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COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Community Support Program

February 2023

“Buy Local!” – CSP Supports Agricultural Cooperatives to Participate in Markets Across Lebanon to Boost Livelihoods

Amidst the worsening socio-economic conditions in Lebanon, local farmers and agricultural cooperatives have been struggling with rising costs of production coupled with diminished incomes. To improve the livelihoods of farming communities, USAID’s CSP has supported six cooperatives by providing them with modern equipment while also building their capacities to expand production and increase incomes by facilitating their participation in markets and exhibitions across the country.

Between December 16 and 18, 2022, CSP supported four cooperatives – from Majdel Aanjar in the Beqaa, Tanbourit in the South, and Jdaifat el Qaitaa and Fneidik in the North – to participate in a Christmas market held at The Backyard Hazmieh in Beirut. This presented an important opportunity for the cooperatives to increase their product sales, gain brand recognition, and build linkages to new markets. As a direct outcome of this support, the four cooperatives earned more than LBP 32,000,000 (\$1,060) by selling their products over the three-day Christmas market, which went directly towards supporting the families of cooperative members during the holiday season.

Find out more by following this link to a video which includes testimonials from members of CSP-supported cooperatives and their customers during the market:



Click here to watch a video about CSP
Market Linkages

CSP Enhances Wastewater Treatment for Over 10,000 Residents in Batroun

The sewage network in the coastal town of Batroun in northern Lebanon used to only cover around 70% of households, and as a result of the ongoing socio-economic crisis, the municipality lacked the funds to connect the remaining 30% to the network. The resulting environmental and health hazards negatively affected the local population and the potential growth of tourism in the area, which many residents depend on as a source of income. In response, CSP constructed 1,420 linear meters of sewage pipes to connect 126 households in three underserved neighborhoods in Batroun to the main sewage line. With the intervention successfully completed by early 2023, USAID's assistance has eliminated the flooded wastewater, reduced the risk of contaminated underground water, and is reducing health hazards and related frustrations for 10,760 residents in the targeted neighborhoods.



“With the support of USAID, we are able to connect these highly populated areas to the sewage network to preserve our beautiful city and keep it clean,” said

Marcelino el Herek, Mayor of Batroun

CSP Launches Two New Vocational Training Courses at Partner TVETs, Benefitting 64 Scholarship Recipients

During December 2022, CSP's workforce development team launched two new vocational training courses – one in Homebased Healthcare (HHC) at the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) Faculty of Nursing Sciences in Baabda and the other in Full Stack Web Development at Saint Elie Technical Institute in Mina – benefitting 21 and 43 students respectively. All 64 students are recipients of CSP's Jobs, Education, and Training (JET) scholarship which covers their tuition, and provides them with a monthly stipend for transportation and medical insurance for the duration of the three-month course and subsequent internship. Both courses were developed in collaboration with CSP's expert grantees and in response to pre-identified gaps in the Lebanese labor market to build the professional skills and enhance the employability of students from vulnerable backgrounds.

Overall, CSP has provided a total of 396 vocational scholarships to date.

“By including English and soft skills in addition to the technical material, I am learning about the importance of communication, networking, and presentation skills towards my professional development,” stated Tareq Mohammad el Ali, JET scholarship recipient undertaking the Full Stack Web Development course at St Elie.

“The JET scholarship is really helping me during these challenging times, especially as I was unemployed. I believe this training will open many doors and opportunities for me, and will hopefully enable me to take care of myself and my family,” stated **Ghada Fawaz, HHC student and scholarship recipient at LRC Baabda.**



CSP Launches New Solar Activity to Enhance Water Provision for 2000 residents in Mazraat et Teffah

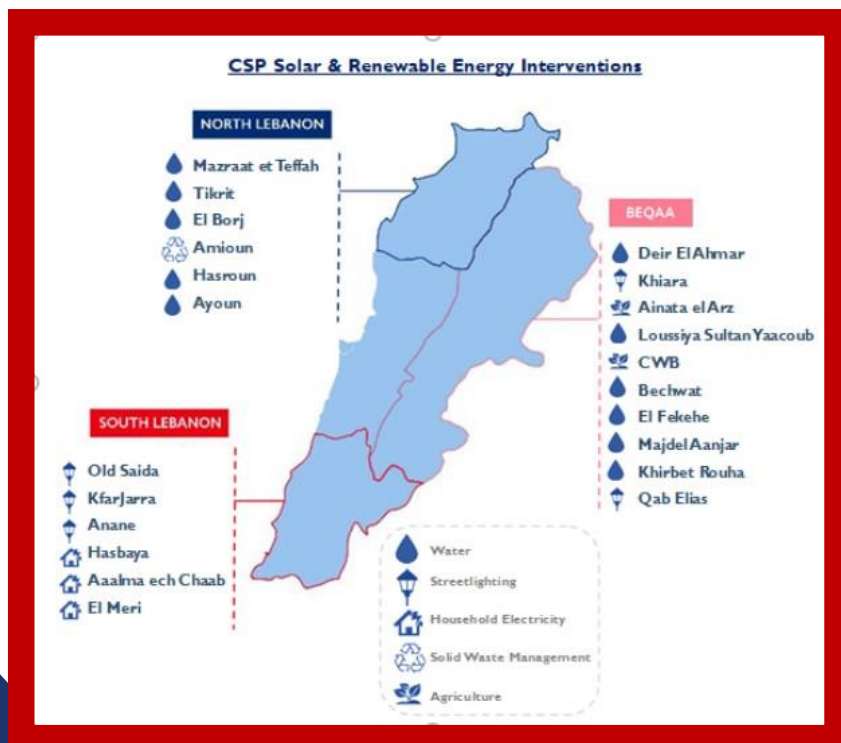


[Click here to watch a video on USAID's Solar Solutions through CSP](#)

Renewable energy is needed now more than ever given the country's worsening financial crisis and resulting energy shortages, especially in vulnerable communities. While increasing power cuts have left much of the population grappling with life without electricity, residents have equally lost access to other electricity-dependent services, which has significantly degraded living conditions across Lebanon. In response, CSP has been implementing a range of solar energy interventions to strengthen community access to household electricity and enable local authorities to provide essential services that rely on electricity such as water pumping, streetlighting, and solid waste management.

On February 7, 2023, CSP kicked off a new intervention to install a solar photovoltaic farm in the village of Mazraat et Teffah, North Lebanon, to power the local water pump which was too expensive for the municipality to run on the municipal generator resulting in the community suffering from regular water shortages. CSP expects to complete this activity by the end of June 2023. Once completed, it is expected that the 2,000 residents will benefit from enhanced access to domestic water provision, while each household will save an estimated LBP 2,000,000 per month by eliminating their need to purchase trucked-in water.

This is CSP's 22nd intervention which uses sustainable solar solutions to enhance Lebanese residents' access to essential services.



CSP's Partner Industry Installs Equipment to Treat Industrial Wastewater

Through its Industrial Wastewater Project (IWT), CSP is supporting Lebanese industries willing to invest in proper treatment of their wastewater. Within this intervention, CSP is implementing a rebate program to partially reimburse partner industries for the costs of installing equipment to mitigate their industrial wastewater pollution.

This month, Cortas – one of CSP's partner industries which specializes in the production of halewe and tahini – successfully completed the installation of an industrial wastewater treatment plant on its premises. The plant has been fully operational since November 2022, and it is now treating 220 cubic meters of industrial wastewater per day according to environmental norms and standards. This represents an important achievement by CSP's wastewater management team, especially given the reduced capacities of Lebanese companies and industries amidst the ongoing socio-economic crisis.



Industrial wastewater treatment plant in operation at Cortas' factory – February 2023

CSP Interns Train Local Partners on the Usage of Professional E-Communication Tools

Like in many parts of the world, working remotely and distance learning have become commonplace in Lebanon following the outbreak of COVID-19. To ensure that its local partners are able to maximize their efficiency while adapting to these new working conditions, CSP interns are being dispatched to build the capacities of 44 municipalities, civil society organizations, and cooperatives on e-communication tools. On February 2, 2023, five tech savvy CSP graduate interns delivered their first training to the municipality of Deir el Ghazal to teach them how to use email, Zoom, and Google Space to more effectively communicate with their constituents. This represented the first time a CSP technical assistance activity was fully implemented by interns, showcasing how CSP is combining the improvement of its interns' professional skills while simultaneously delivering technical assistance to its local partners.



USAID/ CSP interns providing training on e-communication skills to the Deir el Ghazal Municipality on February 16, 2023

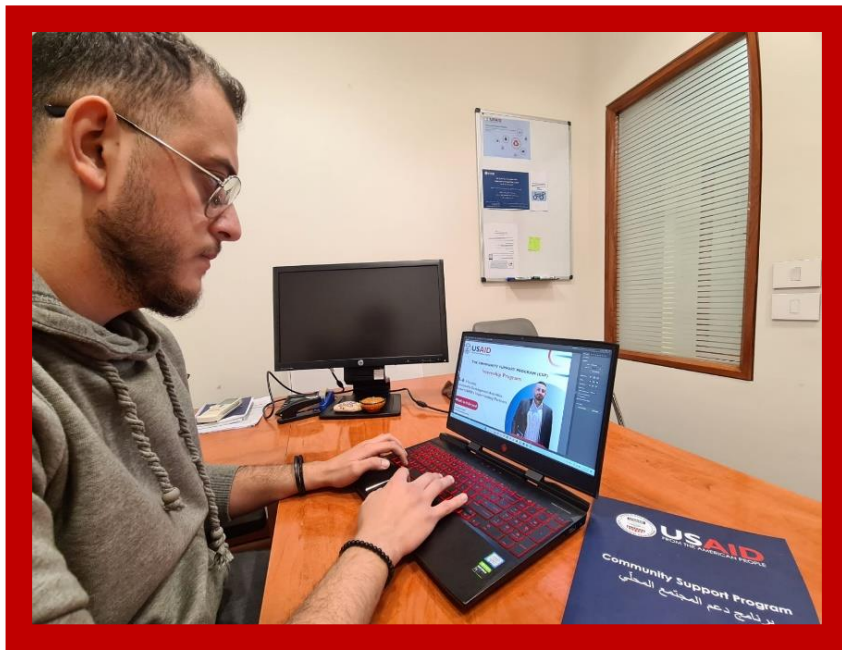
Meet Nael: CSP Intern Who Found Employment Upon Completion of His Internship

After successfully completing his six-month internship, Nael Nasr started working as a graphic design consultant with CSP on January 1, 2023, providing him with his first full-time job since graduating from university in 2020.

Nael was among the first interns – assigned as a graphic designer with the CSP communications unit – to be engaged as part of the expansion of the CSP internship program from AUB and LAU to nine additional universities. Having showcased great maturity and professionalism, he transitioned to professional staff when a need arose. He is now providing a wide range of graphic design support to CSP, including posters, reports, and other outreach material to enhance the visibility of project activities. He also serves as the project’s photographer, helping to highlight the human impact of CSP assistance and progress in activity implementation.

“I wouldn’t have grown and learned as much as I have without the constant feedback, support, guidance, and mentorship from the CSP team. I am very grateful for this experience that allowed me to continue this journey with USAID/CSP,”

Nael Nasr, AUST graphic design graduate.



USAID/CSP graphic design intern Nael Nasr working on the partner universities' internship posters - December 29, 2022