



**American University of Beirut
University Scholarship Program
HES Award**

**YEAR TWO QUARTER ONE
NARRATIVE REPORT**

**COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT:
No. 72026818CA00002**

**REPORTING PERIOD:
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A. Program Summary

The overarching goal of AUB, through the USAID Higher Education Scholarships (HES) is to increase the private sector competitiveness through increased workforce readiness linked to job opportunities. The project aims specifically at increasing access to quality education, and equipping the beneficiary scholars with the necessary technical, soft, and leadership skills needed to excel in the labor market. Higher Education Scholarships (HES) at AUB will provide undergraduate scholarships, covering full educational costs including a housing/transportation allowance and stipends to attend high quality universities that promote critical thinking, freedom, diversity, and respect. The HES consists of two components:

Component 1: The University Scholarship Program (USP VIII)

The University Scholarship Program – Phase Eight (USP VIII) which aims at enabling meritorious and financially disadvantaged Lebanese public and private school graduates to access quality higher education to increase their job readiness and maximize their potential in supporting Lebanon’s democratic and economic development.

Component 2: Refugee Scholarship Support (RSS)

HES will offer scholarships to non-Lebanese, having refugee status and are legally residing in Lebanon, to complete undergraduate studies. RSS allows the recruitment, selection, and enrollment of one cohort of non-Lebanese refugee students for up to four academic years.

B. Executive Summary

This report summarizes all the activities and events that took place during the period extending from October 1, 2019 until December 31, 2019. It presents information related to the launching of the second recruitment year of the HES scholarship program.

C. Launching of HES Cycle II

On September 27, 2019, a meeting was held at AUB to officially launch the second recruitment year of the HES scholarship program. The meeting was called upon by USAID-AOR to discuss issues of interest among HES implementing partners (AUB and LAU) with a highlight on lessons learnt from HES Year I, especially the RSS component as well as the inclusion of private schools under USP VIII component. The meeting included representatives from AUB Office of Admission, a representative from AUB Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS), and AUB HES team. The meeting included also members of the HES team at LAU, representatives from the Enrollment Management Department at LAU, representatives from the Out Reach and Civic Engagement team at LAU, as well as the USAID-AOR. The agenda of the meeting listed a number of topics as follows: Recruitment, Selection, and Admission. Attendees went through and discussed each component in the meeting agenda. They then agreed on the below:

Recruitment

- a. AUB and LAU agreed to train their respective recruiters and ensure that they are fully aware of all the HES eligibility criteria. Partners also agreed to update the requirements and selection process of HES Cycle II.
- b. Both universities agreed to add in the FAQ document a clear statement regarding the parents' financial contribution towards the tuition. This statement applies ONLY to candidates who are enrolled in a private school in at least one of the last three high school years under USP VIII. Both universities agreed to update their FAQ document accordingly and to include parents' financial contribution, when applicable.
- c. Both universities will consider any foreseen budgetary changes that may impact the number of refugees. USAID might request to have more scholars than planned. However, this doesn't intend to say by any means that USAID will increase the total number of refugees under RSS.
- d. Partner universities will revise the HES applications and brochure for HES Cycle II (USP VIII and RSS): Respective Admission Officers of Partner Universities (AUB and LAU) will schedule meetings to update the HES applications and brochure and will finalize the material by mid October, 2019.
- e. Partner universities will revisit the material content and will agree on the quantities of the applications and brochure that they deem necessary to order.
- f. Both universities recommended that school visits start earlier this year. A timeline for upcoming activities was also set upon agreement of all attendees, as per below.

Date	Activity
October 15, 2019	Development of a revised draft of dissemination material (applications and brochure)
October 30, 2019	Dissemination material to be sent to printing
End of November, 2019	Dissemination material (applications and brochure) to be received by universities from printing
Early January, 2020	School visits to start
March 31, 2020	Deadline to submit the application under HES-Cycle II

Selection

USAID Updates

- a. Refugee Scholarship Support (RSS) Status: USAID might request to have more RSS scholars than planned. However, this doesn't intend to say by any means that USAID will increase the total number of refugees.
- b. Vetting: Vetting requirements remains the same by having all selected candidate names submitted to PVS without neglecting due diligence process.

Private School Students

No exceptions will be made for candidates coming from private schools above the 5 million LBP tuition cap. It was made clear that candidates who apply from private schools with a yearly tuition above 5 million LBP are not eligible to apply to HES irrespective of the source of funding to their tuition.

List of Private Schools

USAID will seek to obtain the list of all private schools in Lebanon with a yearly tuition less than 5 million LBP. If AUB or LAU have access to this list, then it will be shared accordingly.

Admission

- a. Property Statement "IFedit Al Milkiyeh" to be submitted along with the application (Pros/Cons). "IFedit Al Milkiyeh" to be submitted for the governorate place of residence as well as the governorate place of origin as per the ID for both parents. Both universities agreed that "IFedit Al Milkiyeh" to be requested by and submitted during the Open Days. RSS candidates to submit their "IFedit Al Milkiyeh" document according to the governate and district that they are residing in. A certified copy of "IFedit Al Milkiyeh" will be accepted by both AUB and LAU.

- b. Original copies of the yearly tuition fees for candidates enrolled in a private school in grade 10, 11, or 12 to be submitted along with the application as part of the Financial Aid documents. Partner universities will plan this accordingly in due time.
- c. Consistency in collecting financial aid documents from candidates who are applying to both universities: Partner Universities will plan accordingly in due time.
- d. Residency permit for refugees: Partner universities will make sure that all RSS scholars obtain their residency permit before enrollment and renew it (in due time) during their stay at AUB.
- e. Shortlisted student drop-outs due to transfer to a sister HES program: AUB and LAU agreed that students will not be allowed to transfer to a sister HES program when classes officially start at the their respective university.

D. Dissemination Material Release

Preparation of HES dissemination material began in early October, 2019. LAU representative and AUB Office of Admission representative met and revised both USP VIII and RSS applications and brochures. They agreed to modify the titles of both applications and update the selection process dates. The titles of both applications were modified as per the below table:

Application	Title
USP VIII	Higher Education Scholarship University Scholarship Program (USP VIII) at AUB and LAU
RSS	Higher Education Scholarship Refugee Scholarship Support (RSS) at AUB and LAU

The deadlines listed under the “selection process” in the applications were also updated as per the below table:

Date	Phase/Deadline
December 2019 – March 2020	Recruitment phase and completion of application
March 31, 2020	Deadline to receive complete applications
April 9, 2020	Deadline to receive additional documents requested by the university (if need be)
April 2020 – May 2020	- Review of applications and shortlisting students for exams

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ifedit milkieh for both mother and father/caregiver will be requested from shortlisted applicants who attend Open Days - Selection criteria: application completeness and high school grades
May 2020 – July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview period for students and parents - Selection criteria: high school grades, English Entrance Exam results, official Lebanese baccalaureate or official technical results, Lebanese baccalaureate score and validation of financial need, including “ifidet milkieh” (إفادة الملكية)
July 2020 – August 2020	Final selection criteria: high school grades, English Entrance Exam results, interview results, official Lebanese baccalaureate score, and financial aid assessment
End of August 2020	Start of Academic Year 2020-2021

The USAID-AOR has requested to make the below modifications pertaining to both USP VIII and RSS material before officially approving on the dissemination material:

- 1- Adding the USAID disclaimer on the cover page of both USP VIII and RSS applications as per the following: *“This flyer is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of AUB and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government”*.
- 2- Adjusting the statement on the back page of the cover of both applications to read: *“A Golden opportunity offered by two of the most prestigious universities in Lebanon with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)”*.
- 3- Inserting USAID branding at least on the first page of both applications and the brochure

Once the modifications in the dissemination material were finalized based on the edits requested by USAID-AOR, AUB and LAU were given an official approval to proceed in printing the applications and brochures.

E. Printing of Dissemination Material

AUB and LAU agreed to print the same quantities of applications and brochures as per the first HES recruitment year:

- 6,000 copies of USP VIII application
- 3,000 copies of RSS application
- 3,000 copies of the brochures

On December 12, 2019, AUB Office of Communications shared with the selected printers the artwork and PDF files of the applications and brochure. However, the printing of the dissemination material was put on hold as per official directives from USAID-AOR on December 13, 2019. AUB thus withheld the printing of the material until further notice from USAID-AOR.

F. Challenges

The economic crisis and political instability during this reporting period created many challenges; The Fall Semester 2019 was interrupted and AUB had to close for several days during October and November, 2019. However, the design of the HES Cycle II dissemination material was completed in due time, and the documents were about to be sent to printing up until AUB received directives from USAID-AOR in December, 2019 to withhold all activities pertaining to the second recruitment year until further notice. This is challenging by itself since any delay in printing the dissemination material might thus result in a subsequent delay in conducting the public school visits.

G. Upcoming Activities

The table below indicates the activities for the upcoming quarter if directives from USAID-AOR were given to proceed in the second recruitment year activities:

Activity	Date
Printing HES Cycle II Dissemination Material	December 2019-January 2020
Official Invitation Letters for AUB to visit Public Schools (MEHE Letter)	January 2020
Public School Visits	January 2020- March 2020
Outreach expansion plan of HES through FB/Instagram	January 2020- April 2020

H. Conclusion

This progress report includes the proceedings of major meetings and activities that took place in the aforementioned quarter extending from October 1, 2019 until December 31, 2019. It is worth noting that this is the second year of the HES scholarship program whereby the first cycle of students have been selected and are currently pursuing their undergraduate studies at AUB. This year is marked by the recruitment of the second cycle of HES students. Similar to the first recruitment year, financially disadvantaged eligible Lebanese and non-Lebanese (refugees) candidates coming from private and public schools in Lebanon will be given a chance to pursue their undergraduate studies at AUB.