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USAID-SUPPORTED FEMALE YOUTH LANDS JOB IN LEBANON

USAID's Scholarship and Internship Program Provides Students with Practical Skills to Enhance Their Employment Potential



Zeina at her workplace as a grants officer at the USAID-funded Agriculture and Rural Empowerment (ARE) program - March, 2023

“I wanted to pursue a career that would give back to the community and to USAID, without which, none of my achievements would have been possible.”

“Without the scholarship and support from USAID, I would have never been able to pursue a higher education and a career,” shared Zeina Taleb, 23-year-old Business Administration and Marketing graduate from the American University of Beirut (AUB) and beneficiary of USAID’s University Scholarship Program (USP). “There are very few opportunities for young people in Lebanon, let alone young women from low-income families like mine.” In fact, according to a 2022 study by the International Labor Organization¹, only 22% of Lebanese women are active in the workforce, while youth unemployment rates hover around 48%. The crisis is forcing many young people to drop out of school and engage in poorly paid, irregular work just to help feed their families. To address this issue and to enhance employment opportunities for students and recent graduates in Lebanon, USAID’s Community Support Program (CSP) is complementing USAID’s scholarship program by engaging students and recent graduates as interns to assist underserved communities. “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,” stated Zeina.

After completing her studies at AUB, Zeina was selected for a USAID-sponsored internship at CSP, during which she supported a solid waste management community awareness campaign in North Lebanon. “I gained hands-on experience which developed my skills in a range of areas, including communication, capacity-building, and monitoring and evaluation, which was invaluable during this early stage of my career.” As a result of her professionalism, ability to adapt and communicate effectively with partners and beneficiaries, Zeina was then offered a short-term capacity-building officer position with CSP. Zeina’s diligence and hard work at CSP laid the groundwork for her career. In March 2023, she was selected to serve as a grants officer with the USAID-funded Agriculture and Rural Empowerment (ARE) program in Lebanon. “I am really enjoying my new role at ARE so far, and am excited to continue my journey with USAID,” she stated.

Zeina is among the 38 (of 121) interns who have found quality employment after completing a USAID-sponsored internship. CSP’s internship program was expanded in 2022 to include similar opportunities for students from 11 Lebanese universities. The five-year internship program, worth around \$800K in USAID funding, aims to place up to 300 youth from challenged socio-economic backgrounds in internships to support local communities through USAID’s projects in Lebanon.

¹ http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/Publications/LFS_2022/Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Follow%20Up%20LFS%20Lebanon%202022.pdf