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ACTIVITY  
REPORT  
2023

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# ACTIVITY REPORT



Support to Smallholder Farmers in partnership with WeWorld and LHF funding-Kfartoun-December 2023

# MADA'S STORY

Born in the highlands of Akkar and Hermel in 1999, Mada is a local non-governmental organization that works through a Territorial Approach, constantly adapting to meet local needs.

Mada was amongst the first organizations to work in Akkar. To inform programming and raise national awareness regarding Akkar's vulnerability, natural assets and cultural heritage, the team conducted various studies and socio-economic assessments. With the goal of reinforcing the relationship between communities and the environment, the early years were focused on working towards the establishment of a Natural Park in the Akkar-Hermel-Donnieh area. Common development and nature conservation goals were set with local authorities and communities, based on which Mada implemented various projects (education, agriculture, rural development, women empowerment). In 2011, the refugee crisis shifted priorities and Mada adjusted to the new context, while retaining its identity as a development agency. Although the Natural Park became a longer-term ambition, Mada continued to work on elaborating the legal framework for Parks.

Today, Mada continues to act as a local development agency, exploring new approaches and sectors of development in the deteriorating socio-economic context.



Agroecological Plot - Akkar Al-Attika

## OUR MISSION

Working with diverse groups on development and environmental projects to facilitate dynamics of change, through endogenous and inclusive efforts as well as policies and regulations adequate for local realities.

Mada achieves this mission by:

- **Supporting marginalized groups and providing a space for initiatives by actors who have the potential for change**
- **Contributing to the establishment of relationships or effective partnerships between local actors and other stakeholders.**

Through its activities, Mada tries to ensure long-term mobilization and inspire new practices of leadership while contributing to the emergence of a culture of collective action and responsibility.

# OUR VISION

Mada strives for the emergence of balanced communities, appreciative of diversity, open to the world, and respectful of human rights and social justice; communities that base their development on a long-term vision of public interest and on models that emphasize a harmonious relationship between human beings and the environment. Members of these communities would be committed, accountable, and creative individuals, able to take initiatives and unite their energies within effective partnerships.

# OUR VALUES

Mada is a secular, non-partisan organization with the following guiding principles:

Non-discrimination and equity;  
Democracy and participation;  
Commitment to public interest;  
Respect and protection of the natural environment;  
Transparency and accountability;  
Creativity and flexibility;  
Autonomy and responsibility;  
Independence from political parties and private interests.



Irrigation Channel Rehabilitation in Hrar, Akkar - in partnership with arche noVa and funding from BMZ

## HIGHLIGHTS 2023

- Under the research 'Evidence-Based Determination of Farm Gate and Market Values of Agroecological Produce in Upper Akkar' – with funding from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Mada collected data along the production cycle to determine agroecology's economic viability. So far, the results are promising, and data will be collected every season for representative findings.
- Four team members participated in the "Water Sanitation & Conservation (WSC) in Lebanon" – Technical Training and Fundraising/Project Management Program by Chaire de l'Éducation à l'Éco-Citoyenneté et au Développement Durable (CEEDD)/Fondation Diane at the University of Saint Joseph, funded by USAID, aimed at enhancing CSO capacities in water conservation and sanitation.
- Mada's Agroecology Team took part in an experience-sharing visit to Sri Lanka, organized by CAFOD. The visit included interactions with agroecological farmers, women cooperatives, producers, organic markets, and schools, aiming to facilitate learning and exchange among participants from Lebanon, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.



Community Nursery - in partnership with the Akkar Ministry of Agriculture Branch - supported by AFD and the Centre de Crise et De Soutien and implemented by Expertise France under Shabake II

### I – Women and Youth

- **Employability and soft skills programme for youth in Akkar**, supported by UNICEF. The project supported Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian youth to enter the labour market, retain jobs, and launch their own businesses through support to establish small home gardens and chicken farms.

### II – Food and Agriculture

- **Localized and accountable Food Security and WASH response for 6,370 people in Wadi Khaled, Machta Hammoud, and Mazarea Jabal Akroum in Akkar governorate**, funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) implemented by We World Onlus, in collaboration with Mada Association as a sub-implementing partner. Mada's component entails distributing fresh food baskets to the most vulnerable households through agricultural cooperatives, providing technical and material assistance to smallholder farmers, and supporting households with Supplementary Subsistence Gardens as a pilot exit strategy to food assistance.
- **Strengthen resilience of refugees from Syria and their host communities to current and future challenges and risks related to socio-economic crises in Lebanon**, in partnership with arche noVa and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This project includes rehabilitation of agricultural and water infrastructure across the North and micro-infrastructure at the farm level, and builds the capacities of smallholder farmers and producers on Good Agricultural Practices and business management.

- **Wielding Agroecology to Transition Agriculture for Development (WATAD)**, – under the Shabake 2 project supported by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Centre de Crise et De Soutien and implemented by the French Public Agency for International Technical Cooperation - Expertise France. Under the objective of increased social, economic and environmental resilience in Lebanon, the project increases the individual and collective capacities of smallholder farmers to transition to agroecology, and fosters the enabling environment for agroecology to prosper.

### III – Environmental Protection

- **SWaM Akkar - Supporting Sustainable Solid Waste Management in Jurd al-Kaytaa, Akkar** in partnership with COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale, COSPE - Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo nei Paesi Emergenti, StudioAzue, and the Union of Municipalities of Jurd al-Kaytaa, and funded by the EU. Under this project, Mada is responsible for awareness raising and community mobilization.
- **Supporting Sustainable Solid Waste Management in Jurd al-Kaytaa** in partnership with the Municipality of Fano, COSPE, COOPI, ASET, and the Union of Municipalities of Jurd al-Kaytaa, and funded by AICS. Under this project, Mada is responsible for awareness raising and community mobilization.
- **Biodiversity in a Box: Bringing Nature Back to the City**, funded by the French Embassy in Lebanon. In close coordination with the local communities of blast-affected areas in Beirut, this project is establishing biodiversity boxes – planters with native species – in front of residential buildings, offices, NGOs, schools, and hospitals, to beautify the space, be taken care of collectively by the community, and serve as biodiversity islands in the city.



Training on Small Ruminants and Cattle in Minnieh, Dannieh in partnership with arche noVa and funding from BMZ

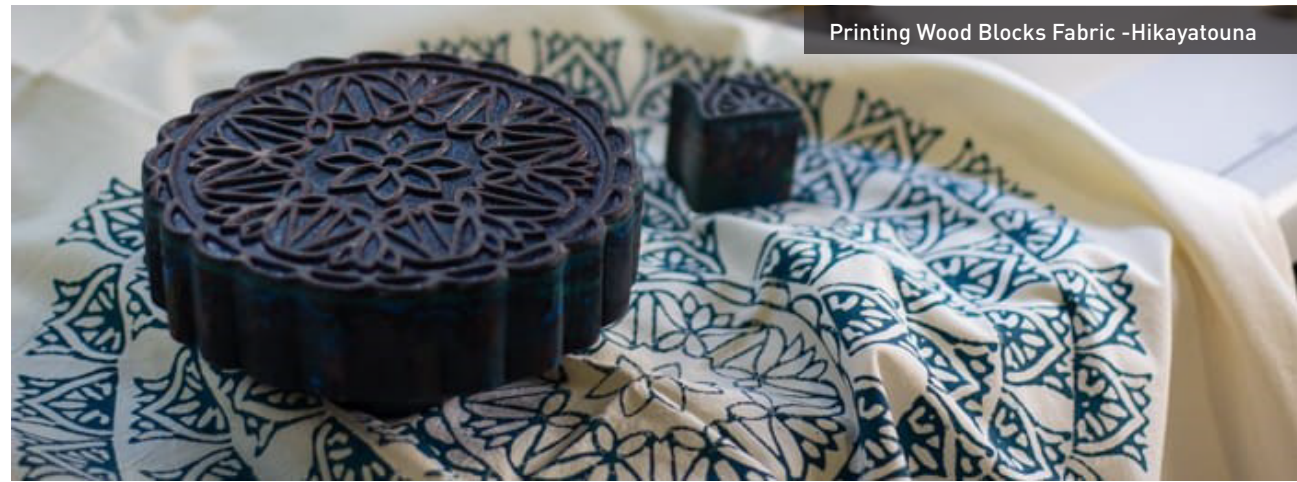


Women Carpentry - Warch(ée)

The Platform is a space that provides diverse supports to civil society and grassroots initiatives. In 2023, various groups were supported with the financial support of CAFOD and the Catholic Committee Against Hunger and for Development (CCFD-Terre Solidaire), and a donation from the Student Union of the University of Helsinki.

- **Dikken el Mazraa** an experimental solidarity grocery shop that combats inflation through a membership system that prices goods progressively based on the client's socioeconomic situation, while sourcing mostly from local, sustainable producers. Mada continued to support Dikken strategically, operationally, and materially in 2023.
- **Nation Station** founded in response to the Beirut Blast, operates a Community Kitchen that distributes hot meals to vulnerable households in Geitawi, hosts the farmers' market Souk el Mawsam, and implements various communal and educational activities. Mada continued supporting them strategically, operationally, and materially in 2023, with focus on increasing self-reliance.
- **Hikayatouna** a women-led crafts workshop, specialized in Aghabani embroidery and woodblock printing on textile. Mada continued to support them in administration, accounting and communication in 2023.
- **The Horshna Forest School** a community of educators and families that runs a school in the forest of Beirut and surroundings. Mada continued to support them in administration and accounting in 2023.

- **The Great Oven** a cross-community, cross-cultural, cooking-based group based in Beirut and Bekaa, that seeks to break down barriers and address misconceptions pertaining to ethnicity, faith, culture and traditions. Through the kitchen in Beirut, they work with migrant communities through cooking classes and workshops. In 2023, Mada started supporting them with internal templates, fundraising, partnerships, and joint activities with other groups.
- **Tres Marias** a migrant women-led organization founded in Bourj Hammoud in 2020. They provide upskilling workshops to migrant women, life/social skills workshops, and advocate for social justice. Their activities include cooking classes, daily meals, catering, and running a shop of processed products and crafts. In 2023, Mada started supporting them with equipment for their kitchen, and linkages with other groups.
- **Warchée** a carpentry initiative for women, that empowers them in crafts, technical trades, and construction. It fosters equal opportunities, aiding women in accessing traditional construction jobs for financial independence. With Mada's support, Warchée developed a recruitment process, and received capacity building in administrative and financial management.
- **Initiative Ras el Nabaa (IREN)** founded by a group of friends to support the Ras el Nabeh community with essential items (food, medication, and clothing). With Mada's support, IREN secured a one year's rent for their kitchen and center, while also expanding their networks through Mada's partners.
- **A Hydroponic Farm** established by partner Basmeh & Zeitooneh under the K Food – Farming for Vulnerable - Phase II" project funded by CAFOD, which brings Syrian and Lebanese farmers to work together. Mada supported with the development of a business framework, provided legal advice on registration, conducted finance and accounting sessions to the farmers, and supported the development of an internal system including management, operations and finance.



Printing Wood Blocks Fabric -Hikayatouna



Fresh Baskets Distributions - Dikken al Mazraa

Since 2022, Mada scaled-up linkages between The Platform and its agroecology projects in Akkar through two projects with the objective of contributing to Food Sovereignty in Lebanon:

**Producers, Consumers and Civil Society for Greater Food Sovereignty in Lebanon** – funded by CAFOD, and **A Locally-Led Model for Greater Food Sovereignty in Lebanon** - funded by CCFD-Terre Solidaire. Both are in partnerships with two groups supported under **The Platform - Nation Station** and **Dikken el Mazraa**, and both continued into 2023 in their second phases. The projects work closely with smallholder farmers supported to transition to agroecology, and pilot an alternative, sustainable food model whereby:

- Farmers are supported technically and materially to expand agroecological practices.
- Farmers are linked with Nation Station’s Community Kitchen and Dikken’s Social Grocery Shop: part of the agroecological produce is used for the distribution of hot meals and fresh produce baskets to vulnerable households, and the remainder is used for sales for income generation.
- Nation Station and Dikken are supported to reinforce their models and increase self-reliance and sustainability, including supporting the development of a pricing system for Nation Station and a subsidy system for Dikken.

Ultimately, Mada seeks to challenge the notion that nutritious, ecologically-sound products cannot be accessible for all, and provide evidence that fair prices at both the farmer and consumer side are possible.

## Kick-starting & upcoming projects

————— **Strengthening local climate-sensitive and universal WASH capacities using and disseminating the Green Humanitarian Aid approach** in partnership with arche noVa and funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO). Under this project spanning 14 countries, Mada will enhance the capacities of authorities in Akkar to respond to water-related emergencies, support farmers in water-management, and promote agroecology through demonstration plots.

————— **SAFE: Sustainable Agri-Food Economy for refugee and local communities in vulnerable governorates of Lebanon** in partnership with We World Onlus and the Lebanese Observatory for Workers’ and Employees’ Rights (LOWER), under the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP II) and funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This project will provide technical and financial support to private sector actors and civil society actors in the Agri-Food Sector, to generate jobs and provide income for the most vulnerable, with focus on decent employment and inclusion.

————— Mada will implement the third phases of **A Locally-Led Model for Greater Food Sovereignty in Lebanon** with funding from CCFD-Terre Solidaire, and **Producers, Consumers and Civil Society for Greater Food Sovereignty in Lebanon**, with funding from CAFOD.

————— **An analysis of the fresh vegetables and fruits food systems in Lebanon: on the right path towards Food Sovereignty?** a research funded by CAFOD that will look into the ‘sustainable’, ‘alternative’ food movement in Lebanon, to determine alignment with the principles of Food Sovereignty (economic, social, cultural, environmental, health).



## A PEEK INTO 2024

Under The Platform, Mada seeks to focus on collective support as opposed to individual support of groups in 2024. As such, efforts will go into linking the groups together, creating common spaces, implementing joint activities, sharing resources, and exchange.

Mada seeks to diversify its partnerships with other local organizations. In 2023, Mada gained two new local partners: LOWER and Basmeh & Zeitooneh. This will be a priority in the upcoming year, as Mada is a firm advocate for localization of aid and development.

Mada will participate in the "Campagne de Carême 2024" organized and funded by CCFD-Terre Solidaire in March 2024. The theme of this campaign is Food Sovereignty in relation to Economic Justice. Mada will have the opportunity to present its work in Lebanon, including projects and the operational context, as well as meet diverse actors – from farmers to cooperatives to solidarity initiatives.

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