The Societal Impact of Beirut Arab University

Examples of projects by the Lead for SDG 9 for the IAU HESD Cluster

IAU HESD Cluster Leader

Lebanon is currently facing multiple crisis and transformations such as financial, environmental, the pandemic and recently the tragic explosion that heavily damaged Beirut City. Beirut Arab University (BAU) acknowledges that its contribution to society is measured not only by its impact on higher education and research but also by the extent to which it carries out societal interactions aiming at improving the wellbeing of communities. The following are examples that respond to the current community need demonstrating how BAU can collaborate in providing a vital role to sustainable urban development.

1.Inclusive and Sustainable Cities: Municipalities Good Practices in Lebanon

https://www.bau.edu.lb/Architecture-Design-and-Built-Environment/News/Inclusive-and-Sustainable-Cities-Municipalities-Good-Practices-in-Lebanon
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTJq6MEZoeA

"Inclusive and sustainable cities – Municipalities Good Practices in Lebanon", implemented through a partnership among UNESCO, UN-HABITAT and Beirut Arab University. The process of developing a unique interdisciplinary methodology to the urban inclusiveness was presented highlighting on the approach of students engagement within this process which started on April It aims at collecting evidence of practice-based initiatives carried out by Lebanese local municipalities and responsible authorities. Inspiring programs, which promote social cohesion and urban governance in the area, have been initiated by the municipalities in Lebanon. These practices focus on social cohesion, solidarity among vulnerable groups and promoting sustainable urban development. A good practice serves the effectiveness of intervention in a particular setting and is replicable to other circumstances. The context, process and outcome are evaluated taking into consideration cases of spreading wellness in society, environment or habitation.

2. MOST - School on "Youth Civic Engagement (YCE) and public policies for urban inclusive governance through cultural heritage"

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/sv/news/unesco_beirut_holds_a_most_school_on_youth_civic_engagement/
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1996547037314175&id=1520373881598162&__cft__[0]=AZX78AePtCgMUjI_viQVgXbvLuVQjtFluElL864pR_C-9VuzjDBKx_06-pRxOtJFo_D51opx8-9jpdWv9pBKe0U-fcUJ1mKiOMa2q3NUWWuaOINfKQnxJJJBVeqYjaAM7pzOq9ECc0g8bZiFedlNYqgQ&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

MOST Schools are capacity-building activities focused on strengthening the competencies for evidence-informed decision-making in Member States. They help develop the capacity of researchers and decision-makers to translate knowledge into action. Their primary goal is to support long-term sustainable development in contexts where capacity gaps may be a major constraint to translating research into action. A 3-day MOST School on "Youth civic engagement and public policies for urban governance

through cultural heritage" was organized in partnership with UNESCO, the Beirut Arab University (BAU) and the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development (HFSHD). While numerous SDGs were tackled, this MOST School aims to share experiences and various methodologies of policy research in order to collaborate to promote an effective policy dialogue. A set of research methodologies and reflections, and good practices from policy areas from the Arab region were shared to further enhance the positive role of youth in promoting social inclusion through cultural heritage promotion in Lebanon.

3.Tarik Jdideh Urban Regeneration – Collaboration between Beirut Arab University and the Municipality of Beirut.

Beirut Arab University is collaborating with Beirut Municipality on the redesign of Cola Square Landscaping and Bostani Street Urban Regeneration prepared by the Faculty of Architecture team. The urban intervention aims to make the area more pedestrian friendly by widening the pavements, adding benches for people to rest, kiosks, planting trees for shade, and other urban features such as adding separate bike lane. The wider sidewalks are also more beneficial for arts and cultural events in Tarik Jdideh neighborhood. Several meetings were held between the Faculty Dean, Prof. Ibtihal El-Bastawissi and the Mayor of Beirut, Engineer Jamal Itani in order to determine the optimum solutions that comply with the municipality requirements as well as with the technical and aesthetic requirements. The faculty team prepared the detailed design package and the Tender documents of Cola Square Landscaping in order to begin the implementation phase.

4. Youth-led rehabilitation efforts to support local communities affected by the Beirut blast. BAU in partnership with UNESCO, UNFPA, and UNODC Offices in Lebanon are working on developing children's emotional attachment to the territory of Beirut Blast.

https://en.unesco.org/news/announcement-unesco-unfpa-and-unodc-joint-call-proposals-youth-led-rehabilitation-efforts

The main goal of the proposed project is to develop children's emotional attachment to the territory of Beirut Blast through activating their participation in the construction of cognitive maps by playing with spatial maps strategically designed in a game environment. BAU UrbanLab is established as a multidisciplinary platform used by experts and urban stakeholders to collaboratively seek innovative and sustainable solutions for urban challenges strengthening the role of BAU in the Lebanese society. The architects and urban designers in the BAU Urban Lab are working in this project using their technical, and creative skills to design maps for particular neighborhoods in Beirut as well as creating 3D physical models for a number of historic buildings introducing the children to educating architecture from an early age and as a coping strategy after this stressful event.

5. The involvement of the BAU's incubator in achieving the University's Social Responsibility

Supporting links BAU Business incubator projects:
https://www.bau.edu.lb/SDG9/Innovation-hub
http://www.tradearabia.com/news/LIFE_376920.html
https://www.mitefarab.org/en/startup/1008/infrastic
https://www.auf.org/nouvelles/actualites/une-nouvelle-plateforme-de-ressources-sur-lentrepreneuriat/
Volunteering and Community engagement for Beirut Blast Relief: https://www.bau.edu.lb/disaster-civic-engagement

Universities, as educational institutions, play a vital role in the development and improvement of the society, contributing to the welfare of citizens. Considering the social responsibility of universities with many stakeholders (students, institutions, government, employees, companies, local community, etc.), BAU has established the mission, objectives and strategic actions oriented to meet these expectations. The implementation of strategic planning began by introducing a socially responsible culture at the levels of management, teaching, research, and expansion. Volunteer work is one aspect of community engagement through youth engagement programmes to assess the affected areas of the Beirut Blast, enhancing by that democratic principles in student leadership and raising aspirations for university education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Moreover, the role of universities is essential in the social development for the knowledge-based economy, assuming a strategic role in the welfare of the nations. BAU's business incubator programme has thus far incubated three groups of innovative entrepreneurs aiming at leveraging the momentum around social entrepreneurship, spreading the entrepreneurial mindset within its community, and identifying future opportunities to create strategies for civic engagement and economic integration of underprivileged communities.

6. Our City Our Way "Youth Project Encouraging to draw their dream city

https://www.bau.edu.lb/Tripoli-Campus/Event/Our-City-Our-Way-Youth-Project-Encouraging-to-draw-their-dream-city
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333389788_A_child-friendly_city_a_youth_creative_vision_of_reclaiming_interstitial_spaces_in_El_Mina_Tripoli_Lebanon
Our City: Our Way which is is a joint initiative between **Safadi Cultural Foundation, Beirut Arab University, Al Mina Municipality (funded by South MED CV)**. This initiative aims to empower 30 youths from Al Mina city – North Lebanon by building their capabilities in urban design, cartography, model-making and proposal-writing. BAU and Al Mina Municipality shared the design and construction work including street furniture, facade beautification, planting, lighting facilities, and a children playground. The capacity-building provided by the project prepared the youth to advocate for an active citizenship role to be recognized by the local authorities, through a series of workshops and cultural training processes, that led them proactively to understand the key urban functions and accordingly design and implement their model of a creative child-friendly city (CFC).

7. 1st Place Family Urban Set UNIDO X BDW competition

https://www.bau.edu.lb/Architecture-Design-and-Built-Environment-Tripoli/Event/BDW-x-UNIDO-United-Nations-Industrial-Development-Organization-Competition
http://www.herskhazeen.com/unido_tripoli/
The 1st winning project was produced and executed at the Vocational training Center for Carpentry in Zgharta Official Technical Institute in North Lebanon by the support of Digital Fabrication lab at Beirut Arab University in Tripoli Campus." The first intervention is called Family Urban Set. The design is divided into different cross sections based on different family ages, starting from kids to adults' and ending by a shading zone for optimum comfort. The project is inspired by the Sea Shells and Waves that can be found in El Mina Beach. It can accommodate different family members and sizes; it starts with a low seating area for kids and ends with a shaded lounging zone. The intervention was designed by Beirut Arab University, Tripoli campus, and includes a climbing zone for children and different seating areas that merge into one family set. This set target is to create a gathering space for families and friends.