pottery and its decoration techniques. Pottery industry flourished in "Fatimid" era distinguishing it by the beautiful colors, magnificent printings and decorations. Pottery and porcelain industry evolved more in "Ayyubid" era and the birth of Ayyubid faience "Porcelain," which is best known with its famously fine clay and decorated glass, in addition to the brilliant drawings for

plants, birds and animals. Pottery industry now is concentrated in the areas of "Fustat" in Old Cairo, Fayoum, New Valley and Qena. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.6. Marble Industry:

"Shaq El-Teban" nearby "Maadi" area in Cairo is recognized to be the largest industrial cluster for marble & granite products in Egypt, its location is over thousand acres, and considered the 4th largest marble and granite exporting cluster in the world. Next to the quarries, the cluster includes several workshops and factories specialized in marble sculpture and carving with a wide set of products including basins, fountains as well as flooring tiles. Dressah also in Alexandria is known by producing handmade mosaic, frescos and basins made from residues and waste of marble. Dressah has about 200 workshops specialized in trading and manufacturing the best kinds of handmade mosaics. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.7. Alabaster Industry:

Alabaster industry is one of the unique Egyptian crafts that developed and sustained through the sequential generations since ancient Egyptians. It represents the major source of income for many artisans working mainly in the west of Luxor. Yellow limestone, black granite, basalt, marble and the national marmar are the most prominent materials used in this craft, brought from the mountainous region in "Qurna village" located at the west bank of Luxor, where the artisans live besides the temples and ancient civilization symbols to produce Pharaonic antiques fascinating tourists from different worldwide nations. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.8. Glass Industry:

The antiques found in Delta and Nile Valley refers to the existence of the glass industry in Egypt since thousands of years ago. This industry has sustained and grow due to the strong interest of the Muslims in the middle ages to develop this craft after learning its techniques from different countries including Levant, Iraq and Iran to satisfy their needs of glassware for perfumes, medicines, lighting, and drinking, ... etc. Blown glass is one of the famous kinds of

glass that developed in Roman era, where integration of dyes in the glass took place to produce dark and faint colored products. Then in the Byzantine era, glass vessels made from molds began to emerge. After that, the Arab have developed many tools to be used in this craft such as the holding rod of the vessel's bottom during glassblowing process, and using wood blocks to made the glass in ball shapes before the blowing process. After this period, the Blown glass has witnessed important changes including new Geometric and plant shapes. Stained and Mosaic glass is another fantastic art; mosaic is a foreign word means "Fosefisa" in Arabic language, it refers to a kind of art depend on the collection of stones, ceramics or small glass pieces to produce a unique wonderful products. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.9. Furniture Industry:

Egypt is well-known with its history in the furniture industry started hundreds of years ago, since the Mamluk era. The furniture industry especially the French styles was supported and developed in Egypt as a sort of national rebellion against British occupation. The Egyptians admire to the French classical arts contributed to boosting this industry. Additionally the flow of French and Italian minorities to Egypt played an important role in developing the furniture industry. Egypt is characterized by its skillful artisans and their capabilities in "Quema" art, this kind of art does no longer exist except in Damietta, where young craftsmen are educated through their fathers and grandfathers. Damietta is considered to be one of the oldest regions specialized in furniture industry in Egypt. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.10. Sarsou Wooden Products:

In Upper Egypt and specifically the village of "Hijazh" there is one of the largest and recognized centers for wooden handicrafts and furniture products in Egypt. The products designed in "Hijazh" are characterized by being a mixture from the Egyptian Coptic, Arabic and Islamic traditions formulated in a unique wonderful design. This art spreads with the successive

generations of "Hijazh" artisans, due to the availability of the finest type of wood, such as Asersus, Nabq, Acacia, Tamarix and Orange wood, thus most of "Hijazh" citizens work in this craft producing traditional looms, seats, pallets, doors, and windows. They excel in carving the wooden Sarsou and producing various forms for both local and international customers. The artisans have surpassed also in the sculpture, etching and wood forming, affected by the Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic art. Moreover, they are talented in designing perfect and fantastic models, including paintings, forms of birds and animals, chairs, small tables and candlesticks, in addition to kitchen tools, saucers, and spoons that are made of wood without adding any artificial colors or paints, to be healthy and safety for food catering. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.11. Tally Industry:

Tally is a special form of embroidery made of silver or gold threads. This industry was flourished in the rural areas of Egypt, especially Sohag in Upper Egypt since two centuries ago. The artisan makes one stitch at a time, then cuts the thread off and moves to the next stitch, which gives the design exactly the same pattern and shape when seen either from the back or the front. This technique in embroidery was dated back to pre-Coptic and Islamic era. Women in Upper Egypt especially in Shandawil village are still working collectively in this craft to resurrect the ancestors' heritage. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.12. Handmade Textile Industry:

Akhmim city is recognized to be the land of civilizations, where the buildings indicate its originality and confirms the view of historians that this city was built seven times along the Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Coptic and Islamic history. Akhmim is famous for its amazing handmade textile products since the ancient era as it was named and described as the "Prehistoric Manchester" relative to the British city of Manchester which is well-known for its modern textile industry. The outstanding beautiful products of Akhmim spread worldwide in different

museums. These products are mixture of hand weaving and embroidery, Akhmim is also famed for its natural silk fabrics and distinctive designed cotton bedspreads and bed linens. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.13. Copper and Metal Crafts:

Copper and metal crafts are one of the oldest crafts known since the ancient Egyptians and evolved till reaching its peak in the Islamic and Mamluk era, in which the copper teapots and drinking utensils had flourished. This craft is not limited to household wares, but included also wall plaques decorated with verses from Quraʿn, or historical landmarks. Copper profession is a cultural and artistic one rather than a traditional career, as it represents the Islamic history inherited through some Cairo families and used in manufacturing long swords in addition to engraved and decorated trays. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.14. Jewelry Industry:

Jewelry industry exists in both the Egyptian ancient and modern civilizations, where men and women wear them as adornment to show their richness and beauty. Jewelry designs and shapes were derived from the Egyptian ancient history. The industry had flourished dramatically in the Pharaonic era. Egyptian Jewelry is currently characterized by its Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic designs fabricated from silver, copper and gold pieces. This industry is mostly located in Khan El Khalili and El Hussein areas. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.15. Leather Industry:

Leather industry and tanning are one of the oldest industries known by ancient Egyptians, especially in Pharaonic era. This industry is currently developing by using sculpture and painting through qualified and skillful Egyptian craftsmen. Leather tanning industry is now localized in Magra El Oyoum area, Cairo. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.16. Candles Industry:

Nowadays, candles are not just a tool to illuminate homes, but turned to be a masterpiece in perfection and precision. Candle industry has entered the impressive sculpture world and become an important

element for the decorative arts. Candles are currently mixed with copper pieces and arabesque to reflect many traditional handicrafts beautifying homes, gardens and hotels. [www.imc-egypt.org]

4.17. Natural Cosmetic Products:

Natural cosmetic products had been widely used in Egypt since the Pharaonic era. These products were associated with the idea of immortality and caring for dead bodies. The Pharaonic woman was demonstrating a special interest to show her beauty using many cosmetic tools i.e. kohl sticks as appeared in many temple walls. [www.imc-egypt.org]

5- Egyptian Case Study “Al- Foustat Traditional Crafts’ Center”:

Foustat crafts’ center is affiliated to the Cultural Development Fund, it is considered among the most prominent projects of the ministry of Culture, aiming to revive the glories of a great history, and assert a radiant present. The center provides the artists and craftsmen (approx. 60 craftsmen) with a complete opportunity to practice their creations and assure the artistic value of their products, whether in ceramics, copper, jewelry, carpentry, tents making or glass and plaster. All the products of the center are handmade with designs inspired by ancient Islamic arts.

Cooperation between Foustat traditional crafts center and the ‘Prince Charles’ school for traditional crafts, took place through workshops and courses. The center is also, keen to help new generations of apprentices to hone their skills in this field.

Field Study Results:

The data was collected through (2) different interviews, the first was with Prof. Dr. Fathy abd El Wahab (Chairman of ‘Foustat’ Traditional Crafts’ center), and the second was with the craftsmen at the center. After analyzing the interviews results, the researcher was able to create a SWOT analysis for the center, to highlight the main strength and weak sides at the center, and therefore, they can present solutions in order to achieve the main role of the centre, which is reviving and preserving the Egyptian traditional handicrafts.

SWOT ANALYSIS:

(SWOT analysis of “Al-Foustat Traditional Crafts Center”, Cairo, Egypt)

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong organization for working on the ground • Staff – good technical team with many years of experience • Staff is very committed • Good brand name • Management team has good links with different projects • Number of well-designed collections available • Cooperation with “Prince Charles” school for traditional crafts. • Training courses and educational workshops for the interested individuals • The location of the center is in the heart of old Cairo, where the cultural tourists focus • Variety of traditional products (ceramics, copper, jewelry, carpentry, tents making , glass and plaster) • Large number of craftsmen • Fixed and scheduled working hours • Organizing international exhibitions • Academic Participation in the training process(for the theoretical sessions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No active export marketing of final products • There is no exportation for the products • Poor promotion of the center activities, local authorities do not know much about it. • No suitable information available for the center • Lack of cooperation with travel agencies (specialized in eco-tourism) • It’s not one of the top tourist destination in Cairo • Absence of cooperation between the center and the ministry of Tourism • Shortage of tourist services • There is no variety of foreign visitors , most of the visitors are Egyptians. • Lack of equipments’ maintenance • Shortage of some raw materials • There is no accommodation places for the craftsmen • There is no training courses for children • Small amount of financial incentives (for the craftsmen)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High political interest in promoting the national traditional crafts sector • Good relationships with different donors and stakeholders • There is a special niche market for fine traditional crafts, with the center as the main provider • Growing number of tourists provide market opportunities for traditional products and potential for eco-tourism • The great interest from the UNESCO concerning the conservation of the traditional handicrafts globally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration of the craftsmen • The global economic crisis reduces international demand • The existence of another crafts center in Cairo, ‘Wekalet el Ghoury’. • There are some traditional crafts which likely to become extinct • Inconvenient infrastructure at the surrounded area of the center

Conclusions:

- 1- The international support of the traditional crafts is essential to its survival, and also in maintaining and preserving the Egyptian craft and visual culture.
- 2- The lack of data illustrating the impacts of crafts production on income and employment generation often result in an underestimation of the importance of the crafts sector in reducing poverty.
- 3- The lack of quantitative data demonstrating the feasibility of crafts-related projects further hampers the

- financing of such projects. As such, funding remains a significant problem faced by most national craft associations.
- 4- Strengthening handicraft- tourism linkages is important
- 5- The Egyptian craftsmen have shown how the usage, composition and production of traditional goods have changed to address international market demand for their craft.
- 6- The emergence of the existence of both academic and popular interest role in the



Egyptian traditional handicrafts production.

- 7- There is a shortage related to the role of the Egyptian official authorities, concerning the marketing of the traditional handicrafts.
- 8- There are many obstacles, concerning the exportation regulations of the traditional crafts.
- 9- Al-foustat center has brand name through organizing international exhibitions.
- 10- There are large numbers of academic professionals who participate in the center training courses.

Recommendations:

1. The target populations must have access to training. There must also be a demand for the skills as well as a supply of people who can be trained.
2. Semi- and low- skilled workers must have access to markets where they can sell their goods. Moreover, market access is linked with access to information, transportation facilities and telecommunications.
3. Microfinance facilities must be expanded and existing intermediary national financial institutions must be equipped with adequate refinancing and appropriate risk-sharing programs. The support of central banks and regional and international financing institutions is also extremely important.
4. The Ministry of Culture should create an environment conducive to craft appreciation. It should take the lead in the creation of a national art network and should advocate both inside and outside of the country on behalf of artisans.
5. Cultural Authorities should ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to be heard and that collective discussions on culture do not discriminate, exclude, divide, or deny the participation of any citizen.
6. The ministry of Tourism could also facilitate marketing and venue selection for crafts events. Not only will this help

promote crafts, but it will also give the women and youth added confidence to produce and sell their products at these events.

7. Organizations such as export promotion bureaus, small industries, microfinance institutions, also need to be established
8. Increasing the maintenance procedures of the center equipments.
9. There must be training courses for the children (from age 7 years), to help in transferring the skills of the handicrafts through different generations.
10. Increasing the financial incentives for the craftsmen in the center
11. The Egyptian official authorities must facilitate all the exportation regulations concerning the traditional crafts.
12. Official promotional plan must be designed and implemented for the international marketing of the Egyptian traditional handicrafts.

References:

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