



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

**YEAR TWO  
QUARTER FOUR  
NARRATIVE REPORT**

**COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT:  
No. 72026818CA00002**

**REPORTING PERIOD:  
July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 – September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020**

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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 educational costs including a housing/transportation allowance and stipends to attend high quality universities that promote critical thinking, freedom, diversity, and respect. HES consists of two components:

### **Component 1: The University Scholarship Program (USP VIII)**

The University Scholarship Program – Phase Eight (USP VIII): 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 scholars 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 July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 till September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The narrative provides information on the HES Cycle II Open Days, HES Cycle II Final Selection, and HES Cycle II scholars’ enrollment at AUB during the month of September 2020. Open Days and Final Selection were carried out based on the contingency plan that was approved by USAID-AOR in May, 2020. Accordingly, financial and leadership interviews were conducted virtually during the open days, English Entrance Exam was waived, and the final selection of HES Cycle II scholars was done based on the USAID-AOR approved scoring matrix. The final list of selected candidates was then presented to the HES Steering Committee and to USAID-AOR for final approval. After receiving approval from USAID-AOR on the final list, the selected candidates (on both the accepted and waiting list) were vetted. All selected candidates were determined eligible to receive USAID funding. Accepted candidates were then contacted and informed that they were granted the scholarship. Candidates who accepted the scholarship visited AUB Reynolds Hall to sit for the placement exam on August 20, 2020 and to confirm their desired majors while taking all COVID-19 necessary precautions. Accepted scholars were also asked to attend the HES Students’ Orientation on August 31, 2020 and September 1, 2020. An IT Training workshop was conducted before the beginning of the Fall Semester 2020

which was on September 7, 2020. That day marked the beginning of HES Cycle II scholars' undergraduate journey at AUB.

### **C. Shortlisting Applicants for HES Cycle II Open Days**

#### **C.1 Shortlisting Applicants**

As per HES Award guidelines, 40% of applicants were shortlisted on July 2, 2020. Criteria that were studied for shortlisting included the below:

- School grades (Averages of grades 10 and 11 were compared to the averages generated for every district; hence, each applicant's grades were compared to the district grade average)
- Total Family Income (each applicant's family income was compared to the generated district income average)
- Gender balance per district (if gender balance was not met within a district, then applicants were selected from adjacent districts making sure to maintain gender balance)
- Meeting due diligence requirements (vetting was completed at a later stage for the final list of selected HES applicants, as per USAID-AOR's approval)

After reviewing data on HES applicants, a total number of 176 USP VIII Cycle II applicants and a total number of 69 RSS Cycle II applicants were shortlisted to participate in HES Open Days that took place from Monday July 13 to Friday July 17, 2020.

#### **C.2 HES Selection Steering Committee Meeting**

The HES Selection Steering Committee meeting took place virtually on July 6, 2020. HES management briefed the attendees on the HES Scholarship Award and its two components: USP VIII and RSS. Dr. M.T added that despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdown along with the recent civil unrest in the country, the recruitment and dissemination phase of HES Cycle II cohort was completed. The final selection of HES Cycle II candidates will now take place as planned and candidates will be able to join AUB for the AY 20-21. Dr. M.T added that the first round of shortlisted candidates will be contacted by AUB Office of Admissions to attend the AUB-HES Cycle II Open Days (virtually via zoom) which will take place from Monday July 13 to Friday July 17, 2020. Shortlisted candidates will undergo a leadership interview and a financial interview. Breadwinners will be contacted on phone by AUB-Financial Aid Office for a financial interview. The sections mentioned below provide a detailed description on the matters that were discussed during the committee meeting.

Mrs. N.D briefed the attendees on the recruitment activities that took place under HES Cycle II. She stated that printing of HES dissemination material was first withheld as per USAID-AOR directives and was then resumed during January 2020. HES Cycle II public school visits began during the month of February 2020, and

were then withheld on March 16, 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. Representatives from AUB-Office of Admissions then sent applications to the Directors of the schools that were not visited. Emails were also sent to the school directors asking them to inform their students to check the AUB-USP Webpage regularly for updates on the scholarship program. Candidates were then informed to submit their applications online via email to hes@aub.edu.lb. Deadline to submitting applications was extended to May 4, 2020. Deadline to submitting supporting documents was also extended to June 19, 2020. Applicants who submitted their applications but did not submit the requested supporting documents were contacted by AUB-Office of Admissions reminding them to submit all supporting documents before the due date. Mrs. N.D added that 75% of total received applications were submitted online. Data was then entered on Banner and AUBSIS by AUB-Office of Admissions team generating a list for USP VIII applicants and another list for RSS applicants. The total number of USP VIII Cycle II applications was 440, and the total number of RSS Cycle II applications was 172. Accordingly, 40% of total applications were shortlisted under each component as per HES Award eligibility criteria that are stated below:

- Be a Lebanese citizen (under USP VIII)
- Be a refugee/displaced student residing in Lebanon and holding a valid and legal Lebanese residency permit issued by the Lebanese authorities (under RSS)
- Not an American Citizen or Asylum seeker
- Have attended a public or private school in Lebanon for at least the last three years of your secondary education and expected to graduate from high school during summer 2020. An exception is made for students who spent two years out of the three in a public and private school and one secondary year in a US Government education exchange program (such as YES). Students who spent less than their last three years of schooling in Lebanon are not eligible unless their transfer to Lebanon was substantiated by death of the breadwinner, or official bankruptcy
- Obtain a minimum of 13.5/20 on your Grade 10 and Grade 11 Cumulative Average
- Not be registered at any university or have completed studies at any university
- Not have siblings who have benefited or are benefiting from any USP scholarship
- Not have parents receiving an educational university subsidy of 5,000 USD or more
- Annual family income less than 30,000 USD
- Demonstrate high financial need

As a result of data verification and the above mentioned eligibility criteria, 40% of total applications were shortlisted under each component, as per the below:

Total USP VIII Cycle II Shortlisted Candidates = 176

Total RSS Cycle II Shortlisted Candidates = 69

Mrs. N.D added that the shortlisted candidates will be contacted by AUB-Office of Admissions for interviews. Candidates will be asked to attend two virtual interviews: leadership interview and financial interview. Breadwinners will be contacted via phone for a financial interview. Candidates will not sit for EEE Exam as per the contingency plan that was approved by USAID-AOR in May, 2020. The scoring matrix for HES-Cycle II final selection that was also approved by USAID-AOR is as per below:

- Composite score of financial need and 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade averages: 70%
- Leadership and Financial Interview: 30%

Dr. S.H added that the accepted HES Cycle II scholars will sit for a placement test prepared by UPP Faculty to assess their English Language Proficiency, Chemistry, Physics, as well as Mathematics skills. This preliminary assessment will allow the HES team to enroll accepted scholars at the University Preparatory Program (UPP) for one term, two terms, or even three terms (in case of RSS candidates). Scholars who excel on the placement test will not be enrolled in UPP rather will begin their undergraduate studies as of the Fall Semester 2020. The remaining scholars will be enrolled in UPP. At the end of the Fall Semester 2020, UPP scholars who earn a cumulative average equal to 90% or more will not be enrolled in another semester of UPP rather will begin their undergraduate studies as of the Spring Semester 2021. Dr. S.H. added that the UPP Faculty will develop a comprehensive and structured program to compensate for the content that the newly selected scholars have missed back in high school due to the civil unrest and COVID-19 pandemic that occurred in AY 19-20. She also added that UPP course instruction will be given online during the Fall Semester 2020 and that all HES Cycle II scholars will be given IT and computer skills instruction before enrollment to be able to adapt smoothly with the online learning experience. Mrs. N.D added that candidates will be informed during the financial interview that they must submit their ownership deed of owned or inherited house, resort, building, land, or any business premise before final selection.

#### **D. HES Cycle II Open Days**

During the months of June and early July 2020, HES team planned and organized the open days. Based on lessons learned from previous experiences, the team revised the leadership interview questionnaire to better probe into the applicants' leadership potentials and their readiness to take part in community and civic engagement activities. Several questions were added to the different sections of the questionnaire to give the candidate a variety of options to articulate and deliver his/her thoughts. Moreover, a new section was added including a number of questions inquiring about the candidate's chosen major and career path and its impact on the community especially with the current emerging challenges. A meeting was then held on July 6, 2020 between HES management, AUB Office of Admission representative, and CCECS representative to plan for HES Cycle II Open Days that were scheduled to take place from Monday July 13 to Friday July 17, 2020. Following that, AUB Office of Admissions shared the list of HES Cycle II shortlisted candidates with HES management and CCECS team. The HES team divided the list of names across the five open days. Candidate names were split into five leadership interview panels per day and four financial interview panels per day over the course of five days. The list of names within each panel per day was then sent to CCECS team and AUB Office of Admissions. On Thursday July 9, 2020, AUB Office of Admissions completed due diligence screening of all shortlisted HES Cycle II candidates as well as their parents. All candidates had clear due diligence results.

After completing due diligence screening, the list of all HES Cycle II shortlisted candidates was posted on AUB-USP website. Shortlisted candidates were then called and informed that they were shortlisted for the first round of HES Cycle II selection. Candidates were informed that they had to sit for a virtual leadership interview and a virtual financial interview via zoom application. Shortlisted candidates were also asked to verify their email addresses and phone numbers. The CCECS team and the financial aid office team then sent emails to shortlisted candidates indicating the date, time, and zoom interview link. Candidates were also told that their breadwinners will be contacted for a financial interview via phone. AUB Faculty members were also invited by Dr. M.T to participate in the leadership virtual interviews. One faculty member offered to participate in the interviews. HES Cycle II Open Days then took place smoothly as scheduled from July 13 to July 17, 2020. All shortlisted candidates attended the open days except for one RSS candidate who refused the scholarship.

## **E. Final Selection Activities**

### **E.1 Final Selection Committee Meeting**

The period extending from July 17 till July 22, 2020 was dedicated to data entry of USP VIII and RSS shortlisted candidates' results on the leadership interview and financial aid interview. The notes of the financial need interview of both scholars and their parents were cross-matched and a need score was given to each USP VIII and RSS shortlisted candidate and was later added to the excel sheet of USP VIII and RSS candidates respectively. Since BAC II Exam was canceled for AY 19-20 due to COVID-19 pandemic, Admission Officers did not have to wait for results and were able to finalize the excel sheets. Selection of HES Cycle II scholars proceeded based on the below scoring matrix, as per the contingency plan that was approved by USAID-AOR in May 2020:

- 70% Need50Grade50
- 30% Leadership Interview

On July 7, 2020 AUB Office of Grants and Contracts confirmed that AUB has received official approval from USAID-AOR to select a total number of 45 USP VIII Cycle II scholars and a total number of 24 RSS Cycle II scholars. Based on these figures and the approved scoring matrix, the final selection of HES Cycle II scholars proceeded.

The HES Selection Committee met virtually on July 23, 2020. A total of 245 candidates were shortlisted (USP VIII Cycle II = 176, RSS Cycle II = 69). Candidates underwent leadership interviews and financial interviews. Also, candidates' breadwinners underwent financial interviews. Only 1 RSS candidate refused the scholarship and did not undergo the virtual interviews. 40% of total applications were shortlisted in July 2020 under each component, as per the below:

Total USP VIII Cycle II Shortlisted Candidates = 176

Total RSS Cycle II Shortlisted Candidates = 69

The shortlisted candidates attended the virtual Open Days (leadership and financial interviews). Breadwinners were also contacted via phone by AUB Financial Aid Officers for financial interviews. Candidates did not sit for EEE Exam as per the contingency plan that was approved by USAID-AOR in May 2020. Scores of shortlisted candidates were then entered on the system and a scoring matrix was used for final selection, as per below:

- Composite score of financial need and 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade averages: 70%
- Leadership and Financial Interview: 30%



Accordingly, shortlisted candidates' composite scores were calculated and final selection was done. Under USP VIII Cycle II, a total of 45 candidates were selected (Females = 23, Males = 22). Under RSS Cycle II, a total of 24 candidates were selected (Females=17, Males = 7). Dr. A. S explained that under USP VIII component, HES Award mandates to select 30% of applicants from Beirut and Mount Lebanon, while 70% of applicants from South Lebanon, Nabatiyeh, North Lebanon, Baalbeck-Hermel, Beqaa, and Akkar. The award, on the other hand, does not specify the quota of applicants to be selected from private or public schools. Candidates of highest composite scores were selected from each district regardless of the school giving equal chances to both genders. In other words, the male and the female with the highest composite scores per district were automatically selected. A male and a female with the second highest composite scores per district were put on the waiting list in case a selected candidate refuses the scholarship. The total number of selected candidates under USP VIII Cycle II = 45. Moving to the RSS component, the HES Award does not put any restrictions on gender, district, and nationality (Syrians vs. Palestinians in this case). As a result, a total number of 20 Palestinian candidates and a total number of 4 Syrian candidates were selected under RSS Cycle II. Candidates were selected as a result of their highest composite scores regardless of gender, district, school (public or private), and nationality. The total number of selected candidates under RSS Cycle II = 24.

Dr. S. H added that the selected candidates who approve the scholarship will be asked to sit for a Placement Exam that will take place in August, 2020. Scholars will be asked to sit for a Freshman Level English, Mathematics, and Science assessment. Scholars who excel on the assessment will be enrolled as sophomores and will begin their undergraduate studies in Fall Semester 2020. The rest will be enrolled in UPP, and their performance will be monitored during the semester and based on that scholars may need 1 term of UPP, 2 terms of UPP, or even 3 terms of UPP (applicable to RSS scholars only). Dr. S H. added that scholars who are enrolled in UPP will select their majors as of acceptance but will be given a chance to finalize their choice of major during UPP. However, scholars will not be allowed to shift from a 3-year program to a 4-year program, as per HES Award guidelines. Finally, Dr. M. T concluded that the final lists along with the statistics will be sent to USAID-AOR for official approval after committee members give their consensus. All candidates (selected candidates and waiting list candidates) will then be vetted on PVS prior to enrollment.

## **E.2 USAID-AOR Approval on Final List**

Following the Final Selection Committee Meeting, four excel files pertaining to HES Cycle II (USP VIII and RSS) selected candidates were shared with USAID-AOR on July 27, 2020 for final approval before proceeding with the vetting process. The files consisted of:

- 1- USP VIII excel file including all shortlisted candidates with their corresponding information. The selected candidates were labeled as “Y” for USP VIII in the (ACCEPTED) column of the excel sheet. Candidates who were placed on the waiting list were labeled as “W” in the (ACCEPTED) column of the excel sheet.
- 2- RSS list including all RSS Cycle II shortlisted applicants with their corresponding information. The RSS selected candidates were labeled as “Y” in the (ACCEPTED) column of the excel sheet. RSS candidates who were placed on the waiting list were labeled as “W” in the (ACCEPTED) column of the excel sheet.
- 3- An excel file including 3 sheets of summary tables and statistics on USP VIII selected candidates as per below:
  - a- Gender distribution of the accepted candidates
  - b- Geographic distribution per governorate inclusive of the number of selected scholars and their respective percentages
  - c- Number and percentage of scholars who were selected from private schools vs. public schools
- 4- An excel file including 4 sheets of summary tables and statistics on RSS selected candidates as per below:
  - a- Gender distribution of the accepted candidates
  - b- Geographic distribution per governorate inclusive of the number of selected scholars and their respective percentages
  - c- Nationality of selected scholars
  - d- Number and percentage of scholars who were selected from private schools vs. public schools

On August 14, 2020 USAID-AOR approved the final proposed list of HES Cycle II selected scholars pending vetting clearance of all scholars.

### **E. 3 Vetting of Selected HES Cycle II Scholars**

USP VIII and RSS Cycle II candidates that were accepted or placed on the waiting list were vetted on the Partner Vetting System (PVS). The HES team filled the candidates’ data on the Partner Information Form (PIF) and uploaded it on PVS. Once the vetting support unit replied back providing the eligibility letters of all vetted candidates, the HES academic monitor automatically contacted the accepted USP VIII and RSS candidates and informed them that that they were granted the USAID-HES scholarship.

### **E.4 UPP Placement Exam and Major Confirmation**

HES Cycle II scholars visited AUB-Reynolds Hall on Thursday August 20, 2020 to sit for the UPP Placement Exam. The exam was two hours and a half long. Scholars were instructed to come alone to campus, bring their national identification form, wear a facemask at all times, and respect social distancing guidelines. After completing the exam, scholars were asked to fill in and sign the below forms:

- Major Confirmation Form – confirming their choice of major
- Ifedit Al Milkiyeh Form – confirming their submission of the requested ownership deed document within a week of acceptance
- Sibling Letter Form – confirming that they have no siblings who were or are currently funded by the HES – USAID program

Scholars were then informed that they will attend the HES Orientation which will take place end of August, 2020. In the last week of August, 2020 some selected candidates declined the Award for personal reasons or due to a mismatch between their choices of major and the ones offered as per scholarship eligibility guidelines. Hence, replacements/substitutions were made in coordination with the Office of Admissions. Replaced candidates along with the justifications on replacement were sent to USAID-AOR for final approval. Due to the late notice of refusal of scholarship by several candidates, the total number of USP VIII Cycle II scholars ended up to 42, and the total number of RSS Cycle II scholars ended up to 23. USAID-AOR was informed that cost savings will be used to select an additional number of students under HES Cycle III selection.

## **F. Baseline Collection**

### **F.1 Descriptives on Preparatory Year Enrollment**

#### **USP VIII**

Among the 42 selected USP VIII Cycle II scholars, 11 scholars were placed in the University Preparatory Program (UPP) for one semester and 22 scholars for two semesters.

#### **RSS**

Among the 23 selected RSS Cycle II scholars, 9 scholars were placed in UPP for one semester and 8 scholars for two semesters.

#### **Project Duration**

All selected scholars are expected to graduate within their Cycle II award mandated duration i.e. not more than five years.

### *USP VIII Cycle II Scholars*

- Up to one preparatory year, if needed:

- 22 scholars need 2 semesters UPP
- 11 scholars need 1 semester UPP

- Up to four academic years:

- 4 scholars got accepted under 4yr programs: 1 needs 1 UPP semester, 3 enrolled as sophomores

### *RSS Cycle II Scholars*

- Up to one preparatory year, if needed:

- 8 scholars need 2 semesters UPP
- 9 scholars need 1 semester UPP

- Up to four academic years:

- 1 scholar got accepted under 4yr programs with 2 terms UPP

### **Gender Distribution**

<b>HES Component</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
USP VIII Cycle II	21	21
RSS Cycle II	16	7

### **Geographic Distribution**

#### *USP VIII Cycle II*

<b>District</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
Beirut	2
Mount Lebanon	11
North Lebanon	9
Akkar	2
Beqaa	5
Baalbek Hermel	1
South Lebanon	5
Nabatieh	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>

### **Public and Private Schools**

#### *USP VIII Cycle II*

Among the 42 USP VIII Cycle II selected scholars, a total of 16 scholars were enrolled in a private school in grade 10, grade 11, or grade 12. The scholars who attended private schools were informed during the HES

Cycle II Orientation that they must contribute towards their tuition fees at AUB; these scholars must pay a proportional amount to the average school tuition in grades 10, 11 and 12 irrespective of the source of payment.

#### *RSS Cycle II*

Among the 23 RSS Cycle II selected scholars, a total of 4 scholars were enrolled in a private school in grade 10, grade 11, or grade 12.

#### **Housing/Transportation**

#### *USP VIII Cycle II*

As per HES Award guidelines, up to 80% of USP VIII scholars will be eligible for housing per cycle. The remaining 20% are eligible for transportation allowance (HES Award p. 38). Having mentioned this, a total number of 33 scholars under USP VIII Cycle II will benefit from AUB Housing, and a total of 9 USP VIII Cycle II scholars will receive a transportation allowance.

#### *RSS Cycle II*

As per HES Award guidelines, up to 80% of RSS scholars will be eligible for housing per cycle and 20% are eligible for transportation allowance (HES Award p. 56). Having mentioned this, a total number of 17 RSS Cycle II scholars will benefit from AUB Housing and a total number of 6 RSS Cycle II scholars will receive a transportation allowance.

#### **G. HES Students' Orientation**

On August 31 and September 1, 2020 HES scholars (USP VIII and RSS) attended their first orientation session prior to their enrollment at AUB. The orientation session provided the selected scholars with an overview of the HES Award requirements, benefits, as well as responsibilities. Scholars were also given general information on their civic engagement requirements and the various AUB Clubs and Societies. Following that, scholars were introduced to the healthcare services at AUB as part of their Health Insurance Plan (HIP). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was then explained by the academic monitor and program coordinator. Each scholar was given two copies of the MOU and was asked to sign both copies and to hand in one of the signed copies to the program coordinator. A detailed description of the program of the orientation session is mentioned in the table below.

Table 1

#### *HES Student Orientation Session Program*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>
9:00 - 10:00 AM	Introduction to HES Scholarship Overview of HES benefits and responsibilities
10:00 - 10:30 AM	Introduction to Student Affairs Services (clubs and societies)
10:30 - 11:15 AM	Overview of Health Insurance Plan (HIP) at AUB
11:15 - 12:00 PM	MOU Briefing

### **H. Information Technology Training**

On September 3 and September 7, 2020 HES (USP VIII and RSS) Cycle II scholars attended an IT Training workshop. The main objective behind the IT Training was to provide the newly admitted HES scholars with the essentials on IT and online learning platforms. In addition to that, scholars needed to gain some knowledge about computers and the different learning platform features and functionalities especially that instruction is given almost exclusively online at AUB for the Fall Semester 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Details pertaining to the IT training are attached in the project material folder.

### **I. Scholars' Enrollment for Fall Semester 2020 (Academic Year 2020-2021)**

The Fall Semester 2020 began on September 1, 2020. A total of 9 USP VIII Cycle II and 6 RSS Cycle II scholars were enrolled as sophomores and registered their courses during the assigned registration period. These scholars filled their graduation plans, showed the plans to their advisors and submitted it to their academic monitor who further reviewed the plan before the end of the drop and add period i.e. September 8, 2020. The remaining HES Cycle II scholars (33 USP VIII and 17 RSS) were enrolled in UPP and began their online classes as scheduled. All HES scholars were asked to share with the HES program coordinator their contact numbers and emails once activated. The HES program coordinator and academic monitor will follow-up regularly on the academic and non-academic progress of all HES Cycle II scholars during the semester.

### **J. Administrative Follow-Up**

#### **J. 1 Dorms and Transportation Allowance**

## **USP VIII Cycle II**

As per HES Award guidelines, up to 80% of USP VIII scholars are eligible for housing per cycle. The remaining 20% are eligible for transportation allowance (HES Award p. 38). Having mentioned this, a total number of 33 scholars under USP VIII Cycle II will benefit from AUB Housing, and a total of 9 USP VIII Cycle II scholars will receive a transportation allowance. Scholars who benefit from the transportation allowance are residents of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. On March 2, 2020 AUB suspended all student-related activities on campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdown measures. Technology-enhanced learning replaced physical attendance and classes were delivered online for the rest of the AY 19-20. Only students with a valid reason and special permission were allowed on campus premises. Fall Semester 2020 began on September 7 and classes were also delivered exclusively online during the month of September. Accordingly, all HES Cycle II scholars were asked to reside in their hometowns and to attend their classes virtually.

## **RSS Cycle II**

As per HES Award guidelines, up to 80% of RSS scholars are eligible for housing per cycle and 20% are eligible for transportation allowance (HES Award p. 56). Having mentioned this, a total number of 17 RSS Cycle II scholars will benefit from AUB Housing and a total number of 6 RSS Cycle II scholars will receive a transportation allowance. Scholars who benefit from the transportation allowance are residents of Beirut and Mount Lebanon. As mentioned in the above section on USP VIII Cycle II, classes were delivered online during the month of September 2020, and all HES Cycle II scholars were asked to reside in their hometowns in order to attend their classes virtually.

## **J. 2 Stipends**

### **USP VIII Cycle II**

A total of 42 USP VIII Cycle II scholars received stipends amounting to 400 USD during the month of September 2020 as part of the 1,600 USD total amount of stipends that the HES scholars shall receive during a regular semester.

### **RSS Cycle II**

A total of 23 RSS Cycle II scholars received stipends amounting to 400 USD during the month of September 2020 as part of the 1,600 USD total amount of stipends that the scholars shall receive during a regular semester.

## **J. 3 Book Allowances**

## **USP VIII Cycle II**

A total of 9 USP VIII Cycle II scholars received their book allowances amounting to 325 USD at the beginning of the Fall Semester 2020. The remaining scholars (33 in total) are enrolled in the UPP program and did not receive a book allowance for the Fall Semester 2020, because UPP course instruction material is given exclusively online for this semester.

## **RSS Cycle II**

A total of 6 RSS Cycle II scholars received their book allowances amounting to 325 USD at the beginning of the Fall Semester 2020. The remaining scholars (17 in total) are enrolled in the UPP program and did not receive a book allowance for the Fall Semester 2020, because UPP course instruction material is given exclusively online for this semester.

### **K. Upcoming Activities**

In the upcoming quarter, the HES program coordinator and academic monitor will follow-up as usual on all scholars making sure that they all meet their academic and extra-curricular requirements. A total of 11 USP VIII Cycle II scholars and 9 RSS Cycle II scholars who were enrolled in UPP for one term are expected to begin their undergraduate studies in Spring Semester 2021. These scholars will be guided to register their courses as per selected degree requirements. All HES scholars will be encouraged to engage in volunteering activities in order to meet their extra-curricular requirements. In the upcoming quarter, HES Cycle II scholars will be asked to attend a town hall meeting to check on their academic and extra-curricular progress and to reiterate on their volunteering requirements. The next quarter will also mark the beginning of HES Recruitment Year III. Recruitment activities pertaining to the months of October, November, and December 2020 will be highlighted in the upcoming narrative report.

### **L. Civic Engagement Component**

#### **L. 1 Leadership and Civic Engagement Interviews**

Candidates were shortlisted to attend the HES Cycle II Open Days which took place from Monday July 13 to Friday July 17, 2020. Virtual interviews were conducted to assess the financial need and leadership potential of candidates. Panelists who conducted the leadership interviews were first given guidance on the leadership assessment process along with the required forms and scoring matrix before conducting the interviews.

#### **Preparation for the Open Days**



After receiving a PDF copy of the application forms from the office of Admissions, a daily schedule of individual interviews was prepared by CCECS for the applicants and allocated to two panelists each (one faculty/USP member and one CCECS staff member). The applications were also shared via email with the assigned panelists in order to review applicants' essays and prepare relevant questions to be addressed during the leadership interviews. In coordination with the HES management, the files of matrix sheets and schedules were photocopied and prepared in files in order to be handed to the panelists on the interview day.

### **Signature of Confidentiality Forms**

All faculty/staff and CCECS team members who participated in the leadership assessment interviews signed a confidentiality form that was later shared with the HES management.

### **Outcome of the Open Days**

A total number of 245 candidates were interviewed under HES Cycle II Open Days (69 RSS and 176 USP VIII). Only 1 RSS candidate rejected the scholarship. The remaining candidates all sat for the interviews and no problems were noted at all.

### **Data Entry of Leadership Interviews**

CCECS updated the leadership interview results based on the matrix sheets filled by the panelists. The results were calculated based on the average of the two panelists' scores. After review, the results were shared with the HES management.

## **L.2 HES Cycle II Scholars' Engagement in AUB Clubs and Societies**

The registration platform for the AY 20-21 was open for AUB students on October 5, 2020; CCECS will be contacting the office of Student Affairs as well as HES students during the month of October 2020 to follow up on this matter and document accordingly.

## **L.3 Introduction to Civic Engagement and Leadership Potential**

Introductory sessions on civic engagement and leadership development were delivered on September 24 and September 30, 2020 by the CCECS team to all HES Cycle II newly enrolled scholars. The two sessions that were conducted on September 24, 2020 were specifically conducted to HES Cycle II- UPP scholars given that their volunteering rotations (15 hours) will adhere to UPP classroom requirements: 15 hours of voluntary activities based on one intervention sector. Scholars were first introduced to the AUB Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) that will be mentoring and guiding them throughout their time at AUB in order to successfully fulfill the civic engagement requirements of their USAID scholarship. This was followed by an overview on volunteering, including definition, expectations, processes, reporting tools and best practices. In

addition to that, scholars were briefed on the various intervention sectors that the NGOs operate under and at the end each scholar was given the chance to select his/her preferred intervention sector.

The session on September 30, 2020 targeted HES Cycle II– regular (non-UPP) scholars. These scholars were first introduced to the AUB Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) that will be mentoring and guiding them throughout their time at AUB in order to successfully fulfill the civic engagement requirements of their USAID scholarship. This was followed by an overview on volunteering, including definition, expectations, processes, reporting tools, and best practices. The overall objective of the sessions was to provide scholars with a clear briefing on their civic engagement and community outreach requirements as part of their undergraduate non-academic requirements.

#### **L.4 Volunteering Rotations**

##### **Volunteer Rotations Update – HES UPP Scholars**

During September 2020, CCECS team shared with HES-UPP scholars a list of opportunities in different various sectors to ensure their placements with NGOs based on: (1) the sector of intervention they have chosen; (2) the tasks/activities that they are interested in; (3) their academic schedule; and (4) the location, if possible.

##### **Volunteer Rotations Update – HES Regular (non-UPP) Scholars**

Given that the introductory session was delivered at the end of September 2020, the scholars have not yet engaged in any activity. Nevertheless, a list of volunteering opportunities prepared by the CCECS team, has been provided to them and will continue to be on a bi-weekly basis.

#### **L.5 Planned Activities**

##### **Volunteering Rotations**

During October 2020, the CCECS team will reach out to the office of Student Affairs to compile the final list pertaining to USP scholars' registration in clubs and societies. In addition to that, CCECS will be following up with the HES scholars to ensure that they all sign up in clubs and societies for the current academic year. Scholars will be also provided with volunteering opportunities from the center's database of credible local NGOs and community partners. They will be also encouraged to suggest new volunteering activities and build partnerships with organizations that match their skills and interests. The CCECS team will follow-up with the HES scholars at the end of every month to receive updates on their individual progress.