

SDG08

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL



DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Balamand (UOB) contributes to SDG 8 through an integrated approach that combines research, fair employment practices, graduate employability initiatives, industry partnerships, entrepreneurship support, innovation ecosystems, and community-based economic development. Through collaborations with employers, professional organizations, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and development partners, UOB enhances workforce readiness, promotes entrepreneurship and innovation, supports local economic growth, and prepares graduates to contribute meaningfully to Lebanon's evolving economy.

During 2025–2026, UOB engaged more than 150 employers through career fairs and recruitment initiatives, supported internships and work-based learning opportunities across multiple sectors, established strategic partnerships to strengthen workforce skills and employability, and expanded entrepreneurship support through the BIAT-Balamand Innovation Center (BBIC), the Business Development Center, IdeaLab participation, and student entrepreneurship programs. In parallel, research activities advanced understanding of sustainable economic growth, entrepreneurship, employability, responsible business practices, and future workforce development.

Key Highlights (2025-2026)

- 27 SDG 8-related research publications
- 153 employers engaged through Career Fairs in two years
- 100+ participants in recruitment seminars
- 15 students completed international aviation training
- 7 students secured documented internships and placements
- 62 entrepreneurial projects showcased
- 25 participants completed entrepreneurship training
- 3 startup teams won IdeaLab
- Regional Innovation Hub (BBIC) established
- Multiple industry MoUs signed
- ALBA engaged students in creative-economy and local development projects

1. RESEARCH ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

Over the past two years, the University of Balamand has contributed to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth through research advancing sustainable economic development, productivity, employability, innovation, entrepreneurship, organizational resilience, and responsible business practices [1–27].

Research explored the drivers of economic productivity, competitiveness, and sustainable growth, including the contribution of tourism to regional productivity [14], resource-based competitive advantage among SMEs [11], sustainable value creation in fragile economies [17], and innovative approaches to measuring prosperity beyond traditional economic indicators through circular economy frameworks [22]. Studies also examined the role of entrepreneurship, digitalization, and business innovation in enhancing firm performance and resilience [6,17].

Several publications focused on artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and future workforce development, investigating the role of AI in accounting and auditing [1], the governance of artificial intelligence for sustainable territorial development [18], the impact of digitalization on SME international performance [11], and the use of AI and social media to strengthen the social performance and growth of women-led enterprises [19]. Additional research addressed graduate employability strategies and the role of higher education institutions in preparing students for changing labor markets [24].

27 SDG 8-related research publications

Research also examined workplace well-being, organizational effectiveness, and decent work conditions, including studies on psychological safety, organizational support, emotional adaptation to remote work, and leadership approaches that foster resilient and productive workplaces [26]. Complementary work explored governance mechanisms, sustainability committees, and responsible corporate decision-making that support long-term organizational performance and accountability [25].

A significant body of research connected economic growth with the green economy, sustainable industries, and circular economy practices. Studies investigated renewable energy systems [2,3], thermal energy storage technologies [16], biodiesel production and optimization [9,10,12], carbon recycling and waste-to-resource innovations [7,8], wastewater treatment sustainability [5,6], sustainable construction materials [15], microalgal biorefineries [21], food packaging sustainability and waste management [23], ESG financial markets [4], and environmentally responsible consumer behavior [27].

Collectively, these research contributions support productive employment, entrepreneurship, workforce readiness, digital transformation, sustainable industrial development, responsible business practices, and resilient economic growth. By addressing both economic competitiveness and sustainability challenges, UOB research

contributes to more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable economies in Lebanon and beyond [1–27].

SDG08- Publications

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[14]. Harb, G., Bassil, C., Al Daia, R. (2026). Tourism and Productivity in NUTS Regions: Revisiting the Tourism-Led-Efficiency Hypothesis. Current Issues in Tourism.
[15]. Hwalla, J., El-Hassan, H., Assaad, J., El-Maaddawy, T. (2025). Multicriteria Performance Index Analysis of Geopolymeric and Cementitious Screed Flooring Materials. Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering.
[16]. Kesserwani, J., Lahoud, C., Al Asmar, J., Lahoud, C. (2025). On the Technical, Economic, and Environmental Impact of Mobilized Thermal Energy Storage: A Case Study. Sustainability (Switzerland).
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Working – Insights from the MENA Region. Journal of Organizational Change Management.
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2. Employment Policy on Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

The University of Balamand promotes fair employment practices, equal opportunity, and a supportive work environment through its Bylaws, Human Resources regulations, Code of Business Ethics, and Statement Policy on Harassment. Employment decisions are based on qualifications, performance, and institutional needs, ensuring fair and equitable treatment of academic and administrative staff. The University provides formal mechanisms for addressing workplace concerns, reporting grievances, and resolving disputes, while supporting professional development, workplace dignity, and staff well-being. Through these practices, UOB fosters an inclusive and productive work environment that contributes to decent work, employee development, and sustainable institutional growth in support of **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

153 employers engaged through Career Fairs in two years

3. Employability and Workforce Readiness

Through structured employer engagement activities, recruitment seminars, internships, and career fairs, UOB connected students and alumni with more than 150 national and multinational employers across 2025-2026. These initiatives strengthened workforce readiness, facilitated experiential learning opportunities, and enhanced pathways to employment across engineering, business, hospitality, aviation, media, and technology sectors.

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE
ANNUAL CAREER FAIR 2025	77 employers participated
ANNUAL CAREER FAIR 2026	76 employers participated
MUREX RECRUITMENT SEMINAR	100+ attendees
JORAMCO TRAINING PROGRAM	15 students trained
ENGINEERING RECRUITMENT PANEL	Internship opportunities offered by participating companies
MEA CADET PILOT PROGRAM	3 students selected
PRESIDENTIAL PALACE INTERNSHIP	2 students placed
LA CIGALE DOHA INTERNSHIP	2 students placed

Career Services and Employer Engagement

Annual Career and Internship Fair at UOB (MAY 6, 2025)

The Annual Career and Internship Fair, organized by the Career Services Center, took place on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. This event served as an excellent platform for students and alumni to engage with

100+
participants in recruitment seminars

recruiters, explore available internships and job opportunities, and stay updated on the latest market trends.
A total of 77 multinational and national companies along with non-governmental organizations participated in the fair, offering internships, part-time roles, and full-time positions to both current students and senior students, as well as alumni seeking career advancement opportunities.
Representatives from these companies provided valuable industry insights and professional experiences to the attendees, enhancing their understanding of the professional landscape. The Career and









Internship Fair facilitated discussions between companies and students regarding their expectations and employability prospects in Lebanon and the wider region, encompassing various fields of study.

For more details visit the [University of Balamand | News Details]

Annual Career and Internship Fair at UOB (APRIL 30, 2026)

The Career Services Center hosted its Annual Career and Internship Fair on Thursday, April 23, 2026. The event provided a dynamic platform for students and alumni to connect with recruiters, discover internship and employment opportunities, and gain insights into current market trends.

A total of 76 national and multinational companies, along with non-governmental organizations, took part in the fair. They offered a wide range of opportunities, including internships, part-time and full-time roles, as well as freelance positions, targeting current and senior students in addition to alumni pursuing career growth.

Company representatives shared valuable industry knowledge and professional perspectives with attendees, helping them better understand the evolving job market. The fair also encouraged meaningful exchanges between employers and participants, focusing on expectations and employability within Lebanon and the broader region across diverse academic disciplines.

For more details visit the [University of Balamand | News Details]











Murex D'or Recruitment Seminar (MARCH 17, 2025)

The Career Services Center, in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering, hosted a Murex Recruitment Seminar on Thursday, March 6, 2025, at the Koura campus. The seminar, part of the Engineering Seminars series, attracted over 100 attendees, including students and faculty members.

The event provided an insightful overview of Murex, a leading provider of cross-asset financial technology solutions known for its MX.3 platform, which supports trading, treasury, risk, and post-trade operations. Representatives shared valuable information about job opportunities and interview process. With over 60,000 daily users across more than 60 countries and more than 3,000 employees across 19 locations, Murex is recognized for its innovative technology and exceptional customer service.



The seminar offered valuable insights for students looking to explore career opportunities in the financial technology industry and learn about Murex's impact on the global market.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

UOB Hosts Roundtable on Future Skills and Digital Transformation (July 7, 2026)

The University of Balamand (UOB), through its Career Services Center in collaboration with the Lebanese Private Sector Network (LPSN), hosted a Roundtable on Future Skills and Digital Transformation. The event brought together 52 participants from various industries, universities, and academic institutions, including university leaders, employers, industry representatives, and students, to discuss the future of work, digital transformation, and workforce readiness.





For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

The event focused on identifying labor market trends, future skills requirements, and opportunities for collaboration between academia and industry to better prepare graduates for employment. Through interactive roundtable discussions, participants explored emerging workforce needs and strategies to align academic programs with employer expectations.



The discussions generated recommendations aimed at improving graduate employability, strengthening university-industry partnerships, and enhancing workforce competitiveness in an evolving digital economy.



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Roundtable Topics

1. **Future Skills in Healthcare**
2. **Future Skills in Education**
3. **Future Skills in the Industrial Sector**
4. **Future Skills in Economics**

Reported Impact:

- Engagement of **52 stakeholders** from industry, universities, and academia in a multi-sector dialogue.
- Identification of future workforce skills and evolving labor market demands across key economic sectors.
- Development of recommendations to strengthen graduate employability and workforce readiness.
- Enhanced collaboration between academia, employers, and industry leaders.
- Strengthened engagement between the University and private sector partners to support skills development and innovation.

Enhancing Graduate Employability Through Career Readiness and Industry Engagement (Fall 2024–2025)

The University of Balamand, through its Career Services Center, implemented a comprehensive employability and career-readiness program designed to strengthen workforce preparedness, career planning, and industry engagement across multiple disciplines. The initiative connected students with employers, professional organizations, and industry experts through workshops, recruitment activities, and experiential learning opportunities aligned with SDG Targets 8.5 and 8.6.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Key Activities



- **Forward MENA Information Session**: Introduced students to professional development programs and future-oriented career opportunities.
- **Malia Group Mock Interview Session**: Provided business students with practical interview experience and personalized feedback from industry professionals.
- **"How to Make Your CV ATS Compatible" Workshop**: Delivered in collaboration with Hired to strengthen job-search and application skills.
- **Matelec Recruitment Seminar**: Exposed engineering students to employment opportunities and employer expectations within the engineering sector.
- **MMKN Information Session**: Introduced education students to emerging workforce demands and career pathways.
- **Industrial Visits to IPT and Zeenni**: Enabled Chemical Engineering students to gain first-hand exposure to industrial operations and workplace environments.
- **Alumni Online CV Writing Session**: Supported graduates and alumni with career-planning guidance, networking opportunities, and advanced CV development.

Reported Impact



- Students from business, engineering, education, and technology disciplines participated in employability and career-development activities.
- Enhanced workforce readiness, interview skills, CV preparation, professional networking, and career planning.
- Strengthened university-industry engagement and student exposure to labor market requirements.

- Increased awareness of industry expectations and employment opportunities across diverse sectors.



Measures:

- 7 employability and career-readiness activities delivered.
- Multiple academic disciplines engaged (Business, Engineering, Education, Technology).
- Industry partners involved: Forward MENA, Malia Group, Hired, Matelec, IPT, Zeenni.

Bridging University and Industry: Engineering Career Readiness Panel (MAY 21, 2026):

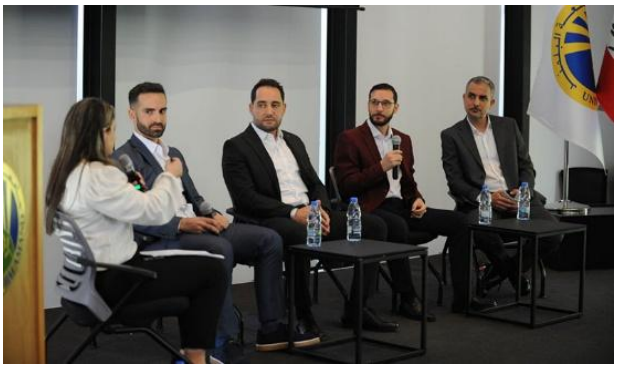
The University of Balamand, through its Career Services Center and Faculty of Engineering, organized the panel discussion **"Bridging University and Industry: What Future Engineers Need to Know"** as part of the Engineering Seminar Series. The initiative supported **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** by strengthening students' employability, career readiness, and understanding of labor market expectations within the engineering sector.

The panel brought together engineering professionals and industry leaders from leading national companies to share practical insights on career development, workforce requirements, and emerging opportunities across different engineering fields. Through direct interaction with employers and experts, students gained valuable exposure to current industry practices, workplace expectations, and the competencies required for successful professional integration.

Discussions emphasized the importance of technical expertise, adaptability, teamwork, project management, problem-solving, and lifelong learning as key attributes for career success. Panelists also highlighted the value of internships, experiential learning, capstone projects, and extracurricular engagement in enhancing employability and preparing graduates for the evolving demands of the engineering workforce.



By facilitating meaningful dialogue between academia and industry, the event helped bridge the gap between education and employment, strengthened industry engagement, and enhanced students' preparedness for productive careers. ***For more details visit the*** ***University of Balamand | News Details***



Reported Impact:

- Direct engagement between students and engineering industry professionals.
- Increased awareness of workforce trends, employer expectations, and career opportunities.
- Enhanced employability skills and career preparedness among engineering students.
- Strengthened university-industry collaboration supporting graduate employment outcomes.

Recruitment in Engineering: Best Practices and Common Pitfalls Panel Discussion (OCTOBER 28, 2025):

The University of Balamand's Career Services Center, in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering, organized a panel discussion on **recruitment best practices and common pitfalls in the engineering sector**, bringing together HR and talent management professionals from leading companies including Matelec, APGAR, IPT Group, and C.A.T.



The session provided students with practical guidance on CV preparation, LinkedIn optimization, interview readiness, professional development, and employer expectations. Through direct interaction and networking with industry representatives, students gained valuable insights into recruitment processes and career planning, while participating companies offered internship opportunities to students.

For more details visit the ***University of Balamand | News Details***



Reported Impact: Enhanced students' career readiness and understanding of recruitment practices, facilitated engagement with industry recruiters, and strengthened university-industry collaboration through internship and networking opportunities.

Career Development and Professional Skills Workshops

UOB Students Attend "Women with Goals" Roundtable Event (MARCH 6, 2025):

On 4 March 2025, students from the Faculty of Business and Management at the University of Balamand participated in the "Women with Goals" roundtable organized by Debbane Agriculture. The initiative provided female students with mentorship, career coaching, networking opportunities, and practical training in resume writing, interview preparation, personal branding, and leadership development. By equipping participants with essential employability skills and facilitating connections with industry leaders, the event supported women's career advancement and workforce participation, contributing to SDG 8 through enhanced employability, professional development, and inclusive economic growth.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

UOB Hosts Talk on Personal Branding and Entrepreneurial Mindset by Ayman Mechlawi (MARCH 27, 2025):

On 20 March 2025, the School of Tourism and Hotel Management at the University of Balamand hosted entrepreneur and business consultant Ayman Mechlawi for a lecture on personal branding, life skills, employability, and entrepreneurship. Students gained practical guidance on professional networking, leadership development, digital presence management, and career readiness, including personalized feedback on their LinkedIn profiles and personal branding strategies. By strengthening students' soft skills, entrepreneurial mindset, and preparedness for the job market, the initiative supports SDG 8 through enhanced employability, professional development, and future workforce success.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details





THM Hosts Mr. Mathieu Greppo, General Manager at Intercontinental Phoenicia Hotel Beirut (IHG) (FEBRUARY 17, 2025):

In February 2025, the School of Tourism and Hotel Management at the University of Balamand hosted hospitality industry leaders from InterContinental Phoenicia Hotel Beirut to provide students with insights into career development, workplace expectations, leadership, and emerging trends in the hospitality sector. The event connected students with industry experts, highlighting the importance of practical experience, professional skills, adaptability, and employability in a competitive global market. By strengthening industry engagement and preparing students for careers in hospitality and tourism, the initiative supports SDG 8 through enhanced employability, workforce readiness, and sustainable economic growth.



For more details about the event visit the University of Balamand | News Details

4. Internships and Work-Based Learning

Presidential Palace Internship
SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

The **University of Balamand** supported two Mass Media and Communication students, Lea Macari and Rafca Ibrahim, in securing internships at the **Directorate General of the Presidency of the Republic** during summer 2025. Through hands-on training in media, editorial work, content creation, video production, and

social media management, the students gained practical workplace skills and professional experience. They contributed to news reporting, political content analysis, event coverage, and digital communications, strengthening their employability and career readiness in the media sector. This initiative reflects UOB's commitment to work-based learning and facilitating students' transition into the labor market. This supports SDG4, 8, and 16. For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details



Hands-On Training at JORAMCO Academy in Jordan (MAY 26, 2025)

For the 10th consecutive year, the **University of Balamand** partnered with **JORAMCO Academy** to provide hands-on industry training for Aeronautical Engineering and Aircraft Maintenance Technology students. In April 2025, 15 students completed an intensive five-day program in Amman, Jordan, gaining practical experience in aircraft maintenance and engineering operations. The initiative strengthened students' technical and professional skills, enhanced their employability, and led to potential summer internship opportunities. This long-standing collaboration demonstrates UOB's commitment to work-based learning and preparing graduates for successful careers in the aviation sector.

This supports SDG8,4, 9, and 17.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details



Three Brilliant Balamand Engineering Students Accepted into the Prestigious Middle East Airlines Cadet Pilot Program (OCTOBER 20, 2025):

Jamal Harmouch, Ralph Achkar, and Oliver El Fata, graduates of the University of Balamand's Aeronautical Engineering Track, were successfully admitted to the highly competitive Middle East Airlines (MEA) Cadet Pilot Program. Following a rigorous selection process involving technical, aptitude, and medical assessments, they commenced an intensive 18-month training program in Spain leading to internationally recognized pilot qualifications. Their achievement demonstrates the effectiveness of UOB's industry-aligned engineering education in preparing graduates for high-skilled employment and career advancement in the aviation sector. This supports SDG8, 4, 9, and 17.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details.

THM Students Complete Internship at La Cigale Hotel, Doha (OCTOBER 22, 2025):

Two students from the University of Balamand's School of Tourism and Hotel Management (THM), Cynthia Hemchaoui and Izzat Yassine, successfully completed two-month internships at La Cigale Hotel Doha during summer 2025. Through practical training in the Rooms Division and Food & Beverage Department, they developed professional competencies in a dynamic international hospitality environment. This experiential learning opportunity enhanced their employability, strengthened industry-relevant skills, and prepared them for careers in the global hospitality sector. The internship reflects UOB's commitment to fostering decent work opportunities through strategic partnerships with leading hospitality organizations. This support SDG 8,4 and 17. ***For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details***





Employability Outcomes Table

Activity	Impact
Career Fair 2025	Employer engagement: **77 employers participated**
Career Fair 2026	Employer engagement: **76 employers participated**
Murex Recruitment Seminar	Participation: **100+ attendees**
JORAMCO Program	Students trained: **15 students**

5. Industry Partnerships and Workforce Skills Development

Strategic Industry Partnerships

UOB Signs MOU with the Lebanese Private Sector Network (MARCH 19, 2025)

The University of Balamand signed an MoU with the Lebanese Private Sector Network (LPSN) to strengthen collaboration between academia and the private sector, support Lebanon's economic recovery, and enhance student employability.

The partnership provides UOB students with internship and employment opportunities while promoting joint initiatives in workforce development, innovation, and artificial intelligence. By connecting students with private-sector stakeholders and practical learning opportunities, the collaboration contributes to skills development, career readiness, and sustainable economic growth.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details



Reported Impact:

- Strengthened university-industry collaboration.
- Expanded internship and employment pathways for students.
- Enhanced opportunities for workforce development and AI-driven innovation.
- Supported economic development through engagement with private-sector leaders.

UOB Signs MoU with Forward Digital MENA to Advance Digital Skills and Employability (FEBRUARY 24, 2026)

The University of Balamand signed an MoU with Forward Digital MENA to strengthen digital literacy, enhance employability, and expand university-industry collaboration.



Through the partnership, UOB students and alumni gain access to the **nammiskills** platform, supported by UNICEF and the World Bank through the *Skilling-up Lebanon* initiative. The collaboration aims to provide market-driven digital skills, industry-recognized learning opportunities, and pathways that better prepare graduates for the demands of the digital economy.

Reported Impact:

Expanded access to digital-skills training and certifications.

Enhanced student and alumni employability.

Strengthened alignment between academic programs and labor market needs.

Fostered innovation and digital transformation through university-industry collaboration. ***For more details visit the*** ***University of Balamand | News Details***





University of Balamand Signs MoU with BIAT to Foster Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development in North Lebanon (April 2025)

The University of Balamand (UOB) signed an MoU with the Business Incubation Association in Tripoli (BIAT), in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli and North Lebanon (CCIAT), to establish a **Business Development Center (BDC)** in North Lebanon. The initiative aims to support entrepreneurship, innovation, research commercialization, and sustainable

economic development by providing students and entrepreneurs with access to mentorship, funding opportunities, coworking spaces, and incubation programs.

For more details visit the ***University of Balamand | News Details***



The partnership strengthens collaboration between academia and industry, creates hands-on learning opportunities for students, and contributes to the growth of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- Established the foundation for the Business Development Center (BDC) in North Lebanon, which later evolved into the BIAT-Balamand Innovation Center (BBIC).
- Enhanced entrepreneurship and innovation support for students and local entrepreneurs.
- Expanded opportunities for mentorship, incubation, and business development.
- Strengthened collaboration between academia, industry, and regional development partners.
- Contributed to sustainable economic growth and workforce development in North Lebanon.



Reported Impact:

ALBA Students Revamp MEDCO's Uniforms in Fashion Collaboration (April 2025)

MEDCO, a Lebanese leading importer and distributor of refined petroleum products, partnered with the School of Fashion Design (École de Mode) at Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) at the University of Balamand (UOB) to redesign the uniforms for MEDCO's forecourt staff.

ALBA students showcased their designs in a fashion show, with a panel of judges including Mrs. Michelle Garzouzi, CIO of MEDCO, Mr. Rabih Kayrouz, renowned Lebanese fashion designer, and patron of ALBA Ecole de Mode, Arch. Fadlallah Dagher, Dean of ALBA, and Mr. Eric Ritter, Director of the School of Fashion Design who selected the winning design. The first place winner was Joy Wakim, a third-year

student, whose design was praised for its originality and attention to detail.

The collaboration between MEDCO and ALBA's School of Fashion Design showcased the creativity and talent of ALBA students. MEDCO is excited about the upcoming uniforms, which will reflect its commitment to innovation. This partnership highlights the importance of combining education with real-world experience, supporting the next generation of designers.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details



Reported Impact:

- Strengthened collaboration between academia and industry.
- Provided students with hands-on experience responding to real client needs.
- Enhanced students' employability and professional design skills.
- Promoted industry engagement and experiential learning within the creative sector.

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development

UOB and BIAT Launch the BIAT-Balamand Innovation Center (BBIC) (October 2025)

The University of Balamand (UOB), in partnership with BIAT, launched the **BIAT-Balamand Innovation Center (BBIC)** as a regional hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer in North Lebanon. The center supports students, entrepreneurs, researchers, and local businesses through programs in ideation, incubation, and commercialization, providing access to mentorship, funding opportunities, collaborative workspaces, and prototyping facilities.



Established through a multi-sector partnership involving BIAT, CCIAT, BLOM Bank, OMT, Cisco, VISA, and the René Moawad Foundation, BBIC aims to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem, promote technology-driven innovation, and support sustainable economic growth in the region.

Reported Impact:

Established North Lebanon's first innovation and entrepreneurship hub at UOB.



Expanded access to entrepreneurship support, incubation, mentorship, and commercialization services.

Strengthened collaboration between academia, industry, financial institutions, and development partners.

Created opportunities for students, startups, researchers, and local businesses to develop market-ready solutions.

Contributed to regional economic development, innovation, and job creation.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

UOB Concludes "Entrepreneurs Program" in Collaboration with Insan Foundation (MAY 18, 2026):

The University of Balamand, through the Issam Fares Faculty of Technology (IFFT) in Beino-Akkar, concluded the Entrepreneurs Program in collaboration with Insan Foundation after five months of training, workshops, and mentorship activities. The program provided participants with practical entrepreneurship skills and guided them in developing innovative business ideas, culminating in project presentations before a panel of evaluators. ***For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details***

Reported Impact: 25 participants completed entrepreneurship training and developed three innovative business projects, strengthening entrepreneurial skills and supporting youth empowerment and local economic development.



UOB Students Shine at IDEALAB PROGRAM (AUGUST 1, 2025):

Three University of Balamand teams were among the **10 winning teams** in the **IdeaLab entrepreneurship program**, implemented by INJAZ Lebanon and Berytech. Through training, coaching, and startup development workshops, students developed innovative Cleantech and AgrifoodTech solutions, including plastic waste recycling into 3D-printing filament, a solar-powered smart composter, and a plant-based protein product. The teams showcased their

prototypes at Demo Day and gained access to seed funding opportunities to support further development.

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Reported Impact: Three UOB startup teams were recognized among the program winners, strengthening student entrepreneurship, innovation capacity, and the development of market-oriented sustainable business solutions.





INITIATIVE	OUTPUT
BIAT-BALAMAND INNOVATION CENTER (BBIC)	Regional innovation hub established
ENTREPRENEURS PROGRAM	25 participants
IDEALAB	3 winning startup teams
BUSINESS EXPO 2025	Student businesses showcased
BUSINESS EXPO 2026	62 projects showcased

Student Entrepreneurship Platforms

Business Expo 2025

The Business Connections Club, in collaboration with the Faculty of Business and Management (FOBM), organized Business Expo 2025, providing students from the Koura and Souk El Gharb campuses with an opportunity to showcase innovative business ideas,



entrepreneurial ventures, marketing strategies, research projects, and existing student-led businesses. Through presentations evaluated by faculty members and external professionals, students demonstrated creativity, innovation, business planning, and problem-solving skills while receiving valuable industry feedback. ***For more details visit the*** ***University of Balamand | News Details***

Reported Impact: Strengthened students' entrepreneurship, innovation, professional skills, industry engagement, and application of business concepts through real-world learning experiences.









Business Expo 2026

The University of Balamand (UOB), Faculty of Business and Management (FOBM), organized the Business Expo 2026 on May 5 at its Koura Campus, in collaboration with the Business Connections club. The event brought together students, faculty, and industry professionals in a dynamic platform centered on innovation and real-world business applications.

This year's expo featured 62 student-led projects presented across three main tracks: Startup & Innovation, Marketing Excellence, and Strategic Creativity. Students showcased a wide range of ideas, including entrepreneurial ventures, marketing strategies, AI-driven concepts, and creative business solutions.



Projects were presented through interactive booths and live pitching sessions, allowing participants to engage directly with visitors and a panel of judges. The judging panel included UOB faculty members and external professionals who evaluated the projects based on innovation, feasibility, creativity, presentation, and overall business impact.

The expo also provided students with the opportunity to connect academic learning with practical experience, while encouraging collaboration and networking. The event concluded with an awards ceremony recognizing outstanding projects in each track, as well as a general Business Impact Award.



Reported Impact: Showcased 62 student projects while strengthening entrepreneurship, innovation, networking, and practical business skills.





Industry-Based Learning and Skills Development

Engineering Students Gain Practical Skills at Rebar Detailing Workshop (MAY 28, 2025):

The Faculty of Engineering, in collaboration with the ASCE and ACI Student Chapters, organized a hands-on **Rebar Detailing Workshop** led by an industry expert from AABCO Group. The workshop equipped civil engineering students with practical skills in reinforced concrete design, rebar detailing techniques, industry standards, and construction practices. As a direct outcome, **three students were awarded paid internship opportunities at AABCO**, strengthening their industry exposure and career readiness. University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Enhanced students' technical and professional competencies through experiential learning, while creating direct pathways to employment through paid internship opportunities.





The Nursing Student Society Recognizes Influential and Self-Made Lebanese Women (APRIL 2, 2025)

In 2025, the Nursing Student Society at the University of Balamand organized **"Her Path, Her Power,"** an event highlighting the experiences of successful Lebanese women entrepreneurs and professionals. The initiative featured an entrepreneurship expo and interactive discussions focused on leadership, business development, career advancement, resilience, and professional success. Through direct engagement with women business leaders and entrepreneurs, students gained insights into entrepreneurship, workforce participation, career development, and the skills required to succeed in competitive professional environments.



For more details Visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Strengthened students' entrepreneurial awareness, professional networking, leadership skills, and workforce readiness while supporting women's entrepreneurship and inclusive economic growth.

UOB Students Shine at HORECA 2025 (April 2025)

Students from the School of Tourism and Hotel Management (THM) participated in **HORECA 2025**, one of Lebanon's leading hospitality and foodservice exhibitions, where they engaged with industry professionals, attended specialized workshops and masterclasses, and showcased their culinary skills. Under the guidance of THM faculty, UOB students earned **six medals** across multiple culinary categories, demonstrating excellence in hospitality training and professional preparation.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Won 6 medals in national culinary competitions, strengthening students' hospitality skills, industry engagement, and career readiness.

THM Student Wins Boecker 'Best Hygiene and Food Safety' Award at LAU UniChef's Challenge 2025 (June 2025)

Melissa Fady, a student from the School of Tourism and Hotel Management (THM), won the **Boecker Best Hygiene and Food Safety Award** at the LAU UniChef's Challenge 2025, a national competition involving students from eight universities and institutes across Lebanon. The competition provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate professional culinary skills, creativity, and food safety competencies while engaging with hospitality industry professionals. The achievement highlights the quality of UOB's hospitality education and strengthens students' professional development, industry exposure, and career readiness in the hospitality sector.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Enhanced student employability, industry engagement, and practical hospitality and food safety competencies through participation in a national professional competition.

Innovation Competitions

FOBM Students Achieve Success in the Unleash Your Creativity Competition (APRIL 28, 2025):

A team of students from the Faculty of Business and Management at the University of Balamand distinguished themselves in the annual **"Unleash Your Creativity"** inter-university competition, competing against students from nine universities. Their marketing campaign attracted **2,300 online votes**, securing a place among the **11 finalists**. As finalists, the students earned coaching opportunities, professional recognition, and the chance to compete for industry training and internship opportunities, further enhancing their practical marketing skills and career readiness.

Reported Impact: Four students reached the national finals, gained exposure to industry experts, and strengthened their employability through a competitive, real-world marketing challenge.

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Global Achievement for the University of Balamand Team at Formula Student 2025 (July 2025)

The Balamand Racing Team (BRT), comprising approximately 25 engineering students, represented the University of Balamand at the international Formula Student 2025 competition. Competing against 100 universities worldwide, the team ranked 39th globally, secured 1st place among Middle Eastern and Arab teams, and received the Michael Royce Learn and Compete Award. Through the design, construction, testing, and presentation of their prototype vehicle, students developed advanced engineering, project management, teamwork, and problem-solving skills while gaining exposure to international industry standards and innovation practices.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Engaged 25 engineering students in hands-on innovation, achieving 39th place globally, 1st among Middle Eastern teams, and an international award while strengthening technical and leadership competencies.

THM Students Succeed at National Food Competition (November 2025)

Students from the School of Tourism and Hotel Management (THM) participated in a national culinary competition organized by the Lebanese Academy of Gastronomy, demonstrating their technical skills, creativity, and professionalism in food preparation and presentation. Competing against students from other institutions, THM student **Melissa Fady** earned **second place and a USD 700 prize**, highlighting the quality of UOB's hospitality training and industry-oriented education. The competition provided students with valuable exposure to professional culinary standards, industry evaluation, and career opportunities within the hospitality and food service sector.



For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Strengthened students' culinary competencies, industry exposure, and career readiness while achieving second place in a national hospitality competition.

THM Events:

THM Hosts "The Boho Bliss" Hospitality Event (June 2025)

The School of Tourism and Hotel Management (THM) at the University of Balamand organized **The Boho Bliss**, a student-led hospitality event that provided students with hands-on experience in event planning and management. Students were responsible for all aspects of the event, including menu design, entertainment, logistics, sponsorship acquisition, budgeting, and operations. The initiative brought together



students, faculty, industry leaders, and hospitality partners, strengthening industry engagement while developing students' practical skills, teamwork, leadership, and professional readiness for careers in the hospitality sector.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact: Students gained real-world experience in hospitality management, event operations, sponsorship development, and industry collaboration, enhancing their employability and workforce readiness.

THM Hosts "Olympian Odyssey - Echoes of Hellas" Hospitality Event (May 2026)

The School of Tourism and Hotel Management (THM) organized **Olympian Odyssey - Echoes of Hellas**, a fully student-led hospitality event delivered as part of the Event Management course. Under academic supervision and with the participation of industry guests, students managed all aspects of the event, including planning, logistics, sponsorship acquisition, budgeting, entertainment, and operations. The initiative provided a real-world learning experience that strengthened students' professional, organizational, communication, and leadership skills while exposing them to industry practices and stakeholder engagement.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | News Details

Reported Impact:
Students gained hands-on experience in event management and hospitality operations, strengthening their leadership, teamwork, project management, communication, and networking skills while engaging directly with industry partners and applying hospitality and business concepts in a real-world setting.



FOBM Celebrates Beta Gamma Sigma Chapter Installation and First Student Induction Ceremony (JUNE 19, 2026)

The Faculty of Business and Management (FOBM) at the University of Balamand (UOB) celebrated the official installation of its Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS) Chapter and inducted its first cohort of student members. Established following FOBM's AACSB accreditation, the chapter connects high-achieving students with a global network of business leaders, executives, entrepreneurs, and academics. Membership recognizes academic excellence while providing opportunities for professional networking, leadership development, mentorship, and lifelong learning.

By linking students to an international business community and fostering ethical leadership and professional growth, the initiative contributes to workforce readiness and enhances graduates' competitiveness in the global labor market.



Reported Impact: Established UOB's Beta Gamma Sigma Chapter, expanding students' access to global professional networks, mentorship, leadership development, and career opportunities while strengthening graduate employability and leadership readiness.



6. Creative Industries, Cultural Economy and Local Economic Development (ALBA)

ALBA contributes to SDG 8 by linking education with the creative industries, entrepreneurship, cultural heritage, and local economic development. During 2025–2026, ALBA reported 3 flagship SDG 8 activities across three academic units, directly engaging at least 20 students, faculty, and staff participants, while an additional 10 projects contributed indirectly through heritage preservation, creative entrepreneurship, tourism, and local economic regeneration.

School of Fashion Design

The School of Fashion Design strengthens students' employability through direct engagement with Lebanon's creative industries. Between November 2025 and March 2026, 11 second-year students, supported by 3 faculty members, participated in an industry-led project in partnership with four leading Lebanese fashion brands and designers: Georges Hobeika, Maison Rabih Krikor Jabotian, Yassmin Saleh, and GOODKILL (Hazem Kais). Working in teams, students developed design proposals responding to real client requirements, creative identities, and market expectations. The project exposed students to professional design practice, client interaction, branding, and production constraints, providing hands-on experience relevant to future employment in the fashion sector.

Reported Impact

- 11 students engaged in industry-based learning.
- 4 professional fashion houses/designers involved.
- 5-month industry collaboration linking education with employment pathways in the fashion industry.

Institute of Urbanism

The Institute of Urbanism integrates economic development into design and planning education. In 2025, a master's project proposed the revitalization of **Bhamdoun el-Mhatta** by transforming vacant buildings into educational, cultural, and collaborative spaces that support tourism, local employment, and economic activity. Additional projects explored heritage-led development, including a proposal for a **glass museum** and artisan workshop network in Sarafand and the adaptive reuse of **Rayak's railway** heritage to promote cultural tourism and support local businesses.

Reported Impact

- 1 master's student project dedicated to the economic revitalization of Bhamdoun.
- Multiple proposals supporting tourism, heritage industries, artisan employment, and local business growth.

Interior Architecture

As part of **WeDesign Beirut Edition 2** (22–26 October 2025), **5 students**, supported by **1 faculty member and 1 staff member**, documented the work of **four traditional Lebanese artisans** specializing in rattan weaving, marquetry, and blown glass production.The resulting documentary films were publicly screened at the Arboyan Centre, showcasing traditional crafts and highlighting their contribution to cultural industries, artisan livelihoods, and sustainable economic activity. The project promoted awareness of local craftsmanship and the role of heritage-based professions in supporting employment and economic resilience. In a complementary initiative, students collaborated with artisan furniture maker **Nour Arabi (Koura)** to explore woodworking, furniture repair, and short supply chains, exposing students to craft-based entrepreneurship and local production networks.

Reported Impact

4 artisans documented and promoted.

5 students trained in documentation and engagement with creative industries.

Public exhibition and screening event **raising awareness of traditional crafts and economic sustainability.**

Graphic Design and Advertising

A master's project in Graphic Design and Advertising explored Souk el Ahad, Beirut's Sunday market, as a dynamic economic ecosystem supporting informal commerce and small-scale entrepreneurship. The project documented how vendors, customers, and market activities contribute to livelihoods, economic resilience, and local economic circulation.

INDICATOR (ALBA)	VALUE
STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN FLAGSHIP SDG 8 PROJECTS	17 students
FACULTY AND STAFF INVOLVED	5
PROFESSIONAL FASHION DESIGNERS/BRANDS ENGAGED	4
TRADITIONAL ARTISANS DOCUMENTED	4
URBAN REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	3
PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS/SCREENINGS	1 major public exhibition (WeDesign Beirut)

These initiatives demonstrate ALBA's contribution to preparing students for employment in creative industries, strengthening entrepreneurship and cultural economies, preserving traditional crafts, and supporting sustainable local economic development.

Conclusion

During 2025–2026, the University of Balamand contributed to SDG 8 through research, fair employment practices, employability initiatives, internships, industry partnerships, entrepreneurship programs, and creative-economy projects. More than **150 employers**, **27 SDG 8-related research publications**, and multiple strategic partnerships strengthened workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, innovation, and local economic development. Through these efforts, UOB continues to advance decent work, productive employment, and sustainable economic growth in Lebanon and beyond.