

SDG11

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

1. RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
2. URBAN RESILIENCE, MOBILITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
3. COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
4. CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION
5. ARTS, DESIGN AND CREATIVE CITIES (ALBA)
6. PUBLIC ACCESS TO CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
7. COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN PLANNING
8. SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS LANDSCAPE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
9. BROWNFIELD REGENERATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE
10. INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Key Highlights (2025-2026)

The University of Balamand advances SDG 11 through interdisciplinary research, heritage preservation, sustainable campus development, urban resilience initiatives, community engagement, and partnerships with local and international stakeholders. During 2025–2026, activities focused on climate resilience, post-conflict recovery, cultural heritage protection, sustainable mobility, environmental quality, and inclusive community development.

- 16 SDG 11-related research publications addressing urban sustainability, resilience, mobility, and environmental management.
- Smart mobility innovation (BTMS) supporting sustainable transportation and route optimization.
- National air quality monitoring initiative (AWAIR) supporting evidence-based environmental policymaking.
- Post-conflict damage assessments supporting recovery, reconstruction, and sustainable redevelopment.
- 700,000 SMS alerts, 100,000 flyers, and 5,000 brochures distributed, reaching approximately 50,000 beneficiaries through community resilience and mine-risk education initiatives.
- 10 public heritage lectures and multiple archaeological, manuscript, museum, and heritage conservation initiatives supporting cultural heritage preservation.
- 7 open-access digital heritage platforms providing global access to cultural, historical, and religious resources.
- 727,451 visits to the ARPOA digital heritage platform, expanding public access to Lebanon's architectural and religious heritage.
- Innovative urban design, architecture, and creative-city projects developed through ALBA, including international recognition at Milan Design Week 2026.
- Free public access to cultural resources through museums, film screenings, exhibitions, cultural centers, and digital platforms.
- Sustainable campus development guided by the Sasaki Master Plan, advancing biodiversity conservation, walkability, green infrastructure, and climate resilience.
- 60,000 m^2 protected natural landscape managed through the Farid & Daad Karam Reserve.
- Two flagship adaptive reuse and redevelopment projects: the Souk El Gharb Campus and the Ethnography Museum.

1. Research on sustainable cities and communities

Over the past two years, the University of Balamand has contributed to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through research addressing urban sustainability, climate resilience, environmental protection, sustainable infrastructure, transportation safety, water governance, renewable energy, and smart territorial development. University researchers examined critical challenges facing cities and communities, including climate change impacts and environmental hazards [3], climate-resilient urban stormwater management and flood early warning systems [8,12], sustainable landscape planning and ecosystem conservation [1,2], groundwater and river pollution monitoring [11,21], wastewater treatment sustainability [6,7], and improved water governance frameworks [22].

Research also supported the development of resilient and resource-efficient urban infrastructure through studies on green roofs [10], sustainable construction materials incorporating agricultural waste and recycled materials [5,13,20], and energy-efficient geotechnical solutions for urban construction [15]. Transportation-related studies contributed to safer and more sustainable urban mobility systems by investigating child restraint system adoption in urban environments [4] and optimizing logistics and transportation networks through artificial intelligence and energy-aware decision-making [9,14].

In addition, the University advanced innovation in sustainable territorial development through research on artificial intelligence governance in fragile urban contexts [18], renewable energy technologies such as bladeless wind turbines [20], infectious disease simulation models that support public policy and urban preparedness [19], and social enterprise models that strengthen community resilience and sustainable local development [17]. Collectively, these research outputs provide evidence-based solutions that support safer, more inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and climate-resilient cities and communities in Lebanon and the wider region.

16 SDG 11-related research publications addressing urban sustainability, resilience, mobility, and environmental management.

SDG11 Publications

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

[2] Aad, R., Zaher, N., Dawalibi, V., et al. (2025). The Application of Landscape Indicators for Landscape Quality Assessment: Case of Zahleh, Lebanon. Sustainability.

[3] Adarbaz, M., Khomsi, K., Al-Delaimy, W.K., et al. (2025). Mortality Related to Climate Change and Environmental Hazards in the Mediterranean Region: A Scoping Review. Current Environmental Health Reports.

[4] Al-Hajj, S., Nehme, R., Hatoum, F., et al. (2026). *Determinants of Parents' Preferences for Child Restraint Systems (CRS) in Low-and-Middle Income Urban Settings*. Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives.

[5] Arairo, W., Arayro, J., Saba, M. (2025). *Thermal Performance of Mortars with Agricultural Waste*. Advances in Bio-Based Materials for Construction and Energy Efficiency.

[6] Boutros, M., Puig, R., Bartolí, E., El Bachawati, M. (2025). Sustainability Assessment of Hospital Wastewater Treatment Techniques: A Comprehensive Review. Sustainability.

[7] Boutros, M., Romero-Güiza, M.S., Palatsí, J., et al. (2025). Environmental Performance of a Full-Scale Wastewater Treatment Plant with Advanced Process Control: A Multi-Year Life Cycle Assessment Using Dual Functional Units. Journal of Water Process Engineering.

[8] Cheng, M., Isleem, H.F., Tejani, G.G., Jahami, A. (2026). Adaptive Infrastructure Intelligence: Integrated Urban Stormwater Management Framework for Climate-Resilient Cities. Journal of Hydrology.

[9] Danach, K., Haddad, S., Aly, W.H.F., Kallab, C., Sayah, J. (2026). *Energy-Aware Hub Location via Reinforcement Learning and Thermodynamic Optimization*. IEEE Open Journal of Intelligent Transportation Systems.

[10] El Bachawati, M., Abiad, A., Abiad, M., Atallah, C. (2025). *Physical Characteristics of Typical Lebanese Soil for Green Roofs*. E3S Web of Conferences.

[11] Ghaleb, S., Yammine, P., El-Nakat, H., et al. (2026). *Analysis of Benzene, Toluene, and Xylene Contaminants in the Groundwater of Tripoli, Lebanon*. Asian Journal of Water, Environment and Pollution.

[12] Haddad, S., Danach, K., Sayah, J., et al. (2026). *Edge-AI Driven Coastal Flood Early Warning System Using IoT-Satellite Data Fusion*. ICAISET 2026 Proceedings.

[13] Jahami, A., Frangieh, H., Assaad, J., et al. (2025). Experimental and Numerical Study Assessing the Synergistic Effect of Metakaolin and Waste Glass on the Concrete Mechanical and Structural Properties. Buildings.

[14] Danach, K., Haddad, S., Merhej, J., et al. (2025). Real-Time Hyper-Heuristic Control for Decentralized Edge Logistics: A Reinforcement Learning Approach. ISNCC 2025 Proceedings.

[15] Khatib, M., Karout, N., Sraj, O., Arairo, W. (2025). *Thermo-Mechanical Behavior of Insulated Diaphragm Walls in Urban Excavations: A PLAXIS 2D Case Study*. Geotechnical and Geological Engineering.

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

[18] Khneyzer, C., Boustany, Z., Dagher, J. (2026). Governing Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Territorial Development in Fragile Contexts: Insights from North Lebanon. Administrative Sciences.

[19] Mohamad, C., Haddad, H., Mohamad, M., et al. (2025). *Monte Carlo-Based Infectious Disease Simulation for Policy Support*. ICCA 2025 Proceedings.

[20] Saba, N., Makhlouf, C., Raad, A., Abi Frem, C., Sabat, M. (2026). Design and Numerical Analysis of a Novel Vortex-Induced Vibration Bladeless Wind Turbine with Cylindrical Cam Mechanical Conversion. Energies.

[21] Sabat, M., Jabali, Y., Millet, M., Khoury, D. (2025). Spatio-Temporal Assessment and Source Identification of Heavy Metals in the Abou Ali River, North Lebanon. Environmental Challenges.

[22] 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.

2. Urban Resilience, Mobility and Disaster Preparedness

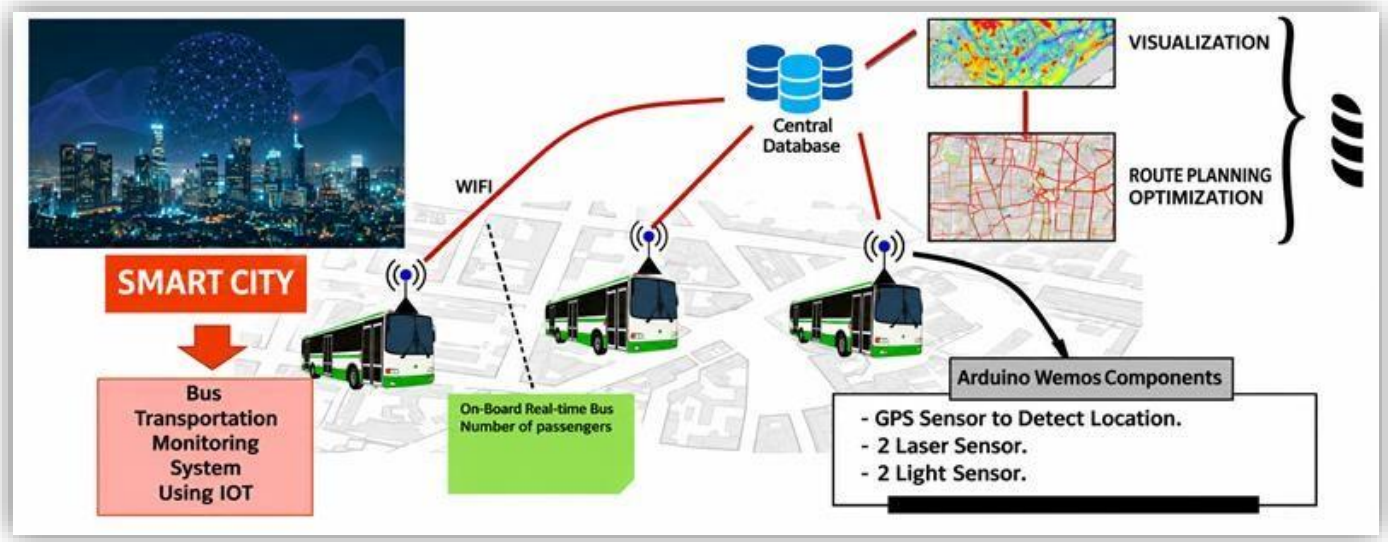
Through its research initiatives, community partnerships, applied student projects, and technological innovations, the University of Balamand actively contributes to strengthening urban resilience, sustainable mobility, environmental monitoring, and disaster preparedness across Lebanon. By integrating scientific expertise with community engagement and capacity-building efforts, the University supports evidence-based decision-making, enhances the ability of communities to adapt to environmental and social challenges, and promotes safer, more inclusive, and sustainable cities and settlements. Collectively, these initiatives advance the achievement of SDG 11 while contributing to SDGs 3, 6, 9, 13, 14, 15, and 16 through interdisciplinary and community-centered approaches.

Smart Mobility and Transportation: System

The Bus Tracking and Management System (BTMS) supports sustainable and efficient urban mobility by enhancing public transportation through real-time bus tracking, passenger-load management, digital booking, and route optimization.

By leveraging smart technologies to improve service reliability and operational efficiency, the project contributes to more accessible, resilient, and sustainable communities.

This supports SDG 11.2, 9 and 13



SDG11.7

Environmental Monitoring and Air Quality: AWAIR Project

The University's AWAIR Project was selected as a grantee of the EPIC Air Quality Fund to improve air quality monitoring and support data-driven environmental policymaking across Lebanon.

National air quality monitoring initiative (AWAIR) supporting evidence-based environmental policymaking.



This supports SDG11, 3, and 13

Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness

GIS Innovation for Disaster Management

Students from the University of Balamand's GIS Center received national recognition at the Manal Sayed Award for GIS Innovation in Higher Education for projects addressing emergency and disaster management and tsunami risk assessment.



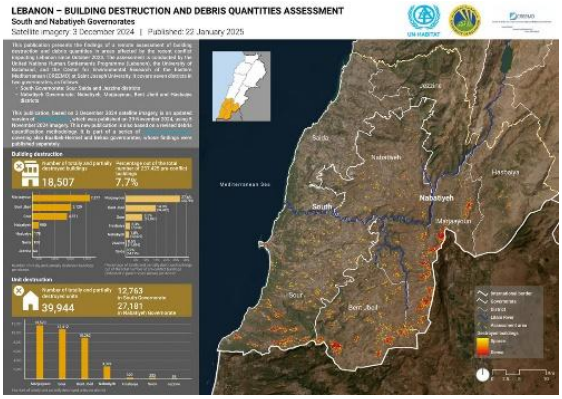
Developed as final-year engineering projects, these GIS-based solutions used spatial analysis and risk mapping to support emergency preparedness, hazard assessment, and disaster-risk reduction. By applying geospatial technologies to real-world challenges, the projects contribute to safer, more resilient communities and strengthen evidence-based approaches to disaster management.

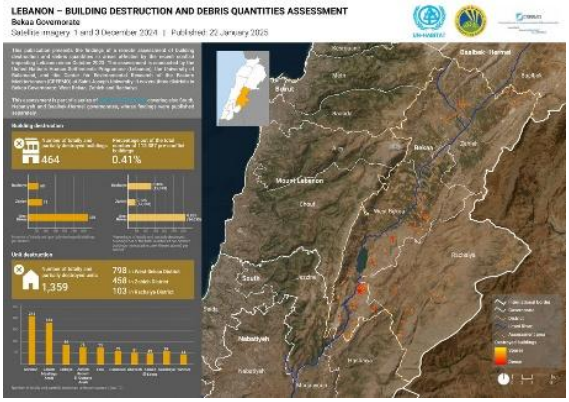


Post-Conflict Damage Assessment

In collaboration with UN-Habitat Lebanon and CREEMO, the University contributed to comprehensive assessments of post-conflict damage in Lebanon, supporting reconstruction planning, debris management, housing recovery, and sustainable redevelopment efforts. This supports SDG11 and 16.







Safe Communities and Humanitarian Response

Water Safety for Displaced Communities

The Faculty of Engineering collaborated with WASH partners to provide free water testing and technical support for shelters serving displaced populations, contributing to healthier and safer living environments.

This supports SDG 3,6,11.

Post-conflict damage assessments supporting recovery, reconstruction, and sustainable redevelopment.

Department of Community Engagement (DoCE)

DoCE contributed to SDG 11 by strengthening community resilience, safety, and preparedness in conflict-affected areas. Through the Localization of Mine Action in Crisis and Post-Crisis Response project in South Lebanon, the Department disseminated life-saving EORE messages through SMS campaigns, social media, municipal networks,

shelters, and printed materials. Project records indicate the distribution of approximately 100,000 flyers, 5,000 brochures, and 700,000 SMS messages, with municipal outreach networks reaching an estimated 50,000 people. In addition, DoCE implemented a national EORE Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) initiative to generate evidence for safer communities and more effective risk-reduction programming. These efforts supported safer return, recovery, and reintegration processes for affected populations.

700,000 SMS alerts
100,000 flyers
5,000 Brochures distributed
Reaching **50,000** beneficiaries

This supports SDG 11,16, and 17.

For more details visit the University of Balamand | Department of Community Engagement

3. Community-Based Development Projects and Civic Engagement

Sustainable Landscape Collaborative Workshop

Students from multiple Lebanese universities collaborated on sustainable landscape prototypes designed to improve environmental quality and social impact.

This supports SDG 11, 13 and 15.

Environmental Volunteering in Anfeh

Our students participated in environmental preservation activities supporting coastal cleanup efforts, biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage protection, and local economic development.

This supports SDG11, 14, and 15.

Green Bridge Competition

The University organized a sustainability-focused engineering competition encouraging students to apply concepts of green infrastructure, resilient design, and environmentally responsible construction.



This supports SDG 9, 11, and 13.

4. Cultural Heritage Preservation and Promotion

The University of Balamand contributes to the preservation, study, and promotion of Lebanon's tangible and intangible cultural heritage through the work of the Department of Archaeology and Museology, the Institute of Theology, the Digital Humanities Center, museums, archives, and cultural centers. During 2025–2026, the University advanced heritage preservation through archaeological research, public outreach, archival conservation, digital heritage initiatives, scholarly activities, and international collaborations. Particular emphasis was placed on safeguarding religious, manuscript, and cultural traditions while expanding public access to heritage resources in support of SDG 11.4: Protect and safeguard the world's cultural heritage.

10 public heritage lectures and multiple archaeological, manuscript, museum, and heritage conservation initiatives supporting cultural heritage preservation.

Heritage Research and Archaeological Fieldwork

Archaeological Research and Fieldwork

The Department continued its commitment to heritage preservation through ongoing archaeological excavations and research projects across northern Lebanon. Fieldwork focused on significant religious and archaeological sites, including St. Barbara Church (Barghoun), Mar Cozma wa Damianos Oratory (Anfeh), Mar Tedros Church (Kfar Hazir), Ras el Qalaa (Anfeh), Mar Nohra Church (Smar Jbeil), and Mar Assia Chapel (Hasroun).

Origins of Beirut Port

Faculty members contributed to scholarly discussions on the historical evolution of Beirut Port, highlighting its significance in Lebanon's maritime and urban history.

Heritage Tour in Anfeh

The Department of Archaeology and Museology organized a heritage tour introducing participants to historical water systems, archaeological remains, traditional salt production, and cultural landmarks in Anfeh. This supports SDG 11 and 8.



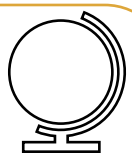


ALBA Archives, Heritage Conservation and Documentation

ALBA contributes significantly to SDG 11.4 through the preservation, documentation, digitization, and public dissemination of Lebanon's cultural, architectural, artistic, and religious heritage. Through the work of its Archives & Collections Department, Conservation and Restoration of Heritage Section, and Research and Creation Centre, ALBA safeguards valuable cultural assets while expanding public access to heritage resources. During 2025–2026, major initiatives included the relocation to ALBA of the online Atlas ARPOA database of the Religious Architecture of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, participation in the Paper Heritage Programme and the S.A.W.N. initiative, acquisition of important heritage collections, documentation of historic churches, and public programming on heritage conservation. The ARPOA platform alone received 727,451 visits between July 2025 and January 2026, demonstrating substantial public engagement with Lebanese heritage. The department also took part in the Paper Heritage programme, organized by BeMA, the Institut français and the Institut national du patrimoine (INP) with support from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gaining expertise in preventive conservation and digital imaging. From October 2025, it contributed as a partner to the fieldwork of S.A.W.N. (Safeguarding Arts & Archives, Weaving Network), led by BeMA with the NGO Biladi and funded by the British Council and the UK Department for Culture, Media & Sport, mapping and assessing Lebanese heritage collections in Beirut.

727,451

Visits



to the ARPOA digital heritage platform, expanding public access to Lebanon's architectural and religious heritage.

Under signed donation agreements, ALBA received new archive collections from the Biennale de Paris, the École nationale d'art de Paris (ENDA), artist Alexandre Gurita and Mgr Camille Moubarak, alongside art archives related to Ricardo Mbarkho, and continued the inventory of its own collection of about 220 artworks and 80 artefacts. Research under way on Beirut's vanished Moscobiyé church and its marble iconostasis, now in the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, is planned for publication.

Selected Heritage Preservation Activities

ACTIVITY	CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 11
ARPOA ATLAS RELOCATED TO ALBA	Public access to religious and architectural heritage
PAPER HERITAGE PROGRAMME	Capacity building in documentary heritage conservation
S.A.W.N. INITIATIVE	Mapping and safeguarding Lebanese heritage collections
MOSCOBIYÉ CHURCH RESEARCH	Documentation of endangered built heritage
DIGITIZATION OF ALBA ARCHIVES	Preservation of institutional memory
RESEARCH ON BEIRUT'S 19TH-CENTURY CHURCHES	Heritage documentation and conservation research

Research on the Moscobiyé iconostasis

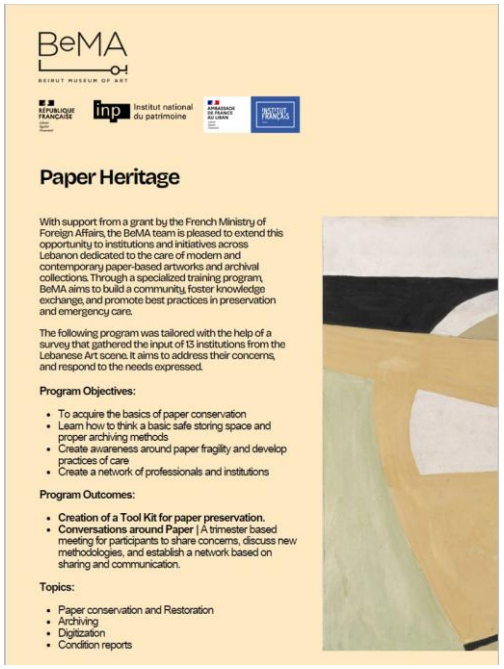


1. Projet de recherche sur le mobilier liturgique de marbre, initialement installé à la Moscobiyé Beyrouth (1860/67), puis réinstallé à l'église de l'Annonciation, Beyrouth (1927)

Lina Fakhoury, contributrice à la recherche

Iconostase de l'église grecque orthodoxe de l'Annonciation, Beyrouth, rue du Liban.

- Marbre blanc
- Bas-reliefs
- *pietra dura saillante*
- *opus sectile*



Paper Heritage programme (BeMA, INP, Institut français)



S.A.W.N. initiative led by BeMA, with ALBA as partner



ARPOA Atlas of the religious architecture of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, hosted by ALBA



"Il y a de cela": ALBA's history presented on its website

Museums and Heritage Awareness

Museums' Night 2026

The Department of Archaeology and Museology welcomed visitors to the Balamand Ethnography Museum and the Museum of Deir el Balamand as part of *La Nuit des Musées 2026*. Through guided tours, historical exhibits, music, and community interaction, the event promoted public appreciation of Lebanon's cultural and monastic heritage. This supports SDG11 and 17.





A Journey into Ethnography

The Department hosted students from Lycée Alphonse de Lamartine for an interactive heritage program combining museum tours, traditional games, artifact sketching, and pottery-making activities. The initiative introduced participants to Lebanese cultural traditions and the role of museums in preserving heritage. This supports SDG11 and 4.

Anfeh on Rails

Organized for International Museum Day 2026, *Anfeh on Rails* celebrated the town's railway heritage through exhibitions, presentations, guided walks along historic railway tracks, and a documentary screening, highlighting the importance of preserving local cultural landscapes. This supports SDG11 and 8.

Heritage Education and Training

The DAM organized educational visits, fieldwork, and hands-on training for university and school students. Activities included archaeology workshops, simulated excavations, museum visits, and heritage tours in Anfeh, Byblos, Barghoun, Mseilha, and Balamand, providing participants with practical experience and a deeper understanding of



Lebanon’s archaeological and cultural heritage. This supports SDG11 and 4.



Heritage Governance and Partnerships

Ministry of Culture collaboration

The Department contributed to the development of Lebanon’s National Strategy for Cultural and Creative Industries in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, supporting national efforts to promote cultural heritage and sustainable cultural development.

This supports SDG 11, 8, and 17.

World Heritage Day Lecture on the Rachid Karami International Fair

The Department of Archaeology and Museology hosted a lecture highlighting the architectural and cultural significance of the Rachid Karami International Fair, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The ALBA Research and Creation Centre

Most of the Centre's work documents and studies Lebanon's cultural heritage. Since September 2025, its research and creation studio on photography and visual formats in Lebanon, run with the Fouad Debbas Collection at the Sursock Museum, has trained students in archival study and critical analysis of visual heritage, and a second studio has studied how artistic practice can contribute to the urban renewal of Bourj Hammoud and involve its residents.

Since November 2025, a three-year research project led by May Davie and Antoine Fischfisch, with five first-year master's students in architecture, has been documenting three 19th-century Beirut churches with faceted vaults through surveys, 3D reconstructions and archival research, leading to a planned publication.

Public Lectures, Conferences, Seminars, and Campaigns

Throughout 2025 and 2026, the Department of Archaeology and Museology (DAM) actively promoted cultural heritage awareness and academic exchange through a series of lectures, conferences, and public outreach initiatives. Faculty members and researchers presented their work at local and international venues, addressing topics ranging from Phoenician heritage and Crusader archaeology to endangered

intangible cultural heritage and modern architectural landmarks.

Notable contributions included presentations by Dr. Patricia Antaki at international conferences in Greece and Portugal, public lectures on the origins of Beirut Port and the castles of Lebanon, and educational activities targeting students and the Lebanese diaspora. The Department also hosted specialized lectures by heritage experts and contributed to international discussions on the preservation of cultural heritage, including the documentation of Anfeh's intangible cultural heritage and historical studies presented at leading academic institutions such as the Rochester Institute of Technology and Oxford University.

In 2025, Dr. Patricia Antaki discussed heritage preservation in an interview with Spanish television channel TVE and contributed to the documentary The Forgotten Medieval Castle of Beirut, helping bring archaeological research and heritage conservation issues to a wider audience. This supports SDG11 and 4.

Religious, Manuscript and Intangible Heritage

Preservation of the Archival Collection of Mgr. Camille Moubarak

The University signed an agreement to preserve, document, and make accessible a major archival collection of cultural, religious, historical, and intellectual significance.



Institute of Theology Lecture Series (2025-2027)

The Institute of Theology continued its contribution to the preservation and promotion of Antiochian, Syriac, Byzantine, and Christian Arabic heritage through a series of public lectures delivered by local and international scholars during the academic years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. The lectures addressed topics related to manuscript traditions, liturgical heritage, church art, theology, Christian Arabic literature, ecclesiastical history, and Antiochian cultural identity. By facilitating scholarly exchange and making recordings publicly accessible through the Institute's YouTube channel, the series contributed to safeguarding and transmitting intangible cultural and religious heritage to wider audiences.

Public Access: Lecture recordings are publicly available through the Institute of Theology YouTube playlist, expanding access to Antiochian theological, liturgical, and cultural heritage for local and international audiences. This supports SDG 11.4, SDG 4 and17.

DATE	SPEAKER	LECTURE TITLE (ENGLISH)	عنوان المحاضرة (العربية)
21 OCT 25	Fr. Dr. Porphyrios Jerji	From the Great City of God to Nicaea: The Antiochian Contribution to the Theology of the First Ecumenical Council	من مدينة الله العظمى إلى نيقيا: الإسهام الأنطاكي في لاهوت المجمع المسكوني الأول
25 NOV 25	Dr. Elie Dannawi	Liturgical Traditions in the Lectionary Gospel According to Sinai Manuscripts: Sinai Ar. 116 as a Case Study	التقاليد الليتورجية في الإنجيل الطقسي بحسب مخطوطات سيناء: أنموذجًا مخطوط SINAI AR.116
27 JAN 26	Archimandrite Dr. Yaacoub Khalil	Saint Maron the Hermit Between the Syriac Tradition and the Byzantine Environment	القدّيس مارون الناسك بين التقليد السرياني والبيئة الرومية
12 FEB 26	Prof. Maria Alexandru	From St. Romanos the Melodist and St. John of Damascus to St. John Koukouzelis	From St. Romanos the Melodist and St. John of Damascus to St. John Koukouzelis
26 FEB 26	Dr. Daniel Hinshaw	Thriving in the Face of Mortality: Kenosis and the Mystery of Life	Thriving in the Face of Mortality: Kenosis and the Mystery of Life
17 MAR 26	Dr. Nada Helou	Church Murals in the Patriarchate of Antioch During the Middle Ages	جداريات الكنائس في بطريركية أنطاكية في القرون الوسطى
21 APR 26	Dr. Souad Salim	Antiochian Endowments During the Ottoman Period	الأوقاف الأنطاكية في العهد العثماني
22 SEP 26	Dr. Daniel Ayouch	Narrative Discourse in the Gospel of Luke: Themes and Characteristics	السرد الروائي في إنجيل لوقا: محاوره وملامحه
27 OCT 26	Fr. Dr. Bassam Nassif	The Family in Christ's Teaching: Parish Accompaniment for Married Couples in Contemporary Crises	العائلة بحسب فكر المسيح: مرافقة كاهن الرعية للمتزوجين في الأزمات المعاصرة
25 NOV 26 (ONLINE)	Rev. Dr. Alexander Treiger, Dalhousie University	Arabic Christian Literature and the Rum Orthodox Identity Throughout History	الأدب العربي المسيحي وهوية الروم الأرثوذكس عبر التاريخ

Public Lecture on the Manuscript Heritage of Our Lady of Balamand

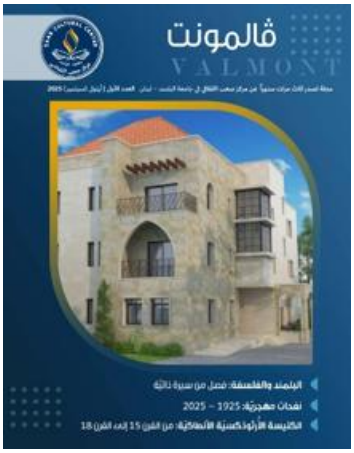
The University highlighted the importance of Antiochian manuscript heritage and ongoing efforts to conserve and study historical collections for future generations. This supports SDG11 and 4.

Participation in Symposium Syriacum and Arabicum 2026

The University of Balamand participated in the 14th World Congress of Syriac Studies (Symposium Syriacum) and the 12th Conference of Christian Arabic Studies (Arabicum) held in Bucharest, Romania, from August 3 to 7, 2026. Faculty members presented five scholarly papers on Syriac and Christian Arabic manuscripts, theology, history, and cultural heritage, contributing to international academic dialogue and advancing research on the rich intellectual traditions of the Middle East. The University's participation reinforced its commitment to preserving, studying, and promoting cultural and religious

heritage while fostering international scholarly collaboration in the fields of Syriac and Christian Arabic studies. This supports SDG 11 and 17.

Cultural Publications and Knowledge Dissemination: Valmont Journal



The Saab Cultural Center launched *Valmont*, a new journal devoted to culture, literature, history, diaspora studies, and the humanities. This supports SDG11 and 4.

Digital Access to Theological and Cultural Heritage

The Institute of Theology extends public access to Antiochian theological, liturgical, biblical, and cultural heritage through a range of online formation programs available in Arabic and Spanish. These initiatives provide lifelong learning opportunities to participants in Lebanon, Syria, the diaspora, and the wider Arabic- and Spanish-speaking Orthodox communities. Through distance learning, participants engage with theological education, biblical studies, ecclesiastical traditions, and the intellectual heritage of the Church of Antioch, helping preserve and transmit intangible cultural and religious heritage across generations and geographical boundaries. Programs include:

- Al Kalimah Program for Theological Formation (Arabic): ***For more details visit Al Kalimah Website***
- CBB Biblical Studies Courses (Spanish): ***For more details visit CBB***
- SOFIA Theological Formation Program (Spanish): ***For more details visit SOFIA***

By making theological and cultural knowledge accessible online, the Institute contributes to the safeguarding of intangible heritage, promotes intercultural understanding, and facilitates access to heritage education beyond national boundaries.

5. Arts, Design and Creative Cities (ALBA)

ALBA: Architecture, Design, Arts, and the Creative City

The Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) continued to contribute significantly to SDG 11 by advancing sustainable architecture, urban design, cultural preservation, creative industries, and community-centered innovation. Through its programs in architecture, interior architecture, design, visual communication, and the arts, ALBA prepares future professionals to shape inclusive, resilient, and culturally vibrant

cities while preserving Lebanon's built and intangible heritage.

Sustainable Urban Design and Planning

Through the Institute of Urbanism, ALBA contributes directly to sustainable urban development by addressing challenges related to mobility, public space, social inclusion, heritage-led regeneration, and local economic development. In 2025, Master in Urban Design students developed innovative proposals for Bourj Hammoud, Nabaa, Zalka, Hadat, Dbayeh, Sarafand, Rayak, Daychouniyeh, Bhamdoun, and Beirut, demonstrating how design can support more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

PROJECT	CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 11
BOURJ HAMMOUD & NABAA	Urban continuity and social inclusion
ZALKA	Car-free neighbourhood and wellbeing
HADAT	Controlled densification and community cohesion
DBAYEH	Improved pedestrian connectivity
SARAFAND	Heritage-led local development
RAYAK	Adaptive reuse of railway heritage
DAYCHOUNIYEH VALLEY	Nature reserve and sustainable growth
BHAMDOUN	Heritage-based economic revitalization
BEIRUT'S "THE EGG"	Adaptive reuse for emergency shelter

Evidence Table: Institute of Urbanism Projects

Sustainable Architecture and Design Education

ALBA architecture and design studios continued to integrate sustainability principles into student projects and coursework. Students explored adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, climate-responsive architecture, sustainable materials, energy-efficient design, public-space revitalization, and community-oriented urban interventions. These projects encouraged innovative solutions addressing environmental pressures, urban resilience, and cultural preservation in Lebanon and the wider region.

This supports SDG 11.3, 11.4, 12, and 13.

Sustainable Architecture (Earth HUB)

Earth Hub activities advanced sustainable approaches to architecture, design, and resource management by promoting the use of locally sourced materials, traditional construction techniques, and circular design principles. Workshops on earthen architecture, natural fibers, and environmentally responsive systems

encouraged students to explore context-sensitive solutions that support resilient communities, preserve cultural knowledge, and strengthen connections between the built environment and local ecosystems.

This supports SDG11,12, and 13.

Design for Sustainable Communities

Students in Graphic Arts and Advertising explored urban sustainability through projects addressing mobility, public transportation, public space, environmental awareness, road safety, and regional identity. Initiatives included the redesign of Lebanon's public bus image, the Eco Day in Beirut car-free city proposal, analysis of Souk el Ahad as an urban ecosystem, and campaigns promoting road civility and the image of South Lebanon.

COMMUNITY-ORIENTED DESIGN PROJECTS

PROJECT	CONTRIBUTION
PUBLIC BUS REBRANDING	Promoting sustainable transport
ECO DAY IN BEIRUT	Encouraging car-free urban spaces
SOUK EL AHAD URBAN ECOSYSTEM	Understanding urban community dynamics
SOUTH LEBANON CAMPAIGN	Heritage and place-based identity
ROAD CIVILITY CAMPAIGN	Safer use of public space

Public Art, Design and Community Culture

Interior Architecture projects encouraged public engagement through cultural installations, exhibitions, storytelling, and lighting design. The annual ESCO exhibition attracted approximately 100 external visitors, while projects such as the nomadic Hakawati storytelling space promoted cultural participation and public dialogue. International recognition was also achieved through award-winning lighting design projects.

Creative Industries and Cultural Economy

ALBA strengthens Lebanon's creative economy through public exhibitions, cultural events, design showcases, visual communication projects, artistic production, and heritage-inspired initiatives. Students developed a visual identity for the Ministry of Culture's General Directorate of Museums, produced cultural publications dedicated to Lebanese artists, participated in WeDesign Beirut, and created projects promoting traditional crafts and heritage-based design practices. Through

collaborations with cultural institutions and public engagement activities, ALBA supports cultural entrepreneurship, strengthens local creative ecosystems, preserves cultural identity, and demonstrates the role of arts and design as drivers of sustainable urban development and community vitality.This supports SDG 11, 8, and 17.

CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INITIATIVES

ACTIVITY	SDG 11 CONTRIBUTION
VISUAL IDENTITY FOR MUSEUMS DIRECTORATE	**Cultural heritage promotion**
TRIBUTE TO ZIAD RAHBANI	**Preservation of cultural memory**
WEDESIGN BEIRUT PARTICIPATION	**Public engagement with design**
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ON ARTISANS	**Safeguarding intangible heritage**
HERITAGE-INSPIRED FASHION PROJECTS	**Reinterpretation of cultural heritage**


05.2026

alba NEWS Awards

Les étudiants de l'ALBA brillent à la Milan Design Week 2026

Les étudiants de l'ALBA ont participé à la Milan Design Week 2026 à travers deux importantes plateformes académiques internationales portées par des institutions mondialement reconnues : le projet *UNFOLD*, développé en collaboration avec Domus Academy, ainsi que l'exposition Interdependence 26 organisée par Politecnico di Milano (POLIMI), toutes deux considérées parmi les institutions italiennes de référence.

Sélectionnés à l'issue de plusieurs phases d'évaluation et de processus de sélection compétitifs, les étudiants de l'ALBA se sont distingués par des projets abordant les notions de mémoire, de résilience, de mobilité et de futur du design centré sur l'humain.

Dans le cadre de l'exposition Interdependence 26 à POLIMI, les étudiants de l'ALBA Judy Al Masri, ancienne étudiante de la section Design, et Charbel Akiki, étudiant à l'École d'Architecture, ont présenté respectivement les projets ÂM et R.A.W: *Ruin As Witness*.

Dans le cadre du projet UNFOLD développé avec Domus Academy, les étudiants en urbanisme Tatiana Chahine, Stephanie Issa et Mohamad Khamis ont présenté le projet *TOGETHERNESS [Bayt 'A Doulab] – House on Wheels*.

R.A.W: Ruin As Witness

Un passage architectural entre ruine, réemploi et renouvellement, construit à partir des débris et façonné par le temps pour ceux qui viendront après.
Présenté dans le cadre de l'exposition Interdependence 26 organisée par POLIMI, R.A.W est un dispositif architectural expérimental construit à partir des gravats de Beyrouth, explorant à travers l'architecture les notions de transformation, de mémoire et de temporalité.

Le projet réemploie des matériaux récupérés ainsi que des techniques de construction traditionnelles afin de créer une structure évolutive pensée pour vieillir, se corroder et se transformer avec le temps. Le visiteur traverse une succession de fragments, de vides, de compressions spatiales, de lumière et de sons, générant une expérience immersive qui interroge ce que l'architecture laisse derrière elle pour les générations futures.
- Master en Architecture – Première année
- Auteur : Charbel Akiki
- Encadrement : Fouad Samara
- ALBA – Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Université de Balamand


ÂM

La machine à tisser qui retisse les morts à la vie.
Présenté dans le cadre de l'exposition Interdependence 26 à POLIMI, ÂM explore les relations entre mémoire, deuil et matérialité à travers une approche expérimentale du design produit et du design global.

Inspiré des techniques ancestrales du tissage et enrichi par l'utilisation de matériaux réactifs contemporains, le projet transforme le deuil en présence tangible. Les fibres réagissent à la chaleur, aux larmes, à la transpiration et au toucher en changeant de couleur, en s'assouplissant ou en se décomposant, créant ainsi une interaction émotionnelle et sensorielle avec la mémoire.

ÂM a été présenté sous les thématiques d'exposition Paradigms et Emotions.
- Bachelor en Product and Global Design
- Autrice : Judy AlMasri
- Encadrement: Kareen Andraos
- ALBA – Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Université de Balamand

TOGETHERNESS [Bayt 'A Doulab] – House on Wheels

De la survie vers la liberté – Escape-ism Pod
Présenté dans le cadre du projet UNFOLD développé en collaboration avec Domus Academy, TOGETHERNESS est un système architectural et urbain mobile conçu en réponse aux situations de guerre et aux scénarios d'évacuation d'urgence au Liban.

Transformant la mobilité forcée en infrastructure collective, le projet propose un ensemble de modules interconnectés dédiés à l'abri, à la cuisine, au soin et à la vie communautaire. Inspiré de la typologie de la maison libanaise à hall central, le projet réinterprète l'espace domestique à travers des notions de dignité, de proximité, d'adaptabilité et de résilience collective.
- Étudiants en Urbanisme : Tatiana Chahine, Stephanie Issa, Mohamad Khamis
- Encadrement : Abbas Sibai, Zareh Sarabian, Khaled Moualem
- ALBA – Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Université de Balamand

Conclusion

À travers leur participation à l'un des événements internationaux les plus influents dans le domaine du design, les étudiants de l'ALBA ont démontré la capacité de l'école à s'engager de manière critique, créative et ambitieuse face aux enjeux contemporains globaux.

Leur sélection aux côtés de projets issus d'institutions internationales de premier plan témoigne non seulement de la qualité du travail des étudiants, mais également de la visibilité internationale croissante de l'ALBA et de son engagement en faveur de pratiques expérimentales, engagées socialement et tournées vers l'avenir dans divers domaines créatifs dont l'architecture, l'urbanisme, le design produit et le design global.

Ces distinctions réaffirment la position de l'ALBA comme plateforme dynamique pour une nouvelle génération de designers capables de proposer des réponses sensibles et pertinentes aux réalités culturelles, sociales et environnementales contemporaines.

International Design Recognition

ALBA Students Showcase Innovative Projects at Milan Design Week 2026

Students from ALBA participated in Milan Design Week 2026, presenting projects that addressed memory, resilience, adaptive architecture, urban living, mobility, and human-centered design. The projects explored how design can respond to social, environmental, and urban challenges while improving quality of life within cities and communities. This supports SDG 11.3, 11.4, 9, and 4.

ALBA Students Earn International Recognition for Innovative Lighting Design Concept

ALBA students received international recognition for an innovative lighting design project that combined environmental responsibility, energy efficiency, social awareness, and human-centered design principles. The project demonstrated how design innovation can contribute to safer, more sustainable, and more inclusive urban environments. This supports SDG 11, 9, and 12.

Innovative urban design, architecture, and creative-city projects developed through ALBA, including international recognition at Milan Design Week 2026.

International Recognition of ALBA Alumni and Faculty

ALBA students and faculty participated in international exhibitions and design forums including Milan Design Week 2026 and received international recognition for sustainable lighting design concepts. This supports SDG 11.4, 8, and 4.

ALBA Contributions to SDG 11: Summary of Activities (2025–2026)

Human-centered urban design projects developed within ALBA studios explored accessibility, mobility, social inclusion, and community well-being through design interventions addressing the needs of diverse urban populations.

The following table summarizes ALBA's key contributions to SDG 11 during 2025–2026.

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION	SDG 11 TARGET	CO-BENEFITS
ALBA STUDENTS SHOWCASE PROJECTS AT MILAN DESIGN WEEK 2026	Student projects addressed resilience, memory, urban living, mobility, adaptive architecture, and human-centered design.	11.3 Sustainable urbanization	SDG 4, 9
INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR LIGHTING DESIGN CONCEPT	Students received international recognition for a socially responsive and environmentally conscious lighting design project.	11.3 Sustainable urban development	SDG 9, 12
SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN STUDIOS	Coursework and design studios integrated adaptive reuse, climate-responsive architecture, public-space design, and sustainable materials.	11.3, 11.4	SDG 12, 13

EARTH HUB SUSTAINABLE DESIGN WORKSHOPS	Workshops promoted earthen architecture, local materials, traditional building methods, and circular design principles.	11.3 Sustainable planning	SDG 12, 13
INTERNATIONAL AWARDS AND DESIGN COMPETITIONS	Student and faculty achievements enhanced the visibility of Lebanese design, architecture, and creative practice internationally.	11.4 Cultural and creative heritage	SDG 4, 8
EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC DESIGN ENGAGEMENT	Participation in exhibitions, design showcases, public lectures, and cultural events promoted public engagement with architecture, design, and heritage.	11.4 Cultural heritage and identity	SDG 4, 17
CONTRIBUTION TO LEBANON'S CREATIVE ECONOMY	Design education, artistic production, and industry engagement support cultural and creative industries as drivers of sustainable urban development.	11.4	SDG 8, 17

THM Hosts Architect and Urban Planner Charly Dabbaghian

The School of Tourism and Hotel Management hosted a lecture exploring the relationship between architecture, design, hospitality, and human experience. The event emphasized the role of design in creating functional and culturally meaningful spaces. This supports SDG11 and 4.





UOB Christmas Village 2025

The University transformed its campus into a vibrant cultural and community space featuring performances, artistic activities, local artisans, and cultural celebrations that brought together

students, families, and the wider public. This supports SDG11 and 15.





Independence Day Cedar Heritage Initiative

To mark Lebanon's Independence Day, the University organized the Cedar Heritage Initiative, celebrating national identity and raising awareness of the cedar tree as a symbol of resilience, sustainability, and cultural heritage. The activity engaged faculty and administration in a meaningful cultural exchange while fostering appreciation for Lebanon's rich heritage.



UOB Music Club Hosts Ghassan Al Rahbani

Students engaged with renowned Lebanese musician Ghassan Al Rahbani through a discussion on music, culture, creativity, and artistic expression. This supports SDG 11.4 and SDG 4.



6. Public Access to Cultural and Educational Resources

The University of Balamand provides broad public access to cultural, educational, and heritage resources through museums, libraries, cultural centers, digital humanities initiatives, and open-access heritage platforms. These resources support lifelong learning, heritage preservation, and community engagement while expanding access to cultural knowledge beyond the university community.

7 open-access digital heritage platforms providing global access to cultural, historical, and religious resources.

Public Access to University Facilities

The University maintains a strong commitment to serving the wider community by providing access to cultural, educational, recreational, and social facilities. Through public lectures, cultural events, museums, heritage sites, festivals, exhibitions, and outreach programs, community members actively engage with the University's resources and activities. This supports SDG11 and 4.

Public Libraries and Learning Resources

The University Library serves as an important educational and cultural resource for students, faculty, researchers, and visiting scholars. Through access to print collections, digital resources, study spaces, and academic services, the library supports learning, research, and community engagement while contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and lifelong learning.

Museums, Collections and Cultural Centers

MUSEUM / CENTER	DESCRIPTION	COMMUNITY BENEFIT	
ETHNOGRAPHY MUSEUM	Preserves traditional Lebanese cultural heritage	Public education and heritage preservation	URL
SAAB CULTURAL CENTER	Cultural, literary, and humanities research center	Promotes arts, literature, and Antiochian heritage	URL
SAINT JOSEPH OF DAMASCUS MANUSCRIPT CENTER	Conserves historical manuscripts and archival collections	Safeguards regional cultural heritage	URL

Public Film and Cultural Programming

The School of Cinema and Audiovisual Production contributes to SDG 11.4 by expanding public access to Lebanese cinema and cultural expression. Since September 2025, the Cine-Club has provided free community screenings and discussions twice monthly, while student productions were showcased at Beirut Shorts, the Lebanese Film Festival of France, the Rabat International Author Film Festival, the NDU International Film Festival, and the 30th ifva Awards in Hong Kong.

PUBLIC FILM PROGRAMMING

ACTIVITY	PUBLIC BENEFIT
CINE-CLUB SCREENINGS	Free public access to Lebanese cinema
BEIRUT SHORTS FESTIVAL	Public cultural engagement
LEBANESE FILM FESTIVAL OF FRANCE	International visibility of Lebanese culture
NDU INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL	Community access to student productions
HONG KONG ARTS CENTRE PARTNERSHIP	International cultural exchange

Digital Heritage and Open Access to Cultural Resources

The University of Balamand, through its Digital Humanities Center (DHC), is committed to preserving, digitizing, and promoting access to Lebanon's cultural, artistic, religious, and historical heritage. By developing freely accessible digital platforms, virtual exhibitions, and online databases, the University enables students, researchers, and the wider public to engage with cultural assets regardless of geographic location. These initiatives support the safeguarding of both tangible and intangible heritage, facilitate scholarly research, and

contribute to the dissemination of knowledge, while strengthening public access to cultural and historical resources in line with the University's mission of education, preservation, and community engagement.

Resource	Description and Link
Morphe – U	Morphe is a virtual museum designed, developed, and curated by the Digital Humanities Center, DHC and ALBA main Campus at the University of Balamand, UOB. The museum intends to expose online the Lebanese art and culture making them accessible to a universal audience. **For more details visit the Morphe-U Museum**
PAVONe: Platform of the Arabic Versions of the New Testament	A free online database of digitized and transcribed Arabic Gospel manuscripts, allowing users to browse by location, date, language, and manuscript characteristics. **For more details visit PAVONe**

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION AND LINK
ARHIVE: DATABASE OF ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS	An open-access database providing digital access to Arabic manuscripts and historical documents, supporting preservation and research. **For more details visit ArHive** https://arhive.uob-dh.org/
ALWAN VIRTUAL EXHIBITION	A virtual exhibition featuring paintings from UOB's art collection donated by renowned Lebanese artists, promoting Lebanese artistic heritage to a wider audience. **For more details visit Alwan Virtual Exhibition**
DATABASE OF ARABIC ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN JOURNALS	An online repository that provides access to Arabic Orthodox Christian journals and publications for researchers interested in theology, history, and culture. **For more details visit UOB Journals**
BIBLIOTHECA HAGIOGRAPHICA ARABICA (BHA)	A database documenting Eastern saints in Arabic, including accounts of their lives, acts, martyrdoms, and associated manuscripts. **For more details visit BHA**
SYRUM – SYRIAC RUM ORTHODOX HERITAGE	A collaborative project dedicated to preserving Syriac Rūm Orthodox heritage through digitization of manuscripts and archives in Lebanon. **For more details visit SyRum**

7. Collaboration for Sustainable Urban Planning

Partnerships with Local Authorities

Through seminars, collaborative initiatives, and stakeholder engagement activities, the University contributed to discussions on sustainable development priorities, regional planning, economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and community development in North Lebanon.

This supports SDG11 and 13.

Partnerships for Sustainable Urban Planning and Regional Development

ALBA's SDG 11 initiatives are strengthened through partnerships with governmental institutions, municipalities, cultural organizations, international agencies, and heritage specialists. Key collaborations included the Ministry of Culture, BeMA, Biladi, the Institut National du Patrimoine (INP), the British Council, the Hong Kong Arts Centre, AVITEM, Ateliers Philippe Madec, and WeDesign Beirut. These partnerships support heritage preservation, urban regeneration, cultural exchange, and sustainable development across Lebanon and beyond.

Regional Development Dialogues: Sustainable Development in North Lebanon

The University hosted seminars and dialogues addressing economic, social, and environmental development challenges facing North Lebanon, fostering partnerships and evidence-based planning approaches.

Community Engagement and Sustainable Local Development: Community-Based Arts and Urban Participation

The Research and Creation Centre supports community-based urban regeneration through artistic and creative practice. The project When Artists Make Urban Space engaged students, residents, and local stakeholders in exploring the role of creative interventions in the renewal of Bourj Hammoud, demonstrating how arts and culture can contribute to community development and place-making.

8. Sustainable Campus Landscape and Community Development

The University of Balamand integrates sustainable planning, biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage protection, community well-being, and resilient infrastructure through the implementation of its Campus Master Plan developed by Sasaki Associates, Inc. The University's approach combines environmental stewardship with inclusive campus design to create a resilient, accessible, and culturally significant learning environment that advances SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

Campus Landscape and Biodiversity Management

The University implements a comprehensive landscape management strategy that protects and enhances a diverse network of natural and cultural assets across campus. Guided by the Sasaki Master Plan and Detailed Implementation Plan, the landscape framework integrates biodiversity conservation, environmental education, heritage preservation, recreation, and sustainable land management.

Key landscape components include:

- A designated Nature Reserve
- Historic olive terraces and monastery orchards
- The Botanic Garden
- Ecological corridors and landscape connectors
- Recreational green spaces and outdoor learning environments
- Natural valleys, rock outcroppings, and native woodland ecosystems

Special attention is given to the conservation of native habitats, particularly stone oak forests and natural valley systems, while maintaining ecological connectivity through nature trails and landscape corridors.

Green Infrastructure and Climate Resilience

The University's landscape strategy incorporates multiple green infrastructure elements designed to improve environmental performance and strengthen climate resilience.

These include:

- Extensive and intensive green roofs
- Permeable parking and pedestrian surfaces
- Stormwater infiltration systems
- Native and drought-tolerant vegetation
- Ecological buffers and habitat restoration measures

These interventions support sustainable stormwater management, reduce environmental impacts, improve thermal performance, and strengthen long-term ecological resilience.

The Botanic Garden and Heritage Landscapes

A central component of the campus sustainability framework is the Botanic Garden, which supports biodiversity conservation, environmental research, education, and stewardship of native and endangered Middle Eastern plant species.

The University also preserves historic olive groves, monastery terraces, and agricultural landscapes as living cultural heritage assets. These landscapes continue to support educational, recreational, agricultural, and cultural functions while maintaining the historical identity of the campus.

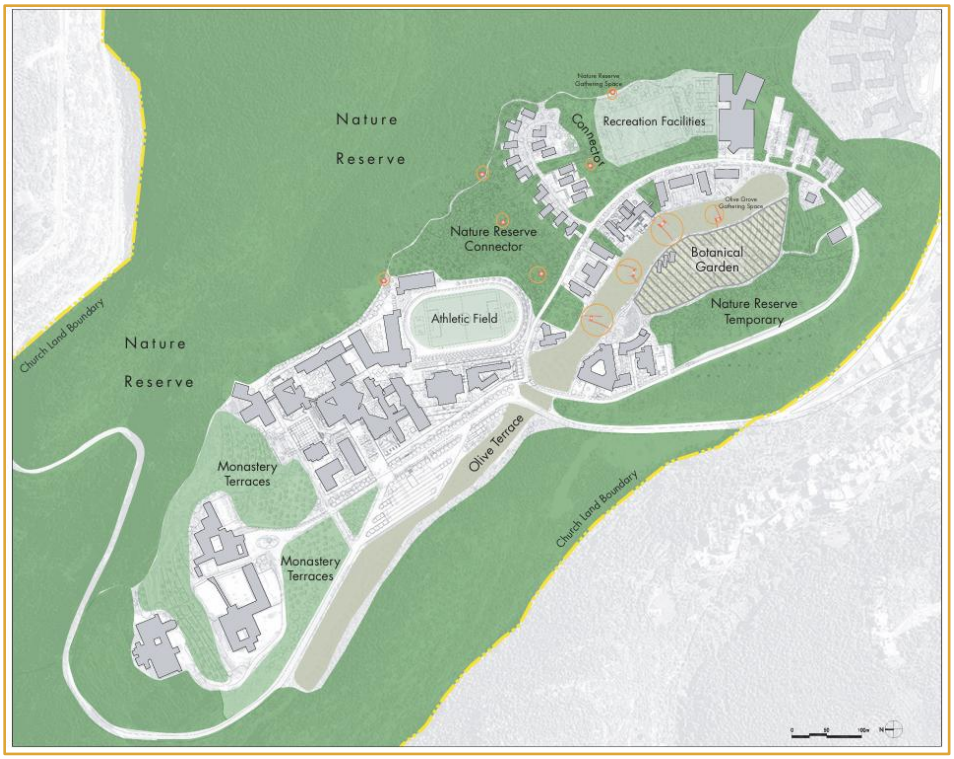
Green and Open Spaces for Community Well-being

The University recognizes access to quality green spaces as an essential component of a healthy and inclusive campus environment.

Students, staff, and visitors benefit from:

- Landscaped gardens and open lawns
- Recreational fields and gathering spaces
- Nature trails and pedestrian corridors
- Courtyards and plazas
- Residential gardens and outdoor study areas

These spaces promote physical activity, social interaction, outdoor learning, mental well-being, and environmental awareness while strengthening connections between people, culture, and nature.



Farid & Daad Karam Reserve (FDKR)

The Farid & Daad Karam Reserve (FDKR), managed by the University of Balamand, encompasses approximately **60,000 m²** of protected natural landscape. The reserve serves as an important resource for biodiversity conservation, environmental education, scientific research, and community engagement. Through its conservation and educational activities, the reserve contributes to public access to natural heritage, environmental awareness, and sustainable land stewardship.

This supports SDG 11.7 and SDG 15.

- Farid & Daad Karam Reserve website
- Reserve video

Walkable and Accessible Campus Design: The Path of Learning

The University promotes sustainable mobility through a pedestrian-centered campus design that encourages walking and reduces reliance on vehicular transport.

At the heart of this network is the **Path of Learning**, the University's principal pedestrian spine and a defining feature of the Sasaki Campus Master Plan. The pathway physically and symbolically connects the academic and upper campuses while linking major destinations across the University, including:

Main Building Complex

- Crossroads Plaza
- Environmental Center
- Olive Grove Pond
- Amphitheater
- Botanic Garden
- Student Housing Areas
- Recreational Facilities
- The Monastery
- The Goat House



Combining landscaped promenades with natural trails through gardens and olive groves, the Path of Learning promotes active mobility, accessibility, recreation, informal learning, and social interaction.

By providing continuous pedestrian connectivity and accessible routes throughout campus, the University enhances social inclusion and equitable access for students, staff, visitors, and persons with disabilities.

Reference: Sasaki Associates, Inc. (March 2004). University of Balamand Campus Master Plan.

Sustainable Housing and Student Well-being

The University provides safe, secure, and inclusive residential facilities that support student well-being and community living. Campus housing includes:

- Study rooms
- Internet access
- Laundry facilities
- Kitchens and common areas
- Accessible accommodations for students with special needs

The Office of Student Affairs also supports students in identifying suitable off-campus accommodation options, ensuring access to safe and supportive living environments throughout their academic journey.

Supports SDG 11 and SDG 3.

Public Buildings and Community Facilities

The University's academic and public facilities serve as important community assets that accommodate cultural, educational, and professional engagement. Throughout the year, campus buildings host:

- Public lectures
- Conferences
- Cultural events
- Workshops
- Heritage activities
- Community outreach programs

These activities bring together students, schools, municipalities, NGOs, researchers, professionals, and members of the wider public, reinforcing the University's role as a regional hub for education and community engagement.

Sustainable Building Standards and Infrastructure Resilience

The University's commitment to sustainable development is guided by the Sasaki Campus Master Plan, which integrates sustainable land use, ecological stewardship, accessibility, mobility, heritage conservation, and community well-being into long-term campus planning.

The plan also encourages the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing assets where feasible, supporting both resource efficiency and cultural continuity.

To strengthen climate resilience, the University has undertaken extensive roof waterproofing and insulation projects across multiple buildings. These improvements have:

- Increased building durability
- Improved thermal efficiency
- Reduced energy losses
- Enhanced protection from weather-related deterioration

These investments contribute to more sustainable, energy-efficient, and climate-resilient campus infrastructure. Supports SDG 11 and SDG 13.

SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

CAMPUS ASSET / INITIATIVE	CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 11
SASAKI CAMPUS MASTER PLAN	Long-term sustainable planning, accessibility, and community-centered development
PATH OF LEARNING	Walkability, accessibility, and reduced dependence on vehicular transport
FARID & DAAD KARAM RESERVE	Biodiversity conservation, environmental education, and public access to natural heritage
BOTANIC GARDEN	Conservation of native and endangered plant species and environmental learning
HISTORIC OLIVE TERRACES AND MONASTERY LANDSCAPES	Preservation of cultural landscapes and heritage assets
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE	Green roofs, permeable surfaces, stormwater management, and climate resilience
NATURE TRAILS AND OPEN	Recreation, wellbeing, outdoor learning, and social inclusion
STUDENT HOUSING AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES	Safe, inclusive, and supportive living and learning environments
BUILDING INSULATION AND ROOF	Enhanced energy efficiency and climate resilience

Key Campus Sustainability Features

- Approximately **60,000 m²** protected natural landscape within the Farid & Daad Karam Reserve.
- Comprehensive campus planning guided by the **Sasaki Campus Master Plan**.
- Extensive pedestrian network centered around the **Path of Learning**.
- Integration of green infrastructure including **green roofs, permeable surfaces, and stormwater infiltration systems**.
- Preservation of historic olive groves, monastery terraces, and cultural landscapes.
- Public access to natural, educational, cultural, and recreational spaces.

60,000 m²

protected natural landscape managed through the Farid & Daad Karam Reserve.

9. Brownfield Regeneration and Adaptive Reuse

The University of Balamand promotes sustainable redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and heritage conservation through the transformation of previously underutilized and conflict-affected sites into educational, cultural, and community assets. These initiatives contribute to regional revitalization, heritage preservation, and sustainable land use while enhancing public access to educational and cultural resources.

Souk El Gharb Campus Redevelopment

The Souk El Gharb Campus (SEG) was established on the site of a former high school heavily damaged during periods of conflict. Today, it is emerging as a key educational, social, and civic hub serving the local community and surrounding areas. The project supports redevelopment, community engagement, economic growth, and expanded access to higher education.

Through collaboration with Sasaki, an internationally recognized planning and design firm, the University advanced its commitment to sustainable campus development. The campus master plan promotes walkability, landscape integration, community connectivity, open spaces, and long-term sustainability, positioning the campus as a catalyst for educational, social, and economic development in the Aley region while preserving its environmental and cultural character. ***For More details visit Sasaki Project Page***

Ethnography Museum Adaptive Reuse

The University of Balamand Ethnography Museum represents a successful example of adaptive reuse and heritage conservation. The building, originally a barn located within the grounds of the Balamand Monastery, was later used as a storage shed, giving rise to its local designation as the "Goat House." After decades of abandonment and deterioration, the structure was restored and reconstructed by Dagher Hanna & Partner in 2008 and transformed into a museum dedicated to preserving Lebanese cultural heritage. In January 2015, the collection was officially registered as the "University of Balamand-UOB Ethnography Museum" with the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The project demonstrates how the adaptive reuse of historic structures can preserve cultural identity while creating new educational and community functions.

10. Institutional Impact Statement

The University of Balamand integrates sustainable planning principles into its campus development through the preservation of green spaces, protection of cultural and natural heritage, promotion of walkability, and creation of accessible and inclusive public spaces. By balancing environmental stewardship with community well-being and sustainable infrastructure, the University contributes to building a resilient, healthy, and interconnected campus community aligned with the objectives of **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**.