

**Responding to the Socio-Economic Crisis:
Promoting Self-Sufficiency and Enhancing Production
(UNDP)**

Executive Summary

In response to the current socio-economic crisis, the UNDP has launched a six-month-long project “Responding to the Socio-Economic Crisis: Promoting Self-Sufficiency and Enhancing Production,” to promote the self-sufficiency of vulnerable communities and enhance local agricultural production and food processing. The project is being implemented by the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) in partnership with the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU) at AUB, the Food Heritage Foundation (FHF), Berytech and Zico House under the Ardi Ardak National Food Security Initiative.

The project aims to foster the local food system by targeting small-scale producers and promoting food security at the household level to ensure the self-sufficiency of vulnerable communities and enhance local production. Various implementation approaches have been outlined including: 1) establishment of urban agricultural demo-units, 2) establishment of an agro-food lab/start-up in Zico House, 3) support for expanding production and sustaining the self-sufficiency of 50 entities, including farmers, cooperatives, SMEs and start-ups and 4) short-term labor force support for expanding production and sustaining self-sufficiency, which includes a “cash-for-work” and “cash-for-training” for 420 Lebanese and Syrian beneficiaries.

The Agro-Food Hub Lab objectives are to develop training and applied research and development in: 1) urban agriculture through planting basic and added-value crops as a qualitative ersatz to the most popular imported aromatic plants and micro-greens, 2) organic waste treatment improvement and experimentation, 3) food design that elevates Lebanese food with innovation and sustainability by applying new technologies to preserve naturally harvested fruits and vegetables and ready-to-eat and cook dishes and mezze, in response to the growing consumers’ needs for convenient, clean and healthy authentic Lebanese food.

The Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU) is ensuring the strategic coordination and upscaling of the impact of the project by linking it to the various Ardi Ardak National initiatives which promote small-scale farmers and producers and revisiting the agricultural sector. Additionally, ESDU will be expanding the scope of the project by linking it to its well-established infrastructure which includes its network of beneficiaries, local communities, community kitchens, demo-units and training centers.