**Lebanon – 2018**

## Overview:

Embassy Beirut’s Public Affairs Section supports a Mission on the frontlines of U.S. national security interests in the Middle East in a country that is fundamentally Western-oriented in business, culture, education, and religious freedom, and where 43% of its urban, literate, and media-savvy population is less than 25 years old. Public diplomacy activities in Lebanon are complicated by confessional sensitivities, attitudes toward the USG, and the role of Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization. Programs that offer a window into American culture, including English language programs, have proven particularly popular and effective.

Embassy Beirut’s Public Affairs Section supports three ICS goals: Lebanese state institutions exert sovereign authority and effectively counter extremism; promote stability by discouraging external interference, strengthening government institutions and processes, and supporting an engaged civil society; and, increase inclusive economic growth, bilateral trade, transparent services, and improved socio-economic conditions.

Embassy Beirut builds positive public awareness in Lebanon about the full spectrum of USG assistance programs to Lebanon, valued at $4.8 billion, including development aid to municipalities, schools, and NGOs. Embassy Beirut maintains very strong, positive awareness of U.S. military assistance, and, amplifies USG assistance to Lebanon via press releases, media engagements, and social media. Embassy social media platforms - 80,000 Facebook likes, 36,000 Twitter followers, and almost 4,000 Instagram followers - highlight Mission programs, including USAID, INL, MEPI, and other educational, commercial and social programs.

Through nearly $5 million in program grants, exchanges, cultural heritage preservation, and media engagement activities executed through cultural, civil society, and media partners, Embassy Beirut encourage dialogue that enriches the U.S.-Lebanon bilateral relationship. Embassy Beirut programs direct a special focus on promoting civic engagement, particularly among youth, across confessional lines.

**ICS Mission Goal 1:** State Institutions Exert Sovereign Authority and Effectively Counter Extremism.

**ICS Mission Objective 1.1 and Sub-Objectives 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.1; 1.22; 1.2.3**

Support Lebanese state security institutions to exert sovereign authority throughout Lebanese territory by working to ensure the integrity of its borders and maintaining internal security; also

* Enhance Lebanese security forces ability to secure their border through training and equipment;
* Maintain U.S.-Lebanese security cooperation to strengthen military readiness;
* Improve capabilities of Lebanese security forces to disrupt terror/criminal networks, repel attacks
* Strengthen Lebanese state and non-state actors to address root causes of VE and limit its spread
* Enhance partner commitment, capability to protect the lives and interests of AmCits in Lebanon.

**Problem Statement:** Hezbollah maintains a militia outside the control of the Lebanese government.

**PD Initiative:** By reinforcing the role of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) as the only legitimate force capable of safeguarding Lebanon’s national security, we can erode a key part of Hezbollah’s narrative, bolster public support for the LAF and highlight the benefits of our strong bilateral relationship.

**PD Activity 1.1-1:** Media placements highlight delivery to the LAF, Internal Security Forces (ISF), and Lebanese national police force U.S. material and training. In partnership with INL, increase media related to: community policing; police professionalization trainings; judiciary and security trainings.

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| Themes: | Security, PVE |
| Audience: | General Public, Media, Security and Civil Society Partners |
| Internal Collaborators: | EXEC; DAO/DATT/ODC/SFL; Legatt; INL; POL and MEPI; RSO |
| External Collaborators: | LAF (and FMF/FMS, IMET), ISF, and DGS |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Sustained public perception of LAF as the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon 2. Increased public confidence and trust in ISF as a professional police force, strengthen positive perceptions of community policing and judiciary |

**PD Activity 1.1-2:** Embassy Beirut public affairs programs work with partners to promote CVE themes in line with Lebanese national PVE strategy. In 2018, after two years of contentious deliberation by 29 ministry representatives, Lebanon’s government adopted a national strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) that incorporates many of post’s Alwan Program’s components. Alwan’s conceptualization of Lebanon’s PVE strategy transformed it from a community program into a national PVE resource, extending the program’s reach from its current 3,800 alumni to the broader Lebanese public.  By continuing this type of programming, we plan to maintain participant numbers and achieve attitude shifts as evidenced through implementer polling and alumni engagement in related activities.

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| Themes: | CVE, PVE |
| Audience: | High School Students and Teachers |
| Internal Collaborators: | N/A |
| External Collaborators: | Adyan Foundation, Participating Schools, Ministry of Education |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Continue supporting Adyan program to enable Adyan Foundation to confront Lebanon’s complex social and political environment and gain broad credibility and local support. 2. Leverage Adyan outreach to connect with disenfranchised and hard-to-reach communities. |

**PD Activity 1.1-3** Embassy Beirut coordinates internally to ensure that Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) plans effectively incorporate public outreach requirements, including updated media contacts and social media SOPs.

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| Themes: | Security |
| Audience: | General Public, Media, Security, Embassy Beirut |
| Internal Collaborators: | EXEC; DAO/DATT/ODC/SFL; Legatt; INL; POL and MEPI; RSO |
| External Collaborators: | LAF (and FMF/FMS, IMET), ISF, and DGS |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Embassy’s sections and agencies are ready and function in sync on public messaging in event of a crisis. |

**PD Activity 1.1-4** Leverage International Visitor Leadership programs to the promote Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and related international treaties, and promote development of tools to counter Trafficking in Persons. In addition to nominating participants to related, existing IVLP programs, post will design and implement Single Country Programs to Combat International Parental Child Abduction and corruption.

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| Themes: | Law Enforcement, Government |
| Audience: | Government, Judicial System |
| Internal Collaborators: | EXEC; Legatt; INL; POL and MEPI; RSO; CONS |
| External Collaborators: | Government, Judges |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Participants gain an increased understanding of U.S. and international laws surrounding IPCA and corruption as evidenced by post-program briefings and assessments. 2. Post strengthens relationship with participants as partners on these issues. |

**ICS Mission Goal 2:** Promote stability by discouraging external interference, strengthening government institutions and processes, and supporting an engaged civil society.

**Mission Objective 2.1; Sub-Objectives 2.1.1 and 2.1.2**

* Encourage and enable the GoL to implement the disassociation policy and be independent of foreign interference;
* Support implementation of UNSCR 1559, 1680, and 1701, including disarming all militias
* Maintain close, cordial ties with GoL; help preserve independence, sovereignty, national unity

**Mission Objective 2.2 and Sub-Objectives 2.2.1 and 2.2.2;**

* Increase GoL capability to respond to the needs of all through democratic elections, functioning government institutions, and transparent processes;
* Improve GoL ability to address the needs of its citizens
* Reduce corruption in GoL through new reform laws, e-government, and enforcement of current laws

**Mission Objective 2.3 and Sub-Objectives 2.3.1 and 2.3.2**

* Support a strong civil society that helps uphold universal human rights, promotes good governance
* Empower civil society to be engaged in policymaking and to hold government accountable
* Build the capacity of current Lebanese CSOs

**Mission Objective 2.4 and Sub-Objectives 2.4.1 and 2.4.2**

* Increase outreach to enable greater understanding of US foreign policy, American culture, and stronger business connections to the U.S.
* Increase outreach to the Lebanese public to promote great understanding US foreign policy, American culture, and stronger business connections to the U.S.
* Enhance travel and exchange opportunities for Lebanese citizens, while securing U.S. borders and protecting U.S. citizen interests in a challenging regional environment.

**Problem Statement:** Key segments of the Lebanon public are not fully aware of the breadth and depth of USG economic, development, and education assistance.

**PD Initiative:** Develop products and programs to increase audience engagement at two American Corners, and expand range of services and audiences, including through alumni-implemented activities.

**PD Activities**

Coordinate with media to clarify U.S. policies, underscore U.S. assistance in all fields and amplify it through different media platforms. Work with grantees and American spaces to promote civic engagement, non-formal education, U.S. culture, and entrepreneurship. Coordinate with alumni networks to maintain feedback relationship for reporting and atmospherics. Supporting and promoting free speech especially online through the Free Speech Positive grant through research and discussions with different stakeholders with the aim of enacting positive amendments to the legal framework.

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| Themes: | Civil Society, Democracy |
| Audience: | Civil Society Partners, Grantees, Students, General Public |
| Internal Collaborators: | POL, MEPI, USAID |
| External Collaborators: | Civil Society Partners, Participating institutions/implementers |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. . 2. Free Speech Positive grant leads to initiating discussions on how to introduce positive amendments to the legal framework. |

**PD Activity 2.3:** Civil society leads others to bring about improvements in gender equality, LGBT rights, rights for persons with disabilities, freedom of expression, and the protection of trafficked persons in Lebanon.

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| Themes: | Civil Society, Democracy, Human Rights |
| Audience: | Civil Society Partners, Grantees, Students, General Public |
| Internal Collaborators: | POL, MEPI, USAID |
| External Collaborators: | Civil Society Partners, Participating institutions/implementers |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Integrate civil activism projects into existing programming. For example, encouraging alumni of the Teaching Women English program to continue growing their Gender-Based Violence Campaign to encourage interaction with social media content (evidence of raising awareness) and participation in in-person outreach engagements. 2. Continue support for disability rights through programs like the Empowerment Through Integration grant, which targets visually impaired youth (who typically are excluded from the Lebanese school system) and teaches them STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art and Math) skills. |

**PD Activity 2.4:** Increase outreach to enable greater understanding of US foreign policy, American culture, and stronger business connections to the U.S.

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| Themes: | Education, Democracy, Consular Services |
| Audience: | Students, General Public |
| Internal Collaborators: | Mission Community |
| External Collaborators: | Media, Grantees, Amideast, EducationUSA, American Corners, Alumni, Universities, Ministry of Culture |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Craft and implement at least three “Coffee with Consular” social media programs to raise awareness (evaluated by number of views and engagement with social media postings) of the visa process. 2. Support/ design at least five mission speaker programs to Lebanese institutions promoting U.S. culture as articulated through holidays, politics, arts, and other themes. 3. Increased media coverage of U.S. government-funded outreach activities to be measured by number of TV interviews, print/online articles, and radio coverage. Editorial understanding of U.S. policies becomes deeper and more extensive. 4. Advertise a Notice of Funding Opportunity at least once per Fiscal Year to encourage new partnerships with potential implementers. 5. Engagement with alumni from MEMI, GMM, and other filmmaking programs leads to partnerships with the U.S. film market (ex. Netflix, Academy of motion pictures, etc.) 6. AFCP-supported sites are restored, open for tourism. 7. The number of Lebanese students studying in the U.S. maintains or increases. 8. Increased number of social media followers and engagement with content. 9. American Corners expand range of services and audiences through including alumni-implemented activities. |

**ICS Mission Goal 3:** Increase inclusive economic growth, bilateral trade, transparent quality services, and improve socio-economic conditions.

**Mission Objective 3.1; Sub-Objectives 3.1.1 and 3.1.2**

* Enhance inclusive economic growth;
* Increase private sector competitiveness and US-Lebanese trade and investment
* Promote access to finance; hold Lebanese banks accountable to international AML/CTF standard

**Mission Objective 3.2; Sub-Objectives 3.2.1 and 3.2.2;**

* Improve capacity of the public sector in providing transparent quality services across Lebanon;
* Expanded access to quality education for all students in Lebanon
* Improved quality of services across Lebanon, especially water-related services

**Mission Objective 3.3; Sub-Objectives 3.3.1 and 3.2.2;**

* Improve socio-economic conditions of refugees and other vulnerable populations in Lebanon;
* Humanitarian standards of protection and well-being are maintained for refugees inside Lebanon

**Problem Statement:**

**PD Initiative:** Embassy Beirut Public Affairs Section will design and implement programs that encourage the development of professional skills, increase access to education for youth in economically disadvantaged areas, and support entrepreneurship opportunities for youth, women and at risk populations. Embassy Beirut will recruit for exchange programs in diverse regions of Lebanon to target participation of disenfranchised and vulnerable populations.

**PD Activity 3.1-1**

Amplify bilateral trade and humanitarian assistance through coordination with media.

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| Fiscal Quarters: | All Year |
| Themes: | Humanitarian Aid, Trade |
| Audience: | Media; General Public |
| Internal Collaborators: | USAID, POL, MEPI |
| External Collaborators: | Media |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Media and Embassy social media platforms amplify bi-lateral trade and USG assistance to vulnerable populations. Amplification measured through articles, TV interviews, radio coverage, and polling. |

**PD Activity 3.2-1** Expand access for quality education for students through English language and other education programs that target economically disadvantaged areas and women/girls. Embassy Beirut Public Affairs Section will continue to shape existing programming to promote entrepreneurship and employment. The most recent cycle of the post-specific Teaching Women English program led to 8.4% of participants obtaining jobs and continuing their higher education. Embassy Beirut will increase entrepreneurship and professional development programming to continue this trend.

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| Fiscal Quarters: | All Year |
| Themes: | Education |
| Audience: | General Public; Students |
| Internal Collaborators: | All sections and some agencies at post (USAID): and also RELO from Manama; GEC |
| External Collaborators: | Media, Grantees, Amideast, EducationUSA, American Corners, Alumni, Universities |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Increased awareness of USG programs promoting education and entrepreneurship. |

**PD Activity 3.2-2** Recruit for exchange programs in diverse regions of Lebanon to target participation of disenfranchised and vulnerable populations. Embassy Beirut’s Access program has typically targeted hard-to-reach areas to promote English language and American culture. In 2017 and 2018, the Access program targeted 580 students (1160 students total as there are 2 concurrent grants) in 29 different locations. These participants can serve as multipliers to spread program information and apply to other Embassy opportunities as changes to this program in 2019 entail broadening program scholarships to encompass teacher trainings, alumni-initiated and implemented activities, and other implementers. Such changes will be designed to meet popular demand for practical academic reforms that both showcase U.S. educational strengths and align with labor market requirements.

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| Fiscal Quarters: | All Year |
| Themes: | Education |
| Audience: | General Public; Students |
| Internal Collaborators: | All sections; RELO |
| External Collaborators: | Media, Academic Institutions, Implementers, Students and Alumni |
| Expected Outcomes: | 1. Diverse participant pool in Embassy Beirut-managed programs, representing increasing engagement with disenfranchised groups. |