



Good Water Neighbors

May 30th, 2012

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A project based on sets of cross-border partnering communities sharing a common water source, promoting environmental awareness and peace building. The "Good Water Neighbors" (GWN) project was established by EcoPeace / Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) in 2001 to raise awareness of the shared water problems of Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis. The GWN methodology is an original idea that is based on identifying cross border communities and utilizing their mutual dependence on shared water resources as a basis for developing dialogue and cooperation on sustainable water management. GWN has created real improvement within the water sector by building trust and understanding that has led to common problem solving and peace building among communities even in the midst of conflict.

Despite limited cooperation between the region's governments on some aspects of water allocation; sustainable management of water resources has not been achieved in the Middle East peace process. Lack of sewage treatment, over-pumping of aquifers, excessive diversion of surface water flows, and difficulty in implementing critical water-demand management policies threaten scarce water resources. These circumstances pose environmental and health hazards to communities, and can be a significant source of cross-border tension and pollution. Initiators of this project took the lead in localizing these water issues by focusing the GWN work on the community level, and fostering the cross-border relationships that are necessary to solve common water problems.



CEMOFPSC ROUND TABLE

Interregional Cooperation: The issue of water in Jordan, Palestine and Israel

Initially eleven Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian communities were selected to participate in Phase I of the project from 2001 to 2005. Phase II of the GWN project expanded the communities involved from eleven to seventeen. Further expansion now includes 28 communities, supporting FoEME's efforts in all the region's shared water resources; the Dead Sea, Jordan River and the Mountain and Coastal Aquifers.

From the outset, the project has chosen a community to be partnered with a neighboring community on the other side of the border/political divide to work on common water issues.

On the local level, GWN works with community members to improve their water situation through education and awareness activities, and urban development projects. On the regional level, GWN works to encourage sustainable water management through information sharing, dialogue, and cooperation.