

Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU)

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Highlights on ESDU activities September 1, 2013-August 31, 2014

During the academic year 2013–14, ESDU implemented several projects covering a budget of 178,432 USD from private sector and from different international donor agencies mainly the International Development Research Center (IDRC).

Mainstreaming Evaluation Theory & Practice in the MENA Region: Using Outcome Mapping as an Entry point	Sept. 2013 – Dec. 1, 2014	\$119,883	IDRC
Establishing a Food Trail in the Higher Shouf and West Beqaa Regions	April 16, 2014 – April 16, 2015	\$50,260	DAI – USAID
Value Chain Analysis of Wheat Landraces and Wheat-Based Traditional Foods in Relation to Agrobiodiversity	Sept 2, 2013- Sept 2, 2014	\$8,289.12	National Council for Scientific Research/CNRS (joint research with Dr. Ali Chalak)

Research: “Value Chain Analysis of Wheat Landraces and Wheat-Based Traditional Foods in Relation to Agrobiodiversity”

The research is funded by the National Council for Scientific Research. The objective is to assess the production chain of selected local traditional food products in relation to agrobiodiversity conservation. More specifically, the production of Borghol and Keshek is assessed in relation to the varieties of wheat landraces and the type of milk used in its process. The research will analyze the origin of (genetic) resource and the agricultural practices of wheat, the processing practices of Keshek, the types of milk used, and the marketing channels based on a survey in two different regions producing Keshek in Lebanon (North-Bekaa and Chouf).

Regional Networking: “KariaNet- Hosting the Regional Knowledge Management and Knowledge Sharing Network”

Knowledge Access for Rural Inter-connected Areas Network is a regional network funded by IDRC and IFAD for the management and sharing of knowledge, information and experience in agriculture and rural development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. A

competitive call for an expression of interest to host KariaNet was launched and the ESDU was selected to be the hosting organization. ESDU is assuming the responsibility of moderating the regional knowledge management network. This Network, inspired by 'open access principles', seeks to empower its members, through the use of ICT and non-ICT tools, to make knowledge available and timely accessible to farmers and practitioners involved in rural development.

Capacity Building: "Mainstreaming Evaluation: Theory and Practice in the MENA Region"

The project is funded by IDRC and provides capacity development, small R&D grants for MENA specific evaluation research and publications, "Arabization" of evaluation methodologies and publications as well as virtual and face-to-face meeting and networking opportunities. One of the positive unintended outcomes of the project was the emergence of the first MENA Professional Association on Development Evaluation ("EvalMENA"). ESDU developed the first of its kind On-line Training Course on Development Evaluation in Arabic (together with EvalMENA members from Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Saudi Arabia), who contributed to the scientific material and the oversight of the entire project along with the International Organization on Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) and the technical support of UNICEF which has been instrumental in providing the e-learning platform. It can be accessed on: <http://www.mymande.org/elearning>.

Workshop: "Mainstreaming Evaluation Theory and Practice in the MENA Region"

ESDU organized in Amman – Jordan the closing workshop of the project "Mainstreaming Evaluation Theory and Practice in the MENA region". Some 83 participants from 13 different nationalities attended the conference, among whom 6 parliamentarians representing Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia and who launched the MENA Parliamentary Forum on Development Evaluation. Dr. Ibrahim Seif, Jordanian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation delivered the keynote address of the conference, stressing the role of evaluation in improving development effectiveness and evidence-based policy making.

Community Development: "Souk O Shouf" farmers' market design project exhibition"

ESDU and the Department of Landscape and Ecosystem Management organized a design competition for landscape students for the implementation a farmers' market in Multaka el Nahreyn in Shouf area. The exhibition was in cooperation with the Al Shouf Cedar Society and was held in the presence of Mrs. Nora Joumblat who presented the prizes to the first four winners of the competition.

"Souk aal Souk promoting nutrition education in universities and organic agriculture in wakf land"

This project aims at implementing a series of farmers' markets to promote local organic and healthy products and build linkages between small-scale producers and urban residents, as well as training producers on good agricultural practices and organizational and managerial skills to sustain the market. It builds on a previously funded project by Waterfront City Cares (Majed Al Futtaim Holding) which started in 2012.

"Community-based Healthy Kitchens to provide locally-produced food aid for vulnerable groups affected by the Syrian Crisis"

A partnership with the International Orthodox Christian Charity (IOCC) was initiated through pilot activities to establish community kitchens where ESDU implemented trainings for women

on food safety practices and managerial skills. A kitchen in Minyara, Akkar led by Syrian and Lebanese women to provide food aid was established in May 2013.

“School Feeding Program in Bourj Al Barajneh”

In partnership with CRPH/FHS, ESDU contributed to a school feeding program in Bourj Al Barajneh by building the capacities of women who were to lead a healthy kitchen to be linked to schools in the camp. Project started in June 2014 and is still running till date.

New Academic Program: “The RCODE Master of Sciences Program in Rural Community Development”

ESDU under the FAFS is hosting a Graduate Program leading to the degree of Master of Science (MS) in Rural Community Development (RCODE, thesis or non-thesis). The RCODE program, initially developed in 2003, was updated and approved by the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences and the AUB administration. It was registered at the Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education. The program was positively reviewed and evaluated by Dr. David Brown from Cornell University (Professor at the Department of Development Sociology and co-Director of the Community and Regional Development Institute CaRDI at Cornell University). The RCODE was registered in New York State Education Department and launched in September 2014. FAFS is one of the few academic institutions in the MENA to offer a rural community development program.

Strategic Challenges:

- To attract students for the RCODE Master Program
- To sustain KariaNet regional knowledge management network
- To put Local Food Systems on the regional and international food security agenda