



HOMAT ALHIMA GUIDELINE MANUAL



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إحياء لذكرى
لوك هوفمان
2016 – 1923

عرفاناً وتقديراً لدعمه اللامحدود لجمعية حماية الطبيعة في لبنان
إن حياة وإنجازات الدكتور هوفمان تسلط الضوء على الجانب
المشرق من طبيعة الإنسان لن ننساك ابداً

In memory of
Luc Hoffmann
1923 – 2016

For his kindness and devotion, and for his endless
support to SPNL

Dr. Hoffmann's life and achievements serve to
highlight the bright side of human nature

You shan't be forgotten

À la mémoire de
Luc Hoffmann
1923 – 2016

Pour sa gentillesse et son dévouement, et pour
son soutien sans fin à la SPNL

La vie et les réalisations de Dr Hoffman ont aidé
à mettre en évidence le bon côté de la nature
humaine Tu ne seras jamais oublié



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IN MEMORY OF LUC HOFFMANN





HIMA KHERBET QANAFAR/AIN ZEBDEH - WEST BEKAA

● ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Syrian Serin *Serinus syriacus* - Hima Anjar
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“Homat Al-Hima is an Arabic slogan widely used to recognize the individuals and groups acting as Hima guardians and Heroes. Homat Hima are motivated, well trained & equipped young from local Hima communities, aspiring to lead on activities to give exposure to the Himas, and their communities work including environmental, economical and social concerns, and to assure the conservation of the site and its key biodiversity, and the ecological and cultural services it provides.”

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) sincerely thanks the support of the European Union, granted through the project “Enhancing livelihoods of Local Lebanese communities in Hima territories; from social, economical and natural perspectives”. Based on which Homat Hima program was initiated, enabling SPNL to contribute further with raising awareness, delivering reliable environmental information, and concretely protecting natural areas in Lebanon, through building capacities of local communities and safeguarding their natural resources, as well as promoting sustainable income generating activities for enhanced livelihoods. In addition, SPNL appreciates the great partnership from the MAVA Foundation and their continuous support to SPNL initiatives.

Further thanks to the our main partners, municipalities of the Himas involved in the pilot stage; namely: Anjar, Kfar Zabad, Ain Zebdeh, Kherbet Qanafar, and El Fekha; where their granted support and cooperation is crucial for the success of Homat Hima programme within the Hima approach.



Future Homat AlHima

● ● EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | RÉSUMÉ

Homat Al Hima (HH) are intrinsic to the Hima communities, the same villages and towns are inbred and inborn.

The experiences Nature and Biodiversity bring to people are mainly local.

The Hima is the Homat Al Hima's first love from which they grasp the first breath of fresh air. Their ears get tuned to the soft whispers of the nearby forest tree leaves', to the songs and sounds of the birds and wildlife, to the water rushing down from the Hima hills, and to the waves crashing endlessly on the Hima beaches inviting local farmers, shepherds and fishermen to harvest and gather the Hima resources while the first rays of sunshine paints the Hima landscapes; a picture we, Homat Al Hima, will cherish till the last days of our lives.

HH understand their Hima weather and climate as well as their local wildlife, the way they know their families, friends and community members they have grown among since their early childhood. They have witnessed the first flower to bloom and the last bird to migrate from their Himas.

They have acquired the tastes of their local cuisine and the songs and dances in their village festivals.

They are the custodians of their natural and cultural heritage.

Biodiversity conservation has the potential to benefit us all. Regional and international initiatives for conservation are important. Most impor-

Les gardiens de la nature, «Homat Al Hima», font partie intégrante des communautés des villes et des villages où se situe une «Hima».

La «Hima» est leur premier amour. Ils y ont respiré leur première goulée d'air frais, écouté le doux bruissement des feuilles dans les forêts voisines, le chant des oiseaux et les bruits de la faune locale, le son des cascades dévalant les collines, le ressac incessant des vagues sur le rivage, invitant fermiers, bergers et pêcheurs à récolter et à recueillir les ressources de ces «Hima», alors que les premiers rayons du soleil colorent le paysage : une image que nous, défenseurs des «Hima», chérirons jusqu'à notre dernier souffle. Ces gardiens connaissent bien le climat, la faune et la flore de leur Hima, de la même manière qu'ils connaissent leurs parents, leurs amis et la communauté au sein de laquelle ils ont grandi. Ils ont vu leur première fleur éclore et le dernier oiseau à migrer, ils ont goûté les saveurs de la cuisine locale, appris les chants et les danses de leur village. Ils sont les dépositaires de leur patrimoine naturel et culturel.

La conservation de la biodiversité est dans l'intérêt de tous et les initiatives régionales et internationales sont très importantes. Cependant, les actions de conservation doivent se concentrer sur des lieux bien spécifiques et impliquer la population locale dans une approche qui permet d'optimiser les connaissances locales et traditionnelles. Cette approche qui s'appuie sur la motivation des parties prenantes, renforce

tantly, conservation action has to be focused on very specific places, and must involve local people. A local approach helps to ensure the appropriate application of local knowledge. It builds on the motivation of local stakeholders, enhances the prospects of sustainability, increases efficiency and legitimacy, empowers people, has the potential to reduce conflict, and respect people's rights.

Through its local engagement and Empowerment Program, Birdlife aims to provide support for local conservation actions. It strengthens and expands networks of local individuals and organizations that are working to protect the places and nature they value.

Hima in Arabic means Protected Area. It is a community that acts for the conservation of sites, species and habitats in order to achieve the sustainable use of natural resources. Its origin goes back more than 1,500 years ago and it is spread along the Arabian Peninsula as a "tribal" system for sustainable management of natural resources.

In recent years the Hima approach- one that roots conservation in the actions of local communities- has seen a revival, as an alternative and complementary approach to the designation of protected areas by states. Efforts to promote the principles of Himas have been especially active in Lebanon, where 17 Himas got established in the last 12 years with municipalities, led by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL).

les perspectives en terme d'efficacité, de légitimité et de durabilité des projets, responsabilise les gens, respecte leurs droits et peut contribuer à réduire les conflits.

A travers son programme en faveur de l'implication et de la responsabilisation des populations locales, BirdLife a pour objectif de soutenir les mesures de conservation, de renforcer et de développer le réseau des personnes et des organisations qui oeuvrent pour la protection de la nature et des lieux qu'ils apprécient.

Le mot «Hima» désigne une zone protégée en arabe. Il s'agit d'une démarche communautaire en faveur de la conservation des sites, des espèces et des habitats pour une utilisation durable des ressources naturelles. Cette règle ancestrale datant de plus de 1500 ans a été progressivement adoptée dans toute la Péninsule Arabique, comme une sorte de système «tribal» de gestion durable des ressources naturelles.

Ces dernières années, cette approche (qui place la conservation au cœur des actions des communautés locales) a connu un renouveau. Elle est considérée par les états comme une démarche alternative et complémentaire dans la désignation des zones protégées. Les efforts pour promouvoir les principes de la «Hima» ont été particulièrement remarquables au Liban où plusieurs municipalités ont déclaré 17 «Hima» au cours des douze dernières années, des projets menés par la Société pour la protection de la nature au Liban (SPNL).

The purpose of SPNL HH Program is to build the capacity of local communities so that they can take a leadership role in the conservation of priority sites for conservation (Important Birds and Biodiversity Areas – (IBAs) & Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

Homat Al Hima (HH) is an Arabic slogan widely used to describe the individuals and groups acting as guardians of Hima and other sites important for wildlife. They are typically, highly motivated, young, and of local origin. They enjoy an aspiration to link conservation to the social and economic concerns faced by their communities.

L'objectif du programme «Homat al Hima» de la SPNL est de renforcer les capacités des communautés locales afin qu'elles assument un rôle de premier plan dans la conservation des principaux sites protégés notamment les zones importantes pour la conservation des oiseaux (ZICO) et les zones clés pour la biodiversité (ZCB).

«Homat al Hima» (HH) est une formule en arabe largement utilisée pour désigner les groupes et les individus qui exercent un rôle de gardiens des «Hima» et d'autres sites importants pour la faune. Il s'agit en particulier de jeunes gens des communautés locales, très motivés, désirant que la conservation de la nature et de la biodiversité contribue à soulager les problèmes socio-économiques de leurs communautés.



Assad Adel Serhal
Director General, SPNL
Directeur général de la SPNL



الملخص التنفيذي

تحقيق الاستخدام المستدام للموارد الطبيعية، ويعود أصل الكلمة إلى قبل أكثر من ١٥٠٠ سنة، وينتشر على مساحة شبه الجزيرة العربية كنظام «قبلي» يهدف إلى الإدارة المستدامة للموارد الطبيعية.

وشهدت مقارنة مفهوم «الحمي» في السنوات الأخيرة - وهو جهد يهدف إلى ترسيخ الجهود الرامية للمحافظة على الطبيعة من خلال أعمال المجتمعات المحلية - نهضة وكنهج بديل ومكمل لتحديد المناطق المعينة كمحميات من قبل الدول، كما أن الجهود الرامية إلى تعزيز مبادئ الحمي نشطت بشكل خاص في لبنان، حيث تم إنشاء ١٧ حمي في السنوات الـ ١٢ الماضية بالتعاون مع البلديات، بقيادة من «جمعية حماية الطبيعة في لبنان» (SPNL).

وكان هدف SPNL من برنامج حماية الحمي بناء قدرات المجتمعات المحلية، ليتكفوا من الاضطلاع بدور قيادي في الحفاظ على المواقع ذات الأولوية للمحافظة عليها (وهي «مناطق الطيور الهامة للتنوع البيولوجي» IBAS، ومناطق التنوع البيولوجي الرئيسية KBAS).

ويستخدم شعار حماية الحمي (HH) على نطاق واسع، وهو شعار باللغة العربية لوصف الأفراد والجماعات التي تعمل كأوصياء على الحمي وغيرها من المواقع الهامة للحياة البرية، وهم عادة ما يكونون من الشباب المندفعين ذات المنشأ المحلي، والطامحين لربط المحافظة على البيئة مع الاهتمامات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية التي تواجه مجتمعاتهم.

أسعد سرحال

مدير عام جمعية حماية الطبيعة في لبنان - SPNL

تعتبر مجموعة حماية الحمي جزءاً لا يتجزأ من قلب مجتمعات الحمي، وهي عبارة عن القرى والبلدات التي يولد فيها هؤلاء الأفراد ويتعلمون بالفطرة والوراثة، وتكون تجارب الطبيعة والتنوع الطبيعي التي يتعرضون إليها محلية عادة.

فالحمي تشكل الحب الأول لحماية الحمي، فمنها يستقون النفس الأول النقي، وتنظم أذانهم على الوشوشات الناعمة لأشجار الغابة المجاورة، إلى أغاني وأصوات الطيور والحياة البرية، إلى المياه المتدفقة من تلال الحمي، وإلى أصوات الأمواج المرتطمة إلى ما لا نهاية على شواطئ الحمي، داعية الفلاحين المحليين، الرعاة وصيادي السمك لجنّي وجمع ثرواتها، بينما ترسم أشعة الشمس الأولى مناظر الحمي الطبيعية، وهي صورة، نحن حماية الحمي سنعتز بها حتى الأيام الأخيرة من حياتنا.

يفهم حماية الحمي طقس ومناخ الحمي، فضلاً عن الحياة البرية المحلية الخاصة بها، بالطريقة التي يعرفون بها عائلاتهم وأصدقاءهم وأفراد المجتمع الذين نشأوا بينهم منذ طفولتهم المبكرة، فهم يشهدون تفتح أول زهرة حتى هجرة آخر طائر من الحمي الخاص بهم.

كما اكتسب حماية الحمي أذواق المطبخ المحلي، والأغاني والرقصات في مهرجانات قراهم، إنهم أوصياء على التراث الطبيعي والثقافي.

فعملية المحافظة على التنوع البيولوجي لديها القدرة على جلب الاستفادة لنا جميعاً، وتعتبر كافة المبادرات الإقليمية والدولية من أجل الحفاظ على هذا التنوع مهمة، إلا أن الأهم، هو تركيز المحافظة عليه في أماكن محددة للغاية، بحيث يجب أن تشمل السكان المحليين، ويمكن أن تساعد النهج المحلية على ضمان التطبيق العملي المناسب على الأرض للمعارف المحلية، وهذا يتم بناؤه على تفعيل أصحاب المصلحة المحليين، تعزيز آفاق الاستدامة، زيادة الكفاءة والشرعية، وتمكين الناس، فضلاً أن لدى هذه النهج القدرة على الحد من الصراع، واحترام حقوق الإنسان.

وتهدف «بيرد لايف» Birdlife من خلال مشاركتها المحلية وبرنامج التمكين الخاص بها، إلى تقديم الدعم لجهود الحماية المحلية، وتعزيز وتوسيع شبكات الأفراد والمنظمات المحلية التي تعمل على حماية الأماكن والطبيعة التي يجلبونها ويقدرونها. والحمي في اللغة العربية تعني المنطقة المحمية، وهي مجتمع يعمل من أجل الحفاظ على المواقع والأنواع والموائل، بهدف





HIMA KEAR ZABAD WETLAND - CENTRAL BEKAA

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● ● ● ● LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FFEM	Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HH	Homat ALHima
IBBA	Important Bird and Biodiversity Area
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
LCGs	Local Conservation Groups
SPNL	Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



Small fruited cherry *Prunus microcarpus* - Hima Anjar / Kfar zabad area



الحامي - AlHami

● DEFINITION OF LCGS AND HOMAT ALHIMA

A. BIRDLIFE DEFINITION

Birdlife International is an organization working globally with a network of grassroots, representing national organizations. It is operating in 120 countries all over the world. They aim to conserve birds and their habitats by undermining biodiversity losses as well as the entire ecosystem and what life depends on. Birdlife and its partners believe that conservation cannot take place without the direct support and involvement of local communities. Accordingly, Birdlife partnership has identified approximately 10,000 sites of greatest importance for the protection of birds and biodiversity conservation through a participatory approach at the national level². Birdlife partners have created and empowered the role of local community networks that support the conservation of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBBAs) at national and site level, through the creation of Local Conservation Groups (LCGs). According to Birdlife, LCGs are voluntary groups and individuals from the local community cooperating with Birdlife partners to achieve common objectives and ambitions including sustainable development. This will

lead to conserve Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBBAs)³. The empowerment of local conservation groups lie at the heart of Birdlife's approach to provide people with skills, knowledge, resources and rights for their own benefits and for the welfare of environment. Globally, this progressively growing network is currently over 2,000 LCGs at IBAs².

B. SPNL DEFINITION

The Birdlife Partner in Lebanon, the Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL), has been working since 1992 on the IBA program. The first 4 IBAs were Identified for Lebanon (Shouf Cedars, Horsh Ehden, Palm Islands & Ammiq Wetlands). Since 2004, SPNL has been empowering the role of the local communities in the conservation of IBAs through the revival of the

C. UNDP DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Hima approach “community based conservation system”. SPNL has recognized Local Conservation Groups as members of the local communities or a protected area committee who dedicate time and effort towards the conservation of the IBA. Thus, through SPNL’s previous work and assessment for LCGs in Lebanon, members of protected area committee who were employed to contribute to the management of protected area, were defined as LCGs too.

SPNL believes that LCGs role is necessary for the improvement of conservation actions. Hence, SPNL encourages the institutionalization of LCGs on “Hima” sites to empower their role in planning and managing IBAs. Accordingly, SPNL recognizes the importance of empowering Local Conservation Groups through the creation of a mentoring program, which highlights and addresses their capacity building needs. Among the identified LCG groups, SPNL has found that youth represent three quarter of them. So, SPNL considered the need to develop the capacities of youth to support in the conservation of IBAs.

In 2014, SPNL established the HH fund to serve this purpose. Homat Al-Hima is an Arabic slogan that is used to recognize the individuals and groups acting as Hima guardians. SPNL defines HH, as motivated, well-trained and equipped youth from local Hima communities, aspiring to lead on the activities and give some exposure to the Hima sites. Moreover, they are ambitious to work for their communities including environmental, economic and social concerns. They also seek the assurance of the conservation of the IBA, and its key biodiversity as well as the ecological and cultural services it provides.

UNDP, working in more than 170 countries and territories, plays a major role in combining local, regional and international visions in order to promote livelihood and support quality environment. UNDP recognizes the United Nations General Assembly definition of the term “Youth” as the age cohort of 15-24 years. The definition of youth varies in different countries due to the diverse circumstances including financial, economic, demographic, and socio-cultural. Considering how each country defines this term, and taking into consideration each circumstance, the UNDP Youth Strategy takes into account the non- homogenous nature of the youth population. It acknowledges the hierarchy in needs within the younger population. As such, UNDP uses a more systematic definition of youth to make country -specific policies and programming affiliated to the national and local realities.

UNDP defines youth as young women and men, with their diverse experiences and circumstances and refers to the initial definition of youth used for them at country or regional level(s). UNDP uses a wide range of younger population including young women and men between ages 25-30 and above 35, based on the diversity of contextual realities, regional and national youth policy directives⁴. In sum , According to UNDP, youth generation is the largest the world has ever known. More than 60 percent of the population in many UNDP’s program countries are youth aged 15-24.



Leading by Example - Berj Tamberian - Homat Alhima leader teaching HH about wildlife monitoring



Guide training, Hima Kfar Zabad Visitors' Center

● BACKGROUND ON SPNL'S WORK WITH YOUTH/ HOMAT ALHIMA

SPNL was established in 1986 under the Lebanese Laws, and approved by the ministry of interior. The effective collaboration with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) & through a fund from GEF, SPNL initiated the first Protected Areas project in Lebanon. It includes three sites declared as nature reserves under the authority of the Ministry of Environment namely: Shouf Cedar Reserve, Ehden Forest and Palm Islands. This was followed by another project funded by FFEM to support Tyre nature reserve, and Ammiq wetlands.

Funded by MAVA, SPNL in partnership with A Rocha Lebanon conducted some extensive field surveys between March 2005 and February 2008, aiming to identify new Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas on the national level. Accordingly, additional 11 new sites were declared as IBAs; thus resulting in an inventory of 15 IBAs in Lebanon which are recognized internationally³.

After twenty years of experience working with nature reserves in collaboration with governmental agencies, SPNL recognized the importance of involving local communities in the conservation of their natural resources. For the purpose of protecting birds, nature and biodiversity and in collaboration with municipalities and local people, SPNL succeeded in reviving the traditional "Hima" approach in 2004. They also sought to promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

Upon the establishment of the Hima sites, SPNL has promoted the establishment of LCGs in its Hima's and empowered their active leadership role in the management.

In addition to Hima sites, SPNL supported the role of both newly and already established LCGs

in nature reserves (such as scout groups, local protected area committees..etc), aiming to conserve IBAs. LCGs were provided by SPNL with several training on nature guiding, bird identification, biodiversity management. etc. Hence, they contributed in the following:

- 1- planning and management of IBAs through the collection of scientific information related to nature and biodiversity.
- 2- day to day management of protected area, such as guiding visitors, monitoring wildlife. etc.
- 3- being involved in several events concerning eco-tourism promotion, and awareness raising aiming to conserve (IBAs).
- 4 - leading on the organization of nature festivals, children's educational summer camps, open days in the village, in addition to the several cleanup campaigns that took place in different IBAs.

In the year 2014, SPNL decided to focus its new strategy on the conservation of Hima sites, through empowering the role of youth and raising their capacities. SPNL realized the important role of youth, which were the biggest portion of local conservation group (LCGs) who supported IBA management, in the conservation of these sites. However, SPNL noted that youth can lead on environmental stewardship in their villages, if offered a progressive capacity building program which could support them economically too. Accordingly, in 2016, SPNL developed a mentoring program which realizes awareness and capacity building needs of youth and providing them with job opportunities in nature conservation. One of the main concerns that was raised has highlighted the need to come up with a local name for youth, in order to give them ownership to their IBAs. Then, Homat AlHima was agreed to be that naming.



Qaraoun Lake, Hima Qaraoun - West Bekaa

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF YOUTH / HOMAT ALHIMA GLOBALLY

A. CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH/ HOMAT ALHIMA

In the 21st century, the situation of the young generation has altered greatly. Some of youth especially women are living in developing countries where they are facing challenges brought about by limited access to vital resources, healthcare, training, education and jobs, political and social opportunities. This diversity of challenges explains why youth are considered as the targeted population that should be protected and empowered in order to transform societies positively. Some of the world's youth suffer from poverty, hunger, violence, different forms of discrimination and gender inequality. One of the key causes of inequality and poverty is due to income losses or unemployment that is associated with poorer health and educational outcomes. Evidence shows that gender equality is an effective way to alleviate poverty, improve health and sanitation and reduce violence in societies.

Many of youth are also deprived from the participation in decision-making process, through

which they become the victims in such violent society's. Likewise, young girls are forced into premature marriages and deprived from the engagement in the public sphere.

The lack of job is another challenge that forces the young population to migrate and leave their families and their communities to search for job opportunities abroad. However, working abroad will bring many challenges to youth such as crime, drug abuse, increase vulnerability of HIV and poor healthcare. For the native community, the massive economic migration causes gender imbalance, brain drain, and loss of young cohort⁴.

“...IT WAS A NICE EXPERIENCE, AS I
NEVER HAD ANY INTEREST IN BIRDS
BEFORE, BUT NOW I’M WALKING
AROUND ALONE TRYING TO FIND AND
IDENTIFY A BIRD BY MYSELF...”

Lama Choker, trainee from Kfar Zabad

B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In order to respond to young generation needs, it is important to guarantee their basic rights, such as involving them in decision-making, offering them new capacities and opportunities. This enables them to play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting an environmentally friendly practices starting from home to the entire community.

Youth can effectively participate in sustainable development. To do so, youth should be offered a diversity of opportunities like education, capacity building & awareness, social media access, political participation, employment, and finance.

- Youth shall be encouraged to participate in decision-making processes concerning environmental & socio-economic issues, at local, national and regional levels.
- Youth shall be involved in civic awareness and volunteerism aiming to empower their stewardship.
- Youth shall be provided with the basic right of free access to information and shall be aware about this human right.
- Youth shall be promoted to explore the role of social media and ICT in enabling access to

information, promote their political participation and mitigate the “digital divide”, allowing their inclusion through information dissemination, sharing and networking.

- Youth shall be promoted to explore innovative technologies and approaches in decision making, monitoring public policies and youth ICT initiatives which means making youth knowledgeable in the domain and of the techniques being used to manipulate and analyze the data.
- Youth shall be equipped with expanded educational opportunities such as environmental and developmental responsibilities through specific awareness and capacity building programs.
- Youth shall be supported to access finance, markets, and other resources to increase their productivity, capacities, and competitiveness.
- Youth shall be connected with internship programs offered by universities and political institutions.



Equipping Homa AlHima - Canoe training workshop in Hima Anjar



Skill development - Canoe training workshop in Hima Anjar

IV. SITUATION ANALYSIS OF YOUTH / HOMAT ALHIMA IN LEBANON

A. CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH/ HOMAT ALHIMA

Most of the global challenges highlighted by youth worldwide are present in Lebanon too. Lebanon is considered to be a demographically young country where youth represent around 60% of its population. Thus, challenges faced by youth are expected to hinder the progressive development of the country and its different sectors, especially the environmental part. Upon the fact that natural sites are mainly located in rural areas, and based on an assessment finalized by SPNL in 2015 in relation to the challenges faced by Local Conservation Groups and HH in IBA sites, the following issues were underlined:

Poor Economic Situation: The aspect of participation in relation to nature conservation was a major challenge in the IBA sites. However, youth were only interested if their participation was associated with financial incentives such as guiding fees, or other service fees.

Lack of Institutionalization: It was found that youth role became more concrete towards the conservation of nature reserve after being unified

under an institution such as a scouts group, club or any other youth group. Many youth indicated that it was hard for them to be involved in the management of IBAs if not linked to a group vision, which provides them with the strategic planning scheme concerning the conservation of the sites that they were supporting.

Security and Welfare Issues: Many youth indicated that their role was paralyzed in some areas because of the security and welfare issues, especially in areas with critical political and security situation. Likewise, such areas were present in rural regions of Lebanon where the community suffers from severe poverty. Hence, financial incentives and stability were needed to support youth role. Furthermore, the Syrian influx in Lebanon created further economic and social burdens on the Lebanese youth, due to the competition on the available jobs.

Social Pressure: Social pressure was identified as one of the reasons that hindered youth role, especially in nature reserves, where local

people perceived themselves as outsiders. They considered that their opinions, role and rights were ignored due to the reserve's conservation priorities.

Capacity Building: Many youth indicated that they lack the major capacities to participate in the management and conservation of nature reserves and Hima. Continuous fixed trainings was highlighted as a major need by the Nature Reserves & Hima sites' youth. This was important in order to provide new youth members with general knowledge and background for the support in the conservation and management priorities of the IBA. It was also noted that, the majority of youth lacked the general knowledge about IBAs, threatened species, scientific data research and monitoring as well as ecosystems management⁴. Adding to the above challenges, the following issues were also identified on the national level.

Unsatisfied Basic Needs and Deprivation: Many youth live in low satisfaction conditions and extreme deprivation that are witnessed in all aspects (education, housing, limited water access and sanitation). Several war incidents in Lebanon have eroded natural resources and destroyed homes. The massive destruction of the primary infrastructure, after July 2006 war, aggravated by poverty issues deprived youth from their basic needs. Likewise, the current infrastructure is insufficient to cope with the added needs due to Syrian refugee crisis.

Discrimination: In terms of youth rights, several regulations exclude young generation from the involvement and the participation in governance such as the voting age, the nomination for parliament election and the right to establish and to be a member of associations. This discrimination has discouraged some youth to participate more actively in civil society and kept them away from the participation in decision-making.

Lack of Adequate Education: The quality of public and private education differs greatly since the government does not provide adequate resources to public schools. For Lebanese youth, there is no problem in access to education; but rather, the youth problem is in the quality of education. Added to that, the Lebanese public schools are confronted with a sudden increase of Syrian pupils.

Unemployment: Lebanese youth suffer from a high unemployment rate. This highly increasing rate deteriorates economic situation which translates into job anxiety and deprivation of youth development needs. In addition, Lebanese youth express concern over the rising work competition. Both Lebanese male and female youth complain that they are driven out of the job market by Syrian refugees willing to work for half or one-third of their wages.

B. OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH/ HOMAT ALHIMA AND DEVELOPMENT

SPNL realizes the important role of youth as agents of change towards sustainable development. SPNL acknowledges the active role of newly and already existing young members of LCGs/ HH, in promoting conservation of IBAs and the management of natural resources. Accordingly, SPNL supports youth and works with them to overcome the challenges they face, in order to empower their leadership role.

Likewise, SPNL realizes the right of youth in education, and reinforces their leadership role by involving them in capacity building trainings on ecosystem valuation, hunting management, eco-tourism and group management, biodiversity monitoring and site management, team building and conflict management...etc.

In addition, SPNL's approach promotes the sustainable use of natural resources and alleviates poverty through the financial support it offers, by providing jobs in ecotourism & biodiversity management in Hima sites. This reduces competition over job opportunities between Syrian refugees and host communities. This also supports the conservation of their nature resources.

SPNL also incorporates both young male and female in political, social and economic life as the core of sustainable development. They are not only beneficiaries of development but also the agents of development.

Youth are empowered to lead on several Hima initiatives (such as eco-tourism development & management), participate in the development of Hima management plans, and negotiate their opinions and rights with their local governance.

Youth are also promoted to have a heard voice among their communities through the established HH committees and clubs, which are officially recognized by the municipality through a municipal council decision.

SPNL also focuses on empowering the role of women and promoting gender equality. This takes place through involving different women groups in the different leadership trainings that are offered for the sake of improving HH capacities and promoting them to be involved in Hima site management. This is done by offering income generating opportunities for them related to Hima services. Also SPNL supports traditional women livelihoods (such as crafts and artisanal work) and prompts its marketing through linking it with conservation messages.

SPNL develops and implements strategies for decent and productive work for youth and makes available the benefits of new technologies, especially in information and communications.

“... TODAY WE WERE TAUGHT ON HOW TO WELCOME VISITORS AND TOURISTS AND INTRODUCE THEM TO OUR ENVIRONMENT, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN NEGATIVE IMPACTS AND HOW TO AVOID IT ...”

Mona Chahla, collage student from Kfar Zabad



Yellow horned poppy *Glaucium leiocarpum* - West bekaa area

A. BACKGROUND ABOUT THE FUND /OBJECTIVE AND CRITERIA

The Homat ALHima Fund was established by SPNL in 2014 in order to support the leadership role of the young population, mainly men and women, through involving them in capacity building trainings, and empowering their ability to make decision concerning the management of the Himas. The fund aims to:

- Identify the motivated young population from Hima communities, and support their leadership role by strengthening their capacities in scientific research, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management, and offering financial support in order to promote awareness activities on their territory.
- Empower social responsibility among the young generation through encouraging them to lead on social/ environmental issues in their areas through providing them with the needed support.
- Connect the identified young population to SPNL programs on Hima revival, and empower their capacities through the in-house training at SPNL, at both office and at the field or enable the abroad training with related partner organizations.
- Provide grants to conserve IBAs by improving the state of habitats, protect birds and other biodiversity, and to address any threats to the IBA.
- Promote community-based conservation of IBAs to recognize , equity, rights, traditional practices ,values and the role of local communities.
- Establish a HH's network to exchange knowledge and skills among Himas and nature reserves.
- Raise awareness, outreach and non- formal education at IBAs with special focus on the young generation and local communities through the provision of financial incentives and capacity building needs.

B. WHY EMPOWER YOUTH / HOMAT ALHIMA

Local empowerment is critical since international conventions stress the involvement of local communities for the conservation of biodiversity, who are considered to be the custodians of the land. Thus, local people should be involved in the planning, management and monitoring of natural resources to have a positive influence on the management of their resources at national and international levels. Empowerment concerns are building the confidence, skills, knowledge, resources and rights of local community to overcome hindrances and possess leadership skills when dealing with local conservation issues. Similarly, empowerment improves the ability of local people to make decisions and access data and resources. They also gain knowledge and new skills that improve their personal and collective circumstances. In summary, local empowerment is the right based approach towards sustainable development. Since HH / youth represent the backbones for a better future, therefore investing in them is the key towards sustaining conservation initiatives. However, this can't be achieved without considering the challenges faced by youth / HH and tackling it in the planning and management of IBAs, such as realizing livelihood and socio-economic issues.





Wetland restoration - Hima Kfar Zabad



Bird Identification and Monitoring Workshop at Women's Atelier - Hima Anjar

VI ● HOMAT ALHIMA CAPACITY BUILDING AND MENTORING PROGRAM

A. GENERAL BACKGROUND ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Since the year 2004, SPNL has been working on the revival of the Hima approach in several areas of Lebanon, aiming to empower the leadership role of local communities in the management of natural resources. Subsequently, SPNL has established Local Conservation Groups/ Homat AlHima in those sites and worked on building their capacities in biodiversity management. LCGs' capacity building needs have been recognized during several trainings in each Hima site. Nevertheless, trainings were given without linking them to a certain systematic capacity building program. After recognizing this aspect, SPNL developed a focused HH mentoring program in 2016, tailored to each site "biodiversity management requirements". The mentoring program was built based on the HH identified needs in previous encounters. The developed mentoring program includes a series of skills trainings that focus specifically on the capacity building needs of HH/ youth, thus allowing them to acquire the necessary potential to lead on the Hima site social & biodiversity management and to attain an income. SPNL chose to implement this planned program, as a module in the Himas of Anjar Kfar Zabad in central Bekaa, as focus areas, in addition to Himas; El Fekha Northeast Bekaa and Ain Zebdeh/Kherbet Qanafar, West Bekaa. The plan was to sustain the extensive efforts and projects that were implemented in these areas and, that is supposed to continue through the leadership of the local community, especially youth.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Through empowering the youth of the Hima sites, the program intends to:

- Promote the leadership role of the HH in Hima sites, in order to spread social and environmental responsibility.
- Promote the role of the HH, especially young women and men, in order to protect and preserve rights and values of local communities, traditional practices and local knowledge.
- Strengthen the role of young leaders in environmental and biodiversity management.
- Offer job opportunities for young leaders in nature conservation, in the process of linking conservation and livelihoods development (ecosystem services, poverty reduction).



Riparian forest - Hima Anjar

A- CASE STUDIES

1. ANJAR KFAR ZABAD CENTRAL BEKAA

Kfar Zabad and Anjar are two adjacent villages on the east side of the Bekaa valley situated among wetlands, woodlands and agricultural fields. The area was declared an Important Bird Area (IBA) by SPNL in 2005. It has been an integral part of the African Great Rift Valley Flyway for migratory birds. The site is a habitat for several globally endangered species including Syrian Serin Bird, River Otter, Wild Cat, etc. Unfortunately, the site suffers from several challenges, which deteriorates the current habitats including unsustainable agriculture, unsustainable hunting, urbanization, water scarcity. After announcing the site as a Hima in 2005, when has to notice the following activities. First, SPNL managed in partnership with local communities, development agencies and partners to minimize the highlighted impacts on the present ecosystem and species. Second, through the Hima approach, SPNL and its partners worked together on a suite of strategies to minimize the negative impact of agricultural and

“ THE PARTICIPANTS ARE GETTING MORE INVOLVED AND CONTRIBUTING WITH THEIR OWN IDEAS TO MAINTAIN AND CONSERVE THIS NATURE IN THE FUTURE ... IF WE MANAGE TO CONTINUE ON THIS PACE WE SHALL HAVE VERY PLEASANT RESULTS...”

Mr Jean Banboukian, a local Farmer and SPNL's focal point/trainer from Anjar

other practices on the ecosystem, and maximizing local support and ownership of the Hima. Third, the Hima approach aided SPNL and the municipalities of Anjar and Kfar Zabad to join their efforts in order to increase their communities' assets and attributes and most importantly to empower locals' roles and promote community ownership for conservation. Consequently, the Homat AlHima mentoring program 'focused on skills trainings', came as a complementary component to support SPNL provision to those sites and its local authorities aiming to invest in "human resources" knowledge and capacity building needs and provide alternative income for the young generation.

2. EL FEKHA NORTHEAST BEKAA

Hima El Fekha, the 8th Hima in Lebanon, declared on April 27 2013, with the consensus and collaboration of its municipality. El Fekha is a biologically diverse site, harboring more than 50 bird species, out of which 10 are considered biome-restricted. It is an extension of the Ras Baalbek Important Bird Area (IBA), as classified by BirdLife International. The Hima area extends over 59,138 Km² linking Mount Lebanon with the Anti-Lebanon mountains, to stipulate the basis for organized grazing systems in El Fekha, whereby methods for sustainable grazing was promoted by SPNL through a zonation & management plan in coordination with the local community/herders themselves.

In El Fekha, the natural ecosystem was found degraded, as a result of hundreds of years of overgrazing, leading to desertification, aggravated by the semi-desert climatic character. This area is recognized as the highest concentration of trans-human shepherd grazing practices in Lebanon with more than 15,000 heads of goat & sheep. The region from Ras Baalbek to Al-Fakhieh, around 120 Km² is used by more than 25 shepherds, estimating, more than 450 heads/shepherd. In parallel, agriculture also acts as another complementary income in El Fekha village. Additionally,



Tufted stonecrop *Sedum caespitosum* - Hima El Fekha area

El Fekha women were found to have a role in the management of livestock and agriculture, and significantly involved in the management of natural resources where they play a major role in household and animal-production. Women have the primary responsibility over the husbandry of small ruminants, providing water and feed, cleaning stalls and milking. They also have a major role in harvesting of seasonal crops and agriculture production, processing of food for market and storage. After completing the socio-economic assessment, the major problems identified in El Fekha were, the absence of small production factories, lack of marketing of crops/products, deficiency of job opportunities, and deficiency in water quantity as compared to demand.



Hima El Fekha / Ras El Ain arid areas

3. AIN ZEBDEH KHERBET QANAFAR WEST BEKAA

Ain Zebdeh/Kherbet Qanafar, declared as Hima by the municipal council in collaboration with SPNL, is located at the eastern slopes of the Shouf Mountain, overlooking the Bekaa Valley. It is also under the main migration flyway for soaring & water birds, a bottleneck area situated in the middle of the Shouf Cedar Reserve, Ammiq wetlands, and Qaraoun Lake (All identified & approved IBAs), a resting & breeding site for a large number of threatened & endangered birds (Imperial Eagle, lesser Spotted, Shrikes, Buntings, Syrian Woodpecker) & others mammals (wolves, Striped Hyenas, porcupines, squirrels, badgers, Lynx & wild cat, etc.), & flora (mainly oak & pine Forests, medicinal and edible endemic plants), situated at the narrowest Lebanese territory between Mount Hermon & Mount Lebanon. The following nature assets made the site a major attraction for Lebanese and International Tourist, developers, hunters, picnickers, and Sheppard, causing lots of destruction to this IBA /KBA. This makes it one of SPNL's top priority sites for conservation and Hima revival in Lebanon. Agriculture was found to be the main income generating activity for its residents. Yet, with an urgent need for artesian well excavation, in order to satisfy the demand and needs of the local community, agriculture, and subsequently supporting shepherds.



Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* - Hima Kherbet Qanafar
© Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi



Agricultural landscapes surrounding Hima Kherbet Qanafar / Ain Zebdeh



Cream-colored Cursor *Cursorius cursor* - Hima El Fekha / Ras El
Ain arid areas © Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi



Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar* - Hima Ain Zebdeh
© Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi

B. SKILLS TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS



Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* - Hima Anjar
© Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi

This module program was mainly implemented with the HH of Anjar –Kfar Zabad, with an age group range between 13 and 35. A group of around 20 to 25 people from both sites participated in the program. On the other hand, part of the program was implemented in the rest of the Hima sites, El Fekha and Ain Zebdeh/Kherbet Qanafar; using same approaches and methodologies; yet slightly different activities based on site needs. The disproportionality in activity implementation between Hima sites throughout the program's process was imposed by the political and national security situation of the latter sites.

Nonetheless, progression was attained, whereby at the end of the program, four Homat AlHima were selected and offered job opportunities in the Hima sites after undergoing an evaluation process. However, the rest of the trained individuals joined the established Homat AlHima club as volunteers for nature conservation.

The program consisted of three major themes, namely:

Biodiversity and Science, Ecotourism and Awareness, Communication and Management.

The series of skills trainings used will further be elaborated in this document.

Prior to the trainings, a sequence of planning and round table discussions were conducted with SPNL members, professional staff, consultants and representatives from municipalities and assigned Hima focal points. The round table discussions resulted in the highlighted themes to ultimately enable HH to sustain and manage their Hima sites. Accordingly, the areas of con-

centration during the trainings were chosen as objectives, and subsequently, expected outputs were developed.

The direct objective and outcome of the program resides on Skills Development. Yet, many indirect objectives have been targeted as well throughout the selected trainings.

In the case of Anjar/ Kfar Zabad, as well as in Ain Zebdeh/Kherbet Qanafar, the specific skills, mentioned in details below, were identified as important outputs for the Himas.

For instance, ecotourism and guiding, in addition to water management and sustainable agricultural skills were identified as a must to enhance the sites' operation and promoting livelihoods. Besides the direct objectives of the highlighted program and its themes, SPNL also aimed to empower HH in order to determine their personal goals from the training program "feeding their personal development in parallel with the Hima site development" thus, realizing their role in the sustainability of the Hima site and management of the activities that they were trained on (such as the management of ecotourism activities & monitoring species).

Furthermore, the program indirectly aims to develop cognitive skills in order to strengthen the mental process of discovering, analyzing and solving problems so that they can overcome obstacles faced in the Hima sites, such as religious and political affiliations, national security issues, civil instability, as well as the change of community leaders (municipality in this case). Consequently, activities in this regard were merged in the program through involving the members from various backgrounds and leading trainees to identify the real problems and then brainstorming solutions together. By such, the probability of them getting involved in such conflicts is minimized, and the likelihood of maintaining the program's continuity independent of any conflict has increased.

The program has been developed based on three fundamental objectives, namely: cognitive, leadership and behavioral objectives with an aim to reach the ultimate goal of creating "Homat Al-Hima", acting as Hima guardians.

The expected outcome from this mentoring program, with respect to the briefed objectives, fall in specific categories, framed by specific outcomes which influence the selection of "Homat Al-Hima members" who were chosen later as staff or volunteers.



Variegated crownvetch *Coronilla varia* - Hima Anjar / Kfar zabad

Table1- Objective & Outcome

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
<p>Cognitive Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper understanding and knowledge about Hima sites • Understanding the relationship between communities and Hima • Appreciation of individual and cultural differences • Acquiring Practical Skill • Application of acquired Skills (canoeing, bird watching, guiding, event management, etc....) • Acquiring knowledge on new biodiversity themes and topics (species, ecosystems management) • Analyzing situations • Prioritizing, by contrasting different values, resolving conflicts, and creating value systems. The emphasis is on comparing, relating and synthesizing values. 	<p>Selected HH staff and volunteers should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the minimum performance essentials of the given themes. • Show verbal knowledge in all aspects of the concerned sites and respective activities. • Show procedural knowledge, such as assigning roles, prioritizing, decision making, and develop site management plans etc.... • Maintain ethics • Participate in leading on environmental awareness and education in the community
<p>Leadership Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation of the HH. (Motivation) • Commitment, i.e, linking HH to the ultimate program goal. • Social improvement. • Adopting values, which control their behavior by showing self-reliance when working independently or in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation • Resembling positive behavior and attitudes towards Al Hima areas • Involvement and follow up of the program • Environmental Stewardship
<p>Behavioral Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentive awareness to all respective Hima aspects • Building relationship between program participants to ensure trust, honesty and synergy at work. • Sharing reliable information • Taking a neutral perspective by considering all alternative views and opinions while reaching decisions about attainable plan or developing realistic objectives. • Providing support in decisions and actions relevant to the development of the program, and evaluating needs and capacities • Engaging in role identification in order to motivate participants. • Improving planning through critical thinking with regards to envisioning the future and developing Hima Site as well as HH potentials. • Using objective approach in problem solving. • Displaying a professional commitment to ethical, traditional and cultural practice. • Ability to construct and continuously (sustainably) develop Hima sites and areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent and objective information or experience exchange within community members • Tangible decisions and action taken towards action plan development and implementation • Adopting roles and responsibilities • Identifying and resolving challenges • Teamwork



Capacity building activities for local communities to enhance leadership and nature stewardship



C. HH MENTORING PROGRAM THEMES AND TOPIC'S - DETAILED OBJECTIVES

A series of skill development training workshops have been conducted at the above-mentioned sites on the selected themes, as formerly explained. Each workshop was planned to enhance specific skills and knowledge for HH, in order to support in the management of the Hima site and undermine faced challenges. Detailed reports of each workshop are highlighted in Annex I below. However, the major objectives of the different provided skills trainings were:

• Biodiversity & Science

• Flora and Fauna Identification

(Conducted at Hima Anjar Kfar Zabad)

- Know what to look for when identifying fauna in field
- Know the common fauna in Anjar / Kfar Zabad area
- Ability to identify fauna by tracking footprints and scats
- Comprehend plants/flora
- Learn basic flora anatomy
- Know what to search for plant/flora identification
- Acquaintance to basic sketching for flora identification

• Basic Bird Identification and Monitoring Tools and Techniques

(Conducted at Hima Anjar kfar Zabad and Hima El Fekha)

- Learn and understand the significance of birds ecologically and economically
- Know the reasons behind the decrease of birds population

- Learn basic bird identification techniques
- Learn basic bird watching tools and techniques

• **Improving Conservation Status near threatened species in Lebanon**

(Conducted at Hima Anjar kfar Zabad, Ain Zebdeh Kherbet Qanafar and Hima El Fekha)

- Raise awareness
- Get familiar with the Cinereous Bunting
- Learn all general information about the near threatened species
- Know how to conserve its population
- Understand how important the stated strategies are
- Learn how to identify a bird
- Understand the importance of sustainable hunting
- Learn the value of birds
- Know the difference between birds and game birds
- Raise awareness on the necessary safety guidelines during hunting
- Differentiate between a hunter and a bird killer

• **Ecotourism and Awareness**

• **Rope courses Training – Training the trainer and Guides training workshop**

(Conducted at Hima Ain Zebdeh/ Kherbet Qanafar)

- Know what is a Ropes Course, why and how to use it
- Know the uses and needs of each tool
- Learn all safety techniques and measures during activity
- Learn about all relevant equipment
- Understand and acknowledge the importance of teamwork.
- Provide challenge to visitors/tourists in a non-competitive manner.
- Ability to train other/new comers or staff on all of the above.

• **Canoeing Training Program**

(Conducted at Hima Anjar Kfar Zabad)

- Understand what canoeing is and all related risks to it

- Be able to properly maneuver and handle the canoe and paddles confidently and be confident in water

- Be able to differentiate between waters of rivers, lakes, etc.(they are all very different and they demand different knowledge and skill)

- Develop group management skills in water

- Learn all needed tools and equipment and how to use them

- Learn how to capsize, to rescue, and how to be prepared for an emergency

• **Guide Training**

(Conducted at Hima Anjar/Kfar Zabad and Ain Zebdeh/Kherbet Qanafar)

- Empower local Community

- Capacity building (Guiding Skills) through existing Local guides

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of a local guide

- Know and identify the basics of hiking tools and equipment

- Know how to receive a group, and steps to be done prior to any tour

- Understand the relationship between agricultural farming and Al Hima

- Know the essentials to camping and learning Ethics of Nature

- Star gazing and basic astrology; learn how to identify stars and planets, by understanding star alignment and positioning.

• **Communication & Management**

(Conducted at Hima Anjar/Kfar Zabad)

• **Landscape & Hima Training**

- Comprehend all elements of Al Hima

- Understand and identify the community's surrounding environment



Rope-course training workshop in West bekaa - Hima Ain Zebdeh/ Kherbet Qanafar



Flora and Fauna training workshop in Hima Kfarzabad/wetland

- Assess the existing components of a landscape, and highlight the needed components for improvement
- Identify characteristics and threats of the land
- Develop a landscape design

• Sustainable Water & Agriculture Management Training

- Know the importance of water
- Know the importance of water use and conservation
- Know about sustainable wetland management
- Learn basic information about the methods and equipment of water and soil monitoring
- Comprehend the concept of sustainable development
- Learn the general concept and practices about sustainable agriculture
- Learn about organic farming and integrated pest management

• Social Media

- Understand the difference between different types of Social Media tools
- Know the trends, techniques, and Insights of the Social Media tools
- Understand the need to publish significant contents in Social Media
- Develop a public Facebook Page for HH

• Business Planning

- Know the main features of a Business Plan
- Apprehend the requirements of a strategic plan
- Draft a simple and focused business plan – Using examples from the respective Hima sites

• Event Management

- Differentiate between event types
- Know what questions to ask when planning for and starting an event
- Develop an event framework
- Identify working committees and assigning responsibilities

- Know what and when to do prior, during and after the event

D. SPNL TOOLS TO EMPOWER YOUTH/ HH

SPNL believes that affective learning, would take place through applying hands on programs and experimentation. Accordingly, upon developing the Hima mentoring program, participatory learning was highlighted as a major approach to be used during the several skills trainings that were provided. Therefore, only around 10% of the provided learning approach was theoretical. Different approaches using several tools were used to provide the training themes including:

• Theoretical approach:

was used to serve as a starting point for practice. The following tools were used:

- PowerPoint presentations & Slideshows; an objective tool to showcase and deliver information and data regarding respective topics.
- Images and audiovisuals; to stimulate and emphasize on learning material.
- Handouts; consists of information and data learnt, kept with trainees as guidelines or reference.

• Participatory approach:

This approach was used in order to enhance engagement and ownership of participants. Accordingly the following participatory tools were used:

- Flip Charts & Flashcards: used by participants

as method to elaborate learning information.

- Q&A's and Experimental Exchange: an open dialog allowing participants to express or share experiences with mentors, aiming to fully comprehend concepts. Group work was used within this approach, where participants were divided into groups aiming to discuss or resolve certain assigned issues or tasks. A group facilitator and repertoire was nominated among each group in order to facilitate communication among group members and present group vision.
- Application Theory - mostly used for management theories, participants are requested to apply the theory that they learnt on paper. Such as, business and event planning and management.

• Outdoor Activities:

The following approach was used in order to implement and exercise learnt theoretical information, such as bird watching and bird identification, flora and fauna identification, canoeing, guiding, etc.

E. SCREENING PROCESS IN RELATION TO EACH WORKSHOP

Hima Anjar Kfar Zabad is considered as a model. A great sum of training workshops was conducted in the course of three months. The screening was used in order to select the potential HH staff for their respective Hima sites. The screening was initially designed as follows:

- **Step 1:** Primary Selection: During this step, groups with the defined age category express interest to join the HH after announcing the program in the village with the help of municipality, scouts or other individuals from the village.
- **Step 2:** Capacity Building: Selected Groups attend the different training workshops provided under the skills development program. During that stage, young leaders express interest to lead on certain areas.
- **Step 3:** Secondary Selection: Groups undertake an exam related to the provided skills in order to select distinguished individuals.
- **Step 4:** Equipping distinguished Individuals.
- **Step 5:** Implementation: Selected individuals implement projects on the grounds and lead on the different trained issues through experts mentoring.

Upon applying the identified screening process, it was noted that Step 3 of the process was not viable, in which a different approach was used in screening.

Hence, training program coordinator as well as corresponding trainers used observational selection in-order to monitor trainees' performances and select the relevant individual in-order to be recruited later as Hima staff. Consequently, trainers and coordinator were asked through each workshop to observe each participating member and assess visually and verbally their capabilities through their demonstrated interest, participation, involvement and comprehension of the conveyed trainings. Additionally, it was important that the selected member should have attended all trainings without any exception to ensure that the complete series of exercises have been acquired. Besides the attendance sheets, and workshop reports, regular documentation of workshops through video and photo shooting were also used in order to improve the monitoring of the individual's performance.



Social Media, Business Planning, & Event Management Training Workshop

SPNL noted that the mentoring program skills training components should be applied over two stages (primary and secondary). During the primary stage HH undertake the basic knowledge and skills in relation to the chosen theme through participatory workshops offered to all trainees before finalizing the screening processes. However, upon choosing the HH staff, a secondary skills training is to be provided to them, in which they will be given an in-depth knowledge about the topics that they will manage (such as bird identification advanced trainings).

Subsequently, as Stage 3 of the screening process came to end, four individuals from Anjar and Kfar Zabad were recruited as Hima staff. As for the other sites further trainings are still planned to enable the proper selection such as: **Photography Trainings**, **Advanced guiding skills**, **Development of educational programs and the use of education equipment**, **Signage development and management leadership games**, **Communication and networking planning**, **Project development**, **Insects, reptiles & amphibians identification and monitoring**, **Landscape assessment**, and **Socio-economic assessment**, etc...

The Four hired HH were provided with the necessary equipment in order to practice their management role. The equipment included unified HH custom, hiking gear, binoculars, backpacks, etc... The recruited individuals are currently leading on the implementation of different programs including tourism management, biodiversity management and monitoring, event management & marketing.

A national HH workshop will be held in September 2016. The workshop aims to allow young leaders (Homat AlHima) to come up with their own vision, towards their active participation in the management of their natural resources (protected area & Hima sites) through the development of a nation action plan.





Heading to fieldwork

F. FACTORS / CHALLENGES THAT IMPEDED THE SELECTION PROCESS

Through out the course of the mentoring program, several challenges were faced on the ground and were highlighted by SPNL training coordinator in order to be considered for the improvement of future planned mentoring programs including:

Time constraint: The series of trainings were planned to be conducted consecutively and in a relatively short time span, mostly during every weekend. It was realized not to be convenient to all trainees due to several intruding events; such as, municipal election, academic examinations, holy occasions, etc., which decreased, expected trainees' participation and led to postponing some work. The trainings were provided for one day only, due to budget constraints. So, the participants expressed the need to practice further hands on activities in relation to the topics provided and requested additional days for that. SPNL is seeking to overcome this challenge through better planning with local stakeholders and youth in relation to appropriate times. Furthermore, a secondary skills training will be provided to HH recruited individuals, where they will have more practical and fieldwork.

Age Group: The training workshops were intended for the age group ranging between 13 and 35 years. However, due to the current situation in the country and the lack of financial and social stability, the selected age group is either in the working field seeking financial support or in their academic path seeking college degrees for

a suitable and stable income. Therefore, regardless of their interest in sustainable environmental conservation and community development, the probability of constant commitment to conservation objectives is a challenge. As so, SPNL decided to overcome such a challenge through creating a Hima Club, which allows school and university students to volunteer for the management of their Hima site in case they couldn't provide full staff commitment. The program also intends to recruit settled HH members who are seeking job opportunities in the management of the Hima sites, part of which 4 people have been recruited for that purpose.

Financial Limitations: Initially, the trainings were planned for two consecutive days per topic or theme. However, due to the limited available budget, they have been reduced to "one day training". As a result, provided training material were condensed and restructured to fit one day only. So, the material was limited to introductory or basic trainings. Consequently, trainees, coordinator and trainers were only given partial facility for a profound assessment. Therefore, SPNL is currently planning for a secondary skills training for recruited HH members in order to provide them with an in-depth knowledge about the areas that they are managing.

“... AFTER THIS LEARNING SESSION REGARDING BIRD WATCHING; I'M HAVING LOTS OF HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, I WANT TO BECOME A BIRD-WATCHER, AND AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST TOO...”

Varant Hadjain, trainee from Anjar



Sustainable Bird Hunting training workshop in Hima El Fekha

G. ATTAINED RESULTS OF MENTORING PROGRAMS

The application of the mentoring program has led to achieving the objectives that it was set for, which stressed on site and personal needs. Accordingly, the following objectives were met:

- Sporadic interest from the majority of the participants concern regarding the ecosystem and available natural resources in their areas
- Participants' ability to plan and develop projects in this regard
- Spreading new information and knowledge about biodiversity and ecosystems management among participants
- Leadership role of individual in the management of conservation actions was met, where trained individuals developed a Facebook group and are currently active on raising awareness about the biodiversity assets of their Hima sites
- Recruiting four individuals to lead on several priority issues related to the provided training, including biodiversity management and monitoring, capacity building and environmental awareness





A young Shepherd at Hima Kfar Zabad



WITH NATURE AND LEARN NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR ENVIRONMENT ... AND IN THE LANDS THEY WERE NURTURED FROM”

Khalil Choker, Kfar Zabad focal Point

“ITS MY FIRST EXPERIENCE EVER WITH BIRD WATCHING, NEVER HAD ANY CURIOSITY TOWARDS BIRDS ... A WHILE AGO WE SAW TWO COMMON BLACK-BIRDS, WE STARTED APPROACHING THEM SLOWLY ... THIS MIGHT BECOME MY HOBBY, PLUS THAT I LOVE TAKING PICTURES”

Ghassan Abou Rjeily, trainee from Kfar Zabad

“BASED ON MY 12 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD WITH SPNL AND HIMA CONSERVATION, ALL PARTICIPANTS HAVE ALWAYS EXPRESSED INTEREST AND PLEASANT EXPERIENCE WITH SUCH TRAININGS, AS THEY ARE HAVING THE CHANCE TO CONNECT



“TODAY WAS ABOUT GUIDING, AND HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE LOCAL GUIDE. WE LEARNED ABOUT THE DETAILED TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT THAT A GUIDE/HIKER SHOULD HAVE ... PERSONALLY I THINK I WOULD BE DOING SUCH ACTIVITIES, BUT IN LOW RISK AREAS SUCH AS THIS WETLAND (HIMA KFAR ZABAD).”

Rayan Shoker, College student, and one of the persisting trainees, from Kfar Zabad

“SINCE CHILDHOOD I’VE LOVED NATURE ESPECIALLY THAT I WAS BORN IN ANJAR, WHICH CONSISTS OF WIDE-SPREAD GRASSLANDS AND FARMING AREAS, SO WE’VE BEEN RAISED UP TO CHERISH THIS LAND AS A FORTUNE ... WE SHOULD ALL BE WELL AWARE OF HOW TO CONSERVE THIS NATURE ... ”

Karnie Kendirjian, College student majoring in economics, from Anjar



“WE ARE TRYING TO PROVIDE THE LOCAL YOUTH WITH ALL THE NEEDED INFORMATION AND DETAILS WHICH THEY WILL HAVE TO CONVEY TO TOURING GROUPS. FIVE INDIVIDUALS LECTURED TODAY EACH WITHIN HIS FIELD OF EXPERTISE, ONE WAS FOR ENVIRON-

MENT, FOR GUIDING, FOR HIKING, FOR NATURE AND FARMING... ALL SKILLS ARE BEING COMMUNICATED TO PARTICIPANTS, FOR THEM TO DELIVER/ APPLY EVENTUALLY AS GUIDES”

Mr Sami Abou Rjeily, a local farmer and guide/trainer, a volunteer and focal point of SPNL for the past 12 years, from Kfar Zabad





Agricultural landscapes surrounding Hima Kherbet Qanafar/Ain Zebdeh

VIII. CONCLUSION

SPNL realizes that the process of building an active community leading on environmental stewardship is challenging, in an unstable country where livelihood, socio-economic and security issues are precedent. LCG role is recognized to be very crucial in boosting conservation and sustaining the management of IBAs/ KBAs. Typically, due to historic and cultural development in the region, natural areas and human presence are intertwined. There appears the need to engage people when conservation action is to be undertaken. Accordingly, LCGs are considered to be an entry point for such an involvement and a major catalyst for improving the management of IBAs through the different management and conservation actions that they undertake.

Youth/ Homat Al-Hima empowerment requires an enabling environment, which supports their leadership role that in turn is hindered by the identified present political, social and economic issues. Accordingly, SPNL is working on creating neutral local youth groups “Homat AlHima” who possess a shared vision towards beholding environmental stewardship within their local territories, through offered inducements. Also SPNL is planning to develop a national Homat AlHima network holding the same vision. This will take place during the planned Homat Al-Hima national workshop.

Such groups are the agents for a positive change, thus empowering their civic engagement in natural resources management is a means towards maintaining environmental management. Nevertheless, youth empowerment is a long-term process that requires continuous follow-up on created initiatives that should run in parallel with offered incentives in order to motivate youth participation, active involvement and ownership. Such incentives can be tangible and intangible rewards. They can be offered in the form of monetary incentives (such as salary, service fees), or in the form of involvement in activities or outreach programs (such as trainings, workshops, outdoor activities, internship), or appreciation for achievements such as certificates of achievement.

“I FELT THAT MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS KNEW A LOT ABOUT HIKING AND THE NEEDED EQUIPMENT, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND THEY WERE ALSO ASTONISHED THAT THERE WAS SO MANY DETAILS THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF... ALL SEEMED VERY INTERESTED IN THE PRESENTATION AND TOOK THE SESSION QUIT SERIOUSLY”

Berj Tumberian, SPNL member, Local Guide and manager of Hima Anjar





HIMA EL-FEKHA, NORTHEAST BEKAA



Eurasian Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* - Hima El Fekha / Ras El Ain arid areas © Ghassan Ramadan Jaradi



Hima El Fekha fauna and flora, Northeast Bekaa



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X● ANNEX I- DETAILED REPORTS OF HELD WORKSHOP



Sheep and Goat Shelters in Hima El-Fekha

Workshop 1.

Canoeing and Safety Training Workshop

Workshop2.

Bird Identification and Monitoring Workshop

Workshop3.

Landscape & Hima Training

Workshop4.

Guide Training Workshop

Workshop5.

Social Media, Business Planning, & Event Management Training Workshop

Workshop6.

Flora and Fauna Training Workshop

Workshop7.

Water & Sustainable Agriculture Training workshop

Other Workshops

- Cinereous Bunting and Sustainable Hunting

Teacher's Training workshop

- Illegal killing of Birds Training Workshop

- Rope courses Training

Training the trainer and Guide Training Workshop

- Full Moon Night Hike & Star Gazing

Astrology Training Workshop

**You can read and/or download the
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