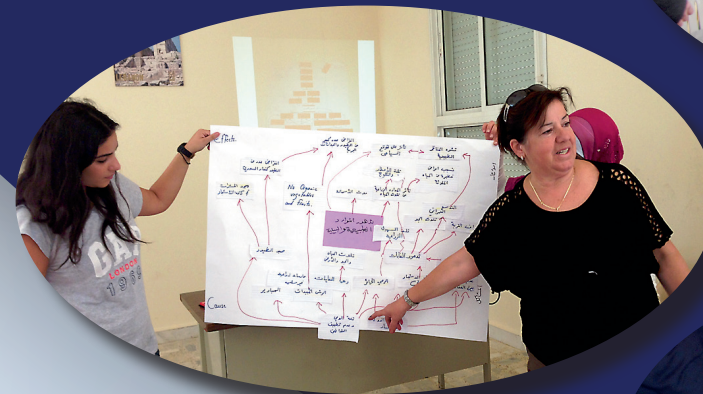


AL-HIMA SYSTEM:

A Mean of Women Empowerment



For more information
about UN Women
Fund for Gender Equality

www.unwomen.org/fge
fund.genderequality@unwomen.org



For more information
about The Society for the Protection
of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL)

www.spnl.org
news@spnl.org





Who we are?



SPNL: Partnership for Nature and People

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), the BirdLife national partner in Lebanon, aims at protecting nature, birds and biodiversity in Lebanon and to ensure sustainable use of natural resources through reviving the concept of Al Hima.

As a national environmental NGO in Lebanon, SPNL contributes to both raising awareness on environmental issues and concretely protecting natural areas in Lebanon. SPNL bases its work on sound science and passionate

commitment, which through transparent and democratic processes, leads to a well-informed public.

SPNL strives to advocate a better quality of life for people and nature, through conserving sites, protecting species, and assuring sustainability, yet on the basis of promoting inclusiveness and equity of socio-economic benefits to the local communities.

Read more: <http://www.spnl.org/about-us/>

UN Women Fund for Gender Equality (UNW FGE)

The Fund for Gender Equality is one of the world's leading grant making funds for women's equality. It is working for results in women's economic and political empowerment. It provides large, multi-year investments to encourage long-term planning and effective partnerships. Its support is aligned with the existing priorities of the full range of national partners. The multi-donor Fund for Gender Equality was launched in 2009 with a US\$65 million contribution from the Government of Spain, and joined subsequently by the government of Norway to fast-track action on women's economic and political empowerment around the world. The Fund is managed

by a Secretariat at UN Women and provides grants on a competitive basis directly to government agencies and civil society organizations.

This partnership between the UN Women Fund for Gender equality, and regional, national and local women's organizations and governments is an innovative approach to advance women's empowerment as an essential part of realizing rights, accelerating poverty alleviation, and advancing sustainable development.

Read more: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/fund-for-gender-equality>

How Did SPNL Become a Grantee of the Fund?

It is through the Fund grant making cycle of 2011-2012, SPNL project titled "Promoting Hima Women Empowerment for Conservation and Livelihood" was selected by the Fund as a modality that aims to improving women livelihood through acquired skills and better income opportunities in the five Hima Sites of Hima Aanjar, Hima Kfar Zabad, Hima El-Fekha, and Hima of Qoleileh and Mansouri.

In principle, SPNL concentrates on promoting community

management of Important Bird Areas and has realized the diminished role of women in decision making process for natural resources management. BirdLife International has alerted SPNL about the call from the UN Fund for Gender Equality. Thus, SPNL applied to the call for proposals highlighting the importance of empowering women role in Hima management and was selected given the novelty of the Project.

Using Traditional Hima Approach in Conservation

Hima means "a protected area". It originated since more than 1500 years ago where it was spread along the Arab Peninsula as a "tribal" system of sustainable management of natural resources.

It was applied as a system for organizing, maintaining, regulating, and utilizing natural pasture and rangelands in a way fitting with ecosystems and local practices.

Since 2004, SPNL is reviving the *Hima* approach in collaboration with the municipalities "local authorities". So far, SPNL have announced 12 *Hima* sites in Lebanon.

The revival of the *Hima* system in Lebanon, is empowering communities to take responsibility for managing local resources. This *Hima* system is being championed by SPNL as a part of their Important Bird Areas programme. SPNL



believes that with its roots in traditional practice and Islamic law, as well as its greater recognition of the needs and rights of local people, the Hima will be more acceptable and effective than centralized protected area systems. The limited ownership of the local communities within the current centralized system of protected areas has resulted in limited benefit sharing with local community groups.



SPNL, therefore, is hoping to gain stronger support for the *Hima* practice as a viable and sustainable alternative to nationally designated protected areas. The increased involvement of local communities and the benefits derived from protection will ultimately result in improved status of the natural resources themselves.

Hima System Helps Women Empowerment

Women have a basic, influential, and guiding role in the communities and in raising up new generations. Moreover, rural women have differentiated responsibilities for maintaining the household (food, medicine, fire, water,...), where many of these activities are dependent on the environment. Therefore, the state of the environment has a massive impact on women and their role and responsibilities, and affects their health, their labor, and daily life.

However, in many if not all countries of the Middle East, women and other marginalized groups in local communities have difficult access and almost no control nor ownership over the use and management of often scarce natural resources. These groups form a considerable part of rural populations. This is a serious problem as it negatively affects their livelihood, health and income earning capacities.

Here lies the importance of the UNW Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) Programme that embodies well designed approaches to support women's access to resources and assuming their own accountability for the management of local natural resources through the Hima approach for

environmental management.

SPNL project titled "Promoting Hima Women Empowerment for Conservation and Livelihood" achievements works also towards the revival of sustainable cultural practices, such as weaving handmade carpets from natural wool and natural dye, needlework, traditional food products (mouneh) processing, handmade ornaments, etc..

One key entry point has been the development of an effective action plan for Hima management which realizes the vision of rural women in the sustainable management of resources.

More than 300 women have understood the Hima approach and have had a proactive role in natural resources sustainable use. They were sensitized on their right to access and control over land, with a focus on the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW, gained leadership, decision making, and group work skills. Positive perception on the significant role that women play in the management of natural resources has been key to the success of the project's main objective.

90 Women in 5 Hima Sites: A Snowball Effect

The communities around Hima sites are rural and depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihoods, but also possess different characteristics such as diverse religions, sects and alienation to different political parties.

The Programme targets forming a core group of women leaders. 90 rural women who are residing around the 5 involved Hima sites that are to assume community leadership roles, thus initiating this snowball effect and advocating for strengthened role of women management and control over local resources.

One of the major achievements is the Economic Empowerment through identifying new job opportunities and income generating activities within the Hima sites. In addition to training workshops on the skills needed for the

identified job opportunities, procuring the needed tools and equipment for those Jobs, and developing ecotourism and marketing plans. Women are to be trained on how to start and manage small business, and generate income. The project used various marketing approaches to support women such as branding, brochures, linkage with SPNL website, and festivals.

SPNL seeks to revitalize local productions like carpet weaving, by supporting women with training, coaching, equipment, and supplies. The project will train women to weave beautiful carpets yet introducing new technologies and patterns that would help in the marketing, still preserving their ancient traditions and supporting them in marketing their beautiful pieces.