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COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSP) IN LEBANON

NEWSLETTER

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USAID Celebrates the Closing of its Workforce Development Project to Enhance Access to Quality Technical and Vocational Education

On May 17, 2023, CSP held a closing ceremony for its four-year workforce development project (WFD). Since 2019, USAID invested \$7.3 million to improve the skills of and employment opportunities for underserved Lebanese residents by enhancing access to quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The event was attended by USAID Lebanon's Mission Director, USAID's Economic Growth Office Director, and representatives from donor agencies, TVET institutions, private businesses, and technical experts. During the event, participants reflected on project achievements, heard students' testimonials, and held a panel discussion with project, TVET, and business experts on lessons learnt and recommendations for future workforce development programming in Lebanon.

Through USAID's WFD project, CSP developed, adapted, and sought accreditation for five TVET curricula in three promising employment sectors: home-based health care, industrial repair and maintenance, and information technology (IT) in addition to a soft skills training course that was provided to all students to improve their ability to compete for jobs. The courses are now available at CSP's thirteen partner TVET institutes across Lebanon, where 1,055 Lebanese residents from the North, South, and Beqaa benefitted from scholarships. In addition to full tuition coverage, scholarship recipients received health insurance, a monthly stipend for transportation, and a computer or tablet to facilitate online learning. As part of its market-driven approach, CSP partnered with 48 private sector businesses and built linkages between them and the TVETs to facilitate graduates' access to employment opportunities, resulting in more than 747 internship placements and full-time employment for more than 150 graduates.



[Click here for a video on CSP's workforce development project](#)



USAID Mission Director to Lebanon views exhibition of student testimonials

“We are constantly striving to ensure that young Lebanese can access opportunities that can enhance their career prospects and allow them to contribute to the development of a strong and vibrant economy”

Mary Eileen Devitt, USAID Mission Director to Lebanon

U.S Ambassador and USAID Senior Development Advisor Visit CSP Interventions in Majdel Anjar



[Click here for a video on CSP's interventions in Majdel Anjar](#)

Home to around 25,500 Lebanese residents and 32,000 refugees, Majdel Anjar's significant refugee presence has long strained the municipality's ability to meet the town's basic water needs, which was further exacerbated by the ongoing electricity and fuel crises. The worsening economic crisis has also limited the ability of the town's agricultural cooperative to modernize its outdated and inefficient equipment, affecting farmer production and leading to decreased livelihoods. In response, USAID's CSP installed solar panels to operate the town's water pumping system, as well as rehabilitated its pumping station and upgraded its chlorination room, enabling a clean energy solution that is ensuring continuous water access for Majdel Anjar residents while also decreasing associated costs on the local government. In parallel, and to improve livelihoods, CSP expanded the town's cooperative by providing commercial equipment to boost production, including commercial stoves, ovens, and freezers, as well as vacuum packing machines and fruit and vegetable dehydrators. Additionally, CSP built all cooperative members' capacities on governance, business planning, food safety, and marketing.

On May 16, USAID Senior Development Advisor Alexious Butler visited CSP's solar-powered water pumping station and met with residents benefiting from it. Since its technical completion in August 2022, this intervention is ensuring continuous access to water for around 19,000 beneficiaries while saving more than \$95,000 a year for the municipality and \$80 a month per household that previously relied on trucked water

On May 18, U.S Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea and the USAID/Lebanon Mission Director Mary Eileen Devitt visited CSP's supported cooperative in Majdel Anjar. Since the end of the 2022 summer season, the cooperative has been able to expand its production from five to 30 types of products, increase its production from 800 kg to 5 tons, and participate in local markets across the country to expand its consumer base. The cooperative also expanded its members from four to 29 women, and is now preparing to launch a new catering business.



USAID Senior Development Advisor meets with Majdel Anjar residents who shared the impact of CSP's solar intervention



Head of the cooperative gives a tour of the expanded cooperative to the U.S Ambassador and USAID Mission Director

CSP Enhances Transparent Governance and Access to Electricity in Khirbet El Jendi



CSP trains Khirbet El Jendi's generator committee members on the operation and maintenance of the USAID provided generator

Khirbet El Jendi in Akkar, North Lebanon is home to 2,900 Lebanese residents and 1,900 refugees. With state electricity provision down to 2 hours per day, the municipality was providing household electricity to monthly subscribers by operating two generators. However, one of the generators exceeded its lifespan, and amidst the worsening economic crisis, the municipality was unable to replace it or cover its maintenance costs, leading to its break down thereby fueling communal tensions over limited access to electricity. In response, USAID's CSP rehabilitated the village's electrical room, replaced its electrical board, and provided a 450-KVA generator enabling the municipality to continue providing household electricity and other essential services such as water pumping and streetlighting.

Following the dissolution of Khirbet El Jendi's municipality in October 2022, and to ensure the sustainability of this intervention, CSP and the Governor of Akkar established a formal committee of four community members headed by the village mukhtar to manage and govern electricity provision through the generator. CSP then trained the committee members on the operation and maintenance of the generator, provided guidance on bookkeeping, and supported in establishing a transparent financial system. In just five months, the committee was able to document \$13,000 in savings and lower monthly subscription fees by around 40%, all while ensuring continued service provision and power supply to Khirbet El Jendi's 4,800 residents. The savings will enable the committee to secure funds for fuel and maintenance, remain environmentally compliant, and ensure the generator's sustainability.

"We are thankful for the new transparent management of the generator. We were not aware of the newly imposed fees, but we now receive a timely, detailed bill that responds to our inquiries. Our electricity bill significantly decreased, enabling me to also help my brother pay his generator bill amidst this financial crisis"

Samir Mahmoud, Khirbet El Jendi resident

CSP's Support to Waste Management in Bechmizzine Increases Recyclables Collection by 52% Across 20 Villages in Koura

Koura district in North Lebanon is home to 88,000 Lebanese, and 15,000 refugees. The closure of a local landfill site in 2019 and the devaluation of the national currency reduced the capacities of many villages in the district to collect and manage solid waste. This has fueled tensions among residents due to increased waste accumulation, dumping in illegal sites, and garbage burning. In response, CSP assisted the Bechmizzine Material Recovery Facility (BMRF) to design and implement a sustainable recyclables recovery model that aims at improving the collection, capacity, operations, and revenue of the facility, while reducing municipal waste management costs in neighboring communities.

CSP's assistance included rehabilitating the BMRF and providing it with a backup generator, plastic crusher, weighing scale, and two balers to expand its ability to receive, process, and sell recyclables collected from more than 20 villages. In parallel, CSP supported the 20 communities to establish recyclables collection points and provided recyclable bins/containers across the district. To ensure the sustainability of this intervention, CSP strengthened BMRF's institutional capacity and trained workers on the operation and maintenance of the provided equipment and on safe recyclables collection. Furthermore, and in collaboration with local NGO Terre Liban, CSP conducted intensive awareness raising sessions in 14 Koura villages to promote sustainable waste management practices and improved sorting-from-source among communities.

By May 2023, this holistic intervention had enabled the BMRF to increase its recyclables collection by more than 52% in eight months, all while improving recyclables recovery for 44,220 Lebanese residents and 7,866 refugees.



CSP delivers recyclable containers across 20 Koura villages after establishing recyclable collection points with relevant municipalities



CSP trains BMRF workers on the operation and maintenance of the USAID-provided truck weighing scale

“The USAID-provided equipment to the BMRF, paralleled with technical trainings, institutional support, and awareness raising sessions, doubled the recyclables collection rate and enabled us to hire more workers to meet operational needs”

Fawzi Kalash, Mayor of Bechmizzine .

CSP Holds a Town Hall Meeting to Introduce Community Members to the Benefits of USAID-Funded Wastewater Treatment Plant in Bchaale

The town of Bchaale in North Lebanon has long been reputed for its nature and scenic hiking trails that attract eco-tourists. However, amidst the worsening economic crisis, the state has been unable to implement 270 of its planned wastewater projects, including in Bchaale. This left the town with no infrastructure to properly manage its wastewater, which endangers the environment and the public health of its 2,400 residents. In response, USAID's CSP is constructing a new wastewater treatment plant and sewage network to treat around 300m³ of wastewater/day in the area, supplying the facility with a new electrical power generator, and establishing and equipping a specialized wastewater lab to conduct regular sample testing.

To ensure the sustainability of this intervention, CSP is also training relevant staff from the North Lebanon Water Establishment on the safe operation and maintenance of the facility and environmental compliance.

On June 10, 2023, CSP held a town hall meeting in Bchaale to introduce this intervention to the community. The town hall meeting was attended by 45 members of the municipality and community as well as staff from the Ministry of Energy and Water. With the facility expected to be completed in 2024, the purpose of the townhall meeting was highlight its benefits to the community, clarify responsibilities, and encourage residents to connect their households to the wastewater network.



CSP shores concrete during construction of the USAID-funded Bchaale wastewater treatment plant



Bchaale community members participate in town hall meeting

"This is a very urgent and necessary project to protect the cultural and touristic legacy of Bchaale, the health of its residents, and the environment in the area"

Patrick El Hani, member of the Bchaale municipal council

CSP Enhances Safety and Security for 6,350 Residents in Kfar Jarra by Installing Solar-Powered Streetlights



CSP installs solar streetlights in Kfar Jarra, South Lebanon

Kfar Jarra is a town in South Lebanon that was originally home to around 1,000 residents, but in recent years has experienced an influx of 5,000 residents, including 350 refugees from Saida city. However, the municipality's budget is based on covering the needs of the original 1,000 native residents. Paralleled with the ongoing economic crisis, the municipality is struggling to provide the entire village with basic public services, including streetlighting. With state electricity down to few hours daily, Kfar Jarra relied on privately owned generators as a backup source of energy to power the existing streetlights; however, amidst the fuel crisis, soaring inflation, and limited municipal budgets, the majority of neighborhoods were left without streetlighting services at night, fueling tensions between long-time residents and newcomers over safety and security. In response, USAID's CSP upgraded 100 existing streetlights with solar-powered LED bulbs, while also installing 20 new solar-powered streetlights at strategic locations across the town.

By mid-June 2023, CSP had also completed earthing works to protect the streetlighting system from any electrical malfunctioning. This intervention is currently reducing municipal generator costs by \$20,000/year while improving public safety and security for Kfar Jarra's 6,350 residents.

“This USAID intervention allowed the municipality to restore a sense of safety among residents by ensuring continuous streetlighting after dark, all while reducing municipal financial burdens and protecting the environment”

Maroun Chalhoub, Mayor of Kfar Jarra.

CSP Participates in Job Fairs to Promote its Internship Program

Launched in 2020, CSP’s internship program provides fresh graduates and undergraduates from 11 partner universities with internship opportunities across USAID-funded projects in Lebanon to gain professional and practical experience to start their careers and generate a temporary income during the current economic crisis. To date, more than 160 students have benefited from this program, 49 of whom have secured full-time jobs.

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES	
 AUB	 AUST
 ANTONINE	 BAU
 USJ	 SAGESSE
 HAIGAZIAN	 NDU
 LAU	 USEK

Throughout April and May, CSP participated in annual job fairs at three universities (Haigaizan, La Sagesse, and AUST) to introduce USAID’s programs in Lebanon and their impact on communities, while promoting internship opportunities across them. Overall, more than 500 students visited CSP’s booth where they met with current and former CSP interns who shared the benefits of their internship on their careers. The job fair was also an opportunity for CSP to connect with other participant companies/organizations to potentially link CSP interns to the job market. Based on its successful engagement at these job fairs, CSP is planning to replicate its participation at other partner universities.

“Engaging with programs that support and empower diverse groups with dignity aligns with my values. I believe USAID carries the same values and has impacted a lot of people. I would be proud to work as an intern in one of its projects”

Serly Keoshgerian, Haigazian University undergraduate studying social work



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