

## CREACT4MED Mapping: Best Practices

Application Number: BP\_49

1. Basic info*	
Email Address	hebronhrc@gmail.com
Title of the Best Practice	Hebron Rehabilitation Committee - Revitalization of Hebron Old Town
Name of the Applicant	Emad Hamdan
Is the BP a registered legal entity?	Yes, I will send the certificate of registration by email
Website	www.hrc.ps
Country	Palestine;
Subsector	Arts and culture (cultural heritage, gastronomy, visual arts, performing arts, leisure and recreation, crafts);
Category	a) Cultural and creative entrepreneurship;c) Local and regional cooperation;
Year of establishment and duration	8/12/1996
Target group of the BP	<p>The beneficiaries of this initiative are the residents of the old town, totaling 11,646 individuals. The number of males is 6,021, and the number of females is 5,625. There are 5,925 children (under 18 years old), and the number of youth (aged 18-29) is 2,188. Additionally, there are 517 elderly individuals.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are 198 people with disabilities in the Old Town . It is expected that the number of beneficiaries from the project will reach 23,322 residents by the year 2045 after the restoration and occupancy of the remaining apartments, based on the comprehensive plan for the Old Town.</p>
1. Best Practice Characteristics	
Problem Statement	<p>The Old Town of Hebron, a significant historic center in Palestine, has maintained its cultural and economic importance over time. However, since the 1980s, it has experienced a decline due to various political circumstances, leading to social issues such as poverty and unemployment. Changes in social and economic lifestyles, aligned with modern trends, have resulted in a significant portion of the population leaving the city. Despite these challenges, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) is actively working to revitalize the old town and promote comprehensive and sustainable development.</p>
Mission Statement & Value proposition	<p>To safeguard Hebron's cultural and historical heritage and counter challenges faced by the Old Town, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) was established in 1996 through a presidential decree. The HRC aims to achieve various objectives, including preserving cultural heritage, revitalizing the Old Town through building restoration and infrastructure projects, improving living conditions for residents, promoting economic activity, and resisting external influences that could disrupt the urban continuity. The focus is on rehabilitating historical buildings, encouraging residents to return, boosting local and international tourism, and enhancing economic, social, and cultural aspects within the Old Town. The overarching goal is to ensure the preservation and vibrancy of Hebron's historical center.</p>
Results and growth	<p>The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) is dedicated to the renovation and sustainable development of the Old Town of Hebron. The initiative focuses on adapting residential buildings to modern family needs, such as privacy and essential facilities, by transforming them into individual apartments.</p> <p>The idea focuses on the criterion of population count to measure the impact of its activities. Statistical studies indicate that the population of the Old</p>

	<p>Town in 1950 was 10,000 inhabitants. However, this number declined significantly due to geopolitical issues, reaching 400 inhabitants in 1996. Through the process of restoration, reuse of buildings, and improving living conditions, the initiative has managed to increase the population to 11,646 by renovating 3000 apartments and providing housing for the residents. It is expected that the number of beneficiaries from the project will reach 23,322 residents by the year 2045 after the restoration and occupancy of the remaining apartments, based on the comprehensive plan for the Old Town. The initiative also repurposes old buildings to provide necessary services like schools and healthcare clinics, improving living conditions for residents. It focuses on the quality of basic public services(Health and Education), resulting in the establishment of five health clinics and the restoration of 12 schools. It has also created two schools by reusing old buildings, providing approximately 80% of these services as per the comprehensive plan's requirements.</p> <p>The HRC promotes social and economic development by revitalizing markets, restoring commercial shops, and encouraging local businesses. Economic revitalization has positively impacted unemployment by creating job opportunities. Another objective is to increase the number of open commercial shops. It has successfully restored 400 commercial shops and encouraged their owners to reopen them, till today 390 of the restored shops are open. In addition, 12 shops were opened through initiatives of the local community. The initiative supports community initiatives, particularly those led by women, to empower them and promote gender equality. Preserving traditional crafts and ensuring their sustainability, along with infrastructure development, service facilities, recreational spaces, cultural promotion, and a commitment to a sustainable environment, are integral components of the comprehensive plan for sustainable development, extending to the year 2045.</p>
<p>Strategy to be financially sustainable</p>	<p>The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) relies on financial mobilization for project implementation. The Palestinian National Authority is a primary funder, and the committee establishes connections with Arab and international channels to secure additional funding. The HRC prioritizes projects based on various studies, presenting them to local and international entities. Successfully obtaining funding, the HRC has renovated 2,500 apartments, accommodating 11,646 citizens and revitalizing economic activity in Old Town markets. The initiative has improved the environment and infrastructure, ensuring essential services like health, education, and cultural amenities. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 11, the HRC provides secure housing, suitable infrastructure, and preserves cultural heritage while fostering green spaces. The impact is evident in the return of residents, the transformation of abandoned spaces, and positive changes in economic and living conditions within the Old Town.</p>

<p><b>2. Impact (please complete at least 3 of the 6 sub-sections)</b></p>	
<p>Economic significance</p>	<p>Hebron, recognized as the economic capital of Palestine, owes much of its economic standing to the old town, historically a thriving commercial center across various industries and traditional crafts. Over time, political circumstances led to the closure of many markets and shops. Through the HRC's Economic Revitalization initiatives, numerous shops have been restored, and owners encouraged to reopen, contributing to the revival of</p>

	<p>economic activity. The HRC's focus on improving market infrastructure and supporting traditional craftsmen, such as glassblowers, potters, leatherworkers, and embroiderers, has preserved heritage and created job opportunities. Local community initiatives, particularly those led by women, have further improved income levels and living conditions through establishments like guesthouses, cafes, libraries, and craft workshops. The HRC has strategically harnessed tourism potential by rehabilitating landmarks, creating employment opportunities, and establishing a comprehensive tourist route with necessary services. The initiative has successfully restored 400 commercial shops, 390 shops were opened after restoration. Almost 780 jobs have been created.</p>
<p>Replicability and upscaling</p>	<p>The HRC's experience offers a versatile application for historical city centers, applicable at local, regional, and international levels. It provides a comprehensive approach to managing heritage sites, showcasing a successful model for the adaptive reuse of old buildings to suit modern needs while preserving their authenticity and historical significance. The lessons drawn from the HRC's experience extend beyond historical city centers, offering practical solutions for challenges in heritage site management, including the adaptation of buildings and property ownership issues. These methodologies are not confined to historical contexts but can be extended to individual buildings and various architectural styles. Furthermore, the strategies employed to address climate change and mitigate its impact are adaptable to a range of sites, irrespective of their historical or modern nature.</p> <p>We can consider the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability through the adaptive reuse of historical buildings which guarantees the preservation of these heritage buildings for present and future generations. In addition to the use of traditional materials and eco-friendly techniques in restoration.</li> <li>• Socio-economic development through the inhabitation of historical buildings and the economic revitalization of the old town.</li> <li>• Community participation, which is evident in all stages of the work, from planning to implementation</li> </ul>
<p>Employment generation</p>	<p>The HRC's maintenance and restoration projects generate diverse employment opportunities across various fields, from construction workers to engineers and technicians. Prioritizing the employment of Hebron's Old Town residents, these projects involve tasks like site cleaning, structural and architectural restoration, and various crafts. A unique model of job creation has emerged, with nearly every household having at least one family member engaged in these activities. Specialized roles related to tender preparation and oversight, requiring skills in documentation, surveying, design, and engineering supervision, have absorbed recent graduates, especially from the Old Town and Hebron City. These projects have also provided employment for artisans in handcrafts and light industries, emphasizing the use of local materials and collaboration with local craftsmen. The HRC's commitment extends to capacity building, as seen in the establishment of the Spanish Academy for Vocational Training, preparing young professionals in restoration and handicrafts and increasing their employment prospects. These initiatives directly create job opportunities and encourage private sector investment, leading to increased employment for both men and women. They have also sparked local community initiatives, leveraging the economic and tourism potential of the Old Town to enhance income levels.</p>

<p>Inclusiveness</p>	<p>The HRC adopts a participatory approach in the planning, preservation, and revitalization processes of the Old Town, emphasizing the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Local community engagement is considered crucial and is facilitated through the establishment of a local committee within the comprehensive plan. Comprising both men and women from the Old Town, this committee actively participates in all plan phases, expressing their needs and suggestions for development. The community's involvement has sparked various initiatives, including projects in traditional crafts, food production, and home agriculture, contributing to improved income levels, women's empowerment, an integrated environment, and cultural heritage preservation. This participatory model has strengthened relationships among residents, enhanced social integration, and united efforts in job market engagement and heritage preservation, promoting sustainability. Additionally, the HRC prioritizes partnerships with the public sector, collaborating with governmental institutions on decision-making and identifying developmental needs aligning with the city. Private partnerships with regional and international cultural heritage preservation institutions, as well as collaborations with universities and research organizations, contribute to training and capacity-building programs. The initiative generates an average of 500 job opportunities annually, divided between direct and indirect job opportunities, including employers, managers, legal workers, laborers, contractors, craftsmen, traders, shuttle and truck drivers...etc. This accumulates three million working days including all work of HRC from 1996 till today.</p>
<p>Social impact</p>	<p>The HRC is dedicated to revitalizing the Old Town and enhancing the living conditions of its residents through comprehensive and sustainable development efforts across vital sectors. With a central focus on social development, the initiative aims to provide a safe and dignified life for the population. This involves renovating and adapting old buildings to meet modern housing needs, ensuring essential services such as health clinics and schools, and establishing social services like counseling and community awareness centers. Recent initiatives include the opening of a nursery to create a secure environment for children while mothers are at work. The committee also focuses on cultural centers, public squares, children's playgrounds, and comprehensive infrastructure rehabilitation in the old town, including water, electricity, sewage systems, and street improvements. Organizing diverse activities and events, from medical days to educational workshops and recreational activities, targets various community groups, particularly children. The HRC has successfully shifted the local community's perspective, fostering awareness of the importance of preserving old buildings and the benefits of investing in cultural heritage for secure housing, economic development, and tourism opportunities. These initiatives support residents in living with dignity, improving income levels, and creating employment opportunities for both men and women, with a special focus on supporting women's initiatives in various projects and traditional crafts.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>The HRC prioritizes the integration of modern technology in the management of the Old Town. Utilizing the Geographic Information System (GIS), they establish a smart database encompassing all project elements, facilitating efficient data access and management. Modern methods are employed for data collection, including the documentation of historical buildings through scanning and imaging techniques. Advanced technology, such as sensor-equipped devices, is used to monitor moisture and cracks in old buildings, enabling proactive risk management. Innovative solutions</p>

	<p>are devised for addressing the complex issue of multiple property ownership, where buildings may have rights belonging to numerous owners. The HRC introduces mechanisms like renting properties from owners in exchange for restoration, granting priority in use, or renting to third parties in need of housing. Innovation extends to adapting historical buildings for modern use, considering their historical communal nature. The HRC employs unique mechanisms to attract residents and newcomers, offering incentives like free health insurance and reasonable costs for electricity and water.</p>
<p>Environmental sustainability</p>	<p>The HRC is committed to fostering a favorable environmental atmosphere in the Old Town, focusing on infrastructure rehabilitation and enhancing green spaces and public areas. Neglected spaces are transformed into accessible public gardens, offering safe environments for various community members. Emphasizing the preservation of natural vegetation, including unique trees and plants, the committee conducts environmental awareness activities to engage the local community in practices contributing to environmental conservation. In a move towards a zero-carbon footprint, the HRC prioritizes reusing old buildings, utilizing traditional, locally-sourced materials like stone and lime, avoiding the environmental impact of modern construction. This eco-friendly approach ensures the well-being of occupants, mitigates climate change, and upholds the right to a clean and healthy environment. Traditional crafts and light industries within the Old Town are promoted, aligning with environmentally friendly practices. The HRC incorporates solar energy for electricity generation, enhancing efficiency and providing clean energy. Moreover, they implement natural alternatives for heating and cooling systems, drawing on historical architectural and environmental practices like courtyards, wind-catchers, and air vents, contributing to reduced carbon footprints in these processes.</p>
<p><b>3. Challenges and lessons learned</b></p>	
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>The HRC encountered several challenges, initially lacking comparable institutions for reference, leading them to create their own systems and specialized mechanisms tailored to the political and architectural context of the old town. A shortage of experts in restoration and historic building preservation was addressed through comprehensive staff training, including international programs and on-site training by experts. Financial constraints prompted the HRC to seek funding from Arab and international sources. The complex issue of property ownership fragmentation in the old town led to the creation of a unique mechanism, involving renting properties from owners in exchange for restoration. The Israeli occupation posed additional challenges, including settlement outposts and closures hindering access to buildings. Mitigation measures included prioritizing restoration around settlement outposts, establishing alternative entrances, using traditional transportation, and creating a legal unit to monitor and document Israeli violations while raising local community awareness on dealing with them.</p>
<p>Lessons learned</p>	<p>The HRC's experience provides valuable insights into the revitalization of old buildings, showcasing the adaptability to modern living needs while preserving their heritage values. The methodology employed, particularly in</p>

	<p>repurposing old buildings for modern families, offers lessons for other initiatives seeking a balance between contemporary requirements and architectural preservation. Notably, the HRC's approach involves subdividing large courtyards into independent apartments with basic services, adhering to international charters to maintain authenticity and urban coherence. The HRC also emphasizes environmental protection and natural resource conservation by leveraging old buildings as alternatives to modern construction, reducing carbon emissions and environmental impact. Additionally, the HRC addresses challenges related to multiple property ownership, providing solutions that prioritize returning buildings to their owners while maintaining the social structure in the Old Town. The administrative system adopted by the HRC stands as a model for similar projects.</p>
<p><b>4. Demographic Information</b></p>	
<p>Is the organization led by a woman?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>What age is the lead of the organization?</p>	<p>Over 35 years old</p>