

Nature Captured Exhibition

18 –21 JULY 2011

Power of Youth Behind a Camera

Nature Captured represents the work of 60 young Lebanese youth – all boys and girls under 17 – trained to take photographs, write testimonies and share their views of what life in their towns is really like with regards to nature. The workshops which took place in the years of 2010 and 2011, taught them valuable digital media skills as well as unconventional ways of expressing themselves.

A group of volunteers and facilitators from AUB-IBSAR, the Nature Conservation Center for Sustainable Futures at the American University of Beirut, worked closely with key persons, such as school teachers, school principals or Mayors who live or teach in the towns to organize these workshops.

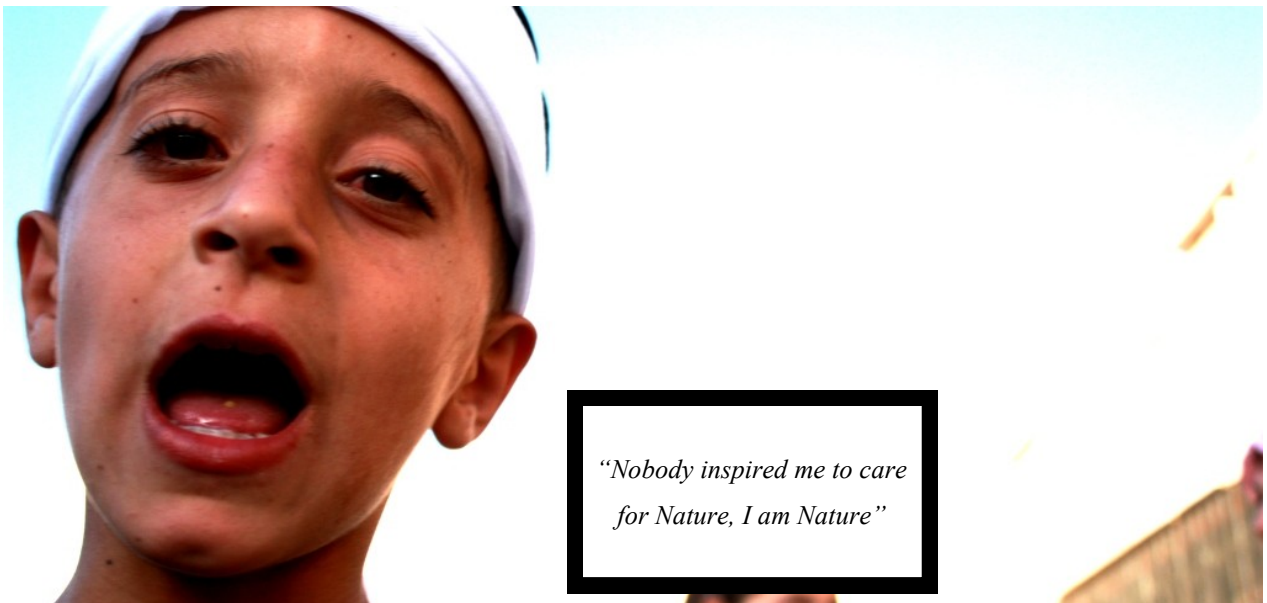


In practice, the participating villages were Michmich (Akkar), Ain Zebde (Bekaa), Aarsal (Bekaa), Damour (Mount Lebanon), Barouk (Mount Lebanon) and Deir el Zahrani (South Lebanon). Every group consisting of 8 to 12 youth participants were lent 8 cameras to record and represent, through photographs, their everyday realities. The pictures were used to promote critical group discussions about environmental, personal and community issues. The facilitator and the participants discussed the power behind use of photography, ethics, and the use of cameras and went on guided photo-shoots to practice using the cameras.

At subsequent workshops, each participant was asked to free-write about the 2 photographs they felt to be most important or simply liked best. A total of 1800 photographs were collectively gathered from all 60 participants. There were 6 workshops that ranged between 2 to 3 days and lasted 3 to 6 hours each day.



For most Nature Captured participants, this was the first opportunity ever to present their lives and concerns to the outside world. The youth expressed feelings of empowerment not experienced prior to the workshops.



We anticipate that one of the most powerful outcomes of Nature Captured will continue to emerge with the execution of a second set of Nature Captured workshops as well as in the long-term relationships built among these participants who, having shared memorable community assessment experiences, newly appreciate and draw upon one another's knowledge for future efforts to address nature conservation.

Photographs and stories collected through Nature Captured have been exhibited at Saifi Urban Gardens in Gemmayzeh. The motive for Nature Captured workshops and exhibition came from the coalition of AUB-IBSAR, a Nature Conservation Center for Sustainable Futures at the American University of Beirut and the Coca-Cola Foundation, Coca-Cola Company's primary international philanthropic arm.



Over 600 people came to the exhibition, a number approximated with reference to the quantity of catalogues distributed at the exhibition. This exhibition was an opportunity for the Coca-Cola Company as well as for AUB-IBSAR to show our work to an audience from Beirut.

Artists inspired by the concept of the photographs showed their support by coming with their musical instruments, singers and canvases and paint brushes to either play music or paint the mood of the exhibition throughout the duration of the exhibition. Stimulated by the Nature Captured exhibition AUB-IBSAR is receiving internship requests, volunteer requests along with job requests from an audience expressing a wish to be part of our positive and hard working team.





Without The Coca-Cola Foundation's constant support, the hard work put forward by the team of employees, interns and volunteers from AUB-IBSAR as well the productive team of Saifi Urban Gardens, Nature Captured would not have had such a powerful impact on its participants and the exhibition audience.

