

Service Learning Conference
"Current Status and Future Prospects of Service Learning"
Bethlehem, Palestine, May, 2023

Workshop

The Experience of the Faculty of Business Administration in the field of Service Learning

Content:

Abstracts of the three proposed interventions (15 minutes each)

1) Discussion session on Social Businesses and the role of the BU Yunus Social Business Center - The leading person on this is Mr. Issa Ghrayeb.

The Principle of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation course offered by the business department at Bethlehem University allowed students to combine their academic learning objectives with their community service. The goal was to meet community needs while allowing students to use their academic knowledge and abilities in real-world situations. In close collaboration with The Yunus Social Business Centre at Bethlehem University (YSBC-BU) Bethlehem University Students participated in significant service projects that addressed the needs of the community while also developing their empathy, cultural awareness, and social responsibility in order to prepare them to be engaged and active members of their communities.

One of the many social enterprises that the (YSBC-BBI) has supported with the aid of business students is L'arche Boutique Hotel. Students helped draft and evaluate the L'Arche Boutique Hotel's business plan, which aims to provide them with employment opportunities and increase their skills, self-esteem, and independence and discover their abilities and interests.

2) Discussion session on the incubation process and its effect on the community and the economic development of Palestine - The person in charge is Mr. Firas Bali.

The Bethlehem Business Incubator (BBI), established in 2016 under the umbrella of the Business Administration Faculty at Bethlehem University, aims to inspire and support Palestinian youth and entrepreneurs who either have an idea to start a business or want to grow an existing business. With experience working with over 100 startups and MSMEs, BBI has had a significant socio-economic impact on the community in the southern part of the West Bank, with a special focus on Bethlehem, by providing a supportive environment for Palestinian entrepreneurs and small businesses.

By offering a range of services, resources, and support, BBI has helped more than 140 entrepreneurs grow and create jobs in the last three years, resulting in a positive economic impact on their communities. Through partnerships with local and international organizations, BBI has also fostered collaboration and knowledge-sharing, creating valuable networking opportunities for entrepreneurs. These partnerships have helped to strengthen the local entrepreneurship ecosystem, making it more resilient and better equipped to weather economic challenges.

Five successful start-ups to showcase through posters during the symposium.

1- Galassia:

Galassia is a unique startup that touches the ancient culture modernly. Two artists express love and peace by making delicate mosaics and silver jewelry. The jewelry is shaped manually during all stages, starting from the design and drawing, passing through stone cutting and shaping, and finally, the stage of silver making and shaping.

2- Maan lil Hayat Boutique Hotel:

Ma'an Lil-Hayat Boutique Hotel is the first hotel of its kind to be staffed by persons with and without intellectual disabilities. The objective is to provide top-class high-quality accommodation for local and international guests in the Bethlehem district. The hotel focuses on getting a sustainable income for the continuation of our Ma'an Lil-Hayat community for people with intellectual disabilities.

3- Muffaker:

Muffaker offers a comprehensive interactive learning system covering all concepts of learning designed by a team of specialists in the fields of education, rehabilitation, IT, and management. As a social enterprise, Muffaker won several national and international titles and has proven its effectiveness by developing children's cognition and vocabulary content. The app is available in three languages: Arabic, English, and Hebrew, with a parent follow-up system and is suitable for work on all smart devices.

4- The Investor:

The Investor: The Investor is a women-led startup that's a "one-stop-shop" for property owners, clients, and other relevant stakeholders, providing first-class real estate advice and services throughout the West Bank.

5- Cycling Palestine

Cycling Palestine: is a start-up that aims to raise participation levels of the Palestinian community - the cyclists and potential cyclists- by spreading the cycling culture to make Palestine a bicycle-friendly country. Their goal is to create cycling destination venues to support and further enable the development of socially and family-inclusive cycling via recreational and competitive cycling.

3) Discussion session on the role of our academic programs of higher education (MICAD and MGAPS) in creating change agents in Palestine.

Palestine, one of the world's most troubled yet fascinating areas, has long been engaged in the effort to achieve statehood and build its own identity in the mosaic of the Middle East.

The process of developing the multi-faceted Palestinian environment has been supported throughout the years by several international organizations, either governmental, multilateral, or established by civil society. Their contribution still plays a major role in improving the Palestinian context's economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Nevertheless, the primary actors of development must be the ones who belong to this land: **The Palestinian people.**

MICAD and MGPAS are multidisciplinary graduate programs whose mission is to form highly qualified officers who will contribute to strengthening the civil society and the public sector, indeed the most valuable heritage of any country.

MICAD program aims at providing its participants with two key elements for sustainable development: specific knowledge and ethical awareness. With the solid support of prestigious European Universities, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and Palestinian institutions, **MICAD** looks forward to creating new opportunities for all those committed to development, justice and peace.

MGPAS program aims to upgrade civil servants' skills already working for the Public Sector in Palestine. The program's overall objectives include the improvement of accountability, the enhancement of transparency in the delivery of public services and the management of public funds. As per the **MICAD program, MGPAS** strengthens the knowledge of Palestine people who want to be the change-makers in their own Country, fostering Sustainable Development.

Name(s): Issa Ghrayeb, Firas Bali & Luigi Bisceglia

Affiliation: Bethlehem University