



PUSH



Promoting dialogue and cultural Understanding of our Shared Heritage

PUSH Regional Experts Workshop April 10-11, 2008 Jerusalem

Executive Summary



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PUSH is funded by the European Union Partnership for Peace Programme

With additional support provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs





Regional Experts Workshop Agenda

Thursday, April 10th, 2008

20:30 Group Dinner

21:30 Short Meeting for PUSH Project Managers and Neil Silberman

Friday, April 11th, 2008

8:00 Registration and Coffee

8:30 Welcome and Pilot Site Selection Presentation

Presented by Professor Michael Turner, Bezalel Academy Project Manager

Open Experts Discussion: Chaired by Professor Michael Turner

9:30 Session I: Pilot Site Brochures

Presented by Professor Yusuf Natsheh, Al Quds University Project Manager

Open Experts Discussion: Chaired by Professor Yusuf Natsheh

10:30 Session II: Pilot Site Manuals

Presented by Mr. Khaled Nassar, JSSD Project Manager

Open Experts Discussion: Chaired by Mr. Khaled Nassar

11:30 Closing Statements

Neil Silberman, Ename Center Coordinator for International Projects

12:00 End of Workshop

12:15 Jordanian Team Departs for Border

Executive Summary: PUSH Regional Experts Workshop April 11, 2008

Overview:

The purpose of the Regional Experts Workshop was to present the PUSH project's new publication Our Shared Heritage: An Anthology of the Region's Shared Natural and Cultural Heritage to the regional experts that have been involved in PUSH since its inception. The unique publication, released in a single Arabic, Hebrew and English format, provides a comprehensive review of the large variety of shared natural and cultural heritage in Jordan, the Palestinian Territories and Israel.



Furthermore, PUSH presented the six pilot sites selected to be the focus of PUSH activities during the coming year. Throughout the workshop, PUSH teams engaged in a discussion with the numerous Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian experts, gathered from a wide range of professional fields, concerning the PUSH project's upcoming publication of site brochures and site manuals.

The PUSH project's Regional Experts Workshop was held at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design's Department of Architecture building in central Jerusalem on April 11th, 2008. Upon arrival guests received copies of the new PUSH book in addition to other supplementary materials.

Welcome and Pilot Site Selection Presentation:

Presented by Professor Michael Turner, Bezalel Academy Project Manager

Professor Turner presented the six pilot sites that PUSH will focus on in the second half of its project. The six sites, selected collaboratively by the three teams, include the "Great Cities" of Sabastia, Pella and Beit She'an, which share a single common narrative; and Gesher, Artas and the Jordan River at Bakoura site of which host multiple narratives of great importance to the peoples of the region.



Open Experts Discussion: Comments and Reflections on the Selected Pilot Sites:

- The most important mission of the PUSH project is to enrich and broaden the understanding of heritage. Regarding the sites selected, "Great Cities," these are dead cities which are connected indirectly to a living community. These cities are mainly of archaeological interest. On the other hand, the second group of sites selected has to do with water, with life. We need to move away from abstract ideas to the tangible: water and stone. We need to move from the abstract history, where the clash between narratives is inevitable, to tangible things which are understandable to every man. Heritage by its nature is about conflict and the

shaping of a distinguishable identity, so there is a need to deal with heritage in a completely new way.

- The understanding and learning of our shared heritage is only the first step, and a very important step, in a long process. We need to be aware of the differences between the parties regarding the depth of knowledge of ones' heritage.
- It is necessary to build a manual. The sites in Jordan participating in the project will set a pioneering example of management, conservation and education.
- There needs to be an agreement between all the parties as to the interpretation of the sites.
- The biggest challenge of the PUSH project is to reach out to the local communities and to the younger generation, to work from the grassroots.
- We need to look for additional ways to reach the local communities and to distribute the ideas of PUSH.
- The aim of this project is to work with the communities and not the exchange of views between the projects' members.

Discussion Summary by Professor Michael Turner:

- The importance of looking at the big picture alongside the daily tasks awaits us.
- In other parts of the world, heritage is connected to the day-to-day life of the people, the sites are still in use by the local communities. In Jordan there is a separation between the heritage sites- the water and stone- and the local communities. We should think of ways to use the heritage sites to empower the community, ways in which the local community will benefit from the site.
- What is the aim of the PUSH project? PUSH can be used as a tool to raise awareness to sustainability, to conservation, to heritage. It is an educational tool. In the past, people knew how to use the natural resources around them in a sustainable way, we can use the examples of the past.
- The importance of the project being a multi-lateral project: People living near the sites are not aware of their broader context and of the regional connection between the sites.
- We need to be brave and deal with the political implications of the sites.



Session I: Pilot Site Brochures:

Presented by Dr. Yusuf Natsheh, Al Quds University Project Manager

Dr. Natsheh presented numerous examples of brochures currently available at local sites. He presented an overview of the information that would be helpful to the public when visiting the site. The wide range of options available to the PUSH project allows creativity in developing our brochures. The needs of the communities vary between and within the partner countries. The needs of the communities should be an integral part in the development of each of PUSH's publications, including the brochures.

Open Experts Discussion:

- What is the purpose of the brochures? Who are they addressed to? Are they addressed to schools? To hotels in Jerusalem? Are the brochures to be distributed at the sites?
- "Keep it simple": Too much information on the brochures is not good. We should narrow down the amount of information on the brochures and instead put references to additional sources of information like the website.
- The brochures need to raise questions and not to provide answers.
- It is worthwhile to have a provocative question on the brochures.
- Set up an information platform instead of a brochure.
- Questions regarding the content of the brochures: Is this a brochure that will present the PUSH project? Is this a brochure that will introduce the idea of shared heritage? Is this a brochure that will give information on a specific site?
- The situation of each partner country is very different. For example, on the Palestinian side there is a serious lack of basic information and information signs at sites.
- Who is the target group of the brochure? What kind of language is it to be written in (e.g. scientific, informative, for school children)? It is necessary to define the target group.
- The brochures should be about the project, not about the sites, they should promote the goal of increasing understanding of our shared heritage using the site and its linkages to the other pilot sites as an example.
- Maybe we need to make only one brochure in all the sites presenting the idea of PUSH.



- In Palestinian areas, site infrastructure is not as developed as in Israel and Jordan- we need to be aware of this problem.
- The brochures should deal with the concept of different narratives and shared heritage.
- The problem with the existing brochures is that the information they contain is at times biased, this is why it is important to give accurate historical and archeological information and move away from subjective narratives.
- PUSH needs to push the development of sites in Palestine.
- There is a lot of work to be done on the Palestinian sites. The needs vary at every site: increasing cooperation with the local communities, rehabilitating the site, raising public awareness, encouraging youth involvement and dialogue.
- Sebastia is included on the list of natural parks managed by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority as it is located in Area C, for this reason it hasn't been developed. PUSH should raise the issue of the responsibility of the sites with the appropriate authorities.
- There is a problem of accessibility between the sites. We need to try and make the sites accessible to as many people as possible.

Discussion Summary by Dr. Yusuf Natsheh:

There is a clear need for project teams to further define the audience. There is a strong inclination towards focusing awareness building efforts on school children. There is a consensus that the brochures should very specifically emphasize the shared heritage of each site in addition to presenting accurate historical data and basic information on the site. Furthermore, these brochures should be a starting place for public inquiry into the concept of shared heritage – they should raise questions and provide information on where to find additional information. A balance is needed between giving basic information on the sites and the ideas of PUSH, as sites are at various degrees of development.

Session II: Pilot Site Manuals:

Presented by Mr. Khaled Nassar, JSSD Project Manager

Dr. Nasser presented an overview of the content of a management manual and the manual's objectives. He emphasized the importance of building a flexible manual relevant to site managers from different backgrounds, as some sites are managed by the community and some by governmental organizations, and for sites at various stages of development.

Open Experts Discussion:

- It is not realistic for PUSH to succeed in such a big mission. Instead, maybe PUSH could take an example from sites that already have a management program that has been developed after years of research, like Beit She'an, and adjust it to the different sites.
- The project needs to address the issue of how communities in conflict deal with shared heritage. "The Management of Shared" – a platform for international shared management.
- The manual does not address the general public but the professional management. PUSH doesn't have any authority over the sites but it can influence decision makers.
- The manual should be not the management of the site but the management of shared; giving the format developed in the PUSH process over the first 15 months.
- The strength of this project is not in its' ability to shape a general management program but in the ability to draw up a manual dealing with the shared heritage of specific sites.
- The manual needs to appeal to local councils/NGOs in the different sites in Palestine.
- The manual ought to complete the ideas expressed in the brochures and carry the message of shared heritage.
- Who is the target group? To whom are we addressing our message? We need to present our ideas in a way that will appeal to the local community.
- The manuals appear to be very technical. In Israel every site must have a manual by law, so the question is what is the added value of the project? PUSH allows a different approach to the sites, through the idea of shared heritage can be integrated to the site manual.



Discussion Summary by Khaled Nassar:

We must create a manual that is relevant to the site managers and will thus be useful to them in developing the concept of shared heritage at the local sites. The PUSH manuals must have added value for the local site managers.

Closing Statements:

Presented by Mr. Neil Silberman, Ename Center Coordinator for International Projects

- It is necessary to establish bench marks: what are we hoping to achieve in one years' time, in five years, in a generation. To combine strategy and tactics.
- You need to set bench marks so you could monitor your progress and the successes and failures of the project.
- The danger in this project is to set goals which are too big. The targets that were presented in the manual are worthy targets, but they are too big and unrealistic.
- There is no point in moving on without creating a manual for PUSH. This is a critical mission for the future progress of the project. We need to always keep in mind the uniqueness of the projects, its' goals and its' purpose.



Additional comments made:

- We ought to try and appeal to the international public: the tentative lists, UNESCO. The Director-General of UNESCO is coming to visit the Palestinian Authority at the beginning of July. PUSH should take the opportunity present the project and its publications to the Director-General at that time.
- We need to remember the importance of working with tour guides.
- It is necessary to start using new media and develop new tools such as animation films and interactive sites.
- There is not enough discussion on mediums such as films and the internet. There is not enough use of new media where there are no limitations of physical borders and language barriers. Bezalel can push towards a more interactive approach.
- PUSH as a model that can be used in the future both in the region and in other regions throughout the world. Think of the next step after PUSH.
- Creating a manual for understanding of shared heritage in areas of conflict.
- It is important to place additional bench marks to the time table we already have.
- We should put the book on a CD and distribute it at the sites.

PUSH Regional Experts Workshop Participants:

PUSH Team

Elizabeth Koch, Project Coordinator



Al Quds University Team

Dr. Yusuf Natsheh, Project Manager

Dr. Marwan Fayaz Abu Khalef

Architect Osama Hamdam

Mr. Mohammed Jaradat

Mr. Sameh Hallaq, PUSH Financial Manager



Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design

Professor Michael Turner, Project Manger

Architect David Guggenheim

Mr. Moshe Caine

Student Assistants from the Department of Architecture:

Josef Israelshvili and Anat Dror



Jordan Society for Sustainable Development

Mr. Khaled Nassar, Project Manager

Dr. Mohammed Waheeb

Mr. Salam Labadi

Ms. Rawan Haddad



Special International Guest:

Mr. Neil Silberman, Ename Center Coordinator for International Projects

Regional Expert Guests:

Qusay Dawwas Ibrahim 'Azzem, Sabastiya

Nirit Bagron, Geshar

Daniel Bar Eli, Coordinator, Israel National Commission for UNESCO

Mira Edelstein, Friends of the Earth Middle East, Tel Aviv

Dr. Eliezer Frankenberg, Deputy Chief Scientist, Israel Nature and Parks Authority

Avner Goren, Abraham Path Initiative

Rami Haruri, Israel Antiquities Authority

Hanan Kaminsky, Bezalel Academy

Architect Bassam Khoury, Architectural Engineering and Consulting Services

Yuval Peled, National Parks Authority

Mohammad Ibrahim 'Ali Sade, Member of Artas Council

Raed Samara, Artas

Jon Seligman, Israel Antiquities Authority

Architect Lea Shneor, Keren Kayemet

Camilya Mustafa Yusuf Sukkar, Sabastiya

Abed Sultan, Friends of the Earth Middle East, Amman



Next Steps

Following the conclusion of the Regional Experts Workshop in Jerusalem partner teams held national level meetings to plan in further detail the publication of the PUSH brochures and site manuals.

Throughout the second year of the project, PUSH will prepare brochures, site manuals and information boards in addition to conducting tour guide trainings focused on the shared cultural heritage of each of the pilot sites. These efforts serve to encourage an inclusive understanding of the area's rich heritage.



Extra Support for PUSH activities is provided by the Beracha Foundation.

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