

For Immediate Release



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LEBANESE AND SYRIAN STUDENTS GRADUATE WITH DIGITAL SKILLS FROM THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

500 students graduated from German-funded digital skills courses at Lebanon's American University of Beirut (AUB). They marked the completion of the programme, which is organised by the World Food Programme (WFP), with a ceremony at the Beirut campus attended by the German Ambassador, Dr. Georg Birgelen.

The digital skills courses have been running in Lebanon since 2016 with technical support from AUB and local partners Kayany, LLWB and Ruwwad. The vocational courses begin with an intensive two-week English-language course, followed by six weeks of tuition on labour-intensive activities such as image annotation or data entry. Advanced courses on web design and software development are also available. The programmes are designed in conjunction with WFP's Innovation Accelerator in Munich and are funded by the German government.

The participants are aged between 18 and 30 and come from Lebanon's most vulnerable communities. In addition to a travel allowance, participants receive a daily stipend to cover basic needs including food.

“In today's world, digital skills are life skills,” explained WFP Representative and Country Director Abdallah Alwardat. “Many of the youth affected by the Syrian crisis are becoming increasingly disenchanted. Opportunities like these provide hope for those and bridge strained community tensions.”

Since 2016, over 1,250 training courses have been held by WFP and its partners in Lebanon. One quarter of last year's participants found employment, and some have returned to the college as teaching assistants.

“Creativity and innovation are key to a better future,” said Ambassador Dr. Georg Birgelen as he congratulated the graduates at the event. “Germany invests in young people to help promote economic development, employment and sustainable growth, and ultimately to reduce poverty.”

WFP has been in Lebanon since 2012, providing food assistance to vulnerable refugee as well to food-insecure Lebanese communities through cash transfers, school feeding and projects to strengthen people’s livelihoods.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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