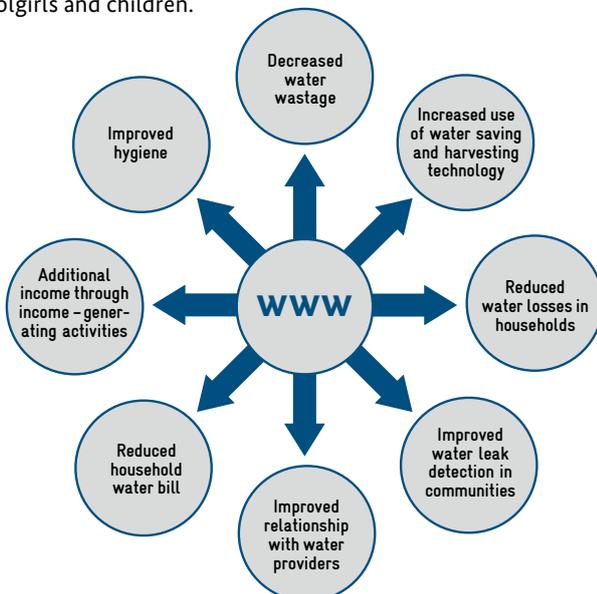


Jordan: Water Wise Women – Female Agents of Change

Summary

The water situation in Jordan is already precarious, and is being aggravated by climate change and the influx of refugees. Adaptation is feasible only if Jordan strives for the highest possible water efficiency, which can also be achieved by breaking new ground in the cultural and social arena. The Water Wise Women Initiative (WWWI) can serve as a good example of the successful application of this thesis. The Initiative was started in 2007, initially covering five local communities in Jordan. It gradually expanded to new locations and eventually reached twelve local communities throughout the country. The initiative was built on the efforts of volunteers organised in 50 community development centres supported by the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), GIZ, the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources and the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI)/Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ).

Female volunteers are trained as ‘change pioneers’, also known as ‘Water Wise Women’, on topics such as water-saving techniques, rainwater harvesting, communication and cooperation with water providers, plumbing, hygiene, and water use for home gardening. The initiative thus provides a good information background and promotes housewives’ changes in attitude. It also provides opportunities for women to generate income and reduce expenses, such as fees for hired plumbers. In addition, the initiative reaches out to schoolgirls and children.



Challenge

Jordan is ‘haven of peace’ in a region of political instability and military conflict, but it finds itself facing an ongoing crisis of a different kind. It is among the poorest and least secure countries in the world in terms of water. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, each resident of Jordan gets an average of only 128 cubic metres of fresh water per year – by comparison, the average European has access to nearly 9,000 cubic metres per year.

Jordan’s already precarious water situation is aggravated by climate change and the influx of more than 800,000 refugees over recent years. This problem can be managed only when striving for the highest possible level of water efficiency, which can only be achieved with the active participation of the people. The Government of Jordan as well as various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been making efforts to increase public awareness of water scarcity and encourage water conservation.

Setup

WWWI was launched in October 2007 as a partnership between JOHUD, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (now GIZ), the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) and the German Hanns Seidel Foundation. However, in November 2011 BGR and the Hanns Seidel Foundation pulled out, and GIZ decided to proceed with the Initiative together with JOHUD. MWI provided governmental support from the very beginning while WAJ joined the Initiative in its second phase. The United Nations University International Leadership Institute provided logistical support during the launch of the Initiative.

Fig. 1: The targets of the ‘Water Wise Women’ Initiative



Fig. 2: A group of 'Water Wise Women'

Opportunities

The idea for WWWI evolved out of the shortcomings of earlier development efforts on water awareness and because of the central role that women play in water management in their households and communities. Women are perceived as guardians of the next generation in Jordan. Any sustainable behavioural change in water use has to start at the level of Jordanian families and schools.

The WWWI is establishing a community-based pool of knowledge on efficient and protective water management at household and community level (Fig. 1). Women of all ages and educational backgrounds have been qualified to become 'change agents' in water use and water protection, providing concrete, appropriate and workable advice to fellow women and other relevant members in their communities (Fig. 2 & 3).

Achievements

- 12 local communities are aware of the WWWI concept (Fig. 4).
- 180 Water Wise Women serving as 'multipliers' have been trained by five core trainers.
- 4,500 housewives have been trained by the Water Wise Women and manage water in their households more efficiently.
- 22,500 people became aware of the scarce water situation in Jordan through WWWI.
- At national level Water Wise Women are now regarded by political decision makers as an important voice of society and respected as stakeholders.
- Water Wise Women are now regarded by water utilities as a crucial link to the community on domestic water issues.

Water Wise Women from nine locations decided to form local non-governmental organisations/community-based organisations to combine their efforts, sustain the WWWI concept, promote the prioritisation of water issues at national level and educate local communities on water-saving methods.

One of the Initiative's indirect main achievements is introducing the concept of a professional 'woman plumber' to Jordan.

A **'Training of Trainers' manual** has been developed covering eight fields of action:

1. Household hygiene and health (prepared by GIZ)
2. Water saving and its efficient use at the household level (prepared by GIZ)
3. Relationship of water users with governmental, non-governmental and private sector providers (prepared by GIZ)
4. Greywater reuse and rainwater harvesting (prepared by GIZ)
5. Water for house gardening and agriculture (prepared by JOHUD)
6. Water protection (BGR)
7. Plumbing and water storage (prepared by BGR)
8. Marketing and communications (prepared by JOHUD).

Interested women have the opportunity to take a plumbing course and receive a repair kit with the required tools.

The WWWI is also serving as a link to the governmental institutions, water providers, donors that support water initiatives at community and household level, and private providers of water-saving devices.

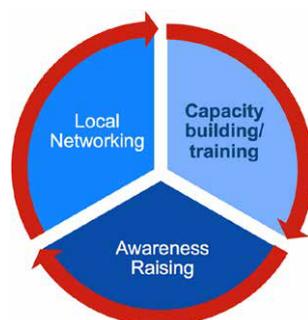


Fig. 3: Water Wise Women taking part in a plumber training course

Fig. 4: The main components of the initiative

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Outlook

Lessons learned: Adaptation to climate change under conditions of extreme water scarcity is only feasible if Jordan strives for the highest possible level of water efficiency, which can also be achieved by breaking new ground in the cultural and social arena. The WWWI can serve as a good example of a successful application of this thesis.

Upscaling: In pursuit of sustainability and to emphasise the fact that the WWWI will remain an essential part in the communities when the partners (GIZ and JOHUD) have pulled out, a non-governmental association called the Water Wise Women Association (WWWA) has been established and covers nine Water Wise Women communities. Through this association, the Water Wise Women try to create a non-monetary incentive system that will keep the Water Wise Women actively involved and positively influencing their community's water issues. This will be achieved by strengthening their position and linkage with the decision makers and enhancing their involvement in water-related issues within the communities. The WWWA helps the Water Wise Women act as partners.

Transferability: The success of such an initiative depends on the awareness of (at least) some of the WWWA members/Water Wise Women, the enthusiasm of the initiator(s), financial means for the WWWA to (1) achieve its goals in reaching out to communities and supporting MWI and water providers; (2) supply the tool kits; and (3) supervise/support the members in contacting and raising awareness among housewives and ensuring changes in their behaviour.

It is recommended that **political decision makers** support these initiatives, if already available, or promote their establishment. These initiatives offer great opportunities to Governments and agencies to create awareness on pressing problems such as water scarcity or adaptation to climate change.

In cooperation with:



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