

For Immediate Release



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AUB students organize IBDA 2020 online **highlighting SDGs on gender equality and climate change**

The American University of Beirut (AUB) Nature Conservation Center (NCC) held its first-ever virtual poster forum competition, IBDA 2020.

International Biodiversity Day at AUB (IBDA) is an annual nation-wide poster forum and student competition. It is an unconventional approach towards education where students come up with innovative ideas focusing on biodiversity and environmentalism. It gives university students across Lebanon the opportunity to form teams and showcase their genius for creating a healthier society and environment. Together with experts and business leaders, participants create a platform to rethink how classroom knowledge can be applied into real-world innovations.

This year's IBDA event was supposed to take place on AUB campus. However, due to the unfortunate spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was going to be canceled. However, "the team did not want to give up on IBDA. Instead, we were willing to overcome all the obstacles in order to maintain the event" said AUB student Celine Al Nemer, head of the IBDA 2020 organizing committee. "We decided to turn IBDA's conventional physical platform into a virtual one."

And indeed, with the committee's hard work, IBDA 2020 took place on Wednesday, April 22, 2020, on the UnHangout Platform, a virtual platform developed by MIT.

Al Nemer also commented on her personal experience with the IBDA event and competition. "It made me discover my passion for the environment and realize that it is my responsibility, even if on a small scale, to protect the planet. And as a person who has a passion in leading and working in teams, I realized that I can join these two together and make a larger positive impact with different people all collaborating together."

The IBDA 2020 organizing committee was formed of AUB students from different majors, who did their best to overcome all the challenges and make IBDA 2020 happen, despite the difficult circumstances the world and the country are going through.

“Being part of the IBDA 2020 organizing committee and a previous IBDA participant, made me realize that everyone has the potential to develop creative ideas that can help solve environmental challenges. All we need is motivation and the opportunity to showcase our ideas.” said AUB student Nathalie Chahrour. “This opportunity is given to all participants because IBDA gathers influencers, important business founders, and companies that might allow you to fully develop your idea. I encourage everyone to at least have one IBDA experience in their life. Mine was surely life-changing.”

Every year, IBDA highlights one or more of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year's theme, women's connection to climate change, highlighted two SDGs: “SDG5: Gender Equality” that promotes gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls; and “SDG13: Climate Change” that promotes urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts.

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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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