



## **Profile: The Dana and Qadisiyah Local Community Cooperative**

**Vision:** The local community governs and controls the land and natural resources of its customary land.

**Mission:** Sustainable management of local natural resources to ensure community empowerment and retain the community's customary rights and comprehensive development.

**Context and Work:** In 1994, the people of Dana and Qadisiyah villages (in rural, southern Jordan) set up the Dana and Qadisiyah Local Community Cooperative. The Cooperative was established in response to an authorisation by the Jordanian Government that the villagers' customary land be turned into a nature reserve. The reserve, known as the Dana Nature Reserve, is managed by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). Despite the Dana Declaration being agreed at an international meeting held by the RSCN in Dana village, the people of Dana and Qadisiyah villages remain marginalised.

The Cooperative has a general assembly of about 100 families, and is governed by a management board of 7 people. Board members are elected every 2 years. There are 9 paid staff within the Cooperative. A large part of the work of the Cooperative is undertaken by volunteers. There is a core group of local and international volunteers with specific roles. The Management Board are volunteers also. Most of the paid staff work within the Cooperative's eco-tourism ventures.

The Cooperative works to claim the land rights to its customary land by empowering members of the local community to adopt a more active socio-political role, and by educating a wider international audience to the community's loss of land rights. The work has a strong emphasis on empowering young people and women. Some of the Cooperative's other projects concentrate on the restoration of Dana village (an Ottoman village, unique in Jordan), and land protection i.e. protecting local ownership of the village's individually owned land by encouraging landowners to join the Cooperative and to sell to the Cooperative only. It also has projects related to sustainable tourism. The Cooperative operates the Dana Hotel and the Wadi Dana Eco-camp. The Dana Hotel was the first community run hotel in Jordan, and Wadi Dana Eco-camp is a joint venture between the Cooperative and a group of local farmers. The tourism ventures ensure that the Cooperative has a strong and positive presence within the Dana Nature Reserve (created upon their customary land), and provide income, work experience and training for members of the local community, including training local guides to international standards.

The Cooperative is proactive in working to preserve the Hima methods (traditional land and natural resources management). Within Jordan, it seeks out traditional communities in protected areas, and areas under consideration for protection, in order to share its experiences and support these communities. For example, the Cooperative has worked with Bani Hashim in the Zarqa Governorate; some of the people of Wadi Rum before Wadi Rum became a protected area; and people in the Jordan Valley who decided to reject the input of the RSCN and to continue in the traditional way. The RSCN used to be the only NGO in Jordan with authority to create a protected area.

The Dana and Qadisiyah Local Community Cooperative was the first organisation in Jordan to join the International Land Coalition (ILC). Working with the support of the ILC, it is leading a process connecting land actors in Jordan in order to create a country strategy and multi-year action plan for people centred land governance. This work began in September 2017 and is ongoing. The Cooperative hosted the ILC's first Arab Forum (a two-day event) in September 2017, and also hosted the ILC Europe and Middle East Regional meeting. The Cooperative has a partnership with the University of Sheffield in the UK, and has provided three research placements to date for students undertaking their dissertations for the Masters Degree in International Development. The first placement was for 7 weeks in 2016, and the other two placements were for 6 weeks in



2019. Research topics were related to the change of rural life in the Dana area, eco-tourism and community participation, and the importance of customary land rights for local livelihoods.

**National and international Involvement:** The Cooperative is proactive within its community, within Jordan and also internationally. It is a member of the following:

- International Land Coalition (ILC)
  - In addition to the ILC work mentioned above, the Cooperative is part of the Women's Land Rights Initiative, and Khalid Khawaldeh served a term as one of the two elected representatives for the EMENA Region.
  - Khalid Khawaldeh served a term as one of the two elected representatives of Europe, North Africa and West Asia region of ILC as Council member.
- World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous People (WAMIP)
  - Khalid Khawaldeh is the Coordinator of the Interim Steering Group
- Habitat International Coalition - Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-MENA)
- Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) consortium.
- Civil Societies Mechanism Coordinating Committee
- Civil Societies Mechanism Working Group on Agroecology.
- Civil Societies Mechanism Working Group on Family Farming.
- Civil Societies Mechanism Working Group on Pastoralism.
- Civil Societies Mechanism Working Group on Small Holders.
- Civil Societies Mechanism Working Group on Right to Food.
- Civil Societies Mechanism Working Group on Pastoralism
- Terra Madre Network
- Slow Food International
- Arab Network for Food Sovereignty
- Arab Pastoralist Communities Network
- Regional Network for Responsible and Solidarity Tourism in the Mediterranean Area (AREMDT)
- Jordan Cooperatives Committee
- Community Empowerment Coalition, Tafilah Governorate, Jordan

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