

ICARDA International Farmers' Conference

KSinR Pilot Project

~ *Mid-Project Update* ~

The ICARDA project, lead by Dr. Stefania Grando, is piloting an International Farmers' Conference as part of the participatory plant breeding program

ICARDA Pilot project update, highlights and plans:

- The ICARDA Pilot project undertook a process of **identification of a number of key knowledge sharing approaches** which could be used in the Farmers' Conference to facilitate sharing of knowledge by farmers. An evaluation of those identified was done and the **storytelling method was chosen**.
- Two members of the Pilot project team took part in the **Knowledge Sharing training workshop-Phase 1** (online) to explore and learn about knowledge sharing tools.
- Preparation of the Farmers' Conference included the **use of a wiki for collaborative planning**.
- The ICARDA **International Farmers' Conference was held at ICARDA 4th-8th May 2008**.
- Communication around this event includes: An article in 'This week at ICARDA', information put on the KS website, blog posts on the event, an article in the ICT-KM newsletter (forthcoming)
- **Follow-up interviews** with farmers from Syria were done by Alessandra Galie, Research Fellow on the project, and Nadia Manning-Thomas, Project Leader of KSinR project. This provided interesting insight and evaluation for the event.
- **Additional interviews, discussions and evaluation** were held by Nadia Manning-Thomas with the Pilot Project Team.
- A **draft website** has been developed and will be launched after a series of initial consultations and feedback. Stories from the Conference are also to be **transcribed and translated into text in all languages for further dissemination**.
- Future plans include finalising and launching the website, doing further dissemination of Conference knowledge in various formats, and following-up with Conference partners and participants outside of Syria. Additional sharing of the Farmers' Conference experience will also be undertaken through KSinR project.

Interesting lessons from the Farmers' Conference include:

- Positive experience, successful first attempt
- Storytelling was a good way for farmers to share their knowledge
- Language and translation were big challenges
- Additional activities in the fields and through the Food Fair were great ways for sharing knowledge and discussing
- Needed more researchers to be present—this was meant to showcase value of farmers' knowledge to researchers—to encourage them to take it into account in their research and to encourage more collaboration in research.
- Allowed farmers opportunity to share knowledge, learn from others, feel valued, be empowered, become motivated to work with research institution like ICARDA etc
- Stimulated farmers to be curious, to experiment and to share knowledge with others.

For more information: <http://ks-cgiar.org/>