

Report
Capacity Building Workshop for Rural Women on “Sustainable and Effective Methods in Embroidery”
Akkar al Atika, Akkar, Lebanon, 4-5 August 2021

Summary

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized a capacity-building workshop for rural women in Akkar al Atika on 04-05 August 2021 titled “Sustainable and Effective Methods in Embroidery and Knitting”. The workshop aimed at supporting the outcomes of the “Regional Initiative for Promoting Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region (REGEND)” project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), in conducting theoretical and practical capacity building workshops to improve livelihoods, achieve economic benefits, social inclusion and gender equality in Arab rural communities, especially marginalized groups, by addressing the problem of energy poverty, water scarcity, climate change and other natural resource challenges through the application of small-scale renewable energy technologies suitable for productive activities and private enterprise development.

The workshop enabled and empowered the participants; rural women of Akkar El Atika to acquire theoretical, technical and practical skills in embroidery, knitting, and design thinking in textile design, and encouraged them to establish new sustainable small businesses.

Quantitative and qualitative observations show evidence of success, and a significant impact on the attendees. Recommendations include more workshops and training of trainer programs.

This narrative report presents a summary of the implemented capacity building workshop, the major points resulting from the analysis of the evaluation forms, and the recommendations received from the participants.

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I. INTRODUCTION


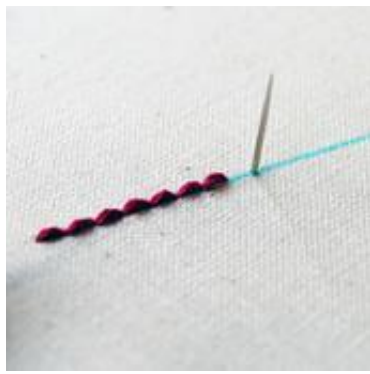



1. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized a capacity-building workshop for rural women in Akkar al Atika on 04-05 August 2021 titled “Sustainable and Effective Methods in Embroidery”.
2. The aim of the workshop is to provide women in Akkar Al Atika with basic embroidery skills, as well as some design thinking training, with the hope of empowering them and offering them enough tools and ideas to start a small sustainable business.
3. This capacity-building is within the framework of the “Regional Initiative for Promoting Small-Scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region (REGEND)”, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). REGEND aims to improve the livelihood, economic benefits, social inclusion and gender equality of Arab rural communities particularly marginalized groups, by addressing energy access, water scarcity and vulnerability, climate change and other natural resources challenges in three targeted countries; Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia.
4. The workshop was conducted in two days. The first day was dedicated for learning and practicing several types of stitches, while the second day was dedicated for putting into practice the learnt skills, where each attendee did her own small project. Section II provides a summary of the presentations and the main topics of discussions held during the workshop. Section III reviews the organization of work, including information regarding the workshop agenda, participants and a summary of the participants evaluation outcome. The full documentation of the workshop is available at the following address:


<https://www.unescwa.org/events/sustainable-and-effective-methods-embroidery-and-weaving>

II. MAIN TOPICS OF DISCUSSIONS

5. As part of the introduction, the instructors talked about the possibilities of embroidery in product creation, in the establishment of sustainable businesses, and in artistic expression. They discussed the kind of products that can be executed and sold using hand embroidery (for example: shawls, clothes, table runners, artistic gifts, fabric jewelry, etc.).
6. Instructors also addressed the business possibilities and specifics of such production, such as the pricing of handmade work and the promotion of such work on social media.
7. The instructors also explained and listed the types of businesses and people who would be interested in purchasing such work, such as:
 - a. Designers in Lebanon and abroad
 - b. Companies that sell crafts
 - c. private customers who would like to gift customized clothing.
 - d. Restaurants and institutions who would like to stitch their brands on their bags and uniforms.
8. They introduced participants to embroidery tools, with a focus on their optimal technical specifications. They also taught them five types of embroidery stitches, namely the below:



Number	Stitch	Description	Image
1	Running Stitch	A stitch where the needle moves in and out of the fabric in a straight line, creating a series of interrupted dashes.	
2	Back Stitch	A stitch where the needle constantly moves backwards, eventually creating a continuous line. This stitch is also used for beading on fabric.	
3	Satin Stitch	A stitch where the needle creates superimposed lines to fill a given space with threads.	
4	Chain Stitch	A stitch where interlocked loops are linked through the movement of the needle, one inside the other, creating a continuous chain that works for lines as well as curves.	
5	French Knot	A stitch where the thread wraps around the needle, creating small, controlled dots that protuberate from the fabric.	

9. Finally, the two trainers discussed design thinking in embroidery, with a focus on:
- Stitch choices: The instructors discussed the design value of each stitch, explained the feeling and meaning that each stitch projects, and gave participants a basic idea of when to use each stitch.
 - Color theory: The instructors discussed the color wheel. They went over the principles of warm and cold colors, as well as the importance of contrasting colors.
 - Background choice: The instructors went over the various possibilities for a hand-embroidered background (fabric, paper, drilled metal, nylon bags, foliage, etc.).
 - Motif drawing: The instructors taught participants how to research a motif online then to trace it from the screen –which makes up a tiny light table.
- 
10. On the 2nd day, the attendees engaged in a small project where they applied all the above skills. It was a very active day, with a lot of brainstorming and all the attendees were busy finishing their projects.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

11. The capacity building workshop took place over two days, starting at 9:30 am and finishing at 1 pm daily. The workshop took place in Akkar al Atika: 4-5 August, 2021 at the hall of the cooperatives' building.

B. OPENING

12. The workshop was formally opened by Mr. Omar Kaaki, Research Assistant, CCNRSC, who welcomed the attendees, and described REGEND's capacity building program in Lebanon, and the long-term impact that the program is seeking. He also explained how the capacity building program fits into REGEND's integrated approach in empowering women, creating job opportunities, through improving access to energy.

C. PARTICIPANTS

13. The audience were mostly women with a very diverse age base; the youngest participant was perhaps six years old while the oldest must have been in her late seventies. Most of the women, however, were between 20 and 50 years old.
14. Few men from the village attended the workshop but they did not participate in the training activities.
15. In terms of numbers, the first day included 45 participants while the second included 56. The growing number of attendances owes to the high interest in the topic, and the widespread word of mouth about the workshop in the village.

D. DETAILS OF THE PRESENTERS

16. The workshop was given by the following experts:
- Yasmine Dabbous, Consultant, ESCWA.
 - Nour Tannir, Consultant, ESCWA.

E. EVALUATION

17. The impact of the workshop was felt both quantitatively and qualitatively, through numbers as well as anecdotal evidence.

18. Quantitative evidence of impact:

a. The high number of women: who attended as well as the increase of this number during the progression of the workshop.

- i. The training launched with 46 participants but women kept coming, especially on the second day, when the news evidently spread about the content of the workshop. Around 56 women attended on the second day

b. The number of finalized works: In such workshops, it is expected that at least half of the women would not participate in the final project or that they would not complete their project. The reason relates to the significant time that embroidery work takes, the patience and dedication it requires, the skills it necessitates. However, the number of finished projects in Akkar al Atika was as follows:

- i. 51 projects were completed > 89.4 percent of the participants finished their projects.



c. The demographic variety of the participants: Reflecting the mission of the program, participants in the workshop were almost exclusively women. However, they varied in terms of age (from a girl who's not more than seven years old to a woman in her 70s). It is clear that women of all constituencies in Akkar understand and appreciate the empowering possibilities of crafts.

19. Qualitative evidence of impact:

a. The technical quality of the finalized works: The first evidence of the success of the training comes of course from the output produced during the training. Not only did the latter surpass the expectations in terms of quantity, but also in terms of quality. Several women excelled in applying the stitches they learned during the workshop, and exhibited evident joy about the result. "This, for me, is a great achievement," is a sentence echoed by many participants in the village. Several women said they uncovered a talent they didn't know they had.



b. The significance of some topics chosen by some women: As part of the design thinking lecture, trainers encouraged women to go for conceptual projects, or projects with stories, because they have more meaning and therefore, they are more attractive from a commercial perspective. Several women, young and old, accordingly went for significant topics that showed serious reflection. Below are samples of such topics, transformed into embroidered projects:

- i. Women as the real heads of the household, behind the scene
- ii. Motherhood and pregnancy

- iii. The honey of Akkar
 - iv. The hills of Akkar
 - v. The Beirut explosion
 - vi. COVID19 and the masks it imposed
- c. A deep understanding of design thinking across ages: Design thinking in embroidery involves making the right decision about the types of stitches, color and yarn to use to evoke a certain meaning or a certain emotion. On day two, and before women engaged in their projects, the instructors gave a lecture about design thinking, which resonated well with the participants. Many conversations happened about design thinking as the projects unfolded in Akkar al Atika. Here are few examples:
- i. A young woman chose the back stitch to create honey combs. She rightly said that the back stitch accentuates the edges that she's trying to paint with embroidery.
 - ii. A middle-aged woman also chose edgy stitches to stitch a piece in remembrance of the August 4 explosion in Beirut.
 - iii. An eleven-year-old girl understood that the French knots would be the best stitch to embellish her sketch of a tree with flowers. She was, indeed, quite right.
- d. Empowerment and inspiration: It is still early to evaluate the long-term impact of this workshop (e.g. whether any women established a business) but anecdotal evidence witnessed during the workshop suggests that most participants were indeed inspired and empowered. Here are few examples:
- i. A 12-year-old girl did two embroidery works at home on the first day of the workshop, then came back and engaged in a third project on the second day. She proudly showed us her works, done at home. Her mother told us that she asked for yarn.
 - ii. A young woman said that her father forced her to study math so she could become a math instructor. She said she hated the major and ended up a married housewife. The young woman said that the workshop inspired her to work in embroidery from home, something she could do while taking care of her bridal house.



20. An evaluation questionnaire was distributed to the participants to assess the relevance, and effectiveness, and impact of the workshop. In Akkar al Atika, the feedback received from the respondents was very positive with 100% of them agreeing that the overall quality of the workshop met their expectations and that the sessions were successful in improving their knowledge in the tackled topics, and that the content was clear, well-structured, and presented in an interactive and engaging manner. Similarly, 100% of the respondents agreed that the logistics of the workshop were handled in a suitable manner, and there was enough time allocated for the workshop and for each session.

21. Below are some of the suggestions, remarks, and needs expressed by the participants in their evaluation forms:

- a. Praising REGEND's capacity building program, and the sustainable impact it had on their skills and capacities.
- b. Due to the very useful and interesting content of the workshop, more versions of it, and further training was requested by several attendees, to be able to better harness and practice the techniques.
- c. Several attendees as well addressed the need for capacity building in other topics such English language, information technology, cooking.

22. There are several techniques, further relevant stitches, other crafts (such as crochet and weaving) and in-depth design thinking techniques that could be taught, to ensure sustainable impact. Furthermore, it is also recommended to have a training of trainers (ToT) workshop, where the women with the best skills, identified during the workshop, are selected to participate in an advanced training program. Exposed to in-depth technical, design and entrepreneurial skills, they will be able to eventually oversee and train other women in the village. Such training would ensure long-term independence and sustainability and perhaps help launch an embroidery workshop in Akkar.

ANNEX I: AGENDA

اليوم الأول	
تسجيل الحضور	09:30 - 09:00
الجلسة الافتتاحية	10:00 - 09:30
كلمات ترحيبية:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • السيدة راضية سداوي، رئيسة قسم الطاقة، مجموعة تغيّر المناخ واستدامة الموارد الطبيعية، الإسكوا -- تقديم مشروع "REGEND" وأهدافه وأنشطته وأهداف سلسلة التدريبات ومحتواها • التعريف بالمحاضرة 	
الجلسة الأولى: التطريز كوسيلة مستدامة نحو معيشة أفضل	10:45 - 10:00
السيدة ياسمين دبّوس، مستشارة، الإسكوا	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • مقدمة وتعريف بالذات • تعريف التطريز <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ الأدوات المستخدمة <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ خيطان التطريز ومواصفاتها التقنية ▪ ابر التطريز ومواصفاتها التقنية ○ أمثلة عن ما يمكن فعله من خلال هذه الأدوات <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ صور لمصنوعات حرفية وأعمال فنية وألبسة وألعاب واكسسوار وغيرها • كيفية استخدام هذه الحرف لتطوير مهنة <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ من هي الأطراف المهتمة بهذا النوع من المصنوعات ○ كيفية الوصول إلى هذه الأطراف ○ معلومات عامة وإحصائيات حول دور الحرف في تمكين المرأة مادياً 	
أسئلة وأجوبة	
الجلسة الثانية: أساليب التطريز	11:30 - 10:45
السيدة ياسمين دبّوس، مستشارة، الإسكوا	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • القطب 1 و 2: قطبة التسريح أو + running stitch قطبة الشك أو back stitch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ الإمكانية الإبداعية هذه القطب <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ صور وأمثلة ○ كيفية اتقانها ○ كيفية الإبداع فيها ○ تطبيق 	
أسئلة وأجوبة	
استراحة قهوة	11:45 - 11:30
الجلسة الثالثة: أساليب التطريز	12:30 - 11:45
السيدة ياسمين دبّوس، مستشارة، الإسكوا	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • القطب 3 و 4 و 5 : قطبة اللفقة + satin stitch + قطبة الجدلة أو chain stitch + القطبة الكروية أو French knot ○ الإمكانية الإبداعية هذه القطب ▪ صور وأمثلة ○ كيفية إتقانها ○ كيفية الإبداع فيها ○ تطبيق <p>أسئلة وأجوبة</p>	
<p>ختام اليوم الأول من الدورة التدريبية</p>	13:00-12:30
اليوم الثاني	
<p>تسجيل الحضور</p>	09:30 - 09:00
<p>الجلسة الأولى: مهارات التصميم والقرارات الإبداعية السيدة ياسمين دبّوس، مستشارة، الإسكوا</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • تذكير عام بالتقنيات الواردة خلال الورشة • معلومات عامة حول مهارات التصميم والقرارات الإبداعية ○ إختيار نوعية الخيط ○ تنسيق الألوان ○ إختيار القطب ○ إختيار الموضوع وطريقة تنفيذه ○ إختيار الخلفية <p>أسئلة وأجوبة</p>	10:00- 09:30
<p>الجلسة الثانية: تمرين تطبيقي السيدة ياسمين دبّوس، مستشارة، الإسكوا</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • العمل الفردي على التمرين التطبيقي بمساعدة السيدة دبوس <p>أسئلة وأجوبة</p>	11:30 - 10:00
<p>استراحة قهوة</p>	11:45 - 11:30
<p>الجلسة الثالثة: تمرين تطبيقي السيدة ياسمين دبّوس، مستشارة، الإسكوا</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • العمل الفردي على التمرين التطبيقي بمساعدة السيدة دبوس • تقييم سريع للأعمال <p>أسئلة وأجوبة</p>	12:30 - 11:45
<p>ختام الدورة التدريبية توزيع شهادات المشاركة صورة جماعية</p>	13:00-12:30

ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------------|
| 1. | Sabah Ahmad Al Aakk | 53. | Najwa Abbas |
| 2. | Nahed Ahmad | 54. | Jinan Taleb |
| 3. | Elham Al Ayoubi | 55. | Hanaa Taleb |
| 4. | Fatima Batteekh | 56. | Soha Tlayje |
| 5. | Khadija Mostafa Mostafa | | |
| 6. | Saja Othman | | |
| 7. | Jana Othman | | |
| 8. | Maha Taleb | | |
| 9. | Faten Mohammad Al Nazer | | |
| 10. | Ahlam Mohammad Al Shaar | | |
| 11. | Tania Diab | | |
| 12. | Nahida Mohammad Kaddour | | |
| 13. | Mona Darwish Yusuf | | |
| 14. | Fatima Hussein Tlayje | | |
| 15. | Amina Mohammad Al Ahmad | | |
| 16. | Suzi Shaar | | |
| 17. | Sanaa Ali | | |
| 18. | Ghinwa Tlayje | | |
| 19. | Aisha Hasan | | |
| 20. | Kamar Shaar | | |
| 21. | Fatima Ahmad Khodr | | |
| 22. | Aisha Khatib | | |
| 23. | Lana Khatib | | |
| 24. | Mariam Khatib | | |
| 25. | Ayat Khatib | | |
| 26. | Siham Ahmad Mohammad | | |
| 27. | Christine Abdallah Nazer | | |
| 28. | Aisha Obeid | | |
| 29. | Serene Obeid | | |
| 30. | Iman Haidar | | |
| 31. | Wafaa Saleh | | |
| 32. | Asmaa Haidar | | |
| 33. | Leen Obeid | | |
| 34. | Marwa Nazer | | |
| 35. | Abir Nazer | | |
| 36. | Nahed Zoabi | | |
| 37. | Hadiyya Zoabi | | |
| 38. | Yusra Khaled | | |
| 39. | Saada Saada | | |
| 40. | Mariam Saada | | |
| 41. | Fatima Khaled | | |
| 42. | Abir Ali | | |
| 43. | Jamila Tlayje | | |
| 44. | Tania Daher | | |
| 45. | Nadine Tlayje | | |
| 46. | Safaa Tlayje | | |
| 47. | Wiam Tlayje | | |
| 48. | Serene Tlayje | | |
| 49. | Reem Nazer | | |
| 50. | Ghadeer Ali | | |
| 51. | Ritaj Ali | | |
| 52. | Nour Abbas | | |