

AUB community engagement extends to the Beqa'a area

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

The American University of Beirut is organizing a Summer Volunteering Camp in the Beqa'a region initiated by the Civil Engineering Society (CES) and in collaboration with Ibsar (Nature Conservation Center for Sustainable Futures). The nine-day camp which will be coordinated by the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) will be stationed in the Agricultural Research and Education Center (AREC) and take place from September 15 until September 23.

About 75 AUB students and few faculty and staff from various departments at AUB will volunteer their expertise in community development projects in several villages and towns in the Beqa'a region including Baalbek, Bednayeel, Chmistar, Taanayeel, and Aarsal. Three interns from Earth University in Costa Rica will also join the camp and share their knowledge with the AUB team.

During the camp, AUB will partner with the villages' municipalities and community organizations which will benefit from the projects executed by the camp volunteers. In collaboration with the Baalbek branch of the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU) and with the support of the Baalbek Municipality, a team of students will build ramps for disabled people around Ras-Al-Ain. This project will ease the access of disabled people to the park and its surroundings.

In Chmistar and in collaboration with the Lebanese Organization of Studies and Training (LOST) and the village municipality, a team will build a bus stop and carry out beautifying paint jobs around the sidewalk area at the village entrance.

A team will also volunteer at Arc-En-Ciel center in Taanayeel, where volunteers will repair mud houses built in the traditional Lebanese architectural style.

The activities undertaken by the volunteers during the camp will not be limited to construction. A team of students will develop and design a website for the village of Bednayeel in collaboration with the Lebanese Organization of Studies and Training (LOST) and the village municipality. Another team will offer computer literacy workshop to kids and youth in the village of Aarsal and at AREC.

Concurrently, a team will be stationed in Aarsal village where it will organize the "Sharing nature and knowledge" festival, in partnership and with the support of the municipality as well as the collaboration of Ibsar.

During this festival, residents, AUB students, faculty, staff, and friends will work together to hold a computer literacy workshop (12 computers will be donated by AUB to the municipality), establish a public garden, set up a native tree village nursery, and conduct a photography workshop and exhibition for the youth. The participants will organize a farewell evening on September 21.

The camp will conclude with a farewell reception hosted by AREC on the night of September 23, when the student volunteers will gather with the partnering villages and community organizations.

The aim of the AUB Summer Volunteering Camp 2010 is to give the students hands-on professional experience, allowing them to contribute to the development of villages and communities. The camp will further expose students to various regions in the Beqa'a, and strengthen ties between them and the communities where they will be working.

The camp is generously supported by Sipes Paints Manufacturing and Khatib and Alami Engineering firm, as well as the various partners at AUB.

For further information about the camp, please contact CCECS at ccecs@aub.edu.lb 01-350000 ext. 4430/1, or CES at ces@aub.edu.lb, or Ibsar at ibsarprj@aub.edu.lb 01-350000 ext. 4505/9.