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Middle East and North Africa ESTH Hub Activities Report published by Caron De Mars and Yara Abu Laban

The Launch of Jordan’s First Electric Car Charging Station: On October 20, Yara and I attended the launch of Jordan’s first electric car solar charging station! Last year, the Government of Jordan signed an MOU with Japanese car company Nissan to purchase up to 300 Nissan LEAFs for public agencies. Furthermore, the government will promote electric vehicles to move Jordan toward energy independence, protect the environment, create jobs, and invest in the green economy. The solar charging station is located at El Hassan Science City, and was built by a Jordanian firm NetEnergy, Nissan Jordan, and the Ministry of Environment. Donor partners included USAID’s Jordan Economic Development Program and the Higher Council for Science and Technology. The station consists of 24 solar panels and has the capacity to produce 26 kilowatts of electricity per day with the capability of including more chargers. Royal Scientific Society President Princess Sumaya announced that Jordan plans to install a charging station every 90 kilometers on Jordan’s Desert Highway. Jordan’s government thinks this infrastructure will inspire citizens purchase electric vehicles (EVs) and hopes to see 100,000 EVs on Jordan’s roads by 2020!



Princess Sumaya test drives the Nissan Leaf. Photo courtesy of Muhammad Hamed/ Reuters.



Google Jordan: On October 24, Yara attended the second Google Jordan event in Amman. Google invited computer science students, software developers, small businesses, and tech entrepreneurs in Jordan to demonstrate Google's suite of products that are driving innovation in technology and business in the Middle East and across the globe. Diverse speakers led four sessions focusing on mobile technology, web development, using online tools to help promote a business or a cause, and Google’s education program. Fifty Jordanian students signed up as Google Ambassadors to represent the company on campuses, host events, and share knowledge. One of the highlights of the day was the unveiling of the new Google Maps Helicopter View!

http://www.pcworld.com/article/240953/cool_new_google_maps_feature_lets_you_helicopter_preview_routes.html

The Mobile Science Van Project: The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) design team visited Jordan from October 24-27 to meet with our many science van partners to see what it will take to get the show on the road! We selected the Princess Basma Centers as our implementing partners. The USFS team and I met at the Basma headquarters in Jordan to review expectations and look at the existing van to determine what needs to be altered. The rest of the week, the team met with Jordan University, which will provide student mentors; looked at Jordan's Children's Museum to see what experiments it performs; met with Microsoft to explore possible partnerships; and the Peace Corps to gauge its interest in providing more volunteers on down the line. We also visited the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature to determine what type of programs it has that might dovetail with the van project. The teams meticulous planning even included a tour of rural steep and bumpy roads conceptualize what types of fasteners would be needed to secure the van's cargo. The USFS brought professionals from Sea Reach, an exhibit design firm in Oregon that develops and delivers world-class interpretive exhibits for the Forest Service and other well-known entities. The Sea Reach and Forest Service team presented a vision of what the finished van would look like to the Hub and Amman's Public Affairs Section. The interior is small, so a module system will be built and a covered activity area will be extended from the van as it makes its educational stops. All of our partners email and talk regularly as we develop this exciting project!

Other News:

Disclaimer: The following news articles do not represent the point of view of the ESTH Hub or any USG representative and are merely a collection of articles gathered from local and online media.

GLOBAL - NeXXt Scholars: an International Women's Undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education Initiative: To increase opportunities for young women pursuing undergraduate degrees in the STEM fields at U.S. women's colleges; NeXXt Scholar offers access to the STEM community through membership in the New York Academy of Sciences, as well as access to leadership, internship and research opportunities to build the skills and confidence needed to become the next leaders, problem-solvers, and innovators in their communities. For more information please see attached PDF file.

ISRAEL – Robotic brain being developed in Israel: A cutting-edge experiment at Tel Aviv University involved wiring a computer chip with a manmade segment of cerebellum alongside the skull of a rodent with a disabled cerebellum. The device, remarkably, allowed the rat to return to normal activity. Could the same kind of artificial intelligence lead to an unprecedented level of functioning for brain-damaged people who have lost the ability to move their limbs or perform other normal activities? Prof. Matti Mintz of TAU's Department of Psychology hopes that will one day be possible. <http://israel21c.org/health/robotic-brain-being-developed-in-israel>. [Source: Israel21c]

Israel – Dead Sea Divers Discover New Forms of Life! A massive algae bloom that turned the Dead Sea red in the 1980s convinced scientists that there was life in that famous inland salt lake after all. A new set of studies by Israeli underwater researchers shows that the Dead Sea holds a vast number of living secrets waiting to be revealed. <http://israel21c.org/environment/dead-sea-divers-discover-new-forms-of-life>. [Source: Israel21c]

QATAR - Young Scientists Research Experience Program: Here is a funding opportunity for young scientists in Qatar. Young Scientists Research Experience Program (is

intended to support the overarching goal of Qatar National Research Fund, which is to foster a research culture in the country. The program contributes to building human capital through supporting young scientists and fund research of interest to Qatar National Priorities. http://www.qnrf.org/funding_programs/ysrep/. [Source: Qatar National Research Fund]

Green Tip of the month

Did you know that 3 square feet of rainforest are destroyed to make ONE laptop?
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzQgB6eBj9c&feature=player_embedded#at=79