

## **Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU)**

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### Personnel:

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### **Highlights on ESDU Activities from September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018:**

During the academic year 2017–18, ESDU proceeded with the on-going regional networking project “Karianet” which started in 2015 covering a total budget of 148,880USD.

“**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. ESDU organized a workshop on **Youth in Rural Development**, which addressed the challenges of rural development in Lebanon and the region, bringing together people from the private and public sectors, NGOs, and civil society to consider ways to support youth in rural areas and how to empower them to revive the rural landscape. Under the same context, Launching of the pilot rural development network called REEF: Rural Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Forum, took place. Its objective was to develop a rural development strategy and put it into action to provide rural youth with access to knowledge, technology, and finance via the regional platform for knowledge management, KariaNet.”

“**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

(RCOD 344) by providing graduate students with internships in the different ESDU projects.

**Community Engagement:**

ESDU supported the Food Heritage Foundation in different capacity building activities such as providing a set of interactive workshops for Palestinian ladies in the Women Program Association (WPA) in Nahr El-Bared Camp in collaboration with Mercy USA; delivering training sessions to farmers and small-scale producers on Sirdeleh and soft goat cheese making in Deir al Qamar in collaboration with the Secours Islamique France (SIF), the Ministry of Agriculture and the Chouf Biosphere Reserve; delivering gardening workshops to Syrian refugees kids in Sonbola center in Anjar.

**Strategic Challenges:**

- Fundraise for endowment, scholarship and entrepreneurship