

**CASE STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT OF MARGINAL  
LANDS IN ARSAAL, LEBANON: PHASES I AND II  
(IDRC PROJECTS 002627 AND 100360)**

**A Contribution to**

**Strategic Evaluation: Research Influence on Policy  
(IDRC Project No. 100855)**

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## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ARDA	Arsaal Rural Development Association
AUB	American University of Beirut
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organization
ESDU	Environment and Sustainable Development Unit, FAFS
FAFS	Faculty of Agricultural & Food Sciences, AUB
GTZ	German Overseas Development Aid
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
LARI	Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAD	Project Approval Document*
PDC	Participatory Development Communications
PIM	Project Initiation Memorandum*
PLaW	People, Land & Water Program Initiative at IDRC
PCR	Project Completion Report*
PO	Program Officer (at IDRC)
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

\* Internal IDRC documents required for each project funded.

## **NOTE ON SPELLING**

At various times and in various documents, the locale for these projects has been spelled Aarsal, Arsal, Irsal, Eirsal, etc. According to Lamia El Fattal, the IDRC Program Officer responsible for the project, the most appropriate transliteration from the Arabic is Arsaal, and that spelling is used throughout this document except where direct quotation requires the use of a different spelling. To avoid confusion, in all references to IDRC documents, the preferred spelling has been used, regardless of that used in the original documents.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arsaal is a large (for Lebanon) region in the northeast corner of the nation. It lies on the eastern side of the Beka'a valley some 45 km from Baalbek, the nearest city of any size, and extends up the western flanks of the Anti-Lebanon mountain chain to the Syrian border. Rainfall is around 300 mm a year, but the true availability of water is higher because run-off from snow in the mountains adds substantially to agricultural productivity.

The focus of the project is a pair of land-use conflicts in the region, which, prior to the 1960s was devoted to typical agro-pastoral activities. The first conflict goes back some 40 years when some farmers began to raise stone fruit trees, mainly cherries and apricots. The experiment was successful, and the area has become a major fruit producing region. However, in order to maximize output, families with land "enclosed" (in the old British sense) the best land for orchards, which not merely reduced the area available for pasturing sheep and goats but precluded their use of just those pastures on which they had formerly relied in dry years. More recently, quarries have begun to take over potential fruit growing areas on the lower slopes of the mountains, and to smother nearby fruit trees because of dust. The conflict between herders and fruit growers divides along local class and family lines; that between fruit growers and quarries divides Arsaalis from "outsiders."

The two phases of "Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands in Lebanon" analysed these changes, defined their impact on the natural resource base and on socio-economic relationships, and developed, together with the community, technical and institutional measures which would lead toward more sustainable forms of land-use management. On its own terms, the projects were clearly successful. They met or exceeded all objectives. Moreover, though policy was never mentioned as a specific objective, the projects also had significant policy influence, at least if the term "policy" is defined broadly.

Three elements of the political environment in Lebanon are relevant to describing the policy impact of the Arsaal projects. First, national policies are vague and seldom created in a formal sense; they are more often expressed in a *de facto* than a *de jure* sense. Municipal government was non-existent in Arsaal from early in the Civil War until 1999. Second, the research environment is strong, but tends to follow traditional academic lines in a mono-disciplinary and non-participatory manner. Third, Arsaal has been politically marginalized in Lebanon for as long as anyone can remember. Despite lying only 3-1/2 hours from the capital Beirut, it has been far from the centres of economic and political power, and is uniformly described as remote.

Though partially unintended, the Arsaal projects had policy impacts in three directions: upward to national institutions; horizontally to researchers and research institutions; and downward to local people and local institutions. Ranking by the extent of influence, the order, from most to least, would be horizontal, downward, upward.

The Ministry of Agriculture as an institution has remained relatively impervious to both the process and the results of the Arsaal study. Some individuals have become interested and keep in touch with progress, but no new resources have been made available and extension services continue to work almost exclusively in the valley where commercial farms are located. Pastoralism and rangeland management are not seen as priorities by the Ministry. On the other hand, extension officers now attend workshops given in Arsaal, and Members of Parliament from the region do take issues on a one-by-one basis to higher levels for action.

Policy influence at the government level is much more evident with the Municipality of Arsaal. Several members of NGOs with which the Arsaal projects worked moved directly into official positions when the Municipality was re-established. Relationships with the municipality remain close, and there is no question but that municipal officials have been influenced not just by the presence of the project but by research results.

The main policy influence at the academic level is found at the American University of Beirut (AUB) where the research was centred. First, the Arsaal projects re-introduced field research to AUB. In the period immediately after the Civil War, the Arsaal researchers were rare birds for their pattern of going to the field, and more importantly linking their research focus and research method to community development. Now this pattern is widely recognized as academically valuable.

Second, the work in Arsaal led directly to the creation in 2001 of a new multi-disciplinary group at the AUB called the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit. In collaboration with other faculties, donors and research institutes as well as NGOs, the Unit delivers programs in research, education and training, and outreach. The ultimate goal is to create a regional centre of excellence in sustainable development.

Policy influence in research extends beyond AUB. Notably, the Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (part of the Ministry of Agriculture) indicates that the Arsaal projects have had an enormous influence on how they see their role and how they structure their research. Regional institutions such as ICARDA, which undertook (with IDRC support) the original diagnostic survey in Arsaal promotes the Arsaal approach for projects throughout the region. The German aid program, GTZ, found the Arsaal projects almost by accident and decided that its approach provided the best entry point for work against desertification.

The Arsaal project accomplished a great deal in the community, but the major forms of policy influence cannot be easily described because they represent various forms of capacity building. Even municipal officials emphasize that the real legacy of the Arsaal projects was not economic, though this was important, but institutional. The key to this capacity building was the creation of a Local Users Network, which in turn spawned a coop for herders and another for women, as well as a Natural Resources Platform for developing an agenda of action for presentation to the municipality and to the national

government. The Platform is remarkable for bringing so many stakeholders (rather in the nature of one of the Canadian environment and economy roundtables) and so many issues together. If its efforts to influence municipal government have been more successful than those to influence national, that is hardly surprising.

In summary, partially thanks to the series of projects supported by IDRC, Arsaal is now on the map, though still considered remote and unimportant. The two most important innovations, the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit at the academic level and the Natural Resources Platform at the community level, seem likely to continue to operate, as do the coops created during the project. Linkages are being built from informal community institutions to formal political structures, strongly at the municipal level and tentatively at the national level. Evidence suggests that the community relationships will continue, and that the individual and group capacity building will become self-sustaining. What might happen in terms of policy influence with senior levels of government is much less clear. The Marginalisation of Arsaal will not end quickly, but it is less marginal today than at the time the projects were started, and that is an important indicator of policy influence.



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

IDRC has defined its mission as support for applied development research, with emphasis on research proposed and undertaken by scientists in developing countries. Most of the projects are funded with the expectation that they will “make a difference” in the long term if not in the short. This case study is part of a Strategic Evaluation (EPIK Number 100855) undertaken at IDRC to determine the extent to which the *ex ante* expectation of influence is realized *ex post*. More specifically, to what extent is it possible to document the nature and extent of results from IDRC’s investment in applied development research?

The question of the influence of IDRC projects is important in itself. However, it is posed with the implication that the Centre is still learning how to have an influence – or, given the dynamic situation in international development, that the Centre must always be learning how to have an influence. By study of selected projects that seem to have had an influence, IDRC officers can assist researchers in developing countries to design better projects, and to ensure that whatever outputs emerge from the research achieve greater reach and impact.

### 1.1 General Terms of Reference for the Strategic Evaluation

Three broad questions are posed in IDRC documents describing the Strategic Evaluation:

- What constitutes public policy influence in IDRC’s experience?
- To what degrees, and in what ways, has IDRC-supported research influenced public policy?
- What factors and conditions have facilitated or inhibited the public policy influence of IDRC-supported research?

IDRC has adopted a case study approach in its Strategic Evaluation of policy influence. The first step in this approach is to select “good projects,” which includes, among other elements, projects that IDRC research teams themselves have identified as successful on their own terms, primarily in terms of satisfying the research objectives defined in the original study design. This definition of a “good project” is reflected in the basic data that the case study investigators are asked to collect:

- What led to the project?
- When the project was started, what did it intend to achieve?

- What happened during the project?
- Why did it happen?
- What happened after the project was completed?

In addition, the Strategic Evaluation specified that gender dimensions of projects were to be discussed at all stages of the project, and of dissemination of its results.

The most important point is that the case studies are not evaluating the project so much as they are evaluating policy influence from the project. More formally, the case studies are “analysing projects from the point of view of the process of policy influence in order to help the Centre better understand what it means by policy influence and how it will support work in the future which is intended to influence policy.”<sup>1</sup> That point of view colours both the general methods for evaluation and the specific questions posed in the evaluation.

## 1.2 Terms of Reference for Arsaal Study

The two phases of a project entitled *Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands in Lebanon: Arsaal, A Case Study* were selected by the People, Land & Water (PLaW) Program Initiative of IDRC as an example of a “good project.” (Phases I and II are respectively EPIK numbers 002627 and 100360.) They are among several natural resource projects in the Middle East to be included in the Strategic Evaluation.

Having been identified as a good project, it would seem that we have a case study of a case study, but, as I will explain below, the Arsaal projects are much more exploratory and expansive than the typical academic case study. (To be clear, I am *not* making distinctions among case studies in the Strategic Evaluation. The title of the Arsaal projects refers to them as case studies, and my intended comparison is with other academic studies.) Both phases of the project were based at the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences (FAFS) at American University of Beirut (AUB), and both involved a large number of faculty members and graduate students, as well as staff from the University of Lebanon and elsewhere.

Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Arsaal part of the Strategic Evaluation appear in Annex A. In abbreviated form, the key elements for the report phase are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Written communication by Fred Carden to David Brooks (08 December 2002).

- a) review project documents prior to any interviews and know the role of the interviewee in the project;
- b) work with the Centre to identify and locate the appropriate individuals to be interviewed.
- c) develop guides for interviews with project leaders and participants, program officers, beneficiaries and others reached in the implementation and follow up to the project.
- d) travel to and in Lebanon and possibly the Centre's office in Cairo, Egypt, to interview key informants for the Arsaal case. Interviews should normally move out from those most directly affiliated with the project to those purported to have been affected by or to have used the results in some way. Because there is inherent bias in interviewees to present findings in the best possible light, triangulation of data sources is crucial. Every effort should be made to ensure that interviews are conducted with representatives of at least three of the main groups involved: project implementors, beneficiaries, Program Officers, policy makers and where applicable related project participants.

With specific exceptions described in the next chapter, these ToR were followed, and this document is the final report that was due by 31 December 2002. Subsequent steps noted in the ToR involve possible participation in a verification workshop, an oral presentation, and other forms of follow-up. None of these steps are covered by the current contract, but I would be pleased to contribute if so requested.

### 1.3 Structure of the Report

The remainder of this report is divided into five chapters.

- Chapter Two describes the process used in the study. The chapter details the way in which the ToR were satisfied, or in a few cases (notably in use of the interview guide) how specific steps were modified.
- Chapter Three describes the project itself, and responds to the first several questions for the Strategic Evaluation: What led to the project? What did it intend to do? What did it actually do, and why? Implicitly, this chapter also justifies the selection of the Arsaal study as "good projects."
- Chapter Four responds to the question about IDRC's understanding of policy influence. It starts by reviewing the policy environment in Lebanon, which was (and to some degree still is) affected by the Civil War that lasted into the early 1990s. The chapter also reviews two very different but complementary meanings of the word "marginal" in the project title.

- Chapter Five is the core of this report for the Strategic Evaluation as it focuses directly on policy influence. It is sub-divided into three sections in order to explore three dimensions of policy influence:
  - \* Upward – on national institutions and groups
  - \* Horizontally – on AUB and collegial institutions
  - \* Downward – on local institutions, groups, and people.
- Chapter Six presents selected recommendations and comments on elements that were not easily captured in other sections of the report.

#### 1.4 Limitations of the Study

The study as I conducted it was subject to several limitations, few of which could have been avoided. The first three of those limitations listed below may have been significant enough to influence results; the others were likely marginal.

- I was asked to participate in the Strategic Evaluation at a late stage – indeed, only a few weeks before it was necessary to visit the project site (in order to complete field work prior to the start of Ramadan). Therefore, I missed meetings that laid the groundwork for the set of case studies. In partial compensation, I was broadly familiar with the Arsaal site, and had accompanied Eglal Rached on a visit to AUB and to Arsaal prior to funding Phase I of the study. Knowing many of the researchers and something of the geography certainly made it easier to jump right into the study.
- Two evaluations were conducted simultaneously. The Strategic Evaluation (by me) and the PLaW Evaluation (by Dr. Abdelwahab Allam from Egypt). This conserved the time of everyone involved with the project, but it no doubt introduced some confusion into the minds of recipients. Similarly, the presence of Dr. Lamia El Fattal, the IDRC Program Officer currently responsible for the project, also induced some people at some times to treat our presence as an evaluation of the project rather than that of IDRC. Happily, the three of us got along very well, and we all gained from the opportunity to share reactions and to explore hypotheses.
- All of the interviews and meetings were set up by Shady Hamadeh, who has been principal investigator since the start of the project. This must have introduced some bias into the people we met and the meetings we attended. However, short of hiring a consultant for the case study from Lebanon – ie, someone who knew the institutions and the personnel – there was no way to avoid this situation. And, when necessary, we were able to insist on meeting officials whom we felt important (as with those from the Ministry of Agriculture).
- Most of the meetings in Arsaal and all of those with the cooperatives were conducted in Arabic. Drs. Allam and El Fattal did their best to keep me in touch with what was going on, and in any event, impressions of meetings come from more than just the words used. Dr. El Fattal and I reciprocated for Dr. Allam in the case of several meetings that were conducted in French.

- The files available in Ottawa on the Arsaal project are deplorably deficient. In the case of Phase II, they do not even include the PIM and PAD. None of the project outputs except a few technical reports are available. MERO staff copied relevant material, but, even with courier delivery, it only arrived a few days before my departure for Lebanon.
- In contrast to most case studies for the Strategic Evaluation, Phase II of the Arsaal project is still ongoing. It will not conclude for another six months or so. This means that some elements that would have been desirable, such as the final technical report, had not been completed.

## 2 PROCESS AND METHOD

The main elements of this study were conducted during the months of October and November 2002. Prior commitments made it impossible for me to start work earlier, and the schedule of the Strategic Evaluation required a draft final report by the end of November. Also, as noted above, the schedule was compressed in order to complete field work prior to the start of Ramadan.

### 2.1 Sources of Information

With minor exceptions, there were only four sources of information for this report:

- Project documents on file at IDRC offices in Ottawa and Cairo
- Project outputs, such as journal articles, newspaper reports, videos, and pamphlets
- Interviews
- Direct observation in Arsaal.

With the exception of the last, each of these sources deserves a few comments.

#### 2.1.1 *Project Documents*

The key project documents available were the PIM and PAD for each of the two phases, plus final technical reports for Phase I and interim technical reports for Phase II. All were read (many times), and careful note taken of key items, such as project objectives and references to outputs, reach and impact. The principal investigators made every effort to describe the progress and results of their work, and, in so doing, they made my work that much easier.

One particular task that I undertook prior to field work was preparation of the PCR for Phase I (002627). This task contributed significantly to my understanding of what had and had not been accomplished during the first phase of the project, but it was possible only because of my prior experience with IDRC and with this project.

#### 2.1.2 *Project Outputs*

Project documents refer to an enormous number of outputs, but only a few are in project files. Several journal articles were skimmed, and the flyers on the project were reviewed. Two videos were produced during Phase I, and we were able to see both during the field trip to Lebanon. Another is in production during Phase II and we saw clips from this one. From everything I could read or view, the project has been as productive in qualitative as in quantitative terms.

The Arsaal projects are notable for the number of graduate theses that have been prepared. A few students have gone on to other universities for further graduate work but continue to base their research in Arsaal. Though this work is no doubt significant, none of the theses was reviewed. For lack of time (and the absence of information in files), I had to assume that this work was all reflected in project reports.

#### 2.1.3 *Interviews*

Interviews were conducted with people from all of the main groups suggested by the ToR: researchers, beneficiaries, IDRC Program Officers, decision makers and project participants. (For reasons explained in Chapter Four, “policy makers” has been replaced by “decision makers” in the foregoing sentence.) The process was made easier by the fact that research staff, participants and beneficiaries, were mostly the same in both phases of the study. The responsible Program Officer for Phase I was Eglal Rached, and she also initiated work on Phase II; the responsible PO for Phase II is now Lamia El Fattal. Several other officers were also involved with the project, notably Guy Bessette, who gave a workshop to the team on communications for development. Decision makers included national government officials, municipal government officials, and key members of the groups in Arsaal with which the project is working.

With the exception of IDRC officers in Cairo or in Ottawa, all of the interviews were conducted in Lebanon, mainly in Beirut or in Arsaal village. (The name Arsaal is used for both the whole 36 thousand hectare municipality in the northern Beka’a valley of Lebanon, and for the village of several thousand people that is the largest community in the municipality.) For the most part, people were not only willing but eager to be interviewed about the project.

Annex B presents the schedule of interviews conducted in Lebanon, and the Annex C details names and positions of the key people interviewed. (Coordinates are not shown but can be provided.) The schedule also shows group meetings that we attended, and lists a number of people with whom we discussed the project but who were not really interviewed.

## 2.2 Taping of Interviews

As requested, many of the meetings and interviews were taped, and the tapes sent to the Evaluation Unit in IDRC. However, for many of the meetings and interviews, we decided against use of the tape recorder. In our early meetings at AUB, we needed to establish rapport between the three-member evaluation team and the various members of the research team, and we felt the tape recorder might have been an obstruction. In other cases, as with the Dean of FAFS and the Director General of LARI, taping just seemed inappropriate. (We had anticipated that these meetings were courtesy visits, but both turned out to be substantive.) In still other cases, notably community meetings, the situation did not lend itself to the use of a simple, battery-powered tape recorder. Finally, in still other cases, all in Arsaal, we felt that people might be intimidated by the tape recorder; in such cases, we preferred not even to ask whether they were or were not prepared to allow us to tape the interview.

In the end, perhaps 50% of the discussions noted on the agenda were taped. However, those tapes represent well under 50% of the contact time in meetings and interviews. As well, they obviously exclude all of the informal sessions and discussions, some of which were quite substantive.

### 2.3 Interview Guide

In its preparation for the Strategic Evaluation, the Evaluation Unit at IDRC developed a model interview guide. In my preparation for the field visit, I modified this guide and produced my own (see Annex D). My belief was that, given my prior knowledge of the Arsaal project and of the PLaW approach, I could both make many of the questions more precise, and also distinguish between questions appropriate for different stakeholders.

In the end, I discarded the use of the interview protocol almost completely. None of the interviewees seemed to want to follow the pattern of a standardized guide. In small part, this was a result of the effort to conduct two evaluations and a project monitoring visit at the same time. In much greater part, it was clearly evident from the first meeting that we were not so much conducting interviews as entering into professional discussions – structured discussions, to be sure, but not formal step-by-step interviews.

In my view, the results obtained from the less formal process are not just equally valid to those we might have obtained by use of the guide, but far more interesting and insightful. We were able to probe more deeply when the issue warranted, and to leave areas aside when it did not.

Despite the failure to use the guide during the field visits, creation of the guide was by no means a waste of time. More than any other single step in my preparation for this project, it helped me understand in depth what was wanted from the Strategic Evaluation of Policy Influence. The general and specific ToR seemed clear enough when I read them, but it was not until I had to put them into the guide did I have to be precise about their meaning and, even more important, about how to get to that meaning.



### 3 THE ARSAAL PROJECTS: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY

The two phases of work in Arsaal were successful by almost any standard. This chapter will review briefly the results of the project, and suggest some reasons why its achievements were so great. The research questions can be understood without detailed knowledge of either the project or the region. The next chapter will deal with the policy environment within which the project was operating and upon which it was acting.

#### 3.1 The Problem: Natural Resource Conflicts in Arsaal

Arsaal is a large (for Lebanon) region in the northeast corner of the nation. It lies on the eastern side of the Beka'a valley some 45 km from Baalbek, the nearest city of any size, and extends up the western flanks of the Anti-Lebanon mountain chain to the Syrian border. Rainfall is around 300 mm a year, but this figure understates the availability of water because run-off from snow in the mountains adds substantially to agricultural productivity.

Arsaal is a traditional area with the bulk population made up of Sunni Muslims subsisting on low-input agriculture and cash income from small- to medium-sized herds of sheep and goats. (Meat, not wool, was the main cash "crop.") However, as it turns out, tradition is an important but not dominant factor in the analysis. More importantly, the community is sharply divided along family lines, with several dominant families that have intermittent periods of animosity and cooperation. As will be explained in the next chapter, from the start of the Civil War until recently, Arsaal was all but un-governed, and this too plays a role in recent events.

The focus of the project is a pair of land-use conflicts in the region. The first conflict goes back some 30 years when one member of the community began to raise stone fruit trees, mainly cherries and apricots. The experiment was successful, and the area has become a major fruit producing region. However, in order to maximize output, families with land began to "enclose" land (in the old British sense) for orchards, which not merely reduced the area available for pasturing sheep and goats but particularly enclosed those areas that had the best water regimes and that had served, in years past, as the pastures that could be relied upon even in dry years.

Not surprisingly, the conflict between herders and fruit growers divided along class and family lines. Given that annual net income from fruit growing was four or more times that from herding, and significantly less onerous, income disparities increased. In general, those families with greater land rights became better off than those who stuck with herding – only a few families took on both herding and fruit growing – with a whole set of resulting bio-physical and socio-economic changes as a result. These changes (and possible ways to alleviate problems) were, in essence, the focus of the Arsaal projects.

More recently a new resource conflict has emerged. The sandy limestone of Arsaal makes an excellent facing stone, and quarrying operations are cutting across the

landscape of the lower slopes of the mountains. Though the location of the quarries makes them only a nuisance for herders, they conflict directly with orchards, which either grow trees on these same slopes or use them as part of their (very simple) water harvesting systems. Moreover, the quarrying operations themselves, and the trucks carrying the rough-cut rock, create an enormous amount of dust that smothers nearby trees.

If the conflict between herders and fruit growers was at least in principle within the scope of issues that the community might have dealt with, that between quarries and fruit growers is totally outside their experience. Few if any of the quarries are locally owned, yet financial analysis reported by R. Darwish<sup>2</sup> shows that the returns from quarrying exceed those from fruit by a wide margin, even if side effects such as health and accident rates are taken into account.

There were at least two predecessor activities to the pair of IDRC projects. In the early 1990s ICARDA was surveying socio-economic problems in a number of countries in the region. IDRC financed these surveys in Lebanon and Yemen by means of a RSP. The survey in Lebanon identified the orchard-pasture conflict and established some links with Oxfam which, at about the same time, was working in Arsaal on community-based natural resource management. This survey was carried by AUB researchers who later used this diagnostic study as the basis for the initial proposal to IDRC.<sup>3</sup>

The Arsaal projects began from the diagnostic, and set out to determine if there were not just better ways to manage the land, but also better processes by which to make decisions about land use. From the start, emphasis has been on herders and fruit growers with only secondary attention to the quarries.

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<sup>2</sup> Two men with the surname Darwish are associated with the project: Ragy Darwish is the resource economist from AUB; Ali Darwish is executive director of Greenline, an ENGO.

<sup>3</sup> The diagnostic survey in Yemen also resulted in an IDRC project: the study of Mountain Terraces conducted by the University of Sana'a and ICARDA.

### 3.2 Project Objectives

Both phases of the Arsaal project had essentially the same general objective. In Phase I, the General Objective was:

to analyse components of change and trends, evaluate sustainability of the major farming systems (physical, biological, socio-economic) and examine the viability of establishing a network of users to improve sustainable community development through direct involvement of the local beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of resource management strategies in Isral, a highland village in transition from a traditional agro-pastoral system to rain-fed fruit production.

Phase II was similar but reflected progress already made:

to test and evaluate technologies and management options developed by the users network in Phase I, to assess progress towards sustainability in the major land use systems and to monitor, evaluate and strengthen the capacity of the local users network with emphasis on gender analysis towards sustainable natural resources management.

Specific objectives followed logically from the general objective, and included both technical components, as with the use of GIS techniques to develop a method for siting water harvesting reservoirs, and social objectives for working with communities to reduce conflict and stimulate new thinking. With the exception of the “emphasis on gender,” about which I will comment below, each objective was met or exceeded.

In neither Phase I nor II is there any mention of policy influence. At the time of preparation of the proposals and the PADs, the research team and IDRC officers were both looking inward at the project, not outward at policy influence. However, as we are nearing the end of Phase II, the research team has become strongly aware of the influence they have had, and it is referred to in many of their outputs, as with the project newsletter *Aarsal News*. A summary of policy influence, as reported by Shady Hamadeh, principal investigator for both phases of the project, is attached as Annex E.

### 3.3 Success of the Project

In some ways, this section anticipates the results from Chapters 5, 6 and 7, but it is necessary to do so in order to answer the questions of What happened, and Why (in this case, Why so successful).

Certainly the project was successful when measured against its objectives. In the PCR for Phase I, I rated the project as having exceeded its objectives; a score of 4 out of a possible 5. If anything, the project might have merited the highest rating, but it was simply too soon to determine whether the promising results of Phase I could be sustained and have the hoped for results. (Indeed, it will likely still be too soon at the end of Phase II.) However, for the purposes of the Strategic Evaluation, success is

measured more by evidence of outputs, reach and impact than by achievement of specific objectives.

### 3.3.1 *Outputs*

As indicated in the previous chapter, an enormous number of outputs emerged from the two phases of the Arsaal project. Apart from reports to IDRC, I counted at least 10 professional articles or conference presentations from Phase I alone, and many more have been reported in Phase II. As well, seven MS theses were prepared as part of Phase I, and about the same number will emerge from Phase II. Brochures, videos, newspaper articles and other more popular forms of out were also prepared. Finally, several new tools for use in rural development in arid areas were developed.<sup>4</sup>

More generally, in association with other donors, the Arsaal projects helped to reduce the high physical losses experienced by farmers and pastoralists in the region<sup>®</sup>. Darwish). The low-input forms of agriculture universal in the region could not cope with a range of pests and water stress in the field, nor the poor roads and market risks in the post harvest phase.

Further documentation is hardly necessary to justify the output productivity of the Arsaal projects. What is worth adding is that Hamadeh, the team leader, will go on a 6-month Sabbatical starting next spring, and he will pass that time in Canada preparing a book-length study of the Arsaal project.

### 3.3.2 *Reach*

Reach was also significant, though less easy to document. The Arsaal research team took advantage of the presence of the Association for Rural Development in Arsaal (ARDA) as an entry point into work in the community. As explained by Obeid, ARDA was made up largely of younger people who had returned to the region after the Civil War, and who had leftist but more importantly communal values – values that, she emphasized, were shared with most members of the AUB research team. Working with ARDA was not merely convenient; it was probably essential. If ARDA had not existed when the research team started work, they would have had to create it.

Obviously, ARDA was not representative of the community, but by the joint efforts of ARDA and AUB staff, they undertook to make it so. Among other things, they instituted several coops, including one for herders and one for women, two groups that seemed to be left to one side in decision making. Workshops were presented on various aspects

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<sup>4</sup> Because of the large number, only selected outputs are listed in the PCR for the project. However, they are all meticulously recorded in the technical reports from the principal investigator.

of agriculture, with (by count in Phase I), over 500 farmers participating. Some 50 women attended a workshop on local income projects, and out of that workshop came the idea to create the small food processing and carpet weaving projects.

On the other hand, IDRC's efforts to introduce Participatory Development Communications (PDC) to the project were not successful. Two members of the project team from AUB attended a workshop presented by Guy Bessette in Cairo, but neither seemed to get much from the program.<sup>5</sup> Having made significant steps in both participation and communications within the Lebanese context, the team may have suffered from a bit of hubris that precluded deepening their understanding of PDC and their desire to get beyond "cook book" techniques that they could apply without really changing their approach. The absence of PDC may explain in part an impromptu discussion that erupted unexpectedly at a visit with some school teachers in Arsaal. The head of the herders coop, who is a distant relative of the teachers, complained strongly that too much of the project was imposed on the community rather than emerging from it. He was perhaps taking advantage of the situation to "show off," but his point was likely valid. The tendency for workshops to be run by team members may also be in part evidence of the lack of PDC.

The reach of the projects extended beyond Arsaal. Project results were presented at professional meetings on dryland agriculture around the world, and the project itself including the processes followed was discussed at numerous community fairs, ICARDA sessions, and workshops held by the Extension Service of MoA. The Arsaal model is being copied. For example, according to Zurayk, four herder coops have been created in other areas but based on the Arsaal model. Municipal officials told us that the experience in Arsaal is being shared with other communities through both individual and institutional contacts. Both Falayfel of the Extension Service and Hassan of LARI note that tools developed in the Arsaal projects, notably the hydro-geological maps for siting small reservoirs, are being used in their own work. UNDP has cited the Arsaal project in its list of examples of "best practice" in sustainable development. Less formally, reach was also extended by means of a newsletter called *Aarsal News*, which is produced from time to time by the research team at AUB and distributed widely to government and non-government offices and to other research institutions. And the Lebanese ENGO Greenline both experiments with environmental projects in Arsaal, and delivers successful results to other communities (Ali Darwish).

### 3.3.3 Impact

Almost all discussion of impact will be left for later chapters. At this point, I merely want to identify one impact that was reported by many interviewees and from many

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<sup>5</sup> Guy suggests that there was an unfortunate disjuncture in those participating in the PDC workshop. At the start of the workshop, the two participants from the Arsaal team (deliberately not named) were well ahead of the other participants in their understanding of the need for participation and communications. As a result, they lost interest and failed to attend many sessions. They did not learn from interaction with other participants and were not open to deepening their understanding of PDC.

perspectives: *viz*, the project put Arsaal on the map of people dealing with agriculture in Lebanon. Indeed, government officials, such as those from LARI, emphasize that the Arsaal project has become a model for their own rural development efforts. The head of the Extension Service of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) said that every time he goes to headquarters, the subject of Arsaal comes up.

Of course, the project was started in a post-conflict situation. According to the PAD for Phase I, the Arsaal project was the first major agricultural project undertaken by AUB after the end of the Civil War. ARDA itself was created in that situation. Not surprisingly, it was a dynamic time in which changes were to be expected, so it is dangerous to assert any one-to-one relationship between project and impact. However, given that impacts in Arsaal went well beyond agriculture, and evidence that government agricultural research and extension services were more interested in the larger, more commercial farms of the Beka'a valley,<sup>6</sup> it is reasonable to assert a relationship in this case.

### 3.4 What Went Right?

Several people discussed with us why the project worked so well, but R. Darwish put the case most succinctly. In his view (corroborated by others), it worked for three reasons:

- First, the project was started at a time when Arsaalis wanted help, and, given the conflicts they were facing, were willing to consider changes in traditional practices. To a surprising extent, the Arsaal projects were demand driven.
- Second, every member of the team believed in the work they were doing, and they were very clear with the community about the role of research in development.
- Third, AUB has a certain standing throughout Lebanon that allows it take initiatives and to innovate where others would be halted.

Additional reasons for success were cited by interviewees or inferred from direct observation:

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<sup>6</sup> No one can remember the last time an extension officer came to Arsaal except when invited to a workshop. In partial explanation, the Extension Service in Lebanon is relatively small; five officers cover all of the northern Beka'a.

- Fourth, though maintaining its focus on research, AUB initiated a number of mini-projects that are more properly considered as development. However much the community might accept the principle of research, they needed some short-term outcomes. Some of the money came from IDRC funds, and some from other sources. Thus, the water harvesting reservoirs were built with IDRC funds (and indeed were needed to demonstrate the validity of the siting model), and the dipping tank for sheep was paid for by the Dutch Embassy.
- Fifth, the project brought together a remarkable group of people. Hamadeh, the team leader, is indefatigable and manages to keep an amazing number of academic and institutional balls in the air. And to deal equally well with colleagues, students, and people from the community (as well as with visiting evaluators!). Hamadeh is helped enormously by two women, both PhD candidates: Haider in the office and Obeid in the field. If I do not mention other people, it is not to diminish their contributions but just to accept that the point has been made.
- The project did not arrive and disappear. In contrast to most field research in Lebanon, the researchers kept coming back. Of course, they came back with their questionnaires and with their instruments, but they also interacted actively with the community. To some degree, they became a part of the community, and several community members expressed to us regret that the project was coming to an end. The roughly six years of project activities is likely the minimum in which to achieve results of this kind.
- Finally, to the credit of both the researchers and IDRC, the Arsaal projects were able to accommodate change. The AUB team started with one partner (ARDA) and went on to include many. They shifted from mainly technical to mainly socio-economic activities. And they were able to adjust to the newest phase in the political history of Arsaal: the gradual re-entry of the state.

### 3.5 The IDRC Agenda: Multi-disciplinarity, Participation, and Gender

To the extent possible, all IDRC, and certainly all PLaW projects are judged by the extent to which they are multi-disciplinary, by the nature of participation by beneficiaries, and by their efforts toward gender mainstreaming. This project scores high on multi-disciplinarity, medium on participation, and poorly on gender mainstreaming. However, to offset any early reactions, let me anticipate comments below by saying that the poor mark on gender was more likely the result of IDRC blinders than project activities.

#### 3.5.1 *Multi-disciplinarity*

Though based among a group of researchers trained in traditional agricultural disciplines – agronomy, soil science, animal breeding, etc. – the full project team included many more disciplines, including economics (R. Darwish), rural sociology (Baalbaki), women's studies (Obeid), bio-diversity (Talhouk) etc. It is hard to think of a relevant discipline that was not included.

True, the project was conducted in a multi-disciplinary rather than an inter-disciplinary manner. However, in my view that is a more productive way to operate when so many variables are in play. Moreover, from everything I can gather, in its interpersonal relationships, the team operated in an almost trans-disciplinary manner.

### 3.5.2 *Participation*

The Arsaal projects have a reputation for being participatory, but I believe this overstates their true nature. Participation there was, but participatory it was not. As put succinctly by Obeid, “participation crosses gender and class lines with difficulty,” and doubly so when the two overlap. For the most part, and necessarily, the project operated through intermediaries, mainly ARDA. At least to start, beneficiaries and participants other than those in ARDA had little if any role in project design or development. On the other hand, through those intermediaries, a large number of people were involved in one or another element of the project. The very fact that 300 people contributed their time to help complete very length questionnaires – indeed, questionnaires dealing with sensitive issues such as the size and sources of income (an issue doubly sensitive because of proximity to the national border) – is a form of participation. A large number of workshops were held in the early days of the project. Participation in workshops that the coops organize for their members is said to be very high. In fact, the coops seem to be the Arsaal Projects’ way of extending participation outward from ARDA staff. With the re-establishment of municipal government (see next chapter), these groups have a good chance of playing a regular part in local politics. Already in one case, they have felt strong enough to make a representation to the national government.

The level of participation is of course very mixed. As Talhouk stated, rural communities are as diverse as any other, and a project such as the one in Arsaal has no alternative but to work with the most collaborative and most socially concerned people, which is *ipso facto* a bias in the nature and extent of participation. Direct observation at two meetings (one of herders; the other of the Natural Resources Platform) suggests that project staff continue to play a strong role. They commonly chair the meetings and they speak more often than community people. Only a small proportion of beneficiaries speak up. (This view is shared by my colleagues on the field trip, Drs Allam and El Fattal.)

If this were an evaluation of the project itself, I would certainly recommend that the research team think more deeply about how to hold meetings in such a way as to promote wider participation from those present. As indicated just above (3.3.2), more attention to PDC might have helped.

### 3.5.3 *Gender Mainstreaming*

The Arsaal project scores high in two aspects of gender work. First, the research team includes a number of very capable women, some on the faculty and some working on their doctoral dissertations. If men tend to be more senior, that is normal given their longer tenure in the academic world. Second, the project has stimulated a number of women’s projects, including a women’s cooperative.



Other gains are evident. Three women are now members of the senior management of ARDA, and women are moving into the management structures of other NGOs. Certainly in those areas where they can participate easily, women have both increased their incomes and gained skills in production and management. However, the marketing and financial aspects of the women's coops is in the hands of men (though Obeid insists that women make most of the decisions). Women are totally excluded from some coops, notably that for the herders. Though women are nominally members of the Natural Resources Platform, they played little role in the agenda-setting meetings that I attended. No women are members of the municipal council.

Evidently, the project has failed at mainstreaming gender in the Arsaal project. Or is it that gender mainstreaming is the wrong perspective? The answer is probably both "yes" and "no." The widely accepted observation that women play a stronger role in decision making than tradition suggests is important but insufficient. Women deserve to play a stronger role in formal processes as well. However, there is only so far that any intervention can push against convention and tradition. For example, land inheritance laws discriminate against women, but, even in those circumstances when they can inherit land, women in Arsaal tend to turn it over to men. The trade-off of land for (presumably) economic and physical security may be considered acceptable in the family-oriented structure of Arsaal, but it is a trade-off nonetheless.

More relevant to this discussion is the conclusion that production decisions and production activities in the Arsaal region (and seemingly elsewhere in the Middle East) are more equitably shared than commonly believed. Obeid, Talhouk and Baalbaki in particular emphasized that the whole household shares in field work, and that women are recognized for their contribution. Gender distinctions in work tasks remain, but they seem to be default assignments. When the situation demands it, men assist with women's work and vice versa. Indeed, their conclusion is that gender roles are *less* rigid in rural areas than in urban ones if for no other reason than that the work requires them to be flexible. (Presumably they meant to exclude large urban areas, such as Beirut.) Baalbaki emphasizes that the best point of entry for analysis of agricultural activities is the family, not women, and Obeid's PhD dissertation is on kinship relationships, not women *per se*.

If this conclusion is correct, IDRC may have inappropriately imported gender concepts from sub-Saharan Africa that have little, or at least less, applicability in this region. The most useful approach for improving the economic status of women may be to increase household income rather than to focus on separate women's income generation, or at least do the two simultaneously (as the Arsaal projects did). Women's education and women's health programs do remain high priorities for everyone, but they are on the margin of the Arsaal projects given the focus of the research on natural resources management. What the project has done, according to Obeid, is to provide women space in which to stretch the limits of what is and is not acceptable. That, to me, is a form of gender mainstreaming even if it is not an explicit part of the project objectives.

#### 4 THREE ASPECTS OF THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT IN LEBANON

This chapter will describe the policy environment in Lebanon from three perspectives. In so doing, it will respond to the question in the Strategic Evaluation as to how IDRC perceives “policy influence.” (The most general answer, as will be shown, is “very broadly.”) The first part of the chapter describes the post-Civil War situation at the time the first Arsaal project was put together, and its continuing effects on national and local governments. The second section describes the environment for research in Lebanon. And third emphasizes the dual meanings of “marginalisation” for Arsaal. This chapter does not, of course, purport to review the policy environment in Lebanon, but only selected elements that are particularly relevant to the Strategic Evaluation. With some exceptions, the three sections of this chapter set the stage for and are parallel to the discussion of upward, horizontal and downward policy influence in the next chapter.

##### 4.1 Effects of Conflict on Agricultural Policy

As has been shown by several analysts, the most significant environmental impacts of war stem not from the movement of armies but from the disruption of institutions, both formal and informal. In the case of Lebanon, a relatively advanced economy in the western sense, the Civil War threw the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) into a situation from which it has not yet fully recovered. According to several people, MoA was never a strong institution, today, even with new staff and arms for research, operations and extension, but it does not seem to have taken on much of a role in policy making. Indeed, if there was one common theme among the people whom we asked about policy influence, it was, “What policy?”<sup>7</sup> More specifically, the response was that it is difficult to identify policy influence in agriculture when there really is no agricultural policy in Lebanon. One of IDRC’s first projects in post-conflict Lebanon was a study at the University of Lebanon on a research strategy for Lebanese agricultural research (Project No. 93-8605). It seems that most of the results of that project have been ignored.

Some evidence suggests that this deficiency in policy making is a general characteristic of governance in Lebanon that pre-dates the Civil War rather than a particular problem in agriculture. One person (deliberately not named) stated that, because of the competition among interest groups, it is difficult to pass laws in Lebanon, and almost impossible to enforce those that are passed. Haider emphasized that policy making in Lebanon is highly centralized, and can only be changed by approaches “at the highest levels.” This suggests that the word “policy” is more narrowly construed by people

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<sup>7</sup> I deliberately avoid citing names for fear of embarrassing those who reacted this way. Suffice it to say that the comment was made by both government and non-government people, and by both researchers and operational staff.

thinking of government in Lebanon than by IDRC officers. Obviously, agricultural policy of some sort had to be established in the last decade, but it was applied at lower levels and had no formal sanction.

The nation of Lebanon is divided for administrative purposes into municipalities, which, nominally, have a lot of power, but seldom if ever the resources (human or financial) to match that power. These local governments were also severely disrupted during the Civil War, and they have been even slower to recover, at least in the more remote parts of the country.

At 36 thousand hectares, the Municipality of Arsaal is one of the largest in the nation. It covers the entire northeastern portion of Lebanon from the Beka'a valley to the Syrian border. However, from the time of the Civil War until 1999, there was no municipal government for Arsaal. Admittedly, the absence of a municipal government was not entirely the result of the war; inter-family disputes and other factors also played a role. However, the upshot was the absence of a formal government structure, hence policies, not just for agricultural activities but for all activities in Arsaal. Happily, according to Obeid, family feuds seem to be in abeyance for the time being, and the last municipal elections (two elections have been held) were reported as fair.

In summary, from IDRC's perspective, as well as from the perspective of those interviewed, the influence of the Arsaal projects may be negligible on formal policy, but its influence is not negligible on agricultural or municipal decisions. Over and over again, we were told that the Arsaal project has made a real difference in the way that agriculture, and more to the point the link between agriculture and rural development, is perceived in Lebanon. As emphasized by Obeid, ARDA served for several years as a quasi-municipal government, and, when the time came to re-form the municipal government, several ARDA officials changed their non-government hats for government ones. Several people stated that, in many ways, the project facilitated both the role of ARDA in governance and in the transition to formal municipal government.

#### 4.2 Research Environment

The general research environment in Lebanon is strong, perhaps stronger than any other nation (certainly relative to its population) in the Arab world. Though Lebanon is not free of the problems that plague research throughout MENA,<sup>8</sup> researchers and research institutions are relatively independent and well funded. AUB is known for a broad range of faculties, including agriculture, and several other universities reach similar standards in disciplines not offered at AUB. Moreover, the Lebanese Agricultural

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<sup>8</sup> Eglal Rached, *IDRC in the Middle East and North Africa Region*, Report to the Board of Governors [of IDRC], October 2002; typescript.

Research Institute (LARI) has always been strong, and it now has intentions to becoming a centre of excellence in drylands agriculture. (As an aside, LARI has a formal relationship to the MoA similar to that for IDRC and DFAIT; we both report to the minister but are not part of the department.)

Though many researchers left Lebanon during the Civil War, most returned as soon thereafter as they felt safe. And it is from that time that the first Arsaal project was presented to IDRC. The general strength of the research environment in Lebanon, and the specific ability of researchers at AUB to adopt less traditional research methods, have contributed in no small measure to the policy influence of the Arsaal projects.

#### 4.3 Marginalisation and Isolation

The title for the Arsaal project includes the words “marginal lands.” From the perspective of policy influence, the term marginal has to be read in two related but very different ways. First (and in the sense intended by the research team), the agricultural land and pasture on which the great bulk of Arsaalis depend for income is marginal in quality. With only 300 mm of rain plus runoff from the mountains on sandy soils with little loam, it is capable of supporting a subsistence agriculture but, at least until the growing of stone fruit proved so successful, not providing much by way of surplus. Even today, though incomes may have risen for those families with enough land to plant orchards, it is far from a rich community. Only quarry owners, who seem to establish quarries without any formal approval process, and who pay little or no tax to the local community, get rich from the natural resources in Arsaal. However, it is not just the land or the income it provides that is marginal.

The land in Arsaal is also marginal in a political sense, and it this sense that is more important to the question of policy influence. In a sentence, the entire municipality of Arsaal has been marginal to political forces in Lebanon, and only slowly (and in part thanks to the Arsaal project) is this changing. Over and over again, I heard the Arsaal region described as isolated. This is a remarkable way to describe a region that one can reach in a morning's drive from the capital, Beirut. Yet there is no question but that the feeling of isolation is real. As a colleague with family connections to Arsaal stated, the national government never took note of Arsaal except when it decided that the cross-border smuggling was getting out of hand.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Arsaal is closer to Syria than to Beirut, and herders regularly go back and forth across the border in search of pasture. However, as we were assured by everyone, Arsaalis not only are Lebanese

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<sup>9</sup> Comment by Hussein Amery, currently on the faculty of the Colorado School of Mines, Boulder, Colorado, in an email to me dated 03 November 2002. At least some of the smuggling is said to have included drugs, which is presumably why it drew attention.

but think of themselves as Lebanese. In Obeid's words, they "hunger for links" to the rest of Lebanon.

Arsaal may cover 36,000 hectares, but it only contains 36,000 people, just one person per hectare. Not many voters. (The number of sheep and goats per hectare is nearly twice as high.) It only takes about 20 minutes to drive from the turn-off in the Beka'a valley to the community of Arsaal, but the route is steep with precipitous drops at several points along the way. Reportedly, the first private car did not arrive in Arsaal until 1970. Today trucks loaded with rock from the quarries take a heavy toll on the road surface, and they are said to be responsible for many of the highway accidents. Yet another form of Marginalisation for Arsaal stems from religion. The majority of Lebanese citizens are Sunni Muslims, as are most people in Arsaal. However, in northern Lebanon, the majority of the people are Shiite. Further, Baalbaki says that rural Sunnis are less well organized, and as a result less well represented, than rural Shi'ites. (He says that the reverse is true in urban areas.) El Fattal expands on this point by noting that rural Sunni Muslims did not have any high profile warlord during the Civil War, which further isolated them from urban Sunnis (with Saeb Salam) and rural Shiites (with Nabeh Berri).

In summary, Arsaal is marginalised by the political process in Lebanon. My impression drawn from numerous interviews is that the national government just hopes Arsaal takes care of itself, and does not cause any trouble. Perhaps those few who were even aware of the creation of ARDA saw it as a convenient way to keep activists both occupied and well out of the way.

## 5 DIMENSIONS OF POLICY INFLUENCE

Many components of policy influence from the Arsaal project have been telegraphed in previous chapters. My strong conclusion is that the project has had a remarkable influence at each level – upward to national institutions; horizontally to researchers and research institutions; and downward to local people and local institutions. If I had to rank the extent of influence, the order, from most to least, would be horizontal, downward, upward.

The policy influence is all the more remarkable given that, as noted in Chapter 3, specific objectives for the projects make no reference at all to policy. The researchers certainly knew that they were innovating in several dimensions, but they likely did not think of these innovations in policy terms. Indeed, Rached suggests that, had IDRC urged the research team to make a specific objective for policy influence, they might have rejected the idea as inappropriate. However, in broadest terms, their policy results are a corollary of what Hansmann of GTZ calls “the enormous intellectual investment” in the Arsaal project.

### 5.1 Policy Influence Upward to Government

It is generally acknowledged by the people to whom we spoke (among others, Daghir, R. Darwish, Hamadeh, Obeid) that the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) as an institution has remained relatively impervious to both the process and the results of the Arsaal study. Some individuals have become interested and keep in touch with progress (Daghir, Faleyfel), but no new resources have been made available and extension services continue to work almost exclusively in the valley where commercial farms are located. Pastoralism and rangeland management are just not seen as priorities by MoA (Hamadeh, Hansmann, municipality officials).

The Arsaal project has been recognized as positive with the Members of Parliament from the region, and they regularly attend workshops and other events related to project activities (Daghir, Hamadeh). On occasion MPs bring specific issues to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture or other senior officials. This supports Haider’s comment that changes only come by influence exerted at the highest levels. Granted that some of these sorts of contacts would have occurred with or without the Arsaal projects – lobbying for the interests of constituents is, after all, an expected role for an MP – they nevertheless give credence to my argument that the projects did have an upward policy influence in a situation where that senior policy is very hard to define. In the absence of the Arsaal projects, MPs would simply have been lobbying for favours directed to their region. The project and particularly the workshops armed them with information and analysis to support their lobbying. No one factor will ever explain why, for example, the road to Arsaal was paved or municipal power restored to local officials, but presumably local MPs had something to do with those decisions. It is not just hard but impossible to know the extent to which the Arsaal projects contributed to the lobbying effort, but it is reasonable to believe that it was significant.

The most evident upward gains in policy influence have occurred at the level of the Municipality of Arsaal. Several members of ARDA moved directly into official positions

when the Municipality was re-established; one became its first president. Relationships between ARDA and the municipality have been, and remain, close. As indicated by our surprisingly long meeting with municipal officials, they have clearly been influenced not just by the presence of the project but by research results. (The meeting was attended by the current and past presidents, vice president, treasurer and a couple others whose functions I did not catch – obviously they took the meeting seriously.<sup>10</sup>)

Unfortunately, though well supplied with ideas and energy, and granted broad powers, municipal officials in Arsaal have little money to work with. Thus, during the agenda-setting meeting of the Natural Resources Platform that we attended, the President of the Municipality of Arsaal was remarkably open to the ideas presented. This is in itself important, but, given limited resources, his personal willingness may not be matched by municipal capability to follow through. Community and project staff should monitor municipal actions that do (or do not) respond to the recommendations put forward at the meeting.

## 5.2 Policy Influence Horizontally to Researchers and Donors

Given the strength of the research environment in Lebanon, as described in the previous chapter, it is remarkable that the Arsaal projects have had so strong a horizontal influence. The reason for this apparently counter-intuitive result is the way in which the Arsaal projects set out to work. The projects have become *the* test case for using research to stimulate development (Afram, Hansmann). The feeling seems to be that, if the link can be made in Arsaal, it can be made anywhere in Lebanon.

The following sub-sections provide specific indicators of horizontal policy influence:

### 5.2.1 *Within AUB*

Apart from bringing general credit to AUB, two specific influences on research stemmed directly from the Arsaal project. First, the Arsaal projects re-introduced field research to FAFS. As emphasized by Lamia El Fattal, when she was a student at FAFS in the early 1980s, almost all of the research was conducted in the lab. Hamadeh, Zurayk and a few others were notable for their pattern of going to the field, and more importantly linking their research choice and research method to community development. As pointed out above, the first (ICARDA) stage of work was a diagnostic carried out with

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<sup>10</sup> The meeting was conducted almost entirely in Arabic. Michelle Obeid sat beside me and translated as we went along. I was able to participate fairly actively.

local people. The focus on lab work was perhaps necessary during the Civil War, but the notion that true research involved precision in the lab rather than messy and qualitative work in the field seemed to persist at AUB.

The shift to field work, and more importantly to establishing a link between research and development, came at some cost to the researchers. Obviously, it was an expense in time just to get back and forth regularly. And it took more time to attend meetings and to interact with the community. However, the researchers also paid an academic price.

Talhok in particular emphasized that little of what she contributed to the Arsaal projects could be reported in those professional journals that were most important to her career. As well, casual comments made at relaxed times indicated that promotions at AUB for several of the researchers were in doubt because of the nature of the work in Arsaal. It is reasonable to suppose that IDRC funds were a factor that university officials considered when granting their promotions and keeping these researchers at AUB.

A second major influence on AUB of the work in Arsaal was the creation in 2001 of a new multi-disciplinary group called the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU). In collaboration with the environment program at AUB, as well as with donors and research institutions throughout the region, ESDU delivers programs in research, education and training, and outreach. In addition to Arsaal, ESDU teams are working in two other areas of Lebanon. (See [www.aub.edu.lb/~webeco](http://www.aub.edu.lb/~webeco).) The ultimate goal is to create a regional centre of excellence in sustainable development. In my view, ESDU is an idea whose time has come in Lebanon, and it is to the credit of the Arsaal research team that they have recognized the opportunity. One can only wish them good luck – and adequate funding!

The brochure describing ESDU gives explicit credit to IDRC for its conception, which is not surprising inasmuch as the key people in the Arsaal project are equally key to ESDU. IDRC funds allowed Hamadeh to visit several multi-disciplinary university programs in Canada, such as the Institute for Resources and Environment and the Sustainable Development Research Institute, both at the University of British Columbia.

In addition, Rached had two meetings with the President of AUB in order to urge his support for the then-proposed Unit. (The university was reluctant because ESDU seemed too wishy-washy to be considered part of the academic family.)

### *5.2.2 In LARI*

Th DG (Afram) and the director for regional development (Hassan) both emphasized that the Arsaal project has had an enormous influence on how they see their role and how they structure their research. According to Dean Daghir of FAFS, community-based resource management was almost unknown in Lebanon prior to the Arsaal project, but it has now become a model for LARI and for other government agencies. For example, the Arsaal approach is now being applied in the Yammouneh area; what had been designed as an irrigation demonstration is now treated as integrated



agricultural development with at least some measure of local participation.<sup>11</sup> As a centre of excellence in agricultural research for the Middle East, LARI can do a great deal to promote ideas that have emerged from the Arsaal project. Among other approaches, they present community days with exhibits, among which they now include Arsaal.

### 5.2.3 *Other Research Institutes*

The original conception for work in Arsaal stemmed from a survey conducted by ICARDA, which has maintained its interest in the area. Among other things, ICARDA used the project's Local Users Network as the regional node for participatory work related to its Mashreq-Maghreb project. Periodically, they invite members of the research to workshops and other events to explain the methods used and the results obtained at Arsaal.

### 5.2.4 *Other Donors*

Several other donors and embassies have contributed funds to the broader effort at Arsaal. The UNDP has shown particular interest, and, during our visit, we met several people from Finnish international aid who had been brought by regional UNDP staff to Arsaal. GTZ worked along side the Arsaal project through its contribution to the United Nations Commission to Control Desertification. In fact, GTZ was looking for a place to apply its skills and, as Hansmann emphasizes, they came upon the Arsaal project in the field, and were so impressed that they decided to focus parallel efforts in the same region.

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<sup>11</sup> I am reporting this information on LARI as it was presented by LARI officials. However, I doubt that LARI's practice is as good as its word. For one thing, when they say that they have "excellent relationships with all stakeholders," I become suspicious. Are there really no losers in the process? For another, in one community meeting, a senior LARI staff member played what I felt to be an overly strong role. And LARI's brochures put a lot more emphasis on standard production research and commercial farming than on rural development and poverty reduction.

In addition to aid agencies, the Canadian and the Dutch embassies have used their local funds (The Canada Fund in our case) to support small development projects needed to complement research activities. The Lebanese Department of Cooperatives (about which I know nothing) provided funds to the women's coop founded through the Arsaal project.

### 5.3 Policy Influence Downward to Communities

The Arsaal project accomplished a great deal in the community, but, in the words of Talhouk, "the best parts of the project cannot be put into a report" because they represent various forms of capacity building. Some people got experience in either facilitating the development (which is to say, "political") process, and many more in participating in it. Baalbaki expressed much the same view when he said that the project shifted focus from developing technologies to developing communities.

The key to all of this capacity building seems to have been, first, ARDA, and then the Local Users Network. In our meeting with municipal officials, the past president said that the greatest legacy of the Arsaal projects was not economic, though this was important, but institutional. The current Treasurer of the Municipality (and others) emphasized that the projects encouraged new ways of thinking. Granted that such statements might have been made in pursuit of further funding, the distinction between immediate and longer term gains could not have been entirely self-serving. Thus, expressing regret that the project could not extend into a third phase, municipal officials said that the benefits achieved to now would be sustained. Hamadeh, R. Darwish and others said exactly the same thing.

Clearly the Arsaal project gained the respect of the community (or at least those with whom it interacted) because it "gave" as well as "took." Moreover, the project not only created a base from which to launch other activities, but it also imposed a horizontal approach to decisions, something that, according to Haider, Daghir, and others, is quite different from the silo-approach to both academic research and political decision making in Lebanon.

Specific evidence of policy influence at the community level is found in the fact that, after several years, these coops continue to operate. The herders coop still depends significantly on leadership from ARDA and project staff, but, inasmuch as it includes the most traditional and least enfranchised members of the agricultural community, this is not surprising. More than most other farmers, they have been instrumental in the (as yet unsuccessful) effort to get MoA's extension service to put an office in Arsaal. And, to repeat, Zurayk indicates that herders in other communities have followed the Arsaal model and created coops of their own.

The women's coop, in particular that part focussing on food processing, is no longer so dependent upon project staff. Though they need to develop skills in finance and marketing, they have learned about the need to distinguish Arsaali products with a special name, about quality control, and about sanitation. They seem to have made a

sensible decision in using a Beirut-based marketing agency for other coops to handle their products. Hansmann says that this coop is being copied in other communities.

The carpet weaving component of the women's coop has not reached the same level of sophistication, but the women in charge (Halimi) gives evidence that they too can learn the skills. For example, they have found that the very thick carpets produced for local use do not sell well, so they have shifted to thinner ones. They are also experimenting (to my regret but no doubt sensibly) with the use of artificial dyes. Certainly the carpets are attractive and well made. (Both Dr. Allam and I purchased some.) If tourism is initiated in the Arsaal area, they would have a ready market.

Perhaps most important, the Local Users Network also spawned the Natural Resources Platform for presenting specific requests to the municipality and to the national government. Several observers note that the Platform is remarkable first just for its existence and second for the fact that it brings so many stakeholders (rather in the nature of one of the Canadian environment and economy roundtables) and so many issues together. The resulting efforts to influence the municipal government have been more successful than those to influence the national, but that is hardly surprising. Participation of members of parliament in the Local Users Network gives some hope that ties to central authority, to greater funding, and to policy making will come in time, and very possibly without fanfare.

Finally, returning to gender and to class, the best statement of influence in the community again came from Obeid, who, it must be remembered, lived in Arsaal when doing her MS at AUB, and is again living in the community as she gathers data for her doctoral dissertation at LSE in London. In her words, the Arsaal projects have "helped a lot but they have not overcome class and gender barriers." By implication, there has been some influence.

#### 5.4 What Next?

Arsaal is now on the map, if still considered relatively remote and unimportant in Lebanese terms. The two most important innovations, ESDU at the academic level and the Natural Resources Platform at the community level seem likely to continue to operate, as do the coops created under ARDA. Linkages are being built from informal community institutions to formal political structures, strongly at the municipal level and tentatively at the national level. Given the difficulty of defining policy at the national level, it is remarkable that the Arsaal projects had even the ill-defined influence they did have.

What might happen next? One thing is sure. Hamadeh, who was both principal investigator and inspiration for the Arsaal projects is going on a 6-month Sabbatical in the spring of 2003. One of the principal goals of his Sabbatical is to prepare a book-length review of the process and the research results from the Arsaal projects. Funded in part by a separate IDRC grant, Hamadeh should be able reflect on a decade of work, and his book should facilitate sharing of lessons learned on what works, and what does not, for researchers, for development workers, and for decision makers.

One can also assume that the community relationships will continue, and that the individual and group capacity building will become almost self-sustaining. Similarly for the relationships among community organizations and NGOs, which are reported to be more cooperative and less competitive in Arsaal than elsewhere.

What might happen in terms of policy influence with senior levels of government is much less clear. The Marginalisation of Arsaal will not end quickly. The big barrier to the greater policy influence is politics, with funding taking a close (and related) second place.

Lebanon is made up of a diverse group of people split along class, religious and regional lines, and each interest group wants its share of the political and economic pies.

In these circumstances, a region such as Arsaal, which is far from the centres of political power, and which has only a few sources of income, can easily be left out. Much of what has emerged from the IDRC-supported projects in Arsaal is a demand to be heard. It seems unlikely that these projects have themselves created the momentum to push Arsaal into the mainstream, but they have accelerated the process more than could have been anticipated when the projects were conceived nearly a decade ago.

## 6 AFTERTHOUGHT: SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

The important conclusions for the Strategic Evaluation appear in the previous chapter, and this report could have ended there. However, in undertaking the Arsaal case study for that Evaluation, a number of other, related issues arose. This chapter will draw attention to these issues, each of which pertains indirectly rather than directly to policy influence.

### 6.1 PLaW Objectives and Criteria

In several cases the research team had received a mis-impression of PLaW's goals and objectives. Notably, Talhouk worked on Phase I, but was not involved in Phase II because her specialty is bio-diversity, and somehow the team had gotten the message that bio-diversity was not of interest to PLaW. Thinking back to my time on the team, I recall that we wrote something to the effect of not wanting to fund bio-diversity studies *per se*, as with a study focussing on the bio-diversity of region XYZ. We certainly did not intend to rule out bio-diversity as part of study of integrated rural development. In this specific case, Rached recalled that Talhouk had suggested a project component that was strictly ecological, and not well linked to project objectives, which may have been a source of the misunderstanding.

*I recommend that PLaW review its publications and website to ensure that its materials convey the correct impression of what is and is not wanted in proposals.*

### 6.2 Gender and Development in the Mashreq

The comments above on gender relationships in the Arsaal region need to be explored further in order to guide future project development. The few IDRC studies of which I am aware, as with those funded through the Pan-African Initiative in Water in the 1990s, were quite weak. If, as one of the municipal officials ambiguously stated, the issue of rights for women is important in Arsaal, but gender issues are not, we should explore what possible implications this has for IDRC projects, at least those focussing on agriculture. Perhaps we need a revised model, and in particular a model that differs from that applicable to sub-Saharan Africa.

*Eglal Rached's October 2002 regional report to IDRC's Board of Governors recommended an exploratory study of gender in MENA. I concur with that recommendation, and urge that special attention be devoted to the agricultural sector and rural areas.*

### 6.3 Research and Development

As indicated earlier, the research team had made great efforts to emphasize the distinction between research and development. As a result, everyone to whom we talked to in Arsaal – obviously a highly selective sample – understood the role of research. More, they applauded the fact that research was being done in their community. However, almost everyone also mentioned that they would have preferred that more development had occurred over the course of the project.

The dilemma between supporting research and “doing” development occurs everywhere. Perhaps with projects similar to those in Arsaal, IDRC should find ways to link its activities with those of a development NGO that would arrive shortly after the initial diagnostic work has been completed, and, in collaboration with both the researchers and the community, identify some specific projects that would be undertaken in parallel with (and ideally supportive of) the research. Money would of course have to be found for the NGO, and such an approach carries risks (including the possibility of dissension between the research and the development teams).

*Despite possible problems, I recommend that IDRC permit some experiments in which field research incorporates elements of development. The purpose would be to see whether such a combination contributes to the achievement of project objectives or increases the policy influence of the research.*

#### 6.4 IDRC in Lebanon

The very success of the Arsaal projects raise a final and counter-intuitive thought (by no means a conclusion). Perhaps it is time that IDRC asks whether its special role among research donors is needed any longer in Lebanon. Or, better stated, whether IDRC's role is needed as much in Lebanon as in other countries in the Middle East. Income levels in Lebanon (around US\$5,000 per capita) are well above those where IDRC normally works. Governance may leave a lot to be desired, but the regime is neither oppressive nor militaristic. And not only are researchers competent but the research establishment is on firm ground.

*Given that the Regional Director's October 2002 report to the Board of Governors of IDRC specifically proposes to continue to include Lebanon as a recipient country, no recommendation is made. Instead, I merely raise for future consideration the question of whether funds that are currently going to Lebanon could better be directed to other nations in MENA.*

#### 6.5 Further Research

Granted that the Arsaal projects are coming to an end, it is still tempting to think of specific elements of research that might be undertaken in the future.

- In the PCR for Phase I, I recommended that more attention be paid to the quarrying sector. After having visited the site, and seen the great extent of the quarries and the limited extent of powers to control them, my feelings have only become stronger. Little is known about the social benefits and costs of the quarries under various scenarios of management and control. A student working with R. Darwish made a financial analysis, but the full effects on crops, on people, and on community revenues need to be elaborated.
- An intriguing question (suggested by R. Darwish, Haider and others) remains as to why Arsaal, for all its marginalisation, was so ready to accept a research project of this nature, and so eager to pick up on many if not all results. Why is it that this

traditional, isolated community took research seriously? (One municipal official said that research opened their eyes so they could see things in a different way and then ask for other things, which I would interpret as ask in a more appropriate way.) Lamia El Fattal suggests that “. . . part of the Arsaali enthusiasm to get things going with the project had to do also with the new political scene that they were now in post-conflict Lebanon, where basing their economy on illegal trading with Syria . . . was no longer feasible.” I have no idea how to undertake such a study, but there must be lessons in it for other isolated areas.

## 6.6 Community Requests

Inevitably, the presence of three “IDRC people” in Arsaal for several days led community people and particularly the municipal council to ask us for advice in several areas. The major requests were as follows:

- They want to know what are the best options for sewage treatment for the village of Arsaal. It is certainly too cold and dry for wetland approaches. I wondered about small bore systems. This question should be referred to Naser Faruqui who can make suggestions (but avoid stimulating a proposal).
- There is a sizable piece of relatively flat land about 10 km from the village. The community would like advice about how best to use this land. None of us saw this land, so I made no suggestions nor did I promise a response.
- The quarries produce an enormous amount of waste rock of all sizes from boulders to chips. The community would like to know what uses might be made of this waste rock. I immediately thought of infiltration ponds to catch runoff and storm flows. With a little thought we may be able to come up with more suggestions. I will follow through on this one.
- Members of the women's coop want training in finance, administration and marketing. Hamadeh says that this will be provided as part of a SWOT analysis of each of the coops. However, IDRC staff should ensure that it is provided because our project bears some responsibility for the formation of those coops. Lots of evidence indicates that lack of business skills is the biggest factor in the failure of coops to survive. Would it be worth translating the Kapila-Mead book into Arabic?

## ANNEXES

### A: Terms of Reference for Arsaal Case Study

*Excerpt from:*

“Offer of Consultancy Contract: Strategic Evaluation: Research Influence On Policy Centre File No. 100855; Contract No. 107552.

This letter will confirm that the International Development Research Centre (the Centre) wishes to retain the services of Friends of the Earth, hereinafter referred to as *the consultant*, to carry out the work noted above and described below. To this end, the Centre offers Friends of the Earth a contract according to the following terms and conditions.

#### 1. Terms of Reference and Schedule

Many Centre project and program objectives reflect the expectation that the research supported will influence public policy at the national and local levels. Within projects and programs, the Centre staff promote various means of linking research to public policy, and research supported is often reported to have enhanced decision makers awareness of policy options or to have been otherwise taken into account in policy processes. If the Centre is going to increase (and improve the performance of) its portfolio of projects with this mandate, the Centre needs to address what it means by “policy influence.”

Initial discussions with Centre staff, and reviews of the literature and other relevant Centre documents point to three key questions: (1) what constitutes public policy influence in the Centre’s experience; (2) to what degrees, and in what ways, has Centre-supported research influenced public policy; and (3) what factors and conditions have facilitated or inhibited the public policy influence potential of Centre - supported research.

This will serve two main purposes: first, it will provide learning at the program level which can enhance the design of projects and programs to address policy issues where that is a key objective; second, it will provide an opportunity for corporate level learning which will provide input to the strategic planning process, providing feedback on performance, and feeding the design of the next corporate program framework.

The cases studies will form one important set of data in improving the Centre’s capacity to support research which “will foster and support the production, dissemination and application of research results leading to policies and technologies that enhance the lives of people in developing countries.” (from the Centre’s *program directions 2000-2005*, p.16). Attached are five documents which provide the background to the overall study: 1. Interview Framework; 2. Study Overview; 3. Framework Paper by E. Lindquist; and 4. Literature Review by S. Neilson; 5. Study Interview.

The focus of case studies will be on the development of rich case studies that explore not only the work undertaken by the Centre but also the changing context in which the work was carried out and the processes that were used. It is anticipated that the study will cover a range of stories to include cases where policy outcomes may be perceived



as either positive or negative (i.e., research leads to “good” policymaking or “bad” policymaking). The cases will present detailed stories of the policy influence process. The story will be developed through: (1) a review of documents including project design documents, monitoring documents (inter alia, technical reports, trip reports, correspondence) and project reports; and where they can be located; (2) interviews with project leaders and project participants; (3) interviews with those said to have been influenced; and (4) interviews with relevant Centre staff (e.g. responsible Program Officers (PO)).

As part of building a corporate response to the three key questions outlined above, the consultant will prepare the following case study (ies): a case study of the Centre supported work in Arsaal, notably projects 100360 (Sustained Improvement of Marginal Lands) and 002627 (Sustainable Improvement of Marginal Lands In Lebanon). Preliminary tombstone data and instructions for file access will be provided by the Centre.

The period of this contract covers from October 1 to December 31, 2002.

Pursuant to this contract, the consultant shall:

- 1) review project documents prior to any interviews and to know the role of the interviewee in the project; the consultant will work with the Centre to identify and locate the appropriate individuals to be interviewed. The consultant may also have to search out individuals who are no longer known to the Centre but who were central to the project. Based on the Terms of Reference (TORs) and reading the project file, the consultant will develop interview guides for interviews with project leaders and participants, program officers, beneficiaries and others reached in the implementation and follow up to the project. These interview guides will be shared with and approved by the Centre.
- 2) travel to and in Lebanon and possibly the Centre’s office in Cairo, Egypt to interview key informants for the case(s) specified. Interviews should normally move out from those most directly affiliated with the project to those purported to have been affected by or to have used the results in some way. Because there is inherent bias in interviewees to present findings in the best possible light, triangulation of data sources is crucial. Every effort should be made to ensure that interviews are conducted with representatives of at least three of the main groups involved: project implementors, beneficiaries, POs, policy makers and where applicable related project participants (other funded or departmental studies which have been linked to the project). The consultant will normally have an opportunity for follow-up visits for data verification or further data collection where warranted;
- 3) submit satisfactory draft reports for each case in electronic and hard copy format to the Evaluation Unit by November 30, 2002;

- 4) participate in a verification workshop in a location to be determined, the consultant will make a brief presentation, describing the case and indicating preliminary findings. The consultant may be asked to facilitate the data analysis or may be asked to be an active participant in the process. Following the workshops, the team may determine that it is advantageous to follow up the findings with further data collection in the field, either for the introduction of new respondents or to gather data in areas not yet addressed in the case; and
- 5) finalize the case reports based on inputs and any further verification carried out, and submit final satisfactory reports in hard copy and electronic format by December 31, 2002. Upon completion of all the case studies, and the development of a regional analysis, the Evaluation Unit may invite the consultant to participate in a preliminary global analysis of the data. On the basis of these documents, the consultant will be reconvened with the evaluation team for further analysis of the findings.

## **2. Personnel**

It is understood that the consultant will assign performance of all work under this contract to Mr. David Brooks, Director of Research. Written authorization of the Centre must be obtained in advance for any substitution of personnel.

**B: Agenda of Meetings Conducted and Attended during Field Visit to Lebanon**

*This agenda includes only formal meetings; casual meetings arranged during travel or meals are excluded. In addition to field visits, interviews were also conducted with several IDRC officers: El Fattal, Rached, and Bessette.*

Monday 28 October

- Arsaal Team at AUB
  - Shady Hamadeh, AUB
  - Mona Haider, AUB
  - Rami Zurayk, AUB
- Salma Talhouk, biodiversity specialist on Arsaal project, AUB
- Nuhad Daghir, Dean, FAFS, AUB
- Berthold Hansmann, GTZ
- Ali Darwish, Green Line (Lebanese environmental NGO)

Tuesday 29 October

- Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI), MoA
  - Michal Afram
  - Slah Hajj Hassan
- Association for Rural Development in Arsaal (ARDA)
  - President and key officials
- Meeting with Herders Cooperative
- Inauguration of dipping pit for sheep funded by Dutch embassy to Lebanon
- Local Agenda Meeting conducted by Wafa Khoury of UNDP
  - Natural Resources Platform team
  - Mayor of Arsaal Municipality
- UNDP and Finnish Govt. Representatives
  - Elie Kodsi, Regional Manager, UNDP
  - Brigit Krasilowsky, Program Officer, UNDP
  - Matti Nummelin, Environmental Advisor, FinnAid

Wednesday 30 October

- Meeting with Michelle Obeid with emphasis on gender issues
- Meeting and visit to premises of Food Processing Cooperative
- Meeting and visit to premises of Carpet Weaving Cooperative
- Meeting with Arsaal Municipality Officials, including present and past mayors
- Meeting with local Ha-Meiri family (school teachers in Arsaal)

Thursday 31 October

- Meeting with MounirAbiSaid and visit to site of Animal Encounter
- Follow-up meeting with Arsaal Project Team at AUB
  - Hamadeh
  - Haider
  - Zurayk
- Meeting at Zecco House with Moustaha Yarmout and his multi-media communications team on communications for development projects for Arsaal, and to view clips from a new video on resource conflict in Arsaal.

Friday 01 November

- Meeting with Ragy Darwish, resource economist with Arsaal project (AUB)

- Meeting with Faoud Falayfel, Director of Extension Service, MofA
- Meeting with Ahmed Baalbaki, rural sociologist with Arsaal project (Univ. of Lebanon)

**C: Key People Interviewed or Met for Arsaal Case Study**

Two tables follow: C-1 includes those people with whom we sat down and held a discussion. Most of these discussions were taped; C-2 includes people with whom we interacted and discussed the Arsaal project, but with whom no meetings as such were held. None of these discussions were taped. Coordinates for each of these people can be provided.

Two groups of people are excluded from this table. First, IDRC officers with whom I discussed the project, notably Bessette, El Fattal and Rached, do not appear. Their roles are of course well known to the Evaluation Unit. Second, and more significantly, none of the community people in Arsaal are included. This omission is unfortunate, but few of them spoke English or French, many of them were not met in a situation that permitted writing down (perhaps a third were not literate), and my ears did not catch the Arabic names, particularly in the Arsaali manner of swallowing the first syllable.

**TABLE C-1: PEOPLE FORMALLY INTERVIEWED**

NAME	POSITION	UNIT	SEX	NOTES
AFRAM, Michel A (Dr)	Pres. D.G.	LARI	M	Good discussion about agric. policy in Leb.
BAALBAKI, Ahmad (Dr)	Professor	U of Lebanon	M	Rural sociologist on Arsaal project, esp. w/r communities
DAGHIR, Nuha (Dr)	Dean	FAFS / AUB	M	Good discussion about role of Arsaal in research at AUB
DARWISH, Ali (Dr)	Exec. Dir.	Green Line	M	One of leading ENGOs in Leb. – esp. envt. educ.
DARWISH, Nagy (Dr)	Associate Professor	FAFS / AUB	M	Resource economist on Arsaal project; one of few to study quarries
HAIDER, Mona	Director	ESDU and PhD student at AUB	F	Manages the Arsaal project, and ESDU
HAMADEH, Shadi (Dr)	Chair	Dept Animal Sci. FAFS/AUB	M	Project Leader of, and inspiration for, Arsaal projects
HANSMANN, Berthold	Director	GTZ projects in Lebanon	M	Expert on desertification
HASSAN, Salah	?	LARI	M	Senior position in rural development projects
OBEID, Michelle	?	PhD student at	F	Lives in Arsaal. Best source of

		LSE		info. on community.
TALHOUK, Salma (Dr)	Associate Professor	Horticulturalist FAFS/AUB	F	Strong concept of project and role of research
ZURAYK, Rami (Dr)	Professor	Interfaculty Prog on Env't'l Science	M	Gadfly and researcher; strong on community role

**TABLE C-2: PEOPLE MET BUT NOT FORMALLY INTERVIEWED**

ABU SAID, Mounir	Director	Animal Encounter	M	Educational Centre for Wildlife Conservation; familiar with Arsaal
KHOURY, Wafa (Dr)	National Project Mgr	Agrobiodiversity Project, LARI	F	Chairs Natural Resources Platform in Arsaal
KODSI, Elie	Regional Mgr	Drylands Centre, UNDP RO for Arab St.	M	Brings people to visit Arsaal as example of how to work
NUMMELIN, Matti (Dr)	Env't'l Advisor	Dept Int. Dev. Coop., Finnish Min. For. Aff. Affairs	M	Looking for options for Finnaid in Lebanon
YAMOUT, Moustapha ("Zicco")	Coordinator (or something)	Zicco House	M	Inspiration for multi-media project that links art to social issues

## **D: Interview Guide Developed for Arsaal Case Study**

*Nb 1: Some questions are deliberately repetitious in order to "triangulate."*

*Nb 2: This is a protocol for questions themselves, not for wording during interviews.*

### **29 TOMBSTONE DATA**

29.1 Interviewer(s)

29.2 Date

29.3 Interviewee

29.3.1 Name

29.3.2 Title

29.3.3 Coordinates

29.3.4 Type of organization (see General Guide)

### **30 CONNECTION TO PROJECT OR PROJECT RESULTS**

*Nb: If interviewee participated in the research, go to 3*

30.1 What was your connection to the project or its results

30.2 At what stage did you become aware of the project or its results

30.3 How did you become aware of them

30.4 What do you see as the main question that the research project was trying to address

30.5 Do you think that was the right question

30.6 Has anything changed that would alter the nature of the question

30.7 What kind of project was this in your mind

### **31 ACTIVITY OF RESEARCH TEAM**

*Nb: Some questions appropriate only for team leader*

31.1 What was your role on the research team

31.2 How did you get involved in the research

31.3 For how long were you involved

31.4 What do you see as the main question that the research project was trying to address

31.5 What do you see as the main outputs of the research

31.6 At what stage were outputs, reach and impact considered in the study.

31.7 Ditto for gender issues

31.8 How were outputs, reach and impact discussed during the course of the study

31.9 Ditto for gender issues

31.10 Did the outputs stem from the original research question, were they corollaries, or were they serendipitous

31.11 Were project objectives changed in any way during the course of the research in order to achieve greater or wider policy influence

31.12 When was the dissemination plan put into effect

31.13 Has the environment changed since the project was started

31.13.1 For research; if yes, how

- 31.13.2 For policy; if yes, how
- 31.14 What would be different about the project if you were designing it today
- 31.15 What would be different about dissemination programs if you were receiving the research results today.
- 31.16 Did the research process work in such a way as to improve chances for results to be applied?
- 31.17 Did it miss opportunities to do so?

## 32 NATURE OF THE PROJECT AND ITS RESULTS

- 32.1 What do you see as the main outputs of the project (beyond papers and documents)
- 32.2 Who received outputs from the project (ie, reach)
  - 32.2.1 How were the results brought to their attention
  - 32.2.2 What did they or will they do with them

## 33 POLICY OR PROGRAM INFLUENCE

- 33.1 What do you see as the main influence of the project / What do policy makers know now that they did not know before
- 33.2 Are there specific changes to which you can point
  - 33.2.1 What is in place now
  - 33.2.2 What do you anticipate in the future
- 33.3 Where (geographically) will this influence have an effect
- 33.4 Where (structurally) will this influence have an effect
- 33.5 How long will it take for this influence to be felt
- 33.6 How wide will the influence be (eg many people will be affected)
- 33.7 What factors helped to promote the policy influence of the project
  - 33.7.1 Which of those factors were external to the project
  - 33.7.2 Which were internal (ie, how could the project have increased its influence)
- 33.8 What factors worked to limit the policy influence of the project
  - 33.8.1 Which of those factors were external to the project
  - 33.8.2 Which were internal (ie, did project activities or outputs limit its influence)
- 33.9 Do you think the policy or program influence can be generalized beyond Arsaal

## 34 RESEARCH INFLUENCE

- 34.1 Did the research process engage many people
  - 34.1.1 In the academic environment
  - 34.1.2 In the field
  - 34.1.3 Could it have engaged more
- 34.2 How did it influence those people
- 34.3 Will this project affect the nature or style of future projects
- 34.4 Will this project create a demand for additional research



34.4.1 In geographically related areas

34.4.2 In conceptually related areas

34.5 Will the fact that these projects were done alter the broad research environment in any way. If so, where and how

### 35 INFLUENCE ON BENEFICIARIES

35.1 What do the people or groups that were the object of the research know now that they did not know before.

35.2 What are they doing differently now.

35.3 Is the reaction to the research different for men and for women.

35.4 Would they welcome another research study

### 36 POST-PROJECT ACTIVITIES

36.1 Has dissemination of research outputs continued. If so, in what ways

36.2 Are the research results being used

36.2.1 In further research

36.2.2 In policy or program development

36.3 Do you think this project will stimulate wider or deeper analysis of policies, programs or future projects

### 37 POLICY PROCESS IN LEBANON

*Nb: These questions will be worked in as the opportunity presents, or ignored if they seem inappropriate or "dangerous." As appropriate, either Q.9 or Q.10 will be asked, not both.*

37.1 What is your understanding of the term "policy influence"

37.2 How is agricultural and land-use policy set in Lebanon

37.2.1 To what extent are equity issues a concern

37.2.2 To what extent are gender issues a concern

37.2.3 To what extent are environmental issues a concern

37.3 How could the policy influence of this project have been increased

37.4 What are the barriers to greater influence of this project and similar projects

### 38 SETTING RESEARCH PRIORITIES IN LEBANON

*Nb: These questions will be worked in as the opportunity presents, or ignored if they seem inappropriate or "dangerous." As appropriate, either Q.9 or Q.10 will be asked, not both.*

38.1 What is your understanding of the term "research priority"

38.2 How are research priorities set in Lebanon

38.2.1 To what extent are equity issues a concern

38.2.2 To what extent are gender issues a concern

38.2.3 To what extent are environmental issues a concern

38.3 How will this project affect future research priorities

#### 38.4 What barriers block this project from having a greater effect

## **E: Summary of Influence of Aarsaal Projects as Seen by Principal Investigator**

*Excerpts from Document by Shadi Hamadeh in preparation for IDRC Strategic Evaluation (October 2002)*

### **Multidisciplinarity**

The project was a pioneer in multi-disciplinarity at AUB. The project team includes more than 10 researchers, which bring technical and socio-economic expertise from their different fields for dealing with natural resource management issues at the community level.

During phase I of the project, an integrated approach was developed for dealing with technical issues. This was facilitated by the adoption and use of GIS techniques. In phase II, more attention was given to socio-economic issues. A new approach was adopted focusing on livelihood analysis, putting people at the center of development and looking at the overall context within which they operate and make their decisions, analyzing their livelihood strategies and its outcomes on poverty reduction, food security and the natural resource base.

Multidisciplinarity was institutionalized at AUB by the establishment of ESDU, the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit, a research and development specialized in community development.

### **Participatory approaches and gender**

At the project inception, a local NGO, Aarsaal Rural Development Association, served as an entry point to the community and representative groups of farmers were identified for the purpose of determining needed areas of research, and discussing research objectives. These farmers constituted the nucleus of a Local User Network (LUN), a participatory development communication network for the use and exchange of information among policymakers, communities, and researchers.

Specialized working groups with common interests unfolded from the LUN and later developed into 3 Sub-networks: two of these dealt with the main production sectors in the village: livestock and fruit growing, the third addressed women needs. The sub-network for women brought together women from various socio-economic and political groups in the village along with gender researchers and trainers in the project team. The sub-network explored gender related issues and focused on enhancing the socio-economic status of women and their empowerment. Possible income generating activities were explored and resulted in the establishment of carpet/rug weaving and food processing facilities.

### **Institutional strengthening**

*At the community level:*

The Local users network which acted as a hatchery for 2 cooperatives:

Cooperative for livestock herders

Cooperative for women

Empowerment of marginal groups: women and herders

Capacity building for ARDA, the local facilitator. ARDA is now exposed to a wide array of donors and partners and is very active at the national level

*At the PI level:*

Institutionalization of multidisciplinary and participatory approaches at AUB  
Establishment of ESDU

Launching of the Capacity Building Network for community development (CBN)

Establishment of the Natural Resource Management Platform, grouping major stakeholders in natural resource management: decision makers, donors and researchers

### **Conflict-resolution**

The LUN brought together different community groups with conflicting land uses such as fruit growers, herders, and quarry operators and is being used as a conflict resolution platform with the help of researchers and policy makers.

### **Partnerships with other researchers, leveraging of additional resources**

- ✂ The Aarsaal project was the first in the village, it established the LUN
- ✂ The LUN brought together all development practitioners in Aarsaal examples include:
  - o The LUN was adopted by the Mashreq Maghreb as a regional focal point for community participation
  - o The regional Agrobiodiversity project chose Aarsaal as one of its sites
  - o The GTZ supported project CoDeL dealing with UNCCD chose Aarsaal as a major site
  - o The project was listed in UNDP best practice database on sustainable development
  - o The LUN facilitated cooperation between Aarsaal and national NGO's such as Green Line which are currently working on environmental education, organic farming and reforestation in Aarsaal.

### **Policy impacts**

#### *At the national level*

- ✂ The extension service at MoA used the hydro-geological maps developed by the project for siting of reservoirs funded by the World Bank
- ✂ The Cooperative of herders pressured MoA for a center for agriculture in Aarsaal
- ✂ MoA uses LUN for extension purposes
- ✂ Many deputies participated in the workshops of the LUN. This helped increase their understanding of the problems of the area and ensure that recommendations out of the workshop were directly uptaken by relevant decision makers.
- ✂ The Ministry through the department of cooperatives supported the women cooperative in Aarsaal

#### *At the local level*

Members of the LUN became members of the municipality, the local decision making body. This helped raise awareness on natural resource management issues.

### *Translating research into development*

Recently, the project facilitated the development of a jointly agreed local development agenda. The agenda is agreed by all parties in the local community: the municipality, NGO's, cooperatives and sectorial representatives.

Donors and policy makers also agreed to coordinate their efforts through the natural resource management platform to deal with issues in the agenda.