

THE HISTORY OF DDC

HABIB

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LEAD-IN:

AUC Desert Development Center (DDC) is a non-profit institution that was established in 1979 as an idea by Dr. Adly Beshay, AUC physics professor. The main philosophy of DDC is to make the desert an attractive place for life and to help in solving the desert habitants' problems. A-U-C Mary Habib.

Music fades in: Flashbacks – Free play music

Thirty one years ago, Dr. Adly Bishay, AUC Physics professor, introduced the idea of establishing the desert development center as a non-profit organization at AUC.

In 1979, the AUC board of trustees & the Egyptian council of ministries issued the case no. 37 to specify an area of 500 acres in south Tahrir directorate to establish the “Desert Development Center.”

According to Mr. Mahmoud Badran, DDC training manager,

BADRAN: Egypt's problem is the limited resources. Population lives on 4% of Egypt's area, and 96% is desert. There is a huge overcrowding in population in the Delta & Valley. So, the Egyptian government strategy in the last decades was to reclaim the desert and move the population from the Delta & Valley to inhabit the desert. The

American University in Cairo decided to help in this field, and to insure that the university is helping the whole society not only to educate the rich, but also to contribute in service to Egypt. (:29)

From here, this idea got developed to result in a new era of Better Thinkers: Better Futures...

BADRAN: The main philosophy of DDC is to make the desert an attractive place for life and to help in solving the desert habitants' problems. So, this project is mainly based on three axis; the services, applied research and training. (:12)

Announcer: Can you please tell us, Mr. Badran what are the main important researches that has been done since 1979?

BADRAN: AUC Desert Development Center is a non-profit institution that depends on self-financing under the AUC. We have three research centers; South Tahrir research center "on 575 acres," Sadat City research center "25 acres," and the head office in the main campus. The most important research that has been done since the establishment of DDC is in the field of Animal Production. New ways are introduced to improve the product of Egyptian cows from both meat and milk through the Hybridization of European cows with Egyptian ones. This research brought great results and was traded to farmers all over Egypt. (:39)

Another project was the analysis of crop remains like beans chaff and wheat hay to be used as animal's feed. This research decreases the import of feeds and made use of the farm land remains. (:11)

In 1981, DDC began its citrus research to identify the best combination from grafting range of roots that aren't commonly used in Egypt.

Citrus development was one of the researches that longs to 15 years in DDC labs. (:5)

By the time, DDC was growing from success to success; it didn't forget AUC's students. Until now, AUC's alumni are admitting their loyalty and acknowledgment they gained from DDC.

Bishoy Hanna, AUC alumni, who graduated years ago from the Biology department, is now having his PHD degree in University of California Merced. He conducted some research with DDC that helped in the development of the New Cairo Campus.

HANNA: The DDC offered a lot of opportunities to the Biology department, because it's by definition the Desert Development Center. There are ecological studies that could be done for developing the desert. At many points, we as a student, traveled to the DDC and we would sample the plants & animals there to use it for our training.

Announcer: What are the important studies that Biology department conducted with the help of DDC?

HANNA: I am not aware of all the studies that are conducted in DDC. However, I was involved in a project between professor Jeffery Miler & the DDC, which was to develop the GIS system to monitor the new campus plants.

Announcer: Ok, can you tell us about this project?

The aim of this project was that before, the plants were moved to the new campus. They were grown at DDC nursery. We did a GIS map, to map every single tree in the new campus & its water requirement and what kind of fertilizer. What kind of tree it is? And all of these information, we put it in database that was accessible to all those who work in the DDC. So, they can monitor the plants. And also, this map was used when they put the trees in the new campus.

The Desert Development Center not only worked with AUC departments to conduct studies for its benefit, but also, DDC helped in student's academic progress.

Maha Khalil, AUC alumni, is having now her master degree in King Abdullah University of Science & Technology.

KHALIL: we were studying Ecology. We just walked around in the agricultural fields studying land use & sampling the insect population. Also, they have a very nice wind break forest where we did some nice walks in the sampling. So, DDC helped us to practice the stuff that we

were learning about Ecology in class. Doing it by hand and getting first-hand experience. (:29)

Since 1991, the DDC has distributed over 1.3 million citrus trees to farmer in newly reclaimed desert areas.

By the year 2000, DDC achieved over 93% exports quality acceptance of citrus under the adoption of the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture.

DDC citrus, fruit trees research, and technology transfer activities now contribute over \$ 16,000,000 (16 million dollars) per year to the Egyptian economy.

BADRAN: The program was very successful, and the proof is its continuous operation since 1979 till now.

Special thanks for Mr. Mahmoud Badran, DDC training manager – Dr. Bishoy Hanna, UC Merced TA – Miss Maha Khalil, AUC alumni – Mr. Gaser El Safty, AUC undergraduate.

Music fades out: Explosion – Free play music

For A-U-C Radio Production, I'm Mary Habib