

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2011

NI-Damascus / NI-Beirut / NI-Amman

With pleasure we inform you about the activities which have recently taken place at the Netherlands Institute in Damascus (NI-Damascus), the to-be-established Netherlands Institute in Beirut (NI-Beirut) and the Netherlands Institute in Amman (NI-Amman), covering the months of May – July 2011. It will start with Damascus, followed by Beirut and Amman.



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Due to the current situation in Syria, NI-Damascus has not been able to organize its summer activities in Syria as planned. Activities were unfortunately either canceled or postponed to a later moment in time. Therefore, the NI-Damascus part of this newsletter contains a minimum report of activities. Director Astrid Rijbroek and deputy director Kathelijne Smits have continued their work in the Netherlands since 1st June, 2011. At present, the local staff of NI-Damascus is maintaining the institute which can therefore still be contacted for information or assistance.

1. Institutional

Coordination meetings

On 13 and 14 June 2011, the directors of the Netherlands institutes Beirut and Amman met in Beirut and were in online Skype contact with NI-Damascus's Astrid Rijbroek in Holland to discuss and coordinate the policies and activities of the three institutes. Astrid Rijbroek and Kathelijne Smits also met with Taco van der Zwaag, director of NI-Beirut, on several occasions in Leiden at the end of June 2011, to discuss the 2012 year plans and for holding interviews with a number of candidates for the position of director of NI-Amman. On 25 July 2011, they also took part in a meeting in Leiden with Mr. John Kroes of Leiden University and the directors and other representatives of all Netherlands Institutes presently administrated through Leiden university.

2. Science and Education

Assessing and processing the second round of MENA Scholarship applications (July 2011)

Upon the request by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Damascus, the institute processed the applications for the second deadline of the MENA Scholarship Programme 2011. A total of 35 applicants were evaluated based on their experience and motivation. Of these 35 applicants, 10 to 15 mid-career professionals will be finally selected by the NUFFIC and will receive a

scholarship which will enable them to follow a short course related to their area of expertise in the Netherlands.

The program is an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is administrated by the Dutch higher education organization the NUFFIC. Selected applicants will study at any of the four participating higher education institutions: the International Institute for Geo-information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), Maastricht School of Management (MSM), UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, or Wageningen International.

AEUA University President's Meeting conference at the Groningen University (3-6 July 2011)

NI-Damascus director Astrid Rijbroek was present at the AEUA University President's Meeting held in Groningen, the Netherlands between 3 and 6 July 2011. The Arab European University Association (AEUA) was initiated in 1998 by the Lutfia Rabbani Foundation in The Netherlands. Its prime objective is to facilitate and to stimulate collaboration between universities in European and Arab countries at an institutional, departmental and faculty level. The ultimate goal is to develop human resources and to promote understanding between the societies involved.

During the conference, keynote speeches from notable guests including the Dutch Minister of Higher Education, Mrs. Marja van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart; Dr. Khaled Bin Mohammed Alanqari, the Minister of Higher Education of Saudi-Arabia; Dr. Max van de Berg, the Queen's Commissioner in Groningen; Mr. Renk Roborgh, Director General of Dutch Ministry of Higher Education, Culture and Science. In addition to Presidents from European and Arab universities, various other players in the field of higher education were present, such as Ambassadors and representatives of Arab and European businesses. The meeting emphasized the need and importance for closer cooperation between universities in the Arab World and Europe.

AEUA is currently planning to organize a workshop on Higher Education and the Link to the Labour Market. This workshop is scheduled for November, 2011 in Beirut, Lebanon.

The conference offered the opportunity to meet the representatives of the Holland Arab Education Consortium (HAEC) which is a newly formed collaboration for joint representation in the Arab world. Participating universities in the HAEC are 5 Dutch research universities: Maastricht University, Twente University, Groningen University, Leiden University and Wageningen University. NI-Damascus strongly recommends Dutch and Arab universities to join the AEUA network. More information about AEUA and membership can be found on <http://www.aeua.net/home>. The institute looks forward to discussing possibilities for cooperation with the HAEC. See <http://www.haec.nl> for more information about the HAEC.

3. Culture

Translation of Dutch films into Modern Standard Arabic - NIASD Film Programme 2011

The production of Arabic translations for a number of selected Dutch films is in process. Due to the current situation in Syria, the screening of eight films of the 2011 Film Programme had to be postponed to a later date.

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NEDERLANDS
INSTITUUT IN
BEIROET

المعهد الهولندي
في بيروت

[to-be-established]

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1. Institutional

Coordination meeting in Beirut and meetings with NI-Damascus colleagues in Leiden

On 13 and 14 June 2011, the directors of the Netherlands institutes Beirut and Amman met in Beirut to discuss and coordinate the policies and activities of the three institutes, together with the director of NI-Damascus via Skype from the Netherlands. Taco van der Zwaag furthermore met with his NI-Damascus colleagues Astrid Rijbroek and Kathelijne Smits on several occasions in Leiden at the end of June 2011, to discuss the 2012 year plans and for holding interviews with a number of candidates for the position of director of NI-Amman. On 25 July 2011, he also took part in a meeting in Leiden with Mr. John Kroes of Leiden University and the directors and other representatives of all Netherlands Institutes presently administrated through Leiden University (Cairo, Ankara, Istanbul, Damascus Beirut and Amman).

Registration Procedure

On the 28th of June 2011, the Dutch Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Hero de Boer met with the new Lebanese Minister of Interior, H.E. Mr. Marwan Charbel and his advisors. During this meeting the ambassador kindly asked the minister to proceed with finalizing the registration procedure of the to-be-established Netherlands Institute in Beirut. Following this meeting, NI-Beirut's lawyer, Diana Rhayem, has been in continuous contact with relevant civil servants within the Lebanese Ministry of Interior to further the finalization of this procedure.

2. Science and Education

Marketing MENA Scholarship Programme (May-July 2011)

On behalf of the Netherlands Embassy in Beirut, the institute promoted the MENA Scholarship Programme through its steadily growing Lebanese networks and processed the 12 applications submitted under the 1 July 2011 deadline. We evaluated these applicants and prepared the files for approval decisions made by the Embassy on 8 July 2011. In this batch, all candidates were endorsed by the embassy and they are presently awaiting the final decisions by the Dutch course providers in cooperation with NUFFIC. Lebanese mid career professionals who are interested in MENA Scholarships should keep a close watch on the website of the Dutch Embassy in Beirut, where information and links will be provided. See: <http://www.netherlandsembassy.org.lb/>.

Lecture Prof.dr. Willy Jansen of Radboud University Nijmegen, “Why Do We Still Need Women Studies?” (9 June 2011)



From left to right, dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig of IWSAW, prof.dr. Willy Jansen, the Ambassador of the Netherlands H.E. Hero de Boer and assistant-manager of NI-Beirut Michael Huijjer.

Following the preparations mentioned in our spring newsletter, Professor Willy Jansen, director of the Institute for Gender Studies at Radboud University gave a lecture in Beirut entitled ‘Why Do We Still Need Women Studies?’ on June 9, 2011. The lecture was organized at the Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut, in cooperation with NI-Damascus. Professor Jansen discussed the low number of women occupying positions in higher education in the Netherlands and as a result, how women’s studies in the Netherlands developed more quickly compared to other countries. The low participation of women was so unusual for European standards that it was dubbed the ‘Dutch Case’. In the process of establishing a respectable place in science, two movements in women’s studies took place: from women to gender as main object of research, and from a separate specialization to mainstreaming. Over the last few years however, the number of institutes of women studies in the Netherlands has decreased significantly.



The lecture was attended by a variety of researchers and representatives of ngo’s in the field women and gender issues. During the discussion following the lecture comparisons were drawn with the Lebanese situation. Following the lecture, prof. Jansen and the director of the IWSAW, dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, traveled together to Amman for an expert meeting organized by NI-Amman on women participation in higher education.

Lecture Ir Frederike Praasterink of HAS Den Bosch University of Applied Sciences, “Feeding the Future: Food and Responsibility” (7 July 2011)

On Thursday 7 July 2011, the Lebanese Dutch Business Association (LDBA) hosted a lecture by Ir Frederike Praasterink at the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce in Beirut with the title

“Feeding the Future: Food and Responsibility”. The lecture, which was attended by around fifty people, was followed by a Q&A session and a cocktail buffet.



Whilst the world population is growing exponentially, the surface of arable land world-wide is diminishing, due to desertification and Global Warming. At the same time, farming is becoming less attractive as a business, and young generations are drifting away from agriculture, into more lucrative urban jobs and businesses. Hence, food supply is diminishing at a time when demand is growing! Ir Praasterink elaborated on various efforts exerted by governments, ngo's and private enterprises to find better techniques and technologies for growing more and better crops, and the various attempts to stimulate farming by making it more lucrative as a business for the farmers themselves.

On the day following her lecture, Ir Praasterink paid a visit to dr. Shadi Hamadeh, coordinator of the environment and sustainable development unit at the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences of the American University in Beirut (AUB), where a number of relevant bachelor and master programmes are being offered. Her next stop was Amman, Jordan, where her lecture was organized at the University of Jordan by NI-Amman.

Mapping urban planning centers in Lebanon for IHS Rotterdam (May-August 2011)

Upon the request of the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) at Erasmus University Rotterdam, NI-Beirut director Taco van der Zwaag made a report with an overview of educational centers and important public and private players in the field of urban planning in Lebanon. He also met with representatives of three educational centers in Lebanon where master programmes in this field are being offered: the Institut d'Urbanisme of Balamand University's Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA, in Beirut), the Department of Architecture and Design of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of the American University in Beirut and the Urban Planning Department of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Lebanese University. With, respectively, dr. Ziad Akl and his colleagues at ALBA, dr. Mona Harb at the AUB and dr. Mousbah A. Rajab of the Lebanese University at NI-Beirut, an IHS information DVD was presented and various options for a visit by IHS representatives to Lebanon, scheduled to take place in the fall of 2011, were discussed.



Assistance with study trips in the field of political science (May-August 2011)

Together with the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Political Science, Public Administration and Diplomacy (FPSPAD) of Notre Dame University (www.ndu.edu.lb) in Louaize (about 30 km from Beirut), NI-Beirut prepared and finalized a project-proposal for a study trip to the Netherlands for ten NDU political science students. The objective is to deepen students' insight and understanding of the Dutch pillarization (*Verzuiling*) system, possibly including the 'immigrant pillar', and the social-economical negotiation model which became known as the *Poldermodel*. During their study trip, the students will analyze the Dutch models in their various manifestations (in central and local government, media, education, social-economical organizations, civil society, health institutions and religious organizations) and try to establish in what way and to what extent elements of these Dutch models may be of use to the Lebanese society. Presently Dr. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, chair of the political science department, and Taco van der Zwaag, director of NI-Beirut are looking for sponsors for this study trip.

Likewise, during the past few months, NI-Beirut has been in contact with dr. Reinoud Leenders of the Political Science department of the University of Amsterdam (UvA), in an effort to help realize a study trip for UvA master students of this department to Lebanon focusing on the politics of authoritarian governance in the Middle East, regime resilience and contestation. The institute welcomes any tips for potential financial support for these study trips (director@ni-beirut.org).

Expert Meetings 2011

During the past months, the institute prepared an event on arts management with the Utrecht School of the Arts, with lectures, a workshop and an international expert meeting with Dutch, Lebanese, Jordanian and Syrian experts. The event was to take place at the Lebanese American University in Beirut on 17-18 June 2011. Unfortunately, however, the Utrecht School of the Arts had to cancel this event a few days before its start due to unforeseen circumstances. Preparations for this event did produce a wealth of information and contacts for the institute amongst cultural and arts management professionals in all the countries involved.

Together with Dutch cultural consultant Neil van der Linden, the institute is presently preparing for an alternative event, in the field of music education, with Dutch and Lebanese partners, and to take place later this year in Lebanon. Furthermore, an expert meeting in the field of art history — focusing on the Kaftun wall paintings — is scheduled for 27 September 2011, with academics from several countries including the Netherlands, Lebanon and Poland.

AEUA Presidents' Meeting in Groningen (3-6 July 2011)

Together with Astrid Rijbroek (director NI-Damascus), NI-Beirut Director Taco van der Zwaag participated in the Arab European Association Presidents' Meeting, held at the University of Groningen from 3-6 July 2011.

AEUA intends to further exchanges and cooperation between universities in Europe and in the Arab world. Amongst other people, Taco met with Mr. Salim Rabbani of the Lutfia Rabbani foundation, with dr. Jan Donner of KIT and with dr. Henri Awit, the vice-president for Academic Affairs of St. Joseph University in Beirut. In the NI-Damascus section of this newsletter, the AEUA meeting is covered more extensively. See also the picture on the next page.



Some recent student experiences in Holland and Lebanon



Cady Nasr at UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft (July 2011)

“I am Cady Nasr, MSc Environmental Science & Management, Saint Joseph University in Lebanon, and Environmental Consultant at ELARD (Earth Link and Advanced Resources Development), an environmental and water resources consultancy office in Beirut. After being professionally involved in the environmental field for more than two years, it was essential for me to broaden my knowledge through trainings, workshops and short courses in Lebanon or outside. Therefore, I decided to apply for a scholarship for the short course "Solid Waste Management" under the MENA Scholarship Program initiated and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (More information on this scholarship program is available through the website of the Dutch embassy in Beirut.)

The to-be-established Netherlands institute in Beirut (NI-Beirut) was very helpful in providing me with information about this scholarship program and facilitated the preparation and submission of my papers to the Netherlands Embassy in Beirut before the application deadline. In April 2011, I was awarded a MENA scholarship and admitted to the course Solid Waste Management at the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft. Classes started on the 4th of July, 2011. At UNESCO-IHE, I studied in a truly international environment with people coming from more than 20 different countries. Most of the students were mid-career professionals who brought a lot of experience to the classroom. Lectures were combined with interactive sessions, group work, role play and case studies. Field trips were organized as well to maximize our engagement as students and to provide us with exposure to the realities in the field. This course has been a positive experience and provided me with new skills which will be beneficial to my work in Lebanon.

Studying at UNESCO-IHE means that you live in Delft, an amazing old town situated between the cities of The Hague and Rotterdam, in the province of South Holland. Delft is well-known from the paintings of Vermeer, for its blue porcelain, lovely natural landscape, canals and bikes. My accommodation was arranged by UNESCO IHE student's affairs. I stayed at a hostel which was located at a 20-minute walking distance from the institute. Finally, it is worth mentioning that during my stay in Netherlands, I had the chance to visit some of the major cities in the country such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam.”

Nivine Abbas at TU Twente (Since October 2010)

“On the website of the University of Balamand (Lebanon), I read about the WOTRO project (http://www.nwo.nl/nwohome.nsf/pages/NWOA_7NNDM6_Eng), through which a PhD programme by Twente University (UT) in the Netherlands was offered in partnership with the Institute of the Environment at the University of Balamand. Continuing my PhD was always on my mind, so when I read this, I thought: this is it! This is my chance to continue my studies especially since I was at a point in my career where I needed a change. So I applied, and was lucky to be chosen!

I started my PhD research in October 2010. It is a four year programme in which I conduct my research mainly in Lebanon and partly in the Netherlands. The main objective of my research is to study the relation of trust and cooperation between multiple stakeholders and its effect on decision making processes related to environmental management in (North) Lebanon, taking into consideration the complex reality of conflict in this area. My project is supervised by dr. Manal Nader in Lebanon and dr. Irna van der Molen in the Netherlands, with prof.dr. John Lovett of TU Twente as my promoter.



Since October 2010, I travelled three times to the Netherlands, where I attended the CERES (Research School for Research Studies for Development) training courses in Amersfoort. These are mandatory for all PhD students at UT Twente and were very helpful. Besides acquiring new insights and knowledge, I personally learned a lot from the other participants who came from different backgrounds and countries. Learning from their different cultures was an inspiring and great opportunity for me and I am happy to have made many friends amongst them. During my visits to the Netherlands, I met several times with prof.dr. Lovett and dr. Van der Molen to discuss my research approach and methodology. Furthermore, I acquainted myself with the CSTM team (Twente Centre for Studies in Technology and Sustainable Development) of which I am now part.

Some striking social aspects. Although I love my home country Lebanon very much and with all positive things in Lebanon, there are some things in the Netherlands I think we can learn from. To begin with, I was surprised by how organized things are. Everything works on schedule and trains and buses are always on time. Besides, many people in the Netherlands are quiet and often busy reading books; one can relax during a train trip indeed! This is strange for me, since in Lebanon most means of public transportation are crowded and people tend to be noisy. One cannot visit the Netherlands and not notice the bicycles. It was wonderful to see how different people (e.g. mothers with children, workers, businessmen, old and young) all use the bicycle for transportation. In Lebanon mainly poor people use bicycles and there are no special paths encouraging cycling. The fact that most Dutch people speak English as their second language makes communication very easy; this is the same in my own country however. All in all, I found the Netherlands a very nice country and I encourage people who are looking for education abroad to choose the Netherlands as their study destination!”



Mohamed Tleis at Leiden University (Since May 2011)

“During my work at the Lebanese University, in Beirut, I received an email in July 2010, forwarded to all instructors and employees, saying that one could apply for a scholarship under the JOSYLEEN project. JOSYLEEN is initiated under the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 programme and aims to encourage higher education student and staff mobility between Europe and Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. (In the fall of 2011, Josyleen will be followed up, as far as Lebanon is concerned, by the so-called ELEMENT project, see the Erasmus Mundus website, TvdZ.)

In February 2011, I was honored to be accepted by the University of Leiden as PhD Student at the Leiden Institute of Advanced Computer Science (LIACS), in the section Imaging & Bioinformatics of the Imagery and Media department. Under supervision of Dr. Ir. Fons J. Verbeek, my research focuses on Cell-Image analysis in high Throughput Screening Systems.

At the end of May 2011, I travelled to Leiden to start my program. There I started a new exciting life, full of calmness, friends, open green spaces, organized cities, easy transfers, and a lot of places and museums to visit. A standard day for me starts with a joyful bike ride to my office between green spaces and flowers everywhere. I work in a room with big windows providing a view over green trees and, with that, a relaxed working environment. With my fellow researchers, I take coffee and lunch breaks, which also helps to build good relations in a short time. Our group sometimes also organizes social events and sport games. A striking element in the educational system at Leiden University is the strong cooperation between the different departments. This is something we lack in our Lebanese universities, and I believe this is an essential element for the further development of our educational system. In short, in Leiden I have found a new exciting, stress-less, calm and happy life!"



Sophie Dreesman en Sophie Spaan at ALPS in Beirut (July-August 2011)

Since the summer course Arabic at NI-Damascus was cancelled this year, we looked for alternatives. On July 13, 2011, we left for Lebanon for five weeks to follow a beginners course Arabic at the Academy of Languages and Practical Skills (ALPS, www.abtslebanon.org) in Beirut. Our apartment is in the same building as ALPS, in the cozy student neighborhood of Hamra, which has a long history as an intellectual center, especially during the civil war. We quickly felt at home in this hospitable, vibrant and intense city. From the hip bars in Hamra, Gemmayze and Achrafiye, the beaches of the Corniche, until the art in the Robert Mouawad museum: in this city there is always something going on. Armed with our beginners' Arabic, we continue our adventure beyond Beirut. We

discover lovely surroundings filled with interesting contrasts. On the beaches of Tyre we are reminded of the beautiful story of Dido and Aeneas. At the glamorous Druze wedding, for which we were invited, we felt the hope, love and happiness of the Lebanese partygoers. To be honest, we don't want to return!

Visitors and guests at NI-Beirut

PhD student religious studies at the University of Amsterdam, Ammeke Kateman, visited the institute on Monday 30 May 2011. Ammeke is planning to do research in Beirut for a prolonged period of time starting in 2012. On 2 August 2011, Karine Zogby of the Association for Forests, Development and Conservation (AFDC) and involved in Starbucks' Green Leadership Academy visited NI-Beirut to discuss potential areas and activities of mutual interest. Karine is alumnus of the Maastricht School of Management (MSM) and planning to set up a Lebanese MSM alumni chapter. On 20 May 2011, Leiden University PhD student Mohamed Tleis (see his testimonial above) visited NI-Beirut, as did, on 8 August 2011, the Dutch Arabic students Sophie Dreesman and Sophie Spaans (see testimonials above).

In the past period, the guest room of the institute was used by cultural consultant Neil van der Linden (12-22 June), Eveline Kokke of Beit Jiddi (29-30 June), Frederike Praasterink of HAS Den Bosch (6-8 July), Martin Siepermann of Rights Forum (15-20 July), Damascus based arabist and publicist in (amongst other publications) the Volkskrant Martin Jansen (20-24 July) and last but not least filmmaker Randa Nassár (27 July – 16 Aug).

3. Culture

Tarek Chemaly's 'Archewallogy Amsterdam' finalized (July 2011)

Following his series on imagery and texts on walls in Beirut and San Francisco, Lebanese media consultant & artist Tarek Chemaly finalized the online book “Archewallogy Amsterdam” in July 2011. This book contains photographs made in the Dutch capital in 2010 and 2011, and is based on the notion that walls in a city tell something about the life and beliefs of its inhabitants. Both the series on Beirut and Amsterdam can be seen on <http://www.issuu.com/tarekchemaly>. On this website you will also find Tarek’s contact details and a link to his blog on Beirut.

Opening exhibition 'Mounira Al Solh & Bassam Ramlawi' with a lecture-performance by Tony Chakar at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (18 June 2011)

On Saturday 18 June 2011, Taco van der Zwaag attended the official opening of the first large-scale solo exhibition in the Netherlands of the Lebanese artist Mounira Al Solh, entitled ‘Mounira Al Solh & Bassam Ramlawi’, at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam. Mounira Al Solh (Beirut, 1978) studied at the Lebanese University in Beirut (1997-2001) and at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (2003-2006) and was resident at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam (2007-2008). Mounira’s work may be described as an inner conflict with social environments which impose national, cultural and religious identity. In that sense it is a reflection on the social and religious tensions in her country of her birth, Lebanon. But also in the Netherlands one's origins and culture are becoming an increasingly important aspect in social intercourse. Al Solh approaches this fact with a mixture of autobiographical elements and humor.

On the occasion of the exhibition opening, Lebanese artist and architect Tony Chakar gave a personal presentation on Beirut, using a variety of media. Tony Chakar (1968) collaborates regularly with the Dutch Art Institute (DAI) and teaches History of Art and Architecture at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA) in Beirut. At an earlier moment this year, Tony helped NI-Beirut establish contacts with the Institut d’Urbanisme of ALBA for IHS Rotterdam.

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1. Institutional

Erik Marinus leaves as Director NI-Amman (1 July 2011)

Erik Marinus has chosen a different career path and no longer works as the Director of NI-Amman since the 1st of July 2011. Erik Marinus has, as the first Director of NI-Amman, accompanied the kick-off of NI-Amman and laid the foundation of the institute's presence in Jordan. The staffs of NI-Beirut and NI-Damascus thank Erik for his hard work during the past year and wish him good luck and all the best in his future career.

In the period from 1 July until 15 September 2011 former NI-Amman intern Sophie Schellens will monitor the ongoing affairs of the institute as Interim Manager NI-Amman. In September 2011 we will welcome the new director of NI-Amman.

2. Science and Education

European Union University Tour Educational mini-fairs (4 and 5 May 2011)

Between 3 and 8 May, 2011, the European Union Delegation conducted an education tour, visiting several big public and private universities in Jordan. The tour contained several educational mini-fairs at the visited universities, where European countries had the opportunity to inform students on the possibilities of studying in one of the European Union member states. The Netherlands Institute in Amman was present at the mini-fairs of the University of Zarqa, 4th of May, and of the University of Jordan, 5th of May. Besides meeting the presidents of the universities and the head of the European Delegation, the main aim was to inform Jordanian students on studying in Holland. The turn-up of students at the fairs was good, which enabled NI-Amman to promote Study in Holland extensively.



Documentary Making workshops by Rob Rombout at the Royal Film Commission (18-19 May 2011)

Following the successful documentary making workshops by Rob Rombout at NI-Damascus (April 2010) and NI-Beirut (May 2011), a similar documentary making workshop took place in Amman at 18 and 19 May. NI-Amman, together with the Royal Film Commission, invited Rob Rombout to teach aspiring documentary makers in Jordan the art of documentary making. The two-day's workshop, located at the Royal Film Commission, was attended by 10 Jordanian participants. During the workshop, Rob Rombout showed clips from his work, including a sneak preview of his project "Amsterdam Stories USA". At the end of the event, both Rob Rombout and the students were enthusiastic about the workshop, which made a lasting impression on all of them.

Study in Holland presentation for University of Jordan Alumni (23 May 2011)

With the help of the Dutch Alumni Club in Jordan, the Netherlands Institute in Amman was invited by the University of Jordan Alumni to give a presentation about studying in Holland. This presentation took place at the main building of the University of Jordan Alumni. After a short introduction by dr. Eman Basheer Alhussein, Erik Marinus (Director NI-Amman) told the audience about the advantages, opportunities and possibilities of studying in Holland. The audience consisted mainly of Bachelor graduates, interested in pursuing a Master degree in the Netherlands. The questions after the presentation proved that they were enthusiastic about studying in Holland.



Expert Meeting "Participation of Women in Higher Education in Holland, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan" (11-12 June 2011)

NI-Amman organized an expert meeting on "Participation of Women in Higher Education in Holland, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan" on 11 and 12 June, 2011. The expert meeting took place within the theme of Gender Studies, one of the nine focus areas of the institute.

The aim of the expert meeting was to connect experts in the Levant and the Netherlands, in order to exchange knowledge, build cooperation and engage in discussions regarding the current situation and developments of participation of women in higher education in their respective countries.

The following experts participated in the meeting:

- Dr. Dima Dabbous-Sensenig from Lebanon: Director Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), Lebanese American University;
- Dr. Iman Al-Ghafari from Syria: Independent gender & homosexuality researcher in Syria;

- Dr. Mahasen Al-Jaghoub from Jordan: Director Center for Women's Studies, University of Jordan;
- dr. Willy Jansen from the Netherlands: Director Interdisciplinary Institute for Gender Studies, Radboud University.

In the afternoon of the 11th of June, the experts assembled at the British Institute in Amman, where they had a chance to get acquainted with one and other. Dr. Carol Palmer, director of the British Institute, also joined for the afternoon and evening.



The 12th of June was reserved for the discussion sessions. The day was hosted by the Center for Women's Studies of the University of Jordan, which provided a perfect venue. Prior to the meeting, the experts had selected two topics of discussion, which enabled in-depth discussions during the meeting. The discussions, moderated by NI-Amman director Erik Marinus, proved to be very fruitful. Many similarities, but also differences, between the countries were discovered. In the end, the experts made agreements for future cooperation, and a small regional network on Gender Studies has been established.

Lecture "Why Do We Still Need Women Studies?" by Professor Willy Jansen, Radboud University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in cooperation with the Centre for Women's Studies of the University of Jordan (13 June 2011)

Following the Expert Meeting on Gender Studies, Professor Willy Jansen, of the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands, gave a lecture on the 13th of June, at the Law Department of the University of Jordan. During the lecture, Professor Willy Jansen described the development of Gender Studies in the Netherlands, considering all social and cultural factors influencing the current status of Gender Studies.

Although the lecture focused on the Netherlands, the discussion after the lecture proved that the discussed issues are also applicable for Jordan, and that both countries can learn and help each other in the field of Gender Studies. The audience consisted of students and academic staff of the University of Jordan, as well as key players in the women NGO field of Jordan.



Rotating lecture series 2011: “Feeding the Future: Food and Responsibility” by Professor Frederike Praasterink of the HAS Den Bosch University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, in cooperation with ICARDA, NCARE and the University of Jordan (10 July 2011)

After giving her lecture in Beirut, professor IR Frederike Praasterink, professor Sustainable Global Food Supply at the HAS Den Bosch University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, travelled to Amman to give a similar lecture on sustainable food production at the University of Jordan on the 10th of July. After a warm welcome of the dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, dr. Omar Kafawin, the attendees, ranging from students to professors and political officials, listened to an outline of future challenges in food production. The lecture received many positive reactions, also from the attending Dutch Ambassador, her Excellency Joanna van Vliet. After the lecture a panel discussion on food security took place, where, besides dr. Praasterink; dr. Mahmud Duwayri, professor at the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Jordan and dr. Faisal Awawdeh, director general of the National Centre for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE), participated as panelists. The panel discussion was professionally moderated by dr. Nasri Haddad, regional coordinator for West Asia at the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The discussion was very vivid and much information was exchanged. The day ended with a lunch at the restaurant of the University of Jordan. The event gathered and connected many experts interested in sustainable food production and many cooperation ideas for in the future were expressed.



3. Culture

Screening of the films “Tussenstand” and “El Olvido” at the Holland Festival Amman (9- 10 May 2011)

As part of the Holland Festival in Jordan, initiated by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Netherlands Institute in Amman was able to screen two Dutch movies with Arabic subtitles. The screenings were organized in cooperation with the Royal Film Commission, where the screenings took place. On the 9th of May the movie “Stages” or “Tussenstand” in Dutch was showed, and on the 10th of May the screening of the film “El Olvido” took place. The interest in the movies was considerable and was mostly due to the multiple prizes that both films received at earlier festivals. The audience consisted mostly of Jordanian movie lovers, who wanted to know more about Dutch film productions.

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