



## **SESSION REPORT**

### **TITLE OF THE SESSION**

FT4.34: Demand management, institutions, policy options in the Middle East

### **SESSION CONVENERS**

Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI)  
Water Environment and Science Center - Canada (WESC)  
Arab Water Council (AWC)

### **LOCAL ACTIONS PRESENTED DURING THE SESSION**

Brief description of the local actions presented –scope, impact of the local actions, type of stakeholders involved, originality and innovative ideas, etc.

Influencing Water Policy in Egypt:  
Egyptian Youth Take the Local Message  
From the Nile Valley to Mexico City's World Water Forum

There is an urgent need to get Egyptian youth involved in environmental issues. The creation of a wider and deeper understanding and consensus of water awareness is a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between education and the real world. In this way, we can have a capacity building impact on Egypt's people by changing attitudes and actions about water use and appropriate, sustainable water technologies and policies.

Children may be the solution. The Wadi Environmental Science Centre (WESC) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) believe that children are Egypt's best "agents of change" for education, capacity building, and influencing national policy revisions. Children can be much better conduits to deliver policy recommendations than the usual cadre of environmental or scientific experts. Through our programme, we will educate youth on local and global water issues, promote dialogue between Egyptian Ministry officials and Egyptian youth, and empower youth to appeal the Ministry for national policy changes.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Brief description of the most important lessons learned

- More networking at the ministry and local governorate level are critical to successful integration of local initiative programmes.
- Diffusion activities were one of the most critical project components for the students. After they have gained valuable information, students are inspired and seek to diffuse what they have learned. Several outlets of diffusion are needed so students can network with other youth, professionals, and community leaders, businesses, and government officials. In this way they continue to learn and pass on their water awareness and education message.
- The programme needed more field based learning experiences, such as tours of water projects that are working or not working, retreats to different areas of Egypt, and more opportunities for students to get a visual and true understanding of scope of the water issue.
- Multi-media was a powerful tool to convey our message to an outside audience, especially when available in several languages. Multi-media allowed our programme to transcend cultural and language barriers.
- Students gained a tremendous amount of self-confidence and took it upon themselves to continue the lesson, seek out partners, and continue the diffusion to a much wider audience. They truly became “agents of change.”

## **KEY MESSAGES**

Using bullet points and short explanatory paragraphs, include orientations for future actions or policy recommendations, commitments

Future actions and policy recommendations of the WESC Programme are to:

Help promote national policy changes:

- Produce educated youth that become “agents for change.”
- Promote dialogue between Egyptian Ministry officials and Egyptian youth.
- Empower youth to appeal to the Ministry for national policy changes.

Help support environmental initiatives:

- Help prompt behavioral changes that support United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals for Egypt and the UN Decade on Water: “Water for Life” 2005-2015.
- Raise the level of education and awareness about water issues (local and global) in students, parents, schools, villages, and within communities.

- Highlight water conservation methods, and possible environmentally conscientious and sustainable solutions.
- Challenge students to analyze and reflect upon personal and community behaviors required for water improvements in their daily lives.

Help influence governmental change:

- Promote changes that emphasize Egyptian government decentralization goals such that water improvement targets may be realized: “a sanitation component...can only be satisfied through a decentralized approach combining water supply with sanitation in plans conceived locally” (Human Development Report for Egypt: 2004).
- Promote new learning methodologies, teacher skills, and curricula that emphasize and improved scientific research culture towards Egypt’s education reform goals.

## ORIENTATIONS FOR ACTION

Recommendations of the three most relevant future actions, for solving the main issues derived from the session.

- Use participatory methodologies (child-centered learning) to build capacity and empower Egypt’s youth to make changes in their daily life.
- Empower students to propose child-driven and child-presented policy recommendations to the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation:
  - Enable children to bring about positive changes in their homes, schools, and communities;
  - Enable children to bring about positive changes for others less fortunate than themselves;
  - Offer children a venue to voice their concerns and recommendations (at the World Water Forum in Mexico during the "local initiatives for local change" roundtable discussion).
- Work with existing NGOs, local stakeholders, and institutions by giving them support and current technology to build capacity, become more responsive to local needs, and strengthen networks of local support to solve water problems in schools, villages, and communities.
- Overall goal of reducing water management impacts among the country's marginalized populations, and in particular, women and youth; more equitably distributing the benefits of education, technology, and economic growth.