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CREACT4MED NEWSLETTER

CReative Entrepreneurs ACTing FOR
the future of the MEDiterranean



CREACT  **MED**

CREATIVE MEDITERRANEAN



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*Coordinator of the
CREACT4MED Project*

Foreword

Welcome to the latest edition of the CREAT4MED newsletter. Over the past six months, we have remained committed to our mission of supporting, promoting, and amplifying the potential and growth of the cultural and creative industries and innovative entrepreneurs in the Southern Mediterranean.

Since March this year, we have successfully launched 23 subgranted projects in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia who are now over halfway through their implementation. The Southern Mediterranean is a region steeped in cultural diversity and history, and its creative sectors are pivotal drivers of its progress. These industries encompass music, cinema, fashion, design, and more, and they extend beyond mere entertainment. They are wellsprings of innovation, employment opportunities, and cross-cultural understanding. Our 23 projects represent a mere fraction of the region's boundless potential.

Our ongoing training and advocacy activities continue to foster connections with myriad stakeholders in the region, strengthening ties and promoting the cultural and creative ecosystem. The launch of the Med CCI Hub and the second EU-Southern Mediterranean Regional Dialogue have further catalyzed collaboration across the region, drawing more creative minds into our community.

In this newsletter, we present our most recent contributions to the cultural and creative ecosystem in the Southern Mediterranean. Here, you will also discover the notable achievements of the CREAT4MED-funded projects as they progress along their entrepreneurial journeys. By promoting and amplifying their work, and by facilitating collaboration, we unlock the potential of these industries to drive regional prosperity.

We extend our gratitude to all who are part of CREAT4MED, for your support and engagement with the creative vision of this vibrant region.

About CREAT4MED

CREACT4MED is an EU-funded project which aims to strengthen businesses with the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in the Southern Mediterranean.

It seeks to support entrepreneurs and start-ups, create jobs, and foster sustainable economic growth, with a particular focus on young people and women.

Project full name: CReative Entrepreneurs ACTing FOR the future MEDiterranean

Grant agreement number: ENI/2019/412-505

Budget: €2,220,675 (90% funded by the EU Commission)

Timeline: 1st March 2020 – 31st August 2024

CREACT4MED Goals:

- Boost CCI businesses and entrepreneurship in the Southern Mediterranean, increasing the capacity of CCI to attract investment, create jobs, and foster inclusive economic growth.
- Empower current and potential entrepreneurs, in particular young people and women, to start or grow CCI businesses through tailored training and financing opportunities.
- Establish a regional CCI hub to bring together actors from North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, strengthening networking, exchanges, and cooperation in the sector across the Mediterranean.

CREACT4MED is led by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA) and implemented by a consortium of partners from across Europe and North Africa.

News and updates

CREACT4MED's activities are split into 4 main pillars:

- **Mapping** the CCI ecosystem in target countries
 - **Training** aspiring CCI entrepreneurs
 - **Sub-granting** business incubators, MSMEs, and Civil Society Organisations
 - **Engagement and Advocacy** on the importance and social impact of CCI
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Mapping

Since the publication of the CREAT4MED [Country Reports](#) covering Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia, the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association has published 8 infographics to compliment the key findings of the studies.

The infographics, covering Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia provide a visual summary and detail country-specific data on economic and social aspects of the cultural and creative ecosystem. This includes CCI's contribution to imports and exports, the level of entrepreneurial activity, women and youth empowerment, and societal perspectives of entrepreneurs and their activity. The infographics are interactive and can be viewed at the [CREACT4MED website here](#).



Tunisia
Type: Infographics



Palestine
Type: Infographics



Morocco
Type: Infographics



Lebanon
Type: Infographics



Israel
Type: Infographics



Jordan
Type: Infographics



Egypt
Type: Infographics



Algeria
Type: Infographics

The CREAT4MED project continues to update the CCI Data Observatory to give an accurate picture of the cultural and creative industry landscape in the Southern Mediterranean.

A second element to the mapping pillar is the call for nominations of **Best Practices**. The first call was launched in February 2022 with its relaunch in August 2023. The call closed at the end of October. In total, 95 applications have been received: 29 from Tunisia, 19 from Egypt, 16 from Morocco, 12 from Jordan, 11 from Lebanon, 6 from Palestine, and 1 from outside the CREAT4MED target countries.

We will now proceed to the evaluation phase to identify key figures, initiatives, cultural infrastructures, opportunities, and threats in each of the territories, with a view to uncovering and raising awareness of unexploited opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment and developing relevant support initiatives and policy recommendations. The best examples in each target country will be awarded a prize at the project's Final Conference in 2024 with the top practices being published on the CREAT4MED website.



Training

Training Academy

CREACT4MED is committed to strengthening the cultural and creative industries through enhancing the knowledge and skills of the regions budding entrepreneurs and creative minds. To that end, the second cycle of the CREAT4MED Training Academy was launched in September 2023 after a successful first cycle in the summer of 2022. The CREAT4MED Training Academy aims to equip young, aspiring entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to make their business idea a success.

334 applications were received to participate in the second cycle, of which 320 were accepted into the programme. The programme tackled 8 modules over 5 sessions, each 2 hours long:

- Module 1 - CCI Sector Insights
- Module 2 - Business Basics
- Module 3 - Ideation

Modules 1-3 were led by Ouafa Belgacem, CEO and Co-founder of Culture Funding Watch.

- Module 4 - Concept Design & Prototyping, led by Nadia Mansour, Associate Research Fellow at the World Economic Forum
- Module 5 - Company Formation, led by Sara Hammoud, Business Development Consultant
- Module 6 - Marketing, led by Neda Kharoub, Business Consultant and Co-founder of TTI Innovation
- Module 7 - Pitching Your Company, led by Abdelsamee Abouelhamd, Capacity Building and Project Management Consultant

The cycle ran 5 live sessions in Arabic across September and October. The cycle officially closes on the 11th November when trainees will have completed all the online modules.

Management of Creativity Summer School



In addition to the online training academy, the project hosted 26 entrepreneurs from 22 funded projects in Barcelona to take part in the **Management of Creativity Summer School**. The week-long intensive course was organized by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association in collaboration with StartUB!, the Business Incubator at the University of Barcelona.



The school featured trainings, workshops and panel sessions on a range of entrepreneurship and creativity skills, on themes such as Story Telling for Technology, Digital Marketing, and Financing for Entrepreneurs. This experience not only benefited the entrepreneurs as they work as part of CREAT4MED, but also in the future growth of their businesses beyond the project's timeline.

Within the framework of the Summer School, we held the second **Regional Alumni Network Event, "Shores of Innovation: Access to Finance for Mediterranean Creative Ventures"**. The session brought together experts in finance and players who act as intermediaries between finance and entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative industries.



The session was moderated by Prof. Jaime Argerich, Professor of Entrepreneurship at the University of Barcelona.

Three expert speakers joined the conversation, each representing a unique facet of the CCI funding landscape: Ouafa Belgacem (online), CEO of Culture Funding Watch, a network of experts in resource mobilisation who are passionate about supporting cultural initiatives in the global south, Jonàs Sala, Co-founder of Verkami, a cultural and creative crowdfunding platform based in Spain, and Jordi Pardo, President of Cercle de Cultura, an entity which provides the space for dialogue and debate in favour of culture and its greater presence and recognition in Catalan social life.

In total, 9 workshops were held as well as 1-1 coaching sessions with 31 experts and mentors providing tailored advice to each business.

Altogether, the Summer School engaged 88 actors across the cultural and creative industries in Barcelona and held a networking session with over 30 participants. Moreover, so far since its conclusion 9 collaboration agreements have been signed between the CREAT4MED entrepreneurs.



Wafae Zaoui, Co-founder and CEO of CRÉ Artisanat in her 1-1 mentoring session



Morgan Cooper, Founder and CEO of Handmade Palestine and Hiba Ghiati, Founder and CEO of H-Kids celebrating their collaboration agreement.

You can read the full report detailing all the sessions, speakers, and visits to cultural sites [here](#).

Also watch the wrap-up video at our [YouTube Channel](#).



“Cross-collaboration in the cultural creative sector fosters diverse connections and shared experiences, strengthening the fabric of social capital and enriching our collective narrative. The cultural creative industry bridges economic value and personal expression, nurturing well-being through the transformative power of science, art and imagination.”

- Prof. Ayadi,
President of EMEA and Director of the CREAT4MED project

Sub-granting

The CREAT4MED funded projects are well over halfway through their implementation. Between December and May, a kickoff event was held in each country, with the final visit to Palestine taking place on the 24th and 25th May 2023. The entrepreneurs and CREAT4MED Technical Assistance team were hosted and supported by the Business Support Organization selected under the project in Palestine, ASALA - Palestinian Businesswomen's Association, based in Ramallah.

As with previous visits, CREAT4MED Project Coordinator María Ruiz de Cossío (Senior Project Officer at Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association - EMEA), explained the CREAT4MED roadmap outlining the project activities under the subgrant activity. Following that, the participants heard from Mr Samer Makhoul of Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque, a cinema and cultural NGO in Ramallah, on fundraising for entrepreneurs focusing on individual donors and considering the aspects of the Palestinian diaspora, and Ms Rajaa Rantisi, Asala's Executive Director, gave an inspirational talk.



The day ended with a networking cocktail where the entrepreneurs could meet other actors in the cultural and creative industries in Palestine. The second day featured a tour of Inash Al Usra, a Palestinian voluntary organization established in 1965 offering services and programs to Palestinian women and other marginalised sectors of the community as a means of empowerment, and one-to-one meetings with each entrepreneur.



Visits for Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia were detailed in our previous newsletter. You can read about all the country visits in our report [here](#).

Subgrantee Spotlight

Incubators

4 of the CREAT4MED incubators have finished their programmes: TTi (Jordan), Nucleus Ventures (Lebanon), LaStartUpStation (Morocco), and Minassa INCO-Tunisie (Tunisia).

Each incubator has launched a 6-month acceleration programme. Each one started with a call for applications, then a 1-1 needs assessment, and finally trainings and workshops to enhance creative business management skills.

TTi in Jordan shortlisted 12 entrepreneurs to take part in the incubation programme were 30 training and networking days took place. 7 of these start-ups remain operational and financially stable.

In Morocco, LaStartUpStation received 131 applications and 12 were selected to join a 3-day bootcamp where they were prepared to pitch to a jury of experts. 8 were selected to join the incubation programme as well as the 4 CREAT4MED entrepreneurs.

Nucleus Ventures, based in Beirut, Lebanon, had 40 entrepreneurs complete their bootcamp with 7 sessions on ideation, product development, user experience, value proposition, and pitching skills. Their training totalled 53 hours of mentorship as well as the successful incubation of the 4 CREAT4MED start-ups.

Turning to Tunisia, Minassa selected 8 start-ups to join their internationalisation programme where the entrepreneurs received training on fundraising and drawing up an internationalisation plan. Several of these start-ups were also invited to attend an event to exhibit their start-ups in Marseille.

Entrepreneurs

In the fashion and design sector...

[Almah](#) - a project of the [Egyptian Clothing Bank](#), based out of Cairo, featured in *Vogue Arabia* the May/June edition and won first place in the National Initiative For Smart Green Project in Minya Governorate. Now they are running in the national finals, where the winners will be eligible for showcasing at COP 28.



In the performing arts...

[Puppets World for the Development of Children](#) based in Jordan has secured the esteemed Best Script Award at the First Arab Puppet Theater 2023, a testament to their dedication to storytelling excellence, and is currently launching the ECO Puppet Theater, the first of its kind in the Middle East, symbolizing their dedication to environmental consciousness among children.

[Teatro Al Saeed](#) based in el-Minya, Upper Egypt, have launched 5 workshops as part of their Performing Arts Incubation project. These workshops ranged from Arts Management to Theater Writing, Acting, Directing and Scenography.



Turning to community building and B2B platforms...

[Help Mariage](#) have officially opened their first office in Casablanca, Morocco, to enhance their impact in linking creative providers, such as musicians and photographers, with potential customers.

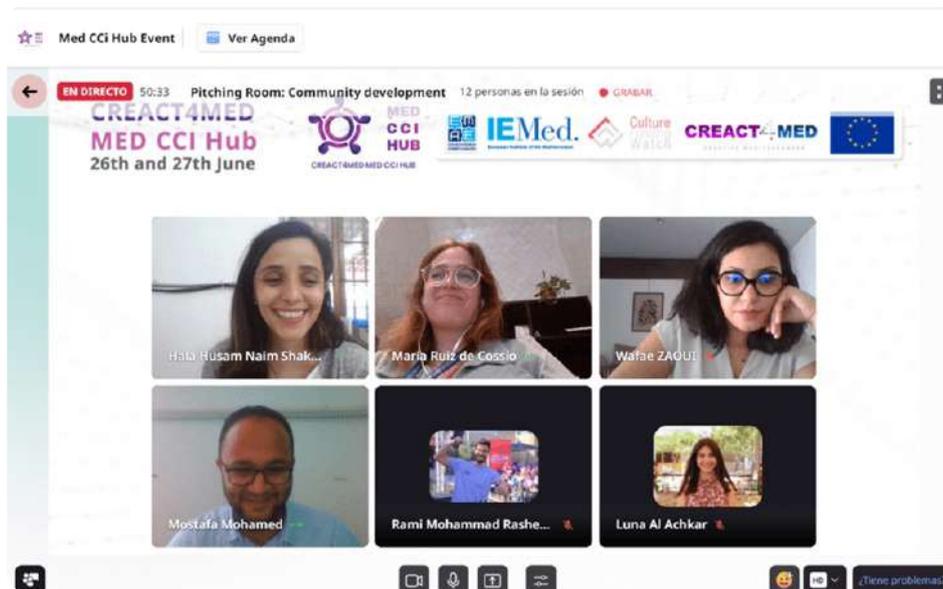
The 23 funded projects will all have finished their implementation by March 2024.



Engagement and Advocacy

To strengthen the cultural and creative industries’ ecosystem, CREAT4MED’s final pillar is engagement and advocacy where we raise awareness of the importance, value creation and social impact of CCI, and advocate for this to be reflected in public policy. With this in mind, the project leads two initiatives: the Mediterranean CCI Hub events and the **EU-Southern Mediterranean Regional Dialogues**, bringing together entrepreneurs, experts in the cultural and creative industries, and other players from around the Southern Mediterranean to build partnerships, share knowledge, and promote cooperation.

The first **Med CCI Hub** event was held on the 26th and 27th June this year, in collaboration with Culture Funding Watch, Tunisia. The event hosted various panel sessions discussing Building Partnerships in the Cultural and Creative Industries, roundtable discussions covering, International Funding Opportunities, Marketing Strategies, and Networking and Cooperation. Over 70 participants registered to the event.



Within the framework of the MED CCI Hub event, CREATMED held its first **Mainstreaming Seminar**, organised by project partner BusinessMed. The event was titled ***Towards a Sustainable Creative and Cultural Mediterranean Industry: the Implication of the Private Sector for a Sustainable CCI and marked the beginning of a series of three regional events that will address significant topics related to CCI.***

The event, held in Arabic, was attended by over 70 participants from 6 countries around the Southern Mediterranean. The participants were split into breakout rooms depending on their expertise:

- Art and Culture, moderated by Dr. Araa Al Jaramani, an expert in the Art and Culture sectors within the Arab region.
- Media, facilitated by Mr. Baker Mohamed Abd Al-Haq, an expert in the field of Media and Communication sciences and,
- Design, guided by Mrs. Amina Abdellatif, a regional expert in the Design sector

Together, the participants developed 7 policy recommendations on how to improve the resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative industries in the Southern Mediterranean. Read about them [here](#).

The next Med CCI Hub event will be held during the next CREAT4MED Annual Conference, planned for January 2024.



Keeping the momentum and building the CCI community, the project hosted the second **EU - Southern Mediterranean Regional Dialogue** during the Summer School in Barcelona. The in-person event allowed for the entrepreneurs involved in the CREAT4MED project to connect with key players in the European CCI sphere. To ensure dialogue and interaction, the event focused on Identifying & Addressing Challenges in the CCI:

- Digital Transformation & Technologies, led by Mercé Boldú, Head of Cultural and Creative Industries Market, Eurecat - Technology Centre of Catalonia (Spain);
- Marketing & Branding/ Market Competition & Access to Distribution Channels, led by Elizabeth Pavlitsa, Products and Services Director, JOIST & Institute for Entrepreneurship Development (Greece);
- Internationalization Strategies, Exports & Shipping Issues, led by CREAT4MED Coordinator, Maria Ruiz de Cossío (Spain);
- Talent Acquisition and Retention: Skilled Workforce/Job Creation, led by Ramon Sanmiquel Pérez, Educational Specialist, Service of Programs and Projects for the Promotion of Vocational Education, EMPRENFP-INNOVAFP program (Spain).



Within the same framework, the dialogue included a roundtable discussion moderated by Gemma Aubarell, Director of the Culture, Gender and Civil Society Department, European Institute of the Mediterranean, with Mireia Estrada, Jivar Creation & Society, Mercedes Giovinazzo of Interarts Foundation, and Houari Bouchenak of Jiser Reflexions Mediterrànies as speakers, who discussed funding for the sector, mobility, and platforms for sharing knowledge.

The event was organised by project partner the European Institute for the Mediterranean.

Finally, the CREAT4MED platform continues to grow. Through the forum, members are exchanging news and events relevant to the industry in the Southern Mediterranean. We are now 591 members and 166 listed entities globally. Join the conversation by subscribing to the platform [here at our website](#).

CREACT4MED Connections

The CREAT4MED Team is constantly searching for collaborations and synergies with other projects, initiatives and communities. Over the last 6 months, the project has been featured in 5 events.

In April 2023, Prof. Rym Ayadi, President of EMEA and Director of the CREAT4MED project, hosted the Plenary Session **“Creativity & Brain Health in the Future of Work”** along with Theo Edmonds, Culture Futurist & Directing Co-founder of the Imaginator Academy at the From Work to Wonder event, organised by the University of Colorado Denver’s Imaginator Academy and the Brain Capital Alliance, in collaboration with the Cities Summit of the Americas.

Drawing into the summer, Project Coordinator, Maria Ruiz Cossío, attended the first capitalisation event of the ENICBC MED STAND Up! Programme, led by MedWaves, on 5th July in Barcelona. STAND Up! addresses the pressing need for a transition to an environmentally and socially responsible circular model in the textile sector, a traditional key industry in the Mediterranean with an undoubtful cross-border nature. Maria Ruiz presented CREAT4MED in the roundtable discussion **Barriers and Opportunities for Textile and Fashion Eco-Innovators**, relaying the firsthand issues found by entrepreneurs working in textiles such as GIOIA, making footwear in Jordan, or Meera Adnan, a contemporary fashion label in Gaza, Palestine, or Reform Studio, the lifestyle brand converting plastic waste in luxury accessories.



Maria Ruiz also attended the **European Culture & Creativity Days: Digital Culture And Digital Humanism** on the 25th October. Virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence technologies are all key to the growth and development of the cultural and creative industries meaning the event was an excellent opportunity to connect with the cultural and creative ecosystem in Europe, highlighting the aims of CREAT4MED in boosting inclusive and sustainable creative entrepreneurship in the Southern Mediterranean.

Moving the spotlight to financial inclusion and gender equality, the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association held the webinar: **“Women’s Economic and Financial Empowerment in the Mediterranean and Africa: What has been achieved and what remains to be done?”**. Dr. Yeganeh



Forouheshfar, Researcher at EMEA, presented key research relating to women’s economic participation in the cultural and creative industries. Moderated by Prof. Ayadi, Director of the CREAT4MED project, the event brought several distinguished speakers from UN-ESCWA, Alfanar Venture Philanthropy, and Impulse4Women and others, to the discussion to give their views on how to increase financial empowerment of women in the Southern Mediterranean and Africa. Read the [full report here](#) and head to the [EMEA YouTube](#) to catch up on the discussion.

Finally, on the 24th and 25th September 2023, CREAT4MED entrepreneurs, Almah, a project of the Egyptian Clothing Bank, and Duma Toys, based in Egypt, attended the 8th Annual Festival of the Creative MENA Summit in Cairo.



Manal Saleh, Founder and CEO, of Almah, a project of the Egyptian Clothing Bank, participated as a panellist in the session Sustainable Fashion and Reinventing the Wheel.

She was joined by Norhan El Sakkout, owner of sustainable fashion brand Saqoutte, and podcaster Lamaan El Gammal.

She explained that textile waste is an increasing problem in Egypt with grave consequences. Creative solutions, however, can be found in fashion where materials are recycled and upcycled.

It was mentioned that tackling logistical and financial challenges for emerging sustainable fashion brands, whilst challenging, is becoming easier through incubation and mentorship programmes, such as the CREAT4MED project. [Read more here.](#)

Project Coordinator



EMEA

The Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, EMEA, is a Barcelona-based regional think-tank that serves as a leading independent and innovative policy research institution; a forum for debate on the political and socio-economic reforms in the Mediterranean and Africa; and a promoter of actions and initiatives that fulfil objectives of sustainability, inclusiveness, regional integration and prosperity.

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