

Transcript: Eco-museums in Southeastern Turkey - Mehiyar Kathem interviews Mustafa Dogan, Associate Professor at Batman University, Turkey

Mehiyar 0:00

Welcome to the Nahrein Network podcast series. Today we're with Dr. Mustafa Doğan from Turkey from southeastern Anatolia from Batman University from the school of tourism, hospitality and management. Hello, Mustafa. How are you?

Mustafa 0:14 Hello, I am very well. Thank you so much. I'm very happy to be here.

Mehiyar 0:20 You're recipient of the Nahrein Network?

Mustafa 0:22 Yes.

Mehiyar 0:23 run in partnership with the British Institute in Ankara. Can you tell us about your scholarship,

Mustafa 0:29 I think it is a very big opportunity for me. It is visiting scholarship by Nahrein Network in UCL and that is also supported by British Institute in Ankara and it takes two month to conduct research on my project. Because of that, I came to here two months, approximately two months ago, and I started my research. The scholarship covers my all expenses, it is very important opportunity for researchers and for academics I think. For example, my rent, my travel expenses, my daily expenses, all of these are supported by the scholarship, these Visting Scholarship.

Mehiyar 1:30 and your research is on eco Museum.

Mustafa 1:32 Yes.

Mehiyar 1:33 Could you tell us about what that means? Exactly?

Mustafa 1:36 I think it is... It is a kind of new museum movement. It is very important way for community museum also. It was started to debate in 1970s. It is a kind of open air museum that cowers people and nature and culture and eco-museum means combining of the people, people's nature and people's culture. After these term 1970s, we faced and we so many eco Museum,s eco Museums in the world, especially France and Italy hold many kinds of eco Museums. Nowadays, I think we have approximately 1000 eco Museums all over the world. It is also best way for developing local communities who are living especially rural areas. I think maybe I have to say that issue eco museums concern the local communities, tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It is very important resources of eco museums. If you have distinctive cultural heritage, you can protect your distinctive cultural heritage with eco museums. And you can provide some contributions, economic, social and social, cultural. We can provide some contributions while eco museums especially in rural areas.

Mehiyar 3:32 Is this a relatively new concept in Turkey?

Mustafa 3:35 Yes, it is. It is very new concept in Turkey. We have just two eco museum projects in Turkey. I'm also volunteer advisor for these eco museum projects. And we have to... we have to promote this kind of museums in Turkey and we have to introduce to academics and some practice and some experts, the responsible persons who are managing local communities or local...

Mehiyar 4:13 so at the heart of the Eco Museum is the community. It's a living heritage. Mustafa 4:18 Yes, sure. Thanks to eco museum you have to exhibit living culture with living people in a territory. You know, if you... if you want to promote your distinctive culture, you can... you can do it while eco museum with real people, with real culture, and with their local area. You know. Mehiyar 4:18 Why.. why would it be called a museum? Is it just not a village or a town?

Mustafa 4:52 Yes.

Mehiyar 4:52 What makes it distinctive?

Mustafa 4:54 Yes. It must be distinctive. It... it.... it has distinctive futures. And for example, you have a unique cultural traditions, some dances or some customs or some crafts methods or some cooking, some plates, some foods or the waste of these cultural assets, you... you have to first of all, you have to protect this and you have to carry on these resources to the future eco museum. Eco museum considers both of them for protection of the cultural heritage and the carrying of the cultural heritage to the future. And we can promote all of distinctive cultural heritage, while sustainable tourism to others. It can be functional way for the local people and visitors to promote it, to protect it, and to learn it I think.

Mehiyar 6:06 So we're looking here at tangible and intangible heritage and its sustainability or continuity.

Mustafa 6:11 Yes sure.

Mehiyar 6:11 within a confined area of territory. And the one you're working on, which is in southeastern Anatolia. Could you tell us a bit more about that specific project?

Mustafa 6:21 Yes, sure. Southeast Anatolian region of Turkey has big potential about that, because their region has many minorities, religion minorities and ethnic minorities. For example, we have Assyrian communities and Yazidi communities, Kurdish communities, Arabic communities, all of these different local communities are living there. So they have huge cultural, especially intangible cultural heritage, dance, traditions, ceremonies, festivals, and some specific beliefs and stories, you know. So if you want to combine their tangible and intangible cultural insight, a project eco museum could be a better way for these. And we can... we can evaluate their unique cultural heritage to development of these local communities. And I think there is no any eco musuem in that region. But we have a big potential. We have many minorities and their distinctive cultural heritage. We can generate eco-museums in there. And thanks to that project, we can protect their culture. We cheer their unique cultural heritage. We can protect their cultural heritage. And we can share it and sustain their unique cultural heritage to the future by sustainable tourism I think.

Mehiyar 8:20 In terms of protection, I mean, we're looking at a large area. I mean, if we're looking at multiple cultural groups, I mean, how this is a role of a state government to protect and to cherish and champion the different the cultural characteristics of these communities. So I mean, how has that panned out in terms of the project you work on? Is it is this government led? Is it a partnership with communities to cherish and protect the intangible tangible cultural heritage they have? I mean, could you tell us about the way in which a project like this could be managed,

Mustafa 8:54 you are so right, we have also some problems in that region, especially political problems, and this region is very huge, very large. And we can generate more than one eco museum, in... eco museum in there. And we can use some teams; for example, minorities religion, minorities ethnicity, or some languages or some natural assets. And we can generate different ecomusuems in there. And these eco museums cover more than one village town or municipalities. So how can we

manage and how can we solve the governmental problems in there if we explain the contributions of that project to the governmental bodies and, for example, to the mayors and local administrators? They can support these activities and these projects in there because the region is poorer than the other region of Turkey. They have been facing economic and social problems. We can bring together the local administrators and NGOs and some universities and some academics for development of local... local communities. I think we can solve and we can get over these problems. And we can manage eco museums with partnership of these authorities, I think together.

Mehiyar 10:44 And you've been to Scotland and the rest of the country. Can you tell us a bit about that? Where did you go and you've been to and eco Museum is sterling went to Fife in Scotland, Falkland community heritage projects.

Mustafa 10:57 Yes. eco Museum in Dundee,

Mehiyar 10:59 Dundee.

Mustafa 11:00 Dundee, yes. Actually, I came here for learning your experiences about that. I think it will be useful for my next project in Turkey. My project, it takes a big process, I know that it is first step, maybe it is first step of these big projects in Turkey. This when I will, when I finish this project, I will continue mark my research on my region and maybe second step will be. ..will be generate and we'll be apply the results of my research on my region. So, I would like to learn your experiences and I would like to experience your practice your eco museum practice about that. And I visited many places and many eco museums in United Kingdom. And for example, Scotland, England, maybe more than 10 museums and eco museums and heritage sites were visited by me. Maybe I can say the most important and most functional examples for me, and Cateran eco museums, Falkland and ...

Mehiyar 12:30 These are all in Scotland

Mustafa 12:31 Yeah and the Highland Folk Museum in New Castle. All of these experiences are very important and I learned many things from your eco museum experiences. First of all, I have to say that point. Your eco museum is experiences based on territory management, big area management like my region. For example they cover many municipalities, many places and they manage all these different small towns and local communities under ecomuseum umbrella. It provides a big opportunity to manage regional territory while has important cultural or natural assets. So, we can combine all of these things under eco museum, umbrella and we can manage all of these things, just one aim. For example, to develop to protect and develop of these natural and cultural heritage, it is very functional way for planning and managing and sustaining of the region I think. I learned, I experienced your practice from ecomuseum and it is really available examples for my region, I think. So, I thought that to create different eco museums in there that cover many places. And I will use... I will combine natural and cultural, tangible and intangible assets together under eco museums. It is a very functional way to bring together and manage and sustain all of these things. And also maybe most important thing to gain some economic and social contributions. For example, we in my project or region, we need to generate economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas, people want to move urban areas, cities. And why? Because they have no economic and social resources and rights, but they have very important reserves on cultural and natural heritage. They can use all resources to stay to leave in there. And because of that, we can, we can continue their unique cultural heritage to the future. If your local communities live in local areas, and stay there live, cheap, they are alive in that we can provide some economic contributions why eco museums use and sustainable tourism for them. So it will be good, it will be useful alternative for local communities.

Mehiyar 16:12 The significant government presence in such projects, particularly if we're looking at whether it be Turkey, whether it be here, using resources, collectively, in natural resources, tangible or intangible heritage resources, and of course, the communities. There's a significant role for the local government is very, very important. I mean, it's not just a community, getting community voices out, but I would like to ask you about the role of government in this, I mean, from your experience in UK in going to several of these places, the role of planning planners, the role of administrators, local governments, central government, the role of government resources for such project, can you tell us a bit about that, because often we think communities exist in some kind of void. So, could you tell us a bit about the role of government in Eco museums,

Mustafa 16:59 The local governments in that region represent a minorities. For example, Kurdish, many of them Kurdish people, mayors of the local governmental bodies, for example, local municipalities, supported by minorities for example, especially Kurdish people. So, they cheer they want to they want to protect and they want to develop their local communities and their life. They want to develop their local communities, it is very wide problem for... for them it. So, their role is very important, but we have we have to obtain some contributions from associations, universities, nongovernmental organizations. For example, my United Kingdom experience show that your charities, your wallet organizations that are established the all of these ecomuseum project. And charity organizations and some nongovernmental organizations may be most important role for establishing of the Eco museums in United Kingdom. For example, I recognize that source social entrepreneurship in in here, it is very interesting array for creating of eco museums. It... we have some similar opportunities in there. For example, we have legally cooperative. It is very similar charities, charity organizations, and social entrepreneurs. So maybe after the local governments, we have to develop and we have to build some charities, some local nongovernmental organizations and we have to enhance these kind of organizations for ecomuseum projects together with local governmental bodies. Sometimes, these non governmental organizations like cooperatives press on the local government to bodies and they proceed on local governmental bodies to... to do something with local communities, I think. So, yes, sure, local government, local, local governmental bodies are very important. But we have an advantage about that majority of these governmental organizations, providing by minorities. So they they cheer their local communities feature, culture, economy and social opportunities. So I think if we, if we build collaboration with local governmental bodies and local, non governmental organizations, for their people. We can generate eco museums in there. We can protect and we can... these natural and cultural assets for the development of these local people, I think.

Mehiyar 20:45 You host it at Reading University, where Adjunct Professor Roger met you is my supervisor, from Reading universe, what you plan to do after the end of your scholarship? your scholarship ends in a in a couple of weeks.

Mustafa 20:59 First week of my project term, I went to Reading University and my supervisor, Professor Roger met you. And we planned my field trips. And we talk about that my project, we planned step by step projects, my projects future. I think the second week of my project term, we visited together the role life that is located in Reading. And we organized a meeting with museum experts in there. And I obtained some specific knowledge about this museum and the Great Great West way. It is in like an eco museum that covers the, from Reading to south part of the reading, it's very large region and they have some roots in that region and touristic ways, but these ways include cultural and natural resources like an eco museum. So, I learned these model and they are experiences with my supervisor. After that, we organize we organized some small meetings in Reading University for other academics, and I informed to them about my project and sometimes

they gave me some specific informations to, to use in my project. So, Reading University and specifically my supervisor has a very important role for my project. And after this research project, I will go back to Turkey and next step, I am planning to apply a new, new project for applying these research results. I would like to generate these eco museums in southeast Turkey. And I would like to generate many routes that cover cultural and natural assets. And I will introduce eco museums to local governmental bodies and NGOs in my region, I will present... I will present the results of my research to them. And the next step I will realize I would like to realize my research results findings in that region I would like to apply and I would like to generate realize eco museums more than one eco museums in that region. It is a big project, but I will continue and I will realize because we have to care the local communities we have to care as an academic, local bodies, sustainability of these cultural and natural assets in my region. Thank you very much for everything especially Nahrein Network, UCL University College London. Thanks to you. I have been conducting the research. I believe that I will continue research in my country, but I I have find out many things because of this research. So, I would like to thank you again to you to your university and my supervisor, Professor Roger Metreon and Reading University. Thank you for all I think.

Mehiyar 25:20 On that note, thank you very much Dr. Mustafa Erdogan, Associate Professor Batman University School of tourism, hospitality and management in South Eastern Turkey. Thank you very much. It's been great...