

Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU)

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Highlights on ESDU Activities from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017:

During the academic year 2016–17, ESDU implemented several on-going and new projects covering a budget of 280,078USD different international donor agencies.

Regional Networking

“**KariaNet**” Knowledge Access for Rural Inter-connected Areas Network is a regional network funded by IDRC and IFAD for the management and sharing of knowledge, information and experience in agriculture and rural development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. ESDU has been hosting the network since 2015 and has designed a new portal that was launched in March 2016, accessible to all users. ESDU is aligning KariaNet activities with Local Food Systems while contextualizing success cases, and partnering with regional and international networks and centers in the region.

In collaboration with The Strategic Partnership Initiative (SPI), ESDU held on July 5th 2017 a workshop in AUB entitled “Promoting rural development through access to finance, ICT and Technology”.

Capacity Building

“**Reducing Vulnerability of Syrian Refugees and Lebanese in Lebanon**” in

collaboration with the Near East Foundation: ESDU built the skills of around 170 Syrian refugees and Lebanese to support the development of home-based productive activities or small businesses related to agricultural productive activities and food processing. The areas of intervention are spread between (1) Minieh and Berqayel (North Governorate); and (2) Taanayel (Bekaa Governorate). A set of interactive training workshops will be delivered between May and September 2017 and will cover the following topics: Food Safety; Production of soft cheeses; Catering Services; Sun drying of Vegetables, Fruit & Herbs and Recipe Standardization & Labeling. A total of 5 workshops were conducted till date in Berqayel, Akkar and Taanayel, Bekkaa where enthusiastic groups of Syrian &

Lebanese women were trained to help them develop home-based production lines of sweets, cheeses, mouneh etc.

Development

“GHATA: Bringing Education to Informal Tented Settlements” This project is implemented in partnership with Kayany Foundation and the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) and funded by Reach Out to Asia – Qatar Foundation. It aims to scale up AUB-CCECS GHATA intervention to assemble two school campuses in effort to provide Community Based Education (CBE) for refugee children in addition to child protection services and nutritional assistance. ESDU team consulted on the establishment of 2 school kitchenettes within the campuses and led the capacity building of the women cooks in each school on food safety, healthy nutrition and menu development. Al throughout the year, students received a variety of healthy snacks hence improving their dietary diversity and access to nutritious food.

“Building the Food Security and Economic Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Vulnerable Members of their Host Communities in Beirut/Lebanon” aims at building the food security and economic resilience of Syrian refugees and vulnerable members of their host communities – enabling them to survive and prosper in the face of decreasing international assistance. The project is in collaboration with NEF and YMCA, and ESDU is in charge of the implementation of the urban agriculture component of the proposed project. Urban agricultural kits were designed and provided by ESDU to 40 families so far (out of 150) in Bourj Hammoud, Dawra and Nabaa areas, and capacity building sessions were delivered to the project beneficiaries enabling them to producer healthy food on their balconies, windows and roofs.

“Souk aal Souk – Farmers’ Market” held on a monthly basis in FAFS and gathering small-scale farmers and food producers from around the country.

Academic program

“The RCODE Master of Sciences Program in Rural Community Development”

ESDU continues to host and provide support for the RCODE in the practicum course and providing graduate students with internships in the different ESDU projects. (Details in RCODE report)

AUB 150th Celebrations

“Arab Women: Keepers of the Land” ESDU 15th Anniversary celebrations: ESDU celebrated its 15th anniversary and paid tribute to partners and friends who have marked the development world by advancing the role of women to preserve their lands and heritage.

Fund Raising Event

ESDU organized its first fund raising event through a movie screening: “3000Nights”, by Ms. Mai Mari, on March 31, 2017. The event was on the occasion of Land Day, and in collaboration with the Palestinian Culture Club at AUB and ULYP (Unite Lebanon Youth Project). It was attended by more than 150 people. Raised funds will support a Palestinian /Arab Graduate student enrolled in the RCODE program.

Strategic Challenges:

- Fundraise for endowment, scholarship and entrepreneurship