

CREACT4MED Mapping: Best Practices

Application Number: BP_112

1. Basic info*	
Email Address	samer@alkasaba.org
Title of the Best Practice	Alkasaba
Name of the Applicant	Samer Makhoulf
Is the BP a registered legal entity?	Yes, since 2003
Website	http://www.alkasaba.org
Country	Palestine
Subsector	Arts and culture
Category	Cultural and creative entrepreneurship
Year of establishment and duration	1974 - ongoing
Target group of the BP	Alkasaba targets different beneficiaries, primarily artists and the art sector. This includes drama students, professional actors, filmmakers, distributors, young people, and the public. Alkasaba offers various types of activities, each benefiting a specific group. Additionally, the two cinema halls enable Alkasaba to have a cinema school.
1. Best Practice Characteristics	
Problem Statement	The main problem is to revive and ignite Palestinian culture and build a vibrant cultural scene. Alkasaba tries to promote arts and culture nationally and internationally. The ongoing conflict doesn't help, and things are not progressing the way Alkasaba hopes due to the war.
Mission Statement & Value proposition	Our mission is to open strategies and serve as a pioneer for artistic expression and cultural development, enriching the community. Alkasaba is committed to producing and promoting authentic Palestinian narratives through theatre and cinema. We aim to foster and revive a creative ecosystem that empowers Palestinian artists and brings cultural experiences to marginalized and underserved communities.
Results and growth	<p>Over the past 4 years, our most significant growth has been the establishment of the first cultural incubator. This incubator serves as a hub that promotes creative industries and targets entrepreneurs in the artistic and cultural fields. Our main goal for this program is to increase the quality and quantity of cultural activities and achieve financial sustainability for artists, create new markets, and connect producers with investors, aiming to make artists and cultural workers somewhat independent of foreign funding.</p> <p>Since its opening, we have targeted different initiatives and organizations. Our approach has been to provide them with professional training designed by experts from the Netherlands, specialized in designing cultural incubators. Additionally, we offer seed funding to help implement creative ideas and provide mentorship to these projects.</p> <p>One of the problems in Palestine is that much of the cultural offerings are centralized in urban centres, leaving people in more marginalized areas unable to access them. Alkasaba serves as a solution to this, creating new audiences for cultural activities.</p> <p>Another important initiative is the major program called "Empowerment Through Drama and Arts." With this program, we target students from</p>

	<p>several universities. Each semester, we provide them with specialized skills and values to create social projects.</p> <p>These individuals, who have become agents of social change, are able to help us revive the cultural scene in these communities and create new audiences. As a result, they become new customers for cultural activities.</p>
Strategy to be financially sustainable	<p>We have been working on building and creating a funding sustainability plan for Alkasaba. This plan depends on diversifying revenue streams from different sources, including institutional funding, individual funding, and a focus on increasing our funding through ticket sales. This self-generated funding covers about 20-30% of our costs.</p> <p>Despite the political situation, which has slowed down and paralyzed progress, the model is sustainable, and the goal is to slowly create stability. Additionally, some time ago, Alkasaba tried to develop a group of individual donors who were willing to contribute. However, these donors stopped contributing for a while due to the political situation, changing their donation preferences since the war started.</p>

2. Impact (please complete at least 3 of the 6 sub-sections)

Economic significance	<p>We can consider participating in international festivals as a means of exporting Palestinian culture. In the last few years, we have been awarded many significant awards. Last year, we won numerous major awards in Baghdad, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia, and Palestine. These awards represent our own exports of culture. Sometimes, they also serve as revenue streams when we participate in other theatre festivals, earning financial support.</p> <p>In addition, we've created an economic cycle in Alkasaba, where many people, mainly actors, artists, vendors, and others, support cultural projects that are part of the incubator. Firstly, when we generate income, we support the artists, who in turn produce and benefit themselves, generating cultural proposals and attracting new customers.</p> <p>The annual budget before the pandemic was around 500.000 and 600.000 dollars, nowadays the budget has reduced to 350.000 dollars.</p>
Replicability and upscaling	<p>Our plan is to expand the work of cultural incubators by opening two new spaces in the southern part of the West Bank, offering a variety of creative opportunities. This will enable artists to use fully equipped spaces close to residents. Another reason for creating these spaces is to be closer to communities and thereby identify new experiences, talents, and customers more easily. This will increase the number of beneficiaries for the incubators. Through these spaces, we aim to tap into new markets and available productions.</p> <p>In terms of scalability, Alkasaba aims to increase the number of beneficiaries, mostly youth and children. We also want to collaborate with more organizations and communities to identify this program. However, most of these organizations focus only on sports and other activities, while Alkasaba aims to implement cultural offerings.</p>
Employment generation	<p>In terms of employment generation, Alkasaba has 8 staff members on its payroll, along with many freelancers collaborating on a part-time basis as actors, trainers, and in other roles.</p>

	Additionally, the support and seed funding provided by Alkasaba to its artists, helping them develop their business plans, generates income and indirect employment in the long term.
Inclusiveness	<p>Our approach is to maintain a balance and be culturally sensitive. In all our work and programs, we ensure that at least 40% to 50% of our beneficiaries are women. We primarily work with young people, both in terms of audience and artists. Alkasaba has developed a set of values that are not only practiced but also promoted in our productions. We strive to raise awareness of equality, especially in rural and marginalized areas and among women in conservative societies.</p> <p>Alkasaba has also developed a mobile theatre to bring theatre to more disadvantaged areas, furthering our commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. Alkasaba is implemented in urban and rural areas.</p>
Social impact	We promote all these values because we believe that they contribute significantly to the development process in our society, and art is one of the key factors and tools that promote community development. Equality, poverty reduction, inclusion, and diversity are major concerns for us, and we strive to promote them not only in cultural practices but in all aspects of our work. These values are genuinely integrated into Alkasaba's mission and operations.
Innovation	
Environmental sustainability	Alkasaba is highly committed to environmental sustainability. All materials used in our productions are environmentally friendly, with a focus on using recycled materials whenever possible to minimize our environmental impact. We actively avoid any practices that could harm the environment or contribute to climate change. Additionally, Alkasaba has installed solar panels to generate its own electricity, providing a sustainable energy source. This commitment to sustainability is a key aspect of our work, and we strive to promote these practices, particularly among young people and children.
3. Challenges and lessons learned	
Challenges	One of the major ongoing challenges we face is the political situation and the unpredictable changes in Palestine. The recent war in Gaza has led to a significant decrease in funding from donors and individuals, posing a challenge for Alkasaba. In response, we are working to develop programs that can adapt to similar situations in the future.
Lessons learned	One of the lessons learned is the importance of diversifying revenue sources to avoid collapse during a crisis. Relying on only one source increases the risk significantly. Another lesson is the experience gained in dealing with crises. We are now able to adapt our programs and activities to such situations, not only in response but also by actively providing psychological support for families and their children through interactive art performances.
4. Demographic Information	
Is the organization led by a woman?	Yes, she is the head of the board.
What age is the lead of the organization?	Over 35