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# Human Resources Development Unit

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## Introduction

ICARDA considers human resources development (HRD), including training, human capacity building of national programs and networking, essential for institutions and individuals to keep pace academically and professionally with the rapid developments in agricultural research and production. The Center recognizes that well-trained agricultural technicians, scientists and managers supported by well-developed institutions are essential to develop effective and sustainable national agricultural research systems. Training is a complimentary component of ICARDA's research mandate and forms an effective means for a two-way learning and exchange of knowledge and experience between the Center and its partners. The Center's approach to training is based on adult-learning methodologies that utilize the participants' past experience. Most training courses are *demand driven* and *highly participatory*, and participants are encouraged to share their experience with their colleagues from other programs, thus enriching the overall content of the courses and adding to the knowledge offered by the trainers. The typology of training includes long-term group courses, specialized short-term group courses, individual non-degree and degree training for M. Sc. and Ph.D. studies, regional, sub-regional and in-country courses. The latter three types of courses are usually conducted in collaboration with NARS.

## Achievements

- More than 4,370 agricultural scientists from over 65 countries were trained at/or through ICARDA. The cadre of trained alumni is significantly contributing to the close and healthy relationship between ICARDA and NARS partners and with many other research and training institutions worldwide.
- More than 241 national scientists from several developing and developed countries completed their M. Sc. and/or Ph.D. degrees in collaboration with ICARDA through its Graduate Research Training Program (GRTP). Several of these scientists occupy leading positions in their respective NARS and are acting as ICARDA's ambassadors. Among these NARS are Algeria, Afghanistan, China, Cyprus, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, UAE, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Tunisia, Turkey, and a few countries in Central Asia.
- About 105 workshops, conference and meetings were held at ICARDA headquarters and were coordinated by HRDU. In addition, several individual and group visits from within and outside the region were also coordinated by HRDU.
- Collaboration in human resources development was strengthened not only with NARS, but also with several sister regional and international research and training

centers, such as ACSAD, AOAD, CIHEAM, CIMMYT, FAO, IPGRI, ILRI, UNDP and CLAES. A homepage for HRDU including staff members, training policies, brochures, in-house seminars, workshop and training database was developed and placed on the ICARDA intranet.

## Current Activities

- Co-ordination and management of training activities in and outside ICARDA headquarters, as well as other activities such as conferences, workshops, meetings and several individual and group visits are underway. When training is needed outside ICARDA research mandate, HRDU seeks appropriate training opportunities at other research or training institutions worldwide. Examples of such HRDU services relate to the following: the Agricultural Higher Education and Development (AHEAD) in North Iraq supported by the USAID and the University of Hawaii; the Third Country Training Programs (TCTP) for Afghanistan and Iraq sponsored by JICA; the Matrouh Resource Management Program (MRMP) in Egypt sponsored by the International Development Agency of the World Bank; the IPM project in El-Fayoum Province in Egypt sponsored by the Netherlands; the Agricultural Sector Management Support Program (ASMSP) in Yemen; and the Iran-funded project in Iran. Since 2000, more than 850 project managers, national scientists, extension specialists and progressive farmers from these special-funded projects have been trained in courses/study tours coordinated by HRDU at selected advanced research and training institutes in the region and outside.
- In line with the recommendations of the previous CCERs, and EPMRs, several of the headquarters training courses have been decentralized and conducted in collaboration with advanced research and training institutions in the region. Among these were: gender and development, biotechnology, INRM, GIS/RS, information management and technology, automated library and information management, expert systems, scientific writing and data presentation, agro-biodiversity and sustainable management, and crop-livestock integration.

## Future Plans

HRDU will continue to build on its past achievements through a continuous process of dialogue and consultation with NARS and other clients. The present structure and associated functions of HRDU is being critically reviewed by the current CCER on HRD and capacity building to meet these changes and respond to the increasing demand for capacity building.

Greater emphasis will be given to alternative training approaches, such as distance/E learning, participatory training through “learning-by-doing” and “training-the-trainer” approaches, audio-conferencing, and computer-based training. Any adoption of such

approaches must be cost-effective and fully justified. To make use of these technologies it is important to have a close synergy between the scientists and the IT/IM specialists. Concrete decisions on adopting any of these approaches will therefore be made through in-depth consultation with concerned parties and NARS.

Opportunities for effective utilization of the current Graduate Research Training Program (GRTP), Post–doctorate and Visiting Scientist fellowships, Internship Program and Sabbatical leave, as well as research and training networks will be further explored. Emphasis will be placed on capitalizing on the comparative advantages of ICARDA and advanced NARS in providing training, and on increasing joint activities with advanced national institutions. Efforts will be made to enhance project funding for training activities.