

THE VOICES OF OUR STUDENTS

Academic year 2024-2025



Master Programme

*SUSTAINABLE AGROECOSYSTEMS AND
RESILIENCE (SARe)*



Nourelhouda Rezig

ALGERIA



About the Master course

I would recommend the SARE course to anyone passionate about sustainability and eager to work on the social dimensions of agroecosystems. It's ideal for those who enjoy engaging in communities, communicating with diverse stakeholders during field visits, and co-designing inclusive solutions. The course blends scientific knowledge with participatory practice, offering a rich multicultural environment and hands-on experience that prepares students to become agents of ecological and social change.

My research in central Algeria

My research bridges agroecology and cultural heritage by documenting traditional farming knowledge among Algerian communities especially in central Algeria. It empowers local voices, supports knowledge conservation, and promotes sustainable practices rooted in ancestral wisdom. Through participatory surveys, it fosters inclusive dialogue and strengthens intergenerational transmission of know-how, contributing to resilient agroecosystems and culturally grounded sustainability.



The Campus experience

What I liked most about the experience at CIHEAM Bari campus was the vibrant multicultural environment. We don't just learn about different cultures we live in, share meals, ideas, and values. At the same time, the experience teaches us to depend on ourselves, adapt to new challenges, and grow both personally and professionally in a supportive yet independent setting.

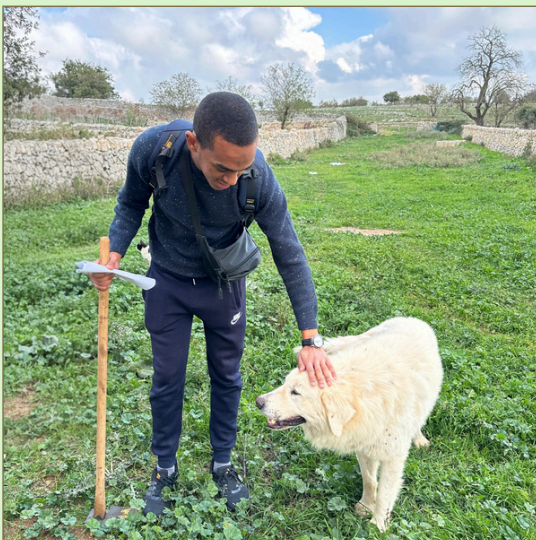
Mahmoud Aly

EGYPT



About the Master course

I would recommend this course because it effectively combines and covers many important topics such as LCA , sustainability and agroecology and skills. It also gave us the opportunity to engage with stakeholders and experts, from whom we gained valuable experience, insightful information and realistic vision of the current situation.



My research in Egypt

I am working on developing smallholders' capacity in organic farming in Egypt. The importance of my research lies in addressing a critical gap in understanding how to build the capacity of smallholder farmers and how they can be practically and sustainably engaged in organic farming, with an overview on the transition from conventional to organic farming.

The Campus experience

It was truly unforgettable, magnificent and painful. Gathering alongside people who were initially strangers, and then seeing them become more than family at the end, was incredibly moving. The experience was enriched by cultural and traditional exchanges, and I can confidently say that it made a significant difference in my character and helped sharpen my skills. The atmosphere also on campus was wonderful and The staff were kind and supportive.

Addisu Abebe Dinku

ETHIOPIA



About the Master course

I would recommend the SARE course without hesitation to any candidate seeking to make a tangible impact in the world of agriculture and food systems. The curriculum covers everything from agroecology and value-chain development to natural resource management, providing a 360-degree view of what it takes to foster resilient rural communities. This program is designed for change-makers. It challenges you to identify pressing issues in your home country or region and empowers you to develop viable, sustainable solutions. You graduate not just with a degree, but also with a concrete action plan.

My research in Babile Woreda, Oromia Region, Ethiopia

My research activity aims to understand the Perceived benefits and Key Drivers for Adopting Bio-fortified Orange-fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) in Ethiopia. Smallholder farmers in Babile Woreda have been introduced to a new variety of sweet potatoes that is rich in beta-carotenes so that it helps in reducing a major problem considering vitamin 'A' deficiency. This study focuses on understanding farmers perception about OFSP cultivation, Key drivers motivating them and factors hindering the to adopt, key value chain actors in vine multiplication and distribution, and main challenges in the development of OFSP in order to promote and scale up this sustainable, food security enhancing and health improving technology in Babile and similar Woredas.

The Campus experience

While the academic excellence was unparalleled, what I cherished most about my time at the campus was the unique and vibrant international community. Sharing classes, meals, and daily life with students from dozens of different countries—each with their own perspectives, agricultural challenges, and cultural backgrounds—was an education in itself. We debated global issues in the classroom, shared recipes in the common kitchen, and formed a supportive, family-like network. Learning to communicate, collaborate, and build friendships across cultures is an invaluable skill that I will carry with me throughout my life and career.

Jana Daher

LEBANON

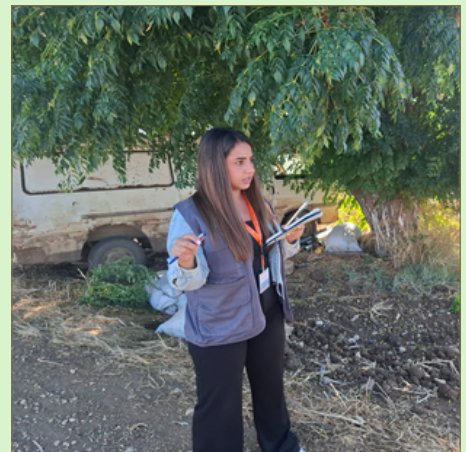


About the Master course

I would highly recommend the SARE course because it provides a unique blend of scientific knowledge, practical field experience, and policy-oriented thinking in the field of sustainable agriculture. The program equips students with strong research skills and exposes them to real challenges faced by farming communities. What makes SARE special is the interdisciplinary approach that connects agronomy, resilience, food systems, and climate change. The learning environment is highly supportive, with expert professors who guide you step by step. It is the perfect program for anyone who wants to make a real impact on agriculture and rural development.

My research in Akkar, Lebanon

My research focuses on assessing resilience to climate change and floods in Akkar, Lebanon, with a particular emphasis on farmers' vulnerability and adaptive strategies. The value of this work lies in generating evidence that can support more sustainable and resilient farming systems in one of the most affected areas of the country. By collecting field data and conducting surveys with farmers, the study reflects real conditions and real needs. The results can help policymakers and development actors design better interventions and improve disaster-risk management. Ultimately, the research contributes to protecting livelihoods and strengthening local capacity to adapt to future climate risks.



The Campus experience

What I loved most about living at the CIHEAM Bari campus is the international environment that brings people together from different cultures and backgrounds. We built strong friendships, exchanged ideas, and learned from each other both academically and personally. The campus atmosphere is welcoming, supportive, and full of opportunities to connect with experts, professors, and visiting researchers. I appreciated the sense of community, the teamwork, and the constant motivation to grow. It truly felt like a second home where I developed not only academically, but also as a person.

Joseph Jackson Kamanga

MALAWI



About the Master course

How do we build sustainable and resilient agri-food systems in light of multi-faceted challenges affecting our agri-food systems? If this is one of the questions that puzzles you, I would recommend enrolling in the SARE program. The program combines theory and practical-based learning that is based on student-centered participatory learning approaches like field trips, group activities. It equips students with essential knowledge and skills in systems thinking and critical analysis of sustainability issues in agri-food systems. This improves the students' capacity in designing context-specific solutions to address real-world agriculture and environmental challenges affecting local communities.

My research in Mzimba District, Malawi

My research study examines how farmer-research networks catalyze agroecological transitions among smallholder farmers in Mzimba District, Malawi. In particular, it unfolds how farmers learn and adapt agroecological practices through FRNs, the level of transitions, and enablers and constraints to agroecological transitions among FRN participating farmers. Results from this study not only contribute to the literature but also provide actionable insights for policy makers, NGOs, and field practitioners on how best to leverage FRNs to support agroecological transitions and enhance resilience and sustainability of smallholder farming systems.

The Campus experience

CIHEAM Bari has offered me a multicultural and collaborative environment and a network of friends, whom I now call family, that motivate and inspire me to grow personally and academically far beyond the limits. These, together with passionate lecturers and other staff members, have been very open, welcoming, and have provided me with the emotional support I needed most during my first stay outside my country. The diverse cultures at CIHEAM Bari have enriched my experience in Italy. Aside from academic life, the sports facility, regular parties at the campus, and attending seasonal festivals in the Puglia region have made my stay at CIHEAM Bari unforgettable.

Rebecca Kehinde

NIGERIA



About the Master course

I would recommend the SARE course because it offers a truly holistic understanding of agriculture, sustainability, and development. The program combines strong theoretical foundations with practical field experiences, allowing you to engage directly with real agricultural systems and challenges. We don't just sit in a classroom, we interact with farmers, practitioners, and researchers, and we see the realities behind the concepts. Another key strength of SARE is its international environment. Learning alongside students and lecturers from different countries exposes you to diverse ideas, cultural perspectives, and innovative approaches. This enriches your knowledge and helps you build networks that are valuable for your future career. Overall, SARE equips students with the skills, mindset, and confidence needed to contribute to more resilient and sustainable food systems, making it an excellent choice for anyone passionate about creating real impact in agriculture.

My research in Major Urban Cities in Southwest Nigeria

The value of my research lies in its contribution to strengthening sustainable urban agriculture and improving food resilience in rapidly growing cities across Southwest Nigeria. By examining different forms of soilless farming practiced in urban areas, the study explores how these innovations can address land scarcity, climate stress, and rising food demand in cities like Lagos, Ibadan, and Abeokuta. Through assessing the level of adoption and practical utilization of these systems, the research seeks to identify the factors that encourage or hinder farmers from embracing soilless farming, as well as the key benefits and limitations associated to its use. These insights are crucial for understanding how soilless farming can enhance productivity, improve resource efficiency, and support year-round food production within limited urban spaces, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and resilient urban food systems.

The Campus experience

What I liked most about my experience at CIHEAM Bari is the sense of community and the people. For many of us, it was our first time living far away from home, but the campus made it feel like we were building a second family. Meeting colleagues from different countries, with diverse cultures and unique backgrounds, made the entire journey truly beautiful. Despite the differences in language, values, and traditions, we blended easily, supported each other, shared meals, laughed, and celebrated our small wins together. CIHEAM also provides a very conducive learning environment, with clean and comfortable hostels, good meals, accessible services, and a supportive administrative and academic team. Everything is structured to make students' stay smooth and easy. For me, CIHEAM Bari became more than just a school, it became a home, a community, and a place where I grew academically, professionally, and personally.

Layal Mahmoud Ali

PALESTINE



About the Master course

SARe master program combines all agriculture sciences, addresses the sustainable use of natural resources, in addition to the socio- economic sustainability, which also focus on the importance of balancing agricultural practices and their impact on the environment. Develop the knowledge about agriculture structure, and how to build stronger system against the unexpected challenges. As well as the practical part and field visits that allow the students to understand the concepts on land, which makes this master is distinguished. And many thanks to the first supporter and guide for SARe students, our coordinator, Dr. Lamberto and our tutor, Dr. Philipp.

My research in Tulkarm city, Palestine

My research highlights the water scarcity problem in west bank, using alternative medium instead of soil because of the restricted reach to land and water resources. It aims to evaluate to what extent the hardships affect the productivity, also the important point is to study the sufficient solutions for saving water and achieve the sustainability. This project is under test on some farmers aims to introduce new smart technologies, trying to find solutions to the unstable socio- economic conditions, such as, the families that have no income sources or breadwinners, which in turn highlights the role of women and their empowerment in society.



The Campus experience

The comfortable atmosphere and the easy making friendships with the new peoples, and new cultures you meet since the first day. living in the same campus together makes it easier, allowing you to share memories and adapt to differences. For me I saw a new personality inside me I learned how to be self- sufficient, the thing I never knew about me before that I can bear many challenges alone. Finaly you will realize that sometimes your favorite people are not from your own, you might meet them abroad.

Ibtihel Mhamdi

TUNISIA



About the Master course

The SARE course is highly recommended because it equips students with an integrated understanding of agroecosystems as dynamic and complex socio-ecological systems. It goes beyond theory by emphasizing local community involvement and empowerment in sustainable management, preparing graduates to implement real-world solutions to evolving agricultural and environmental challenges. The course fosters interdisciplinary skills that are essential for driving agroecological transitions and resilience, making graduates well-prepared for impactful roles in research, policy, and rural development sectors. This combination of scientific rigor and practical application uniquely positions candidates to contribute to sustainable agricultural futures.

My research in Zaghouan, Tunisia

The value of my research centers on exploring the potential of Zaghouan to engage in biodistrict dynamics, which integrate organic farming with sustainable territorial management. Biodistricts promote strong producer-consumer connections, enhance social cohesion, and support diversified local economies while preserving agrobiodiversity. By assessing local stakeholder capacities and perceptions, the research highlights how biodistrict principles can foster community empowerment and agroecological resilience in rural areas. This study advances understanding of how biodistricts serve as a model for sustainable rural development through collaborative governance and rooted cultural practices.

The Campus experience

What I appreciated most about my experience at CIHEAM Bari was the rich multicultural academic environment, which offered the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives and knowledge systems. This exposure broadened my understanding and enriched classroom discussions. Additionally, living the Italian way of life, known for its cultural vibrancy, hospitality, and strong sense of community, allowed me to grow personally and develop valuable intercultural communication skills. This combination of academic rigor and cultural immersion made my time at Bari truly rewarding.

Beyza Yılmaz

TÜRKIYE



About the Master course

The SARE Master's program offers a truly comprehensive perspective on sustainable agriculture and rural development. I especially recommend it to those who want to understand how small-scale farms can navigate and overcome various challenges in today's complex agricultural landscape. The program encourages participants to develop a multidimensional and critical way of thinking by integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions. One of its most valuable aspects is the fieldwork component – the on-site lessons are both engaging and insightful, providing the opportunity to observe diverse farming strategies and practical examples of innovative approaches in different contexts.

My research in Türkiye

Currently, my research in Türkiye focuses on evaluating farms that apply sustainable agricultural practices – such as permaculture, organic, and regenerative farming – from an agroecological perspective. Specifically, I assess how closely these farms align with the 13 principles of agroecology, identifying both their strengths and areas for improvement. For each farm, I prepare a tailored report that highlights these findings. The broader goal of this research is to assess the current state of sustainable farming in Türkiye and contribute to capacity building by providing farmers with feedback and strategies to enhance their agroecological performance.

The Campus experience

Although the campus is not very large, it offers a vibrant and diverse environment enriched by a variety of activities, workshops, and seminars. These events create valuable opportunities to meet people from different disciplines, cultures, and perspectives, allowing for a constant exchange of ideas and experiences. This multicultural interaction is one of the most rewarding parts of the program – it broadens your worldview, strengthens collaboration skills, and deepens your understanding of sustainability beyond the academic framework.