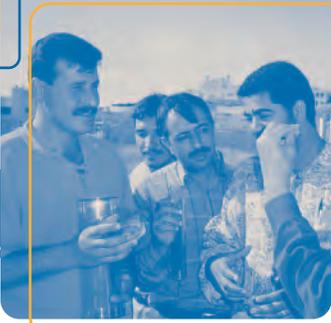


Middle East Water Conservation

Communication Strategies for the Peace Process



In 1992, the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources (MWGWR) was formed to address water issues in the context of the official Middle East peace process. One of the group's objectives was to increase citizens' water conservation behaviors in several countries and territories that were parties to the peace process (Israel, Jordan, West Bank/Gaza, Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, and Egypt).



In 1996, the U.S. State Department requested GreenCOM's assistance to help the MWGWR with its Water Conservation and Public Awareness project to promote best practices in water conservation throughout the region. In 1996 and 1997, GreenCOM conducted research to identify best practices in each target country and for the region as a whole. From 1998 to 2000, the project collaborated with the MWGWR on using the research to develop communication strategies for reaching adolescent youth.

Best Practices, Past and Present

In a region where the accomplishments of ancient civilizations are often invoked with pride, it was important to put water issues in historical context. GreenCOM collaborated with archaeologists to research water use habits of antiquity in the seven target countries. As a result of this research, opportunities were identified for showing citizens how water practices in the past were consistent with present conservation efforts. Making such a connection helped frame water conservation as long-standing cultural tradition.

GreenCOM also researched current best practices in household and agricultural water conservation in

each country,* as well as existing communication and education initiatives on water. Omnibus surveys conducted among the general public in four of the countries and territories (Israel, Jordan, the West Bank/Gaza, and Tunisia) provided insight on people's media habits and awareness about the MWGWR's role in the peace process.

In early 1998, GreenCOM convened a meeting of working group representatives in Athens, Greece, to share results of the research and to strategize about a USAID-funded regional campaign for youth on the theme "communicating water scarcity."

* Tunisia chose not to conduct a study on best practices.

Each country represented at the meeting in Athens committed to conduct additional research on youth knowledge and attitudes about water and to develop educational video and print materials for youth on water scarcity. GreenCOM coordinated additional planning meetings to provide technical guidance for these individual country projects. It also collected video footage from Israel, Jordan, and the West Bank to use in a video for youth that the MWGWR distributed throughout the Middle East.

The final product, a 30-minute video called *Water for Arid Regions*, was narrated by young people and produced in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. It was first shown on television stations throughout the Middle East on United Nations World Water Day in 1999 and was used in high schools and youth groups to

educate young people about water scarcity and the commonality of this problem throughout the region.

An outgrowth of the video project was the WaterCare program, a multi-country education initiative coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey. GreenCOM helped to launch WaterCare by facilitating the initial meetings for a team of water experts and curriculum specialists chosen to prepare WaterCare's middle school curriculum for students in Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank. GreenCOM also assisted with the production of a 2001 calendar that was distributed to youth in Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli schools. The calendar text was in Arabic and Hebrew and each month featured a different children's drawing solicited through contests conducted by members of the MWGWR.

Outcomes

GreenCOM contributed to the agenda of the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources by engaging members in dialogue about water conservation issues common to all parties involved

in the Middle East peace process. Discussions evolved into fruitful collaborative activities including the production of *Water for Arid Regions* and development of the WaterCare youth education program.

Selected Publications and Products

Abdelhadi, M. Lahlou. *Best Water Conservation Practices in Morocco*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development (AED), 1997.

Al-Labadi, Ali M. *Domestic Water Conservation Best Practices in the Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip)*. Washington, DC: AED, 1997.

Al Rawahy, Hussam Mohammed. *A Report on Best Domestic Water Conservation Practices in the Sultanate of Oman*. Muttrah, Oman: HMR Consultants, 1997.

Daoud, Ra'ed. *Middle East Water Conservation Awareness Project: Best Practices Research (Jordan)*. Amman: EnviroConsult Office, 1997.

GreenCOM Project. *WaterCare: A Calendar for 2001* (in Arabic and Hebrew). Washington, DC: AED, 2000.

———. *Water for Arid Regions* (video in English, Hebrew, and Arabic). Cotuit, MA: J-Net Group, 1999.

Kimchie, Shlomo. *Best Practices for Domestic Water Conservation in Israel*. Washington, DC: AED, 1997.

Lenzen, Cherie J. *Water and Antiquity*. Washington, DC: AED, 1996.

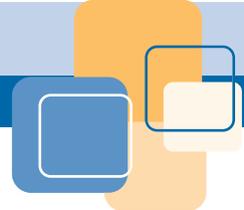
Loza, Sarah. *National Community Water Conservation Program in Egypt: Best Practices*. Washington, DC: AED, 1998.

Mason, Melanie. *Ancient Water Systems and Practices in Tunisia and Morocco*. Washington, DC: AED, 1997.



GreenCOM

GreenCOM is funded and managed by the USAID Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade Bureau: Natural Resources Management Office. Technical services for GreenCOM (Contract no. LAG-I-00-01-00005-00) are provided by the Academy for Educational Development in partnership with Chemonics International.



GreenCOM engaged group members in a dialogue about water conservation issues common to all parties in the peace process.

