

SDG16

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

KEY HIGHLIGHTS (2025-26)

RESEARCH TOWARD SDG 16

SDG16 PUBLICATIONS

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE, ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CLIMATE DIPLOMACY AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE (CDSP) HUB: ADVANCING SCIENCE-BASED GOVERNANCE, REGIONAL COOPERATION, AND PEACEBUILDING

PEACEBUILDING, MEDIATION AND DIPLOMACY

HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND SOCIAL AWARENESS

UOB PROFESSORS TAKE PART IN UNESCO-AFP FACT-CHECKING INITIATIVE

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION, DIPLOMACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PSIA DEPARTMENT HOSTS CONSUL ANTOINE HRAIKI

PEACE, JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

DEMOCRACY, CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE, SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEFUL SOCIETIES

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

STUDENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT

ALBA: INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY, PEACEBUILDING AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

PROMOTING PEACE, DIALOGUE, AND CIVIC REFLECTION THROUGH DESIGN

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SDG 16

CONCLUSION

Key Highlights (2025-26)

SDG 16 Indicator (2025-26)	*Result*
SDG 16-related publications	*13*
National institutional partners engaged	*4*
Mediation and conflict-resolution programs	*2*
Diplomacy and peacebuilding initiatives	*3*
National anti-corruption consultations	*1*
Dedicated climate diplomacy hub established	*1*
International diplomacy partnerships established	*4*
Archive records maintained (ALBA)	*80,000*
Archive files digitized in 2025	*400*
Design in Conflict visitors	*20,000*

RESEARCH TOWARD SDG 16

Over the past two years, the University of Balamand has contributed to **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** through interdisciplinary research addressing public health resilience, governance, social justice, institutional effectiveness, cybersecurity, mental health, social inclusion, public service management, and community well-being. Research examined the health impacts of conflict, environmental hazards, and air pollution on affected populations [1,2], while also exploring the consequences of childhood trauma, adverse life experiences, and psychosocial vulnerabilities on mental health and social well-being [1,3,4].

The University further advanced knowledge on **safe, inclusive, and resilient societies** through research on digital public health surveillance and geospatial monitoring systems [5], cyberbullying prevention and online safety [6], and organizational development and human resource practices that strengthen institutional effectiveness and evidence-based decision-making [7]. Studies also investigated social entrepreneurship and community-driven development models that contribute to social inclusion, local empowerment, and sustainable societal progress [8].

Research contributions extended to the analysis of governance systems, public service delivery, and institutional transformation. These included examinations of water governance and public-sector management [9], sustainable governance and organizational practices [10,11], and the socio-economic and political dimensions of institutional change, public accountability, and development challenges [12]. Additional scholarship explored historical identity formation, religious and community institutions, and their influence on social cohesion and collective identity in the region [13].

Collectively, these publications support evidence-based policymaking, strengthen institutional resilience, promote social inclusion and public well-being, enhance digital and community safety, and contribute to the development of more peaceful, just, accountable, and sustainable societies in Lebanon and beyond [1-13].

SDG16 Publications

[1]. Ajmal, S., Keyes, K.M., Hermosilla, S., ...Karam, E., Kovess-Masfety, V. (2026). *Influence of Maternal Traumatic Experiences on Their Children's Mental Health Symptoms in Afghanistan*. International Journal of Social Psychiatry.

[2]. Abi Nader, A., Whaibeh, E., Habre, R., ...Abi-Tayeh, G., Mrad, M. (2026). *Assessing Short-Term Respiratory and Skin Disease Risks From Air Pollution During the 2024 Armed Conflict in Beirut, Lebanon*. Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness.

[3]. Fekih-Romdhane, F., Ghorbel, O., Cheour, M., Harb, F., Hallit, S. (2026). Associations of Childhood Trauma with Paranoia and Conspiracy Thinking Among Young Adults: Exploring the Indirect Role of Attachment Styles. Healthcare.

[4]. Fekih-Romdhane, F., Maalej, E., Cheour, M., Harb, F., Hallit, S. (2026). The Relationship Between Psychotic Experiences and Sexual Risky Behaviors: Moderating Effects of Childhood Trauma and Depression in Population-Based Young Adults from Tunisia. Healthcare.

[5]. Bassim, Y., Abdelrahman, A., Iaaly, A., ...Mardirossian, J.M., El Chaar, M. (2025). Digital Survey-Based Tracing of COVID-19 Over the Early Pandemic: Comprehensive Geospatial and Symptomatic Analysis in Lebanon. JMIR Public Health and Surveillance.

[6]. Kassem, H., Haddad, S., Rachini, A., ...Al-Jawahiry, A., Alalawi, B. (2025). *Leveraging Text Sentiment Analysis for Cyberbullying Prevention*. 2025 Asian Conference on Communication and Networks (ASIANComNet 2025).

[7]. Ismail, K.E.H., Zakharia, M. (2026). Why Action Research (AR) in Human Resources (HR)? A Comprehensive Meta-Synthetic Review of the AR in Trending HRM Disciplines. Studies in Big Data.

[8]. Khabbaz, L., Kuran, O. (2025). Storytelling for Legitimacy and Brand Building: Insights from Lebanese Social Enterprises. Journal of Social Entrepreneurship.

[9]. Tahsaldar, M., Chehade, I., El Nemar, S., Vrontis, D., Hasnaoui, J. (2025). *Change Management of Water Governance and Public Service: The Case of Drinking Water Management*. Strategic Change.

Rebeiz, K.S., Khayr Yaacoub, H.K., Ghantous, N., Salka, K. (2026). *Green IT Project Management and Its Influence on Sustainability: Insights from Top 100 IT Companies*. The Sustainable Development Goals and the Business Sector: Trends and Implementation Challenges.

[10]. Aad, R., Shbeeb, S., Dawalibi, V., El Balaa, R., Nemer, N. (2025). *Landscape Sustainability: From Assessment to Policy—Case of Baabda Forest, Lebanon*. Sustainability.

[11]. Koussa, Z.A. (2026). The Elephant in the Room: Accumulation by Dispossession and Lebanon's Neoliberal Crisis. Contemporary Review of the Middle East.

[12]. Najm, S. (2025). The Rūm Orthodox Community of Syria and Lebanon in the Light of Tanzimat: The Reorganization of the Millet System, the Bulgarian Question and Their Impact on Arab Orthodox Nationalism (1856–1885). Bulgarian Historical Review.

Institutional Governance, Ethics and Accountability

The University of Balamand promotes ethical conduct, accountability, and responsible governance through a framework of institutional policies and oversight mechanisms, including the Code of Business Ethics and related governance policies within its Bylaws, reinforcing ethical behavior, institutional accountability, transparency, and responsible decision-making, the **Ethics in Research Policy**, and Statement Policy on Harassment.

Research integrity is reinforced through the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which protects the rights and welfare of research participants, and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which oversees ethical animal research practices. The University's research ethics framework addresses research misconduct, conflicts of interest, plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification.

The Code of Conduct Committee (CCC) and the harassment reporting framework provide formal procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving misconduct complaints, supporting transparency, fairness, and institutional accountability.

Through these policies and governance structures, the University of Balamand strengthens institutional integrity, ethical decision-making, accountability, and responsible conduct in support of **SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**.

Climate Diplomacy and Sustainable Peace (CDSP) Hub: Advancing Science-Based Governance, Regional Cooperation, and Peacebuilding

Across the Eastern Mediterranean and MENA regions, climate change, water scarcity, food insecurity, and environmental degradation pose growing challenges to social stability, institutional resilience, and regional cooperation. Recognizing the strategic importance of addressing these interconnected challenges, the University of Balamand (UOB), under the strategic leadership of Prof. Fadi Comair, Senior Executive Advisor to President for Strategic Sustainability and Global Development, and Founder of the Climate Diplomacy and Sustainable Peace (CDSP) Hub, established the Hub in 2025 under the Office of the President. This strategic initiative positions UOB as an active contributor to science diplomacy, regional cooperation, and sustainable peace by bridging scientific research with high-level policy dialogue, institutional capacity building, and international partnerships. Through its growing engagement with governmental institutions, international organizations, and regional diplomatic networks, CDSP Hub translates scientific expertise into evidence-based policymaking and cooperative solutions, strengthening governance, preventing conflict, and advancing institutional resilience and sustainable development.

Since its establishment, the CDSP Hub has developed strategic partnerships with regional and international organizations, including the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), the Arab Water Council, The Water Embassy, and the Cyprus Institute, creating new channels for cooperation on water governance, climate resilience, and sustainable development. Through these partnerships, the University has expanded its contribution to regional governance initiatives and multilateral dialogue platforms focused on shared environmental and security challenges.

Strategic Initiative	Institutional Partners	Diplomatic/Policy Output
Bridging Divides Series	UNAOC, Multilateral Envoys, Global Heads of State	Created a neutral, non-partisan global forum for diplomatic dialogue on climate security.
Flagship ECOMED Academy	UNESCO-IHP (Paris Validation)	Established a standardized, transboundary platform for science diplomacy education.
Executive Security Certification	European Security and Defence College (ESDC), Cyl	Trained cross-ministry personnel and international diplomats in hydrodiplomacy and systemic risk governance.
Blue Peace ME Integration	Lebanese Prime Minister, Regional Sovereign Bodies	Directly integrated academic WEFE Nexus data into state-level transboundary water negotiations.

In 2025, CDSP Hub strengthened its regional presence by convening high-level stakeholders through initiatives such as the Bridging Divides I Conference, organized in collaboration with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the University's World Water Day event held under presidential patronage. These platforms brought together policymakers, diplomats, academics, civil society representatives, and international organizations to promote dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaborative solutions to transboundary environmental challenges.

Building on these foundations, the CDSP Hub expanded its international engagement in 2026 through participation in major policy and governance forums, including UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP), the Mediterranean Cooperation Conference at the French Senate, the Nicosia Climate Action Conference, the European Diplomatic Programme, and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) High-Level Course. These engagements positioned the University as an active contributor to international discussions on environmental governance, climate diplomacy, institutional resilience, and conflict prevention.

A key area of impact has been capacity building and professional education. Through collaboration with the Cyprus Institute and the European Security and Defence College, the

Hub developed specialized training and policy dialogue programmes in hydrodiplomacy, climate risk governance, resilience planning, and the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus. The launch of the ECOMED Academy initiative and the establishment of a Research Affiliates System further strengthened regional knowledge exchange and professional development opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

The Hub has also expanded opportunities for collaborative research and international academic engagement through participation in Horizon Europe, PRIMA, and Erasmus+ initiatives, supporting interdisciplinary research, academic mobility, and international cooperation. These activities have enhanced the University's ability to contribute scientific expertise to regional and international policy processes while creating pathways for student and researcher engagement.

Through public dialogues, international webinars, and stakeholder engagement activities, including Water and Gender: Where Water Flows, Equality Grows and Water as Critical Peace Infrastructure in the Mediterranean, the Hub has promoted inclusive governance, gender-responsive policymaking, and the recognition of shared natural resources as instruments for cooperation and peacebuilding.

Through international partnerships, policy dialogues, executive education programmes, and collaborative research initiatives, the Climate Diplomacy and Sustainable Peace (CDSP) Hub has strengthened regional cooperation on climate diplomacy, water governance, and sustainable peace. By convening governments, international organizations, diplomats, researchers, and civil society actors, the Hub at UOB has created platforms for evidence-based policymaking, knowledge exchange, and conflict-prevention dialogue. Its activities have enhanced institutional capacity, supported inclusive governance, expanded regional and international cooperation networks, and advanced science-informed approaches to managing shared environmental challenges. Through these contributions, the University of Balamand supports stronger institutions, more effective regional cooperation, and sustainable peace across the Mediterranean and MENA regions, directly advancing SDG 16.

Regional and International Engagement

In 2026, the CDSP Hub partnered with the Cyprus Institute and the European Security and Defence College to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean cooperation on climate resilience, water security, and science diplomacy. The initiative positioned UOB as the first ESDC-affiliated climate diplomacy platform in the Middle East and expanded opportunities for policy dialogue, collaborative research, and institutional capacity building.

Governance, Public Policy and Institutional Strengthening

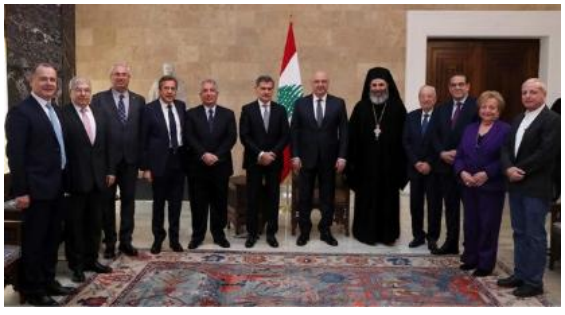
The University of Balamand advances SDG 16 through policy engagement, public-sector collaboration, institutional capacity building, and support for national governance reforms. Through partnerships with government agencies, international organizations, and civil society, UOB promotes transparency, evidence-based policymaking, and institutional resilience at local, national, and regional levels.

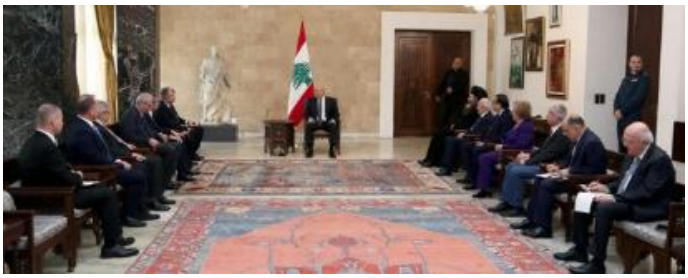
Department of Community Engagement Supports National Institutional Capacity Building

The Department of Community Engagement (DoCE) contributed to strengthening institutions and evidence-based policymaking through partnerships with the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC), UNDP, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and the Ministry of Public Health. Through technical expertise, stakeholder engagement activities, and social and behavior change consultations involving community participants, DoCE helped strengthen institutional systems, participatory governance mechanisms, and national policy implementation processes

Visit of the President and Deans to H.E. President General Joseph Aoun

The President and Deans of the University of Balamand met with the President of the Republic to discuss higher education, national development priorities, and the future of Lebanese institutions. The visit reinforced the University's commitment to supporting national stability, strengthening collaboration between higher education institutions and public authorities, and contributing to policy discussions affecting Lebanon's development.

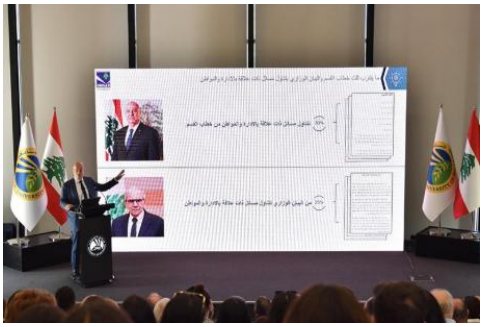




Dr. Ola Sidani Shares Expertise on Public Policy with PSIA Students

Students from the Department of Political Science and International Affairs engaged with public policy expert Dr. Ola Sidani, who shared her experience in designing Lebanon's SDG framework and leading government reform initiatives. The session highlighted the importance of governance, accountability, monitoring mechanisms, and public-private partnerships in building effective institutions.









Town Hall Meeting on "Reinventing Government 2030"

In collaboration with the Ministry of State for Administrative Reform, the University hosted a town hall meeting addressing administrative reform, transparency, digital transformation, accountability, and public sector modernization. The event provided a platform for academics, civil society representatives, students, and policymakers to contribute perspectives toward strengthening public institutions and rebuilding trust in government.







Dr. Chawki Lahoud Appointed to the Board of Directors of the South Lebanon Water Establishment

The appointment of Dr. Chawki Lahoud to the Board of Directors of the South Lebanon Water Establishment reflects the growing role of academic expertise in public sector governance. Through this position, he contributes to institutional oversight, strategic planning, financial governance, and the sustainable management of essential public services.



UOB Hosts Youth Consultation Session on the National Anti-Corruption Strategy

Students participated in a national consultation process supporting the development of Lebanon's National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2026–2030). Organized in collaboration with OMSAR, the initiative promoted youth participation in governance discussions and provided students with an opportunity to contribute directly to transparency and anti-corruption policy development.







Ramzi El Hafez Highlights Disconnect Between Politics and Business

As part of the PSIA 27-Minute Lecture Series, Ramzi El Hafez examined the relationship between governance, economic development, and the private sector in Lebanon. The lecture explored structural governance challenges, accountability gaps, and the need for stronger cooperation between public institutions and economic actors to support sustainable national development.



Peacebuilding, Mediation and Diplomacy

The University promotes peacebuilding, conflict prevention, mediation, and diplomatic dialogue by providing platforms for constructive engagement among students, policymakers, diplomats, and community leaders. Through training programs, regional partnerships, and high-level discussions, UOB equips future leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to foster peaceful cooperation, dialogue, and sustainable solutions to complex societal challenges.

UOB Hosts Awareness Session on Mediation as a Tool for Conflict Resolution

The Department of Political Science and International Affairs organized an awareness session in partnership with March Lebanon focusing on mediation, reconciliation, and conflict transformation. Through testimonies from former combatants and victims of conflict, the initiative highlighted the importance of dialogue, tolerance, and social cohesion in overcoming sectarian divisions and fostering sustainable peace.







University of Balamand Students Complete Mediation Training Program

Students completed an intensive mediation training program organized in partnership with Saint Joseph University and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie. Through practical exercises and conflict-resolution simulations, participants developed skills in dialogue, negotiation, and peaceful dispute resolution, strengthening their ability to contribute to more inclusive and peaceful communities.





University of Balamand Hosts Diplomatic Dialogue on Bridging Divides

The University convened diplomats, policymakers, academics, and international leaders for a roundtable discussion entitled “Bridging Divides: A Diplomatic Conversation.” Discussions focused on coexistence, post-conflict recovery, diplomacy, education, environmental peacebuilding, and regional stability, reinforcing the University's role as a platform for dialogue and understanding.



University of Balamand Advances Climate Diplomacy Agenda with Cyprus Institute

Through the Climate Diplomacy and Sustainable Peace (CDSP) Hub, described above, UOB continued to promote regional dialogue and climate diplomacy as tools for cooperation and peacebuilding.







HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND SOCIAL AWARENESS

UOB Students Participate in the 14th Lebanese Army Workshop on International Humanitarian Law



UOB students participated in the 14th Lebanese Army Workshop on International Humanitarian Law, a four-day program organized in collaboration with the ICRC. The workshop enhanced students' understanding of humanitarian law, justice, and the protection of people, cultural heritage, and the environment during armed conflicts, while providing valuable practical and educational experience.

Renowned Expert Highlights Lebanon's Prison System Challenges



As part of the PSIA Lecture Series, Dr. Omar Nashabe discussed challenges facing Lebanon's prison system, judicial delays, overcrowding, and the need for institutional reforms. The session provided students with insights into justice systems, human rights concerns, and judicial accountability.

UOB Hosts Lecture on Media and Misinformation

Through the Beyond the Mic lecture series, journalist Diana Moukalled addressed the growing threats posed by misinformation and disinformation during times of crisis.



The event highlighted the importance of critical thinking, media literacy, and access to reliable information in protecting democratic processes and social stability.

UOB Professors Take Part in UNESCO-AFP Fact-Checking Initiative

Faculty members from the Department of Mass Media and Communication participated in a UNESCO and Agence France-Presse training program addressing misinformation, verification techniques, deepfakes, and media integrity. The initiative supports responsible journalism, informed citizenship, and trustworthy information ecosystems.



DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION, DIPLOMACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PSIA Organizes a Panel Discussion with the Ambassador of Brazil to Lebanon

The Department of Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) hosted H.E. Ambassador Tarcisio Costa, Ambassador of Brazil to Lebanon, for a panel discussion entitled *"Brazil in a Changing World."* The event provided students and attendees with valuable insights into Brazil's evolving role in international affairs, its foreign policy priorities, and its growing engagement in global diplomacy.

During the session, Ambassador Costa highlighted Brazil's commitment to multilateralism, international cooperation, and constructive dialogue while discussing the country's economic performance, foreign trade landscape, and strategic international partnerships.



The discussion offered participants a broader understanding of contemporary global challenges and the role of diplomacy in fostering cooperation among nations.

By engaging directly with an international diplomat, students gained practical perspectives on foreign policy, global governance, and international relations, reinforcing the University's commitment to promoting informed civic engagement, cross-cultural understanding, and dialogue on global affairs.





PSIA Department Hosts Consul Antoine Hraiki

As part of the *Beyond the Mic* lecture series, the Department of Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) welcomed H.E. Consul Antoine Hraiki, a UOB alumnus and diplomat, who shared insights on the evolving demands of modern diplomacy. Emphasizing adaptability, negotiation, communication, and public service, he encouraged students to develop the skills needed to navigate today's complex political landscape while reflecting on the role of diplomacy in promoting stability and international cooperation.





PEACE, JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Dr. Khaldoun Sharif Kicks Off Lecture Series with Insightful Talk on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

As part of the PSIA 27-Minute Lecture Series, Dr. Khaldoun Sharif delivered a lecture examining the historical and contemporary dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its implications for Lebanon's future. The session encouraged critical discussion on regional stability, conflict dynamics, and the role of informed dialogue in understanding complex political challenges, reinforcing the University's commitment to civic awareness and public engagement.





Celebrated Journalist Georges Salibi Highlights Press Challenges at Lecture Series

The Department of Political Science and International Affairs welcomed journalist Georges Salibi for a discussion on press freedom, war reporting, and the challenges facing journalists in conflict settings. The lecture highlighted threats to journalists, the importance of protecting freedom of expression, and the need to

foster tolerance for diverse viewpoints in democratic societies.







UOB MCOM Club Hosts Journalist Jacinthe Antar for Talk on War Reporting

The Mass Communication Club hosted journalist and UOB alumna Jacinthe Antar for a discussion on ethical journalism and conflict reporting. Drawing from her professional experience, she highlighted the responsibilities of journalists in documenting conflicts, preserving human dignity, and ensuring accurate and responsible reporting during periods of crisis.





UOB Mass Media Students Participate in the 21st Arab Media Forum in Beirut

Journalism students participated in the Arab Media Forum, engaging with leading media professionals and policymakers from across the region. The experience strengthened students' understanding of ethical journalism, professional responsibility, and the role of the media in supporting informed public discourse and accountability.





Democracy, Citizenship and Civic Participation

Collaborative Seminar Explores Development Strategies for North Lebanon

In partnership with the Strategic Development Consortium, the University hosted conversations on local development, stakeholder collaboration, and civic participation. The initiative encouraged dialogue on inclusive governance and sustainable regional development.







Re-imagining Citizenship in the Arab Region

The University participated in Re-Imagining Citizenship in the Arab Region, a regional conference addressing governance, political reform, citizenship, education, displacement, democratic participation, and public decision-making. The event convened academics, policymakers, civil society representatives, international organizations, and public sector leaders to exchange perspectives on accountability, civic engagement, institutional reform, social cohesion, active citizenship, and inclusive governance. Through plenary sessions and panel discussions on political reform, constitutions and trust, civic education, democratic citizenship, refugee governance, and public sector transformation, the conference fostered dialogue on building more inclusive, transparent, and effective institutions across the Arab region.

Interfaith Dialogue, Social Cohesion and Peaceful Societies

Archimandrite Prof. Jack Khalil Participates in International Conferences on Theology, Society, and Technology

Archimandrite Prof. Jack Khalil represented the University of Balamand at international conferences in Greece and Türkiye addressing themes related to theology, ethics, history, and contemporary societal challenges. Through his presentations, he highlighted the importance of human dignity, ethical responsibility, self-sufficiency, and intercultural understanding while contributing to dialogue on the relationship between religion, society, and modern challenges.











UOB Hosts Lecture on Hunger, Culture, and Societal Resilience

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences hosted Dr. Nabil Al Khatib for a lecture exploring the relationship between culture, social resilience, dignity, justice, and identity. The discussion emphasized the role of culture in promoting awareness, belonging, and social cohesion, while encouraging students to reflect on contemporary societal challenges and their implications for human development and community resilience.

University of Balamand Co-Organizes International Theological Symposium in Thessaloniki

The University collaborated with international academic institutions to explore themes related to early Christianity, intercultural understanding, and religious dialogue. The symposium promoted scholarly exchange and mutual understanding across cultures and traditions.







UOB Hosts Seminar on Christian-Muslim Dialogue and Contemporary Issues

The Christian Muslim Studies Center organized a regional seminar addressing coexistence, citizenship, social justice, human rights, religious diversity, and interfaith dialogue. The event reinforced the role of dialogue in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.







Dr. Elias El Halabi Advances Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding through International Engagement

Dr. Elias El Halabi, Director of the Christian-Muslim Studies Center at UOB, represented the University at several international conferences dedicated to interreligious dialogue, coexistence, and peacebuilding. In Rome, he participated in the conference *"Towards the Future: Re-thinking Nostra Aetate Today,"* where he emphasized the importance of sustained Christian-Muslim dialogue and cooperation in fostering mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. In Thessaloniki, Greece, he presented a paper on the challenges and prospects facing Christian communities in the Middle East, highlighting the role of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue in strengthening social cohesion and understanding. He also participated in the Network of Centers for Christian-Muslim Relations (NCCMR) Symposium in Cairo, where he explored the relationship between Christian-Muslim dialogue and peacebuilding, stressing the importance of cooperation, human dignity, citizenship,





and mutual understanding in building more just and inclusive societies.

Through these international engagements, UOB continued to contribute to global discussions on interfaith relations, peacebuilding, coexistence, and social cohesion, reinforcing its commitment to dialogue as a foundation for peaceful and inclusive societies.





Book Signing of "Coexistence and Solidarity in Times of War"

The University of Balamand organized a book signing ceremony for Coexistence and Solidarity in Times of War: The Dynamics of Rapprochement and Nonviolence in Lebanon During the Civil War (1975–1990), a publication examining experiences of coexistence, solidarity, and nonviolence during one of Lebanon's most challenging periods. Based on field interviews and collaborative academic research, the book explores how individuals and communities fostered dialogue, mutual support, and peaceful coexistence amid conflict. The event highlighted UOB's commitment to advancing research, dialogue, reconciliation, and a deeper understanding of peacebuilding and social cohesion in Lebanon.







Responsible Leadership and Student Engagement

Student Leaders Retreat 2025: Fostering Responsible Leadership for Community Impact

The Office of Student Affairs and Career Services Center organized a leadership retreat focused on ethical leadership, inclusion, community engagement, and social responsibility. Students developed initiatives addressing community challenges while strengthening skills in responsible leadership and civic participation.





UOB Hosts Inter-University Dialogue on Social Change in the Arab World

Students from UOB and the American University in Cairo participated in discussions addressing identity, sectarianism, minority rights, and social transformation. The initiative promoted cross-border dialogue, critical thinking, and mutual understanding among young people from different backgrounds.





UOB Hosts Fourth Edition of Dialogue Project on Youth Movements in the Arab World





The Department of Political Science and International Affairs (PSIA) hosted the fourth edition of its Dialogue Project, bringing together students from the University of Balamand and the American University in Cairo for a cross-border discussion on youth movements, civic engagement, and political participation in the Arab world. The dialogue explored the role of young people in shaping social and political change, while addressing challenges related to governance, inequality, identity, and youth empowerment. The initiative reflects UOB's commitment to fostering critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, and active citizenship through regional academic collaboration.

Student Representation Statement

The University of Balamand has adopted an alternative model to traditional student unions that promotes student engagement through active participation in clubs, societies, and representative structures. Faculty deans and administrators regularly meet with student-led clubs and societies, maintaining open channels of communication and ensuring that students' perspectives are heard and considered. The Office of Student Affairs further supports this culture of participation by organizing regular meetings with student organizations, providing a platform for students to voice ideas, concerns, and recommendations for institutional improvement.

Student representation is embedded within the University's governance framework through student participation on university and faculty committees, allowing students to contribute directly to policy discussions and institutional development. Complementing this approach is the University's open-door policy, which encourages direct communication between students, faculty members, and administrative offices, fostering accessibility, transparency, and accountability. Student leadership is further strengthened through the democratic election of club officers in accordance with the University's clubs constitutions and policies, with students also participating in the selection of club advisors.

This commitment to student representation reflects international best practices observed across higher education institutions. For example, the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) promotes student participation through elected class delegates who serve

as liaisons between students and the administration, as well as through a Student Committee composed of volunteers who organize social, cultural, and sports activities. These mechanisms provide students with opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes, strengthen dialogue with institutional leadership, and enhance the overall student experience.

Together, these practices demonstrate how higher education institutions can advance the principles of SDG 16 by encouraging inclusive participation, strengthening institutional responsiveness, promoting democratic engagement, and ensuring that student voices contribute meaningfully to campus governance and community development.

For more details visit the Student Representation Statement

For more details visit the ALBA Student Handbook 2025–2026

ALBA: Institutional Accountability, Peacebuilding and Cultural Heritage

In 2025, ALBA reported **three activities directly supporting SDG 16** from the Product Design section and the Archives and Collections Department, while **four additional activities** reported under other SDGs contributed to peacebuilding, cultural protection, institutional accountability, and dialogue between civil society and public institutions.

Strengthening Institutional Accountability Through Records Management

The Archives and Collections Department continued to strengthen ALBA's institutional governance, transparency, and accountability through the systematic preservation and digitization of academic records. During 2025, approximately **400 additional physical academic files** were archived and integrated into ALBA's records system, bringing the institution's digital academic archive to approximately **80,000 digitized records organized in nearly 800 folders**.

The initiative engaged **8 student assistants and 2 staff members**, generating approximately **300 work hours** dedicated to records preservation, classification, and accessibility. By safeguarding institutional records relating to admissions, assessments, transcripts, examinations, and academic programmes, the project contributes to reliable administrative processes and long-term institutional memory.

Building on this effort, ALBA initiated the development of **ARMS (Automated Records Management System)**, a comprehensive records management platform designed in collaboration with UOB and ALBA IT Services and the Research and Creation Centre. The design phase involved **4 staff members and approximately 100 work hours** during 2025-2026, with deployment scheduled for 2027. Once implemented, ARMS will

enhance document traceability, records governance, operational efficiency, and institutional accountability, supporting SDG 16 targets related to effective, accountable, and transparent institutions.

Promoting Peace, Dialogue, and Civic Reflection Through Design

In October 2025, the Product Design section organized the workshop and exhibition **"Design** in Conflict" during WeDesign Beirut 2025, in partnership with designer Youssef Bassil. Hosted at Beirut's iconic Burj El Murr, a site closely associated with Lebanon's civil war history, the initiative encouraged critical reflection on conflict, displacement, resilience, and civic responsibility. The project engaged 14 students and 2 faculty members in an intensive 30-hour workshop that resulted in the creation of more than 50 functional prototypes and critical design manifestos. Student works explored practical and speculative responses to conflict, including emergency kits for displaced populations, trauma-response sound devices, anti-drone concepts, and protective equipment designed to address civilian vulnerabilities during crises.The exhibition attracted approximately 20,000 visitors, extending the discussion beyond the academic community and creating a public platform for dialogue on conflict, peacebuilding, and humanitarian design. The project also received international visibility through coverage in Dezeen and AD Middle East, amplifying awareness of design's role in addressing societal challenges.

Additional Contributions to SDG 16

Several activities reported under other Sustainable Development Goals also advanced SDG 16 **objectives:**

The **Interior Architecture** section co-organized the *Design in Conflict* exhibition, expanding public engagement on themes of freedom, collective memory, and resilience.

The **Institute of Urbanism** developed the award-winning project exploring the adaptive use of Beirut's **"The Egg"** as shelter for war-displaced populations, demonstrating practical humanitarian responses to conflict and forced displacement.

The **Conservation and Restoration of Heritage Programme** organized a public lecture entitled *"Crisis Management and Heritage Conservation: The Shock of 2024"*, addressing heritage protection in post-conflict environments and highlighting the role of cultural heritage in strengthening community resilience and social cohesion.

A second public lecture by **Colonel Hassan Harkous** examined the role of the Lebanese Army in heritage conservation, fostering dialogue between military institutions, heritage professionals, academics, and civil society stakeholders.

Indicator	Result
Archive digitization work hours	300
ARMS design work hours	100
New physical files archived	400
Total digital archive files maintained	~80,000
Digital archive folders maintained	~800
Students participating in Design in Conflict	14
Faculty involved	2
Prototypes and manifestos produced	50+
Workshop duration	30 hours
Exhibition visitors	~20,000
Public lectures related to conflict and heritage protection	2

Impact Statement: *ALBA* advanced SDG 16 through digital archiving, institutional accountability, civic dialogue, and heritage protection, fostering transparent institutions and inclusive communities.

Conclusion

During 2025–2026, UOB advanced SDG 16 through 13 research publications, partnerships with four national institutions, anti-corruption consultations, mediation and diplomacy initiatives, international dialogue platforms, student representation mechanisms, and institutional governance frameworks promoting ethics, transparency, accountability, and inclusive participation. Together, these efforts strengthened evidence-based policymaking, civic engagement, peaceful coexistence, and institutional resilience in Lebanon and beyond.