

The Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU): The Bitter Sweet Experience

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How the past saw the future...



Rebels with a cause 1989-1993

- Our mission was clear: **Reinvent FAFS & Revive rural communities** by introducing new paradigms:
 - ❖ Sustainable development
 - ❖ Appropriate technologies
 - ❖ Community participation
 - ❖ Environmental conservation



Noble causes fading away 1990-1996

- FAFS resistant to change
- Research with little relevance to community needs
- Promotion anxiety
- Community based research at our own risk





Destiny gave us a push 1996-2001

- IDRC bailed us out: \$\$ grant money: Arsaal project
- Critical mass for change at AUB & FAFS
- Interfaculty Environmental Program
- More Research & Development money



Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands in Lebanon: Arsal, a case study.



1. Pilot community
based research
2. Linking
research to
Development
3. International
fame



The Birth 2000-2001

- Founding Board
- IDRC catalyst support
- Official recognition by AUB administration



Environment and Sustainable Development Unit



- Established in 2001 as an inter-disciplinary research and development unit
- Regional Leader in sustainable rural livelihoods

<http://www.esdu-aub.org>

Now

- Dean Emeritus
- Dean FAFS
- Dean FHS
- Associate Dean FAFS
- Ex-Associate Dean FAFS
- Director IBSAR
- Associate Seed Botanist (Department of Food & Agriculture, USA)
- Director of the Financial Operations at the BDL

Then:

- Dean Nuhad Dagher
- Dr. Nahla Hwalla
- Dr. Iman Nuwayhid
- Dr. Rami Zurayk
- Dr. Shadi Hamadeh
- Dr. Salma Talhouk
- Dr. Riad Baalbaki
- Dr. Youssef El Khalil

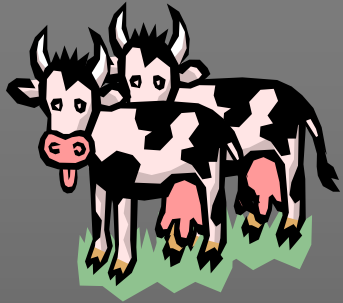
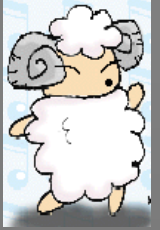


National Fame 2001-2003

- All over Lebanon
- Community based projects:
 - ❖ Innovative R&D solutions
 - ❖ Sustainable Rural Livelihoods



Putting People in The Center



A Participatory Approach:

To Listen

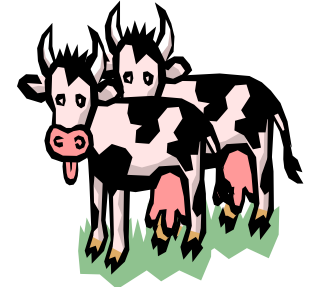
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translator





Putting People in The Center

Capacity Building



to Improve skills, Empower marginal groups and Give sustainability a **CHANCE**



Yammouneh Technology Transfer and Extension Project

Objective

Promoting agriculture as a viable livelihood option and improving agricultural sustainability through an Integrated Development Program (IDP).

Location

Yammouneh and Deir-el-Ahmar



The Healthy Basket

- Healthy Basket started in 2001 as a project by the American University of Beirut to improve Lebanese farmers' livelihood in rural areas, preserving the environment and protecting human health by adopting organic agriculture as a key strategy.
- Fresh, certified organic fruits and vegetables sold by HB are produced by small farmers throughout Lebanon, closely supervised by two certification bodies: the Lebanese “LibanCert” and the Swiss “Bio inspecta”.



Regional conquest 2003-2010

- 2002-03: Regional window: UNCCD
- 2003: IFAD- NEMTA program
- 2005: IDRC- Urban Agriculture (UA)
- 2006: FAO- Communication for Development
- 2007: RUAF- ESDU 7th global center on UA
- 2008: IDRC- Outcome Mapping for MENA



IPD: The Near East Management Training in Agriculture Program (NEMTA)

- Aims to upgrade the skills of managers and senior staff and improve effectiveness and sustainability of agricultural and rural development projects and programs
- Active in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Yemen
- Implemented by IFAD with a co-financing from Capacity Building International – Germany





Some things will never change?

- Few linkages to academic programs
- Dichotomy : ESDU vocation vs. FAFS curricula
- Sense of isolation
- Little institutional support from AUB



Imagine how the future will see us

In 2020 we will look back at our future

- ESDU hosting a vibrant regional training unit.
- ESDU hosting a master program in Rural Community Development (RCODE).
- ESDU actively contributing to sustainable rural livelihoods in MENA.



The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time. *Abraham Lincoln*

Only time will tell





Wa shukran

Thank you

