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WHAT WAS YOUR BEST CEPA INTERVENTION IN THIS TRIENNIUM?

Jassim Mohammed AL-ASADI
CEPA NGO Focal Point, Iraq



Your Position/Role and Country:

Director of Chibaish office of Nature Iraq; Iraq CEPA NGO Focal Point

Title of your CEPA activity/product

Saving the Mesopotamian marshes

Other collaborators – please identify other organizations that assisted you or were your partners

Iraqi Syndicate of Engineers
Consultant in Hima Mesopotamia.
org. USA

Key stakeholder group(s) targeted by your product/activity (e.g. decision-makers, teachers, families, journalists etc.)

Decision-makers, locals, journalists, nature friends and water keepers

When did this event take place/when was your product launched?

23rd September, 2011

What was your key message?

To save the Mesopotamian marshes in terms of natural, environmental, and sustainability frameworks, wildlife, biodiversity, cultural heritage

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Brief description of your product/ activity / material you used

Since 2003, attention has shifted to the wetlands in general and the marshes in particular in Iraq, and become the most important themes of the NGO Nature Iraq. It has become the priority of my daily work and activity not only because I was born and raised in the marshes, but also because of the fact that the biodiversity and the importance of environmental, cultural and economic development of this part of the world is of great value yet despite this has faced the fiercest of drying projects. The marshes faced significant environmental disaster during the years 1991-2003 as they were deliberately drained; UNEP has recognized the event as one of the biggest environmental disasters in the world in the twentieth century.

Starting in 2008 water inflow rates into the marshes from the transboundary Tigris and Euphrates were reduced, and along with climate change and decreasing amounts of rain, negatively affected the situation of the marshes environment and hydrology. The Hammar marsh and the central marshes dried once again.

We in Nature Iraq have been, from the beginning, searching for alternatives to sustain the flooding of the marshlands of Mesopotamia through conferences, seminars, environmental awareness campaigns, links with the local population and decision-makers, producing TV programmes and films, publications and brochures on our wetlands and our environment which are worthy of the effort. Our vision was based on our experience and our engagement with the local population.

What was your intended outcome from this product/activity? (e.g. change in behaviour of target group; volunteer help with a wetland project; newspaper article)

Help the local population, to restore the marshlands of Mesopotamia, and enable them to exercise their social, economic, and psychological re-balance of the returnees, of forced migrations. Enable them to restore confidence in themselves and nature.

What kind of impact did this activity/product have on the target audience?

The marshes and their Arabs inspired a great deal of our ideas. There is so much warmth and love in the marshes, and we were very happy when displaced people of the marsh city of Chibayish, which used to harbour over 60,000 people of whom only 6,000 remained because of the deliberate drainage campaign of the 1990s, came back to their home. The population of Chibayish in 2012 is estimated to be about 62,000.

Nobody believed that the marshes drained and burned for 12 years would revive in such a short time, but the dream became a reality.

Is there a follow-up activity/product planned, if yes briefly describe

Local residents, local governments, stakeholders that want the sustainability of the return of the Iraqi Marshlands of buffalo breeders and fishermen. Journalists and those interested in wetlands and the environment, friends of nature and the staff of Nature Iraq Org.

Why do you identify this as your best CEPA intervention? What makes it stand out?

Because this project was the real saviour, to restore the Central Marshes and without it the droughts would hurt marshes deeply. Population has regained the hope through this project and their environment and their economic activity

What was the source of your funding?

EU regional development fund (part of a large project called "Birds as the top attraction of the Nature tourism in the Oulu region")



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CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)