



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Community Support Program

April 2023

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Visits Recently Completed Elevated Water Tank in Bqasta



[Click here to watch a video on CSP's intervention in Bqasta](#)

Ambassador Shea inaugurates USAID/CSP's elevated water tank in Bqasta

On March 17, 2023, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea visited Bqasta, South Lebanon, in the presence of the Mayor of Bqasta, Ibrahim Mezher, to officially inaugurate the town's newly constructed 300 m³ elevated water tank and rehabilitation of the facility's operation room. The water tank, constructed by USAID's Community Support Program (CSP), was completed in early February 2023, and is currently enhancing affordable and equitable water supply to more than 9,000 residents.

Bqasta, home to 10,500 Lebanese residents and 1,000 refugees, has been experiencing severe water shortages, forcing households to purchase additional trucked in water on a weekly basis which was becoming a financial burden amidst the ongoing socio-economic crisis. In addition to constructing the town's elevated water tank and rehabilitating its electrical, mechanical, and chlorination systems, CSP is also ensuring sustainability by training the municipality on developing and implementing participatory community awareness campaigns on water conservation in collaboration with the University of Saint Joseph's Fondation Diane.

"We stand together with the Lebanese people, and this is a concrete example of our desire to help you improve your lives"

- Ambassador Shea during her visit while addressing Bqasta community members.

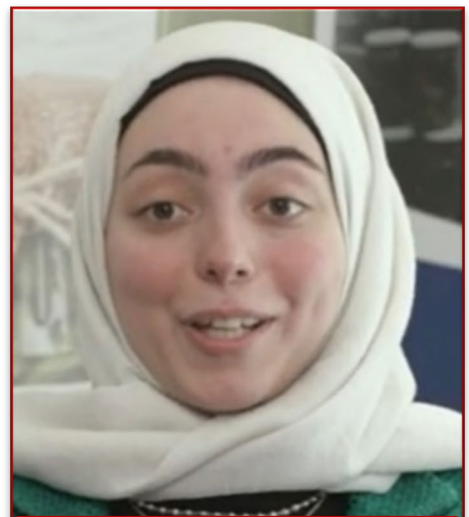
CSP Celebrates the Completion of 76 Student Internships



Interns take a group photo with U.S Embassy and USAID representatives during internship completion ceremony

On March 23, 2023, USAID's CSP recognized the efforts of a third cohort of 76 university students and recent graduates from 11 partner universities who completed internships in support of USAID-funded projects in Lebanon. The ceremony, held at Le Royal Hotel in Dbayeh was attended by the U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Richard Michaels, USAID/Lebanon Acting Mission Director Nicholas Vivio, representatives from USAID implementing partners, municipality mayors, and partner universities. During the ceremony, students shared the impact of the internship program on their lives through testimonials and a panel discussion.

Launched in 2020, CSP's internship program provides graduates and undergraduates the opportunity to gain professional and practical experience to start their careers and generate a temporary income to support their families during the current economic crisis. The interns, who are enrolled in AUB, LAU, and nine other universities* partnered under USAID's Higher Education Capacity Development Program (HECD), provide support and technical expertise to municipalities, civil society organizations, agricultural cooperatives, and water establishments that are benefitting from USAID assistance in a range of sectors including water and sanitation, agriculture and rural development, education, and women's empowerment. This five-year internship program, aims to place up to 300 youth from challenged socio-economic backgrounds in internships to support local communities through USAID's projects in Lebanon. So far, 94 graduates and undergraduates have completed their internships, 40 of whom have secured full time jobs.



[Click here to meet few of CSP's interns in this video](#)

* **Partner Universities under HECD:** American University for Science and Technology, Antonine University, Beirut Arab University, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Haigazian University, Islamic University, Sagesse University, Notre Dame University, and Saint Joseph University

“For many years, the U.S. Government, through USAID, has worked to increase access to education, training, and economic opportunities to nurture the potential of Lebanon’s youth. I am heartened to see such a passionate group of interns who are defying challenges, investing in their growth, and building a brighter future for Lebanon.”

- US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Richard Michaels

USAID Provided Equipment Enhances Volunteer Firefighters' Safety and Effectiveness in Jurd el Qaitea



[Click here to watch a video on how USAID/CSP's intervention enhanced Jurd el Qaitea's response to wildfires](#)

The Jurd el Qaitea Union of Municipalities (UoM) is comprised of 15 towns and villages located in the mountainous forested area of Akkar, North Lebanon. Home to about 130,000 Lebanese residents and 4,000 Syrian refugees, the area experiences recurring wildfires which have been exacerbated by weak municipal response mechanisms. In addition to destroying the local forest and putting residents lives at risk, the fires have reduced the number of tourists visiting the area which has severely impacted local economic opportunities and increased tensions among residents over limited livelihoods. As such, the UoM purchased a truck to enable the local team of firefighters access to fire scene, but they were unable to equip it with the necessary equipment to make it fully effective.

In response, USAID's Community Support Program (CSP) stepped in to equip the truck with what is needed to become fully effective; this included a water pump and thrusters, a fire-resistant water hose and tank, as well as fire hammers. To ensure the safety of the firefighters, CSP also provided two hand-held fire extinguishers, fire-resistant protective suits, gloves and facemasks, air pressure tanks to enable the team to tackle house fires, and handheld transceivers to facilitate communication and coordination within the team during response actions. In parallel, CSP trained the union's members on the operation and maintenance of the provided equipment. Finally, CSP helped the UoM improve the coordination between the firefighting stakeholders in the area, including the Civil Defence, the First Responders' team and local NGO, Darb Akkar, which has contributed to a 97% decrease in fire incidents when compared to last year.

"The protective equipment provided by USAID/CSP has really improved our team's efficiency and safety: so far this year, we have managed to successfully put out 14 fires, without a single injury!"

- Yaacoub Ahmad, Volunteer at the Jurd el Qaitea UOM First Responders' Team

CSP Supports the Lebanese Red Cross in Baabda with Equipment to Enhance Workforce Development

The workforce development component of USAID's Community Support Program (CSP) is designed to improve the employability skills and increase job opportunities for Lebanese students from underserved communities. To this end, it improves the curricula of its 13 private technical and vocational educational partners (TVETs), provides them with needed equipment and technical assistance, and facilitates linkages to the job market; additionally, it provides scholarships and internships to individuals seeking a technical and vocational education in sectors with growth potential in Lebanon.

This April, CSP completed its in-kind support to the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) Faculty of Nursing Sciences in Baabda, one of its TVET partners, by installing a hydraulic wheelchair lift to facilitate access for disabled persons, and providing desktops, an LCD projector, and a standalone UPS to ensure backup power during electricity outages. As the country continues to endure lengthy power outages and limited access to state electricity, the UPS will enable the TVET to cut its generator costs while improving its capacity to deliver courses smoothly without interruption.

Since 2019, CSP's workforce development project has improved six curricula at private TVET institutions, provided 1,052 scholarships, placed 747 scholarship recipients in internships, and facilitated full-time employment for 153 graduates.



USAID/CSP Scholarship recipient undertaking her home-based healthcare vocational course at LRC Baabda.



USAID/CSP installed wheelchair lift to enhance accessibility at LRC Baabda

"The equipment being provided by USAID/CSP is improving the faculty's entire educational process, especially in terms of providing adequate resources to allow students to practice what they have learned in a stable learning environment ."

- Linda Wehbe, Dean's Executive Assistant at LRC Nursing Faculty in Baabda.

Women's Day Highlight – Meet Zeina!

Throughout the month of March, USAID's CSP celebrated International Women's Day and Women's History Month by highlighting exceptional interns who challenged social biases and excelled in their career journey. One of these women is Zeina Taleb.

Zeina is a 23-year-old Business Administration and Marketing graduate from the American University of Beirut who benefitted from USAID's University Scholarship Program (USP) and pursued a CSP internship after completing her studies. She is from a village in Dinnieh, North Lebanon, where there are very limited opportunities for women to pursue careers. During her internship with CSP, Zeina supported the implementation of a solid waste management community awareness campaign in North Lebanon, where she gained hands-on experience that developed her communication, capacity-building, and monitoring and evaluation skills. Zeina's diligence and hard work laid the groundwork for her career. In March 2023, she was selected to serve as a grants assistant with the USAID-funded Agriculture and Rural Empowerment (ARE) program in Lebanon.

"My experience has been inspirational for other young women who are working hard for a bright future, especially those who come from conservative and remote villages", says Zeina.



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"By not differentiating between men and women, and involving women in all its activities and programs, USAID is challenging the social biases around gender in Lebanon and empowering women to take their future in their own hands."

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Zeina Taleb

Business Management and Marketing graduate from the American University of Beirut, Grants Assistant at USAID's Agriculture and Rural Empowerment (ARE) program



March 2023

International Women's Day

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#EmbraceEquity

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSP) IN LEBANON

برنامج دعم المجتمع المحلي في لبنان

CSP Celebrates World Water Day and Launches Awareness Video on Water Conservation

CSP is enhancing access to water in Bqasta (South) and Talia (Beqaa) by constructing 300 m³ elevated water tanks in both towns and rehabilitating their operation rooms. The combined impact of these interventions is facilitating affordable and equitable access to water for more than 13,000 Lebanese residents. To ensure sustainability, CSP is also training community members on how to develop and implement community awareness campaigns on water conservation.

As part of these campaigns, on World Water Day on March 22, CSP launched an awareness video using the slogan *Turn off the tap*. Developed in collaboration with Saint Joseph University's Fondation Dianne, the campaign promotes everyday best water conservation practices.



[Click here to watch the water conservation awareness video launched on World Water Day by Bqasta and Talia community members](#)

USAID's CSP in the Media

In March 2023, USAID's CSP was hosted on Tele Liban and Maryam TV to discuss its wide range of assistance across Lebanon, including community support projects to enhance access to essential services, technical assistance and internships, wastewater management, and workforce development.



Maryam TV – On Time
March 31, 2023



Tele Liban – Ahla Sabah
March 30, 2023