IN FOCUS

Securing Rights and Restoring Lands for Improved Livelihood

A project aimed at conservation, restoration and the sustainable management of ecosystem services. Improved livelihoods are achieved through securing rights, better management and enhanced income generation opportunities.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

For long years, the rangelands control in Jordan has been characterized as an effective system for securing land and maintaining the rights of grazing. This used to depend on the established tribal system, where by the tribe keeps the resources within its borders and uses them for its protection. Then, when the tribal system fell apart and the rangelands were declared as State land, they became open and free for the whole commune.

Consequently, the Rangeland Strategy was updated in cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) west asia taking into consideration the economic, social and environment concerns with emphasis on disseminating the successful approach of the traditional tribal method “Hima” to be applied in Jordan. By following this method, the owners of the rangelands increased their participation in managing their natural resources by themselves in addition to their participation in decision-making processes, including farmers and women.

Dr. Wael Al-Rashdan - Director of the Forestry Directorate and Badia Development at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

The theory of change in this project includes better integration between the local community and decision makers and has proven to bring about better tangible results on the ground. Shifting towards systems that engage local communities in the decision making process, was found to be better than solving acute problems on the ground immediately without any local community intervention. For that reason, this project aims to fill that gap between stakeholders and document that change to allow better project up scaling in the future.
**ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Development of local capacity**

The National Center for Agricultural Research and Studies organized a practical and theoretical training for members of "Hima Bani Hashem Society" in Zarqa governorate on "soil testing and the stocking rate areas in rangelands of the Hima". The aim was to measure the extent of natural rehabilitation in Hima land after two years of community-based protection to enable the "Society" to determine the mechanism and the areas for grazing in the coming period.

The FHI360 Foundation held several technical courses to Hima sites through the Civil Society Program (CSP) that is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). These technical courses are designed to provide a mechanism for Hima site to develop their internal code system (statutes) and build their capacity in the areas of advocacy and communication with the local community and the media, in order to be able to play an active role in society and to better cope with changes in the surrounding environment.

The exchange visits have also been carried out as "main pillars" followed by the project to strengthen local knowledge and lessons learnt between the various initiatives. A group of women from "Hima Bani Hashem Society" made a field visit to Al Mujeb to learn from the experience of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in the production and marketing of medicinal plants. They also did another field visit to The Soldiers Family Welfare Society to learn about the methods of packaging medicinal plants and the appropriate marketing techniques.

The mechanism of supporting policies and its effect at the local levels

The Project’s Steering Committee held its periodic meeting under the chairmanship of MoA Secretary-General, Dr. Radi Tarawneh on April 1, 2013. The members discussed the achievements of the project and the action plan for the next stage.

The Committee agreed on a date for a field visit to Hima Bani Hashem by members of the Steering Committee and members of the Environment and Agriculture Committee in the Parliament. This is to be arranged in collaboration with MoA and to be organized by the Bani Hashem local community. The objective of the visit is to learn from their experience in promoting and developing the Hima concept and to recommend expanding it to larger geographical areas in other places in the Kingdom.

**Updating the Rangeland Strategy**

The MoA in collaboration with IUCN / ROWA had finished preparing the final draft of the updated Rangeland Strategy, which incorporated the Hima concept as a basic approach in the governance of rangelands in Jordan. A participatory approach was adopted with all stakeholders and experts while updating the rangeland...
Strategy provisions and programs.

The project is scheduled to hold its national conference in August 2013 to share the experiences of governmental and international institutions in Jordan over rangelands' rehabilitation and to promote effective policies and laws in the community management of natural resources.

The communities work was thereafter developed and recorded using a participatory video (PV). The PV is a process documentation tools to help bridge local community members with discion makers about their concerns. The four hima communities in Zarqa developed a PV which was shown to decision makers in Jordan and later show cased in the Abu Dhabi International Environmental Film Festival of 2013. The video was screened in the festival and later given as a success example of process documentation in the field.

Promoting Benefit Rights through Ecological System Services

Hima Bani Hashem’s income-generating economic options

Two years of Hima Bani Hashem’s community-based management has enabled the ecosystem to revitalize the land and indigenous plants and contributed to improving the standard of their living. The "Hima Bani Hashem Society" was provided with a drying and packaging unit for medicinal plants to help improve the standard of living of women as well as to boost the production of medicinal plants in home gardens. This was done through supporting the "Hima Bani Hashem Society" with a revolving fund worth 5000 Euros.

Hima El Hallabat’s concerted efforts:

El Hallabat community and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) have agreed to establish a Hima in their area to present a model of sustainable management of rangelands and livestock production. A cooperation agreement was prepared between the West El Hallabat Charity Society, MoTA and the Directorate of Antiquities to manage the process of grazing in a specific area inside the campus of El Hallabat Palace. The project’s pilot economic benefits will be distributed to impoverished families. The agreement is scheduled to be signed in the second half of 2013.

What changed?!

The degradation of natural resources in the Zarqa River Basin due to overgrazing and desertification has left the local community no choice but to adapt to the situation and work together for a better future. Accordingly, the sites have improved environmentally and socially while tribal conflicts
over natural resources have decreased. Grazing seasons have also improved and the original biodiversity began to reappear. Meanwhile, it was established that the problem of overgrazing will no longer be dealt with through preventing livestock from moving but rather through sound management for grazing periods. These solutions have paved the way to improving investment in the local communities through raising their knowledge, building their capacity and increasing women’s participation. This led to improving the livelihoods of these communities by ensuring their rights to land, resources management and the establishment of a constructive relationship with governmental institutions.

These adaptive solutions have been carried out by limited funding that mainly depend on the available resources in the community. This would definitely open the door for the community members to submit proposals and give them better chances and eligibility to get future funding from donors.

The Future
The dissemination of the Hima concept and the political support for it will lead to an increase in the number of local communities that have changed their rangeland practices and consequently improved their lives. The Hima will not be confined to a specific dry land area as it will rather become a “new approach” in the management of rangelands and natural resources that will later contribute to activating the updated National Rangeland Strategy in Jordan.

“Revitalizing natural vegetation such as Artimessia and Germardar created many job opportunities for women in the area, improved their economic livelihoods as well as their role in the development of the region.”

Khatmah Al Omoush
Local community member for Bani Hashem Hima management

Did you know?

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This project is funded by the European Union
This project is implemented by IUCN - ROWA, Global Drylands Initiative

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.