

LEWAP Tuesdays

Research and general public meeting

Conference Report Tuesday 13 October 2020

What is IWRM?

- **IWRM: Integrated Water Resources Management** is:
a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. (Global Water Partnership)
- **IWRM is about:**
 - ☐ Managing water resources at the lowest possible level.
 - ☐ Managing demand for water and optimizing the supply.
 - ☐ Providing equitable access to water resources by a participatory approach.
 - ☐ Establishing policies to help manage water resources.
 - ☐ Engaging all sectors of the economy in the IWRM process.

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Integrated Water Resource Management and the importance of participatory approach in Lebanon's water sector

Dr. Yasmine Jabaly: Senior Lecturer at the University of Balamand, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Dr. Marianne Saba: Vice President of the Youth Committee and Member of the scientific Committee at Ibrahim Abdel Al Foundation for Sustainable Development, Researcher and Senior Lecturer at the University of Balamand, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Dr. Marie-Hélène Nassif: IWMI Consultant, Researcher and Project Coordinator for ReWater MENA in Lebanon

Ziad Khayat: Project Coordinator, IWRM for Improved Water Security, Climate Change and Natural Resources Sustainability Cluster, UNESCWA

SNEAK PEAK INTO THE PRESENTATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO IWRM:

Dr. Yasmine Jabaly presented a global overview on the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach and highlighted the challenges faced in the water sector in Lebanon with their consequences on the long-term.

Integrated Water Resources Management, as defined by the Global Water Partnership, is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.

Communication and collaboration are the main pillars of an IWRM, directly involving all stakeholders in project; this is done through the following:

- Identification of the problem at hand
- Understanding the co-benefits
- Identification of the appropriate tools for intervention
- Development of a stakeholder centric strategy
- Implementation of the strategy
- Monitoring, evaluation and adaptation

Nevertheless, the implementation of an IWRM approach faces several barriers and challenges such as the willingness to change and the lack of quantitative knowledge on water resources leading to an unsustainable management of water resources.

The session was concluded with reflective questions on the general behavior towards integrated water management in Lebanon, the stakeholders involved in the water sector and the nature of their interactions and the urgency to adopt an IWRM for water management and how.

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE WATER SECTOR

Dr. Marianne Saba emphasized on the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Approach in the aspect of shared responsibility across societies and the integration of actors from across sectors and scales; in other words, the participatory approach.

In the water sector, providing equitable access to water and sanitation should be done through participatory and transparent governance and management. This public participatory should include civil society as they are the most knowledgeable of the community's situation and can increase public's support and acceptance of policies.

Dr Marianne proceeded by presenting some examples of good governance in the water and environment sectors. In the water sector, she presented the governance in the Litani River Basin project that initiated with the issuance of the Lebanese Parliament law

63/2016. This law defined an integrated plan to deal with water pollution in the Litani Basin and mandated the Litani River Authority (LRA) to implement water governance in coordination with other concerned authorities – setting the ground for a participatory approach in the area.

Dr. Marianne continued by highlighting the importance of sharing information and awareness among water users, civil societies and farmers' associations on the importance of preserving water and reducing pollution. She further elaborated the importance of establishing Water Users Associations (WUAs) within the Litani Basin and providing them with technical support and capacity building in order to make them the coordinating body on water management projects in their respective regions.

The session was concluded with recommendations for Lebanon on the need to include all stakeholder especially civil society in project development and implementation and not to overlook our commitments to the SDGs in reaching a safe and equitable access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6).

PARTICIPATIVE APPROACH IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN LEBANON INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Dr. Marie Hélène Nassif started her presentation by going through the legal aspect of the water sector in Lebanon. The recent legal reforms that govern the water sector are highly influenced by international policies and paradigms, including the law on Water Users Associations (WUAs); some reforms are directly funded by international organizations while others are guided or supported by these stakeholders.

Her presentation was a critical overview related to the promotion of Water Users Association as a systematic solution in the Lebanese Water Sector and more largely the participatory approach in water resources management. She showed that the barriers to such an approach in Lebanon through analyzing three attempts to implement WUA in the case of Canal 900 irrigation system.

The Canal 900 irrigation system is a state-managed irrigation system (managed by the Litani River Authority LRA). It is supplied by Qaraaoun Lake in the Litani Basin and covers an area of 2000 ha in five villages in South Bekaa, supplying around 500 farmers. The system operated from 2001 until 2014 then stopped operating due to different factors (financial, technical, management, pollution). During the years of operation, farmers were unsatisfied with the water allocation quantities, the time of start of irrigation and other management issues.

Therefore, three initiatives led by different NGOs consecutively tried to form Water Users Associations with the idea to address these problems by involving the beneficiaries

(farmers) in decision-making and management processes. The three projects implemented different approaches, with the first two main focusing on giving a legal status to the association and taking farmers on study tours to visit other international WUAs. The latest attempt was done by the Litani River Basin Management Support (USAID-funded Program), that managed to build on the previous failures and improve the project approach by focusing on establishing stronger links between farmers and between them and managers. But the relationship between LRA and farmers remained intense due to lack of trust from both sides and the unwillingness of the public stakeholder to accept farmers' participation. Cooperation among farmers themselves was also proven to be difficult due to socio-economic and political barriers.

Dr. Marie-Hélène concluded that participation is not a panacea and presupposes the coexistence of different factors: right project approach and expertise, social capital and most importantly the willingness of governmental actors to implement real participation which was proven to be a major issue in the Lebanese context. Nevertheless, the approach might slowly finds its way into decision making practices if projects start setting realistic goals for participation and if the academic sector plays a critical a role in documentation and assessing these participatory processes.

SDG 6.5.1: IMPLEMENTATING INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IWRM) GLOBAL AND REGIONAL BASELINE STUDIES

Mr. Ziad Khayat started off his presentation by presenting the Dublin Guiding Principles on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with special focus on SDG 6 “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. In line with the IWRM approach, target 6.5 indicator 6.5.1 states that by 2030, IWRM should be implemented at all levels as appropriate. In order to assess its implementation in the Arab Region, UNESCWA produced a regional report based on the SDG 6.5.1 indicator surveys of the Arab countries. 19 out of 22 reported on indicator 6.5.1 and the results showed a relatively weak correlation between IWRM implementation and overall level of development due to political will and assigned level of priority. Lebanon’s overall score is below the Arab average score in IWRM implementation.

The assessment conducted at the level of Arab countries revealed that most Arab countries:

- Need to strengthen implementation activities of IWRM-based laws, policies and plans, when they exist.
- Should emphasize on increasing public participation at the local level and on establishing institutions capable of leading IWRM implementation

- Need to significantly increase financing for water resources development and management (effective systems for data and information sharing at national and regional level)

Mr. Ziad concluded with some constraints to the implementation of an IWRM among which weaknesses in national water resources policy, law and plans, insufficient financing for IWRM implementation, inadequate inter-sectoral stakeholder coordination and most importantly non-institutionalized public participation which is the main component of a successful IWRM.

SUPPORTING PRESENTATIONS

SOME SCREENSHOTS OF THE PRESENTATIONS

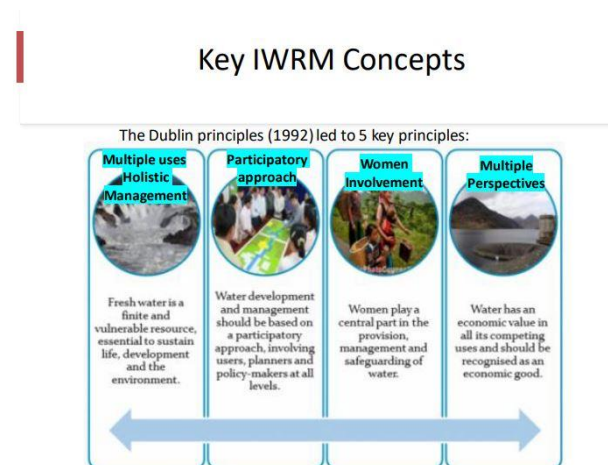


Figure 1: Dr. Yasmine Jabaly presenting the key concepts of IWRM



Figure 2: Dr. Marianne Saba presenting the governance in the Litani River Basin

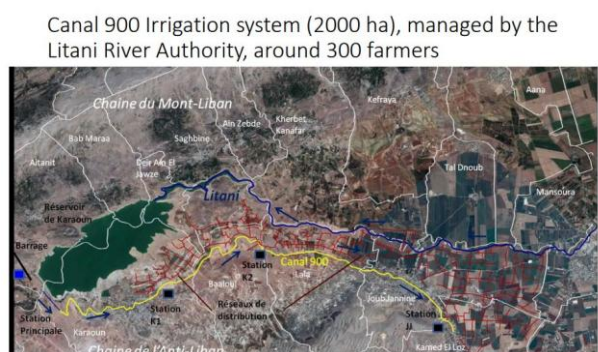


Figure 3: Dr. Marie Hélène Nassif presenting the case study of the canal 900 irrigation system

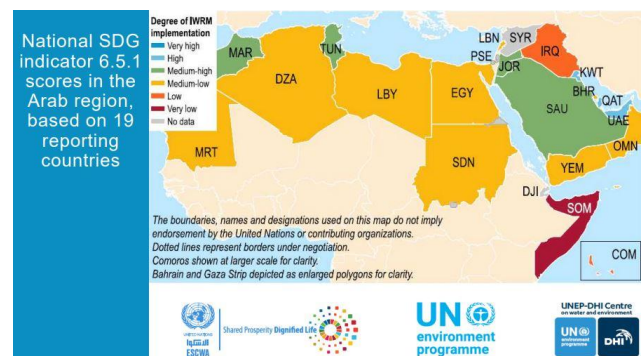


Figure 4: Ziad Khayat presenting the degree of IWRM implementation in the Arab region

LINK TO SPEAKERS PRESENTATIONS

Introduction to Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) [Presentation of Dr. Yasmine Jabaly](#)

Inclusive Governance in the Water Sector [Presentation of Dr. Marianne Saba](#)

Participative Approach in Water Resources Management in Lebanon; Insights from the field, challenges and opportunities [Presentation of Dr Marie-Hélène Nassif](#)

SDG indicator 6.5.1: Implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Global and regional baseline results [Presentation of Ziad Khayat](#)

DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE AUDIENCE AND THE SPEAKERS

Other than the Litani River Authority, are there any River Basin Organization attempts?

No attempts have been done yet in Lebanon; however in North Lebanon a steering committee was established as part of a project that started in 2005 on the elaboration of a river contract on the catchment basin of Nahr Qadisha. This committee was composed of the North Lebanon Water Establishment (NLWE), Union of Municipalities of Bcharee, the Ministry of Energy and Water and the Council for Development and Reconstruction.

How can Lebanon overcome obstacles and achieve progress in IWRM?

Enabling environment is the first dimension to setting an IWRM and this comes with setting laws and regulations that require political will. If this political will cannot be reached there is a need for public pressure. This comes in informing them and raising awareness on the sustainable development goals, importance of water and the right of access to water with the aim of empowering them. Empowering the public will then put them in position of decision making.

Does UNESCWA work on public awareness and capacity building for the public sector?

The role of UNESCWA is to work with governments in policy recommendations but recent shifts were done to involve more the youth, the women and the public sector. Currently, UNESCWA is using the AWARENET network which is open to the public; anyone can register and be part of this network. This network covers awareness raising and capacity building.

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