

## PHOTO TOUR AND EXHIBITION

 *Final Report*



**HIKE IT.  
PROTECT IT.**  
مشي لتحمي

# Table of Contents

- I. Project objective ..... 3
  - Visualizing Conservation: Environmental Education on the Lebanon Mountain Trail..... 3
- II. Implementation ..... 4
  - Activity 1: Photo Tour outing: ..... 4
  - Activity 2: Photographic Exhibition:..... 6
    - Exhibition Curation and Information Display ..... 6
    - Student Photography Showcase at Beirut Guesthouse..... 8
- QUALITY INSURANCE ..... 14
- Annex 1 – Students List..... 15
- Annex 2- sample photos from the exhibition ..... 16

## I. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

### Visualizing Conservation: Environmental Education on the Lebanon Mountain Trail

The DIMED-funded project, "*Awareness and Environmental Education on Three Long-Distance Hiking Trails in Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine,*" combined integrated local actions in each country with a shared resource emphasizing Mediterranean biodiversity.

These local efforts aimed to educate primary, middle, or university students about biodiversity through hands-on activities and field experiences.

In Lebanon, the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA) specifically engaged 18 students from 9 universities in a Photo Tour and a public exhibition to achieve the following:

- Develop students' nature photography abilities.
- Increase awareness of environmental issues and the significance of biodiversity preservation.



## II. IMPLEMENTATION

During the final reporting period, the below planned activities were implemented:

### Activity 1: Photo Tour outing:

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, a photographic outing to the Barouk entrance of the Shouf Nature Reserve took place. This excursion primarily involved photography and audiovisual students from Lebanese universities and was led by a photography expert (Samer Halwany) and a nature guide and eco-tour operator (Pascal Abdallah).



The Photo Tour commenced in the bus with an introductory explanation of the Shouf region's nature and culture, led by nature and eco-tour operator Pascal Abdallah.

This was followed by a traditional Lebanese breakfast at a local Shouf restaurant, featuring manouche prepared with saj bread and homemade thyme and cheese fillings. Students engaged with the woman preparing the food, gaining insight into traditional Lebanese culinary practices.

Subsequently, the group visited the Shouf Nature Reserve, ascending (by bus) to 1800 meters to photograph *Cedrus libani* in challenging, snowy conditions.

The activity continued near the village of Barouk, where participants photographed biodiversity under the guidance of the photo coach Samer Halwany and nature guide Pascal Abdallah, in the presence of LMTA staff Julie Lebnan.

The day concluded with a lunch at the [Cezar's Project](#), offering youth the opportunity to experience traditional Lebanese cuisine incorporating wild plants.



## Activity 2: Photographic Exhibition:

Following the trip, the students' biodiversity-themed photographs were displayed in a public exhibition at [Beit Toureef](#), a partner organization located in the Gemmezye district of Beirut for one week.

### *Exhibition Invitation*



## Exhibition Curation and Information Display

The exhibition involved a two-stage process.

First, students chose their three finest 3 photographs.

Subsequently, a jury comprising two photography specialists and two LMTA personnel evaluated these submissions, selecting one image per student based on its contribution to the exhibition's biodiversity representation.

Each selected photograph was accompanied by the scientific and common names, and the IUCN status of the depicted species, information researched by the students and validated by a conservation expert.

Faculty professors at the nine participating universities received invitations to the exhibition, which was also advertised on LMTA's Facebook and Instagram. Special invitations were extended to the AFD office, the French Institute, and the French Embassy in Beirut.



This photograph captures [Scientific Name], [Common Name], identified by [Student's Name] from [University Name].  
*If you can add this information it's better :*  
 Its IUCN Red List status is [IUCN Status].  
 It [is/is not] endemic to Lebanon.

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 Délégation interministérielle à la Méditerranée  
 Liban, Égypte, Palestine



The question sheet the students had to fill.

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**This photograph captures *Cedrus Libani* (Cedar of Lebanon), identified by Anthony Abdo from Saint Joseph University. Its IUCN Red List status is Vulnerable globally. It is endemic to Lebanon, Syria and Türkiye.**

Lebanon Mountain Trail Association

The completed question sheet that accompanied the photograph.

## Student Photography Showcase at Beirut Guesthouse

The launch of the photography exhibition unfolded at a beautifully renovated traditional Lebanese guesthouse in Beirut, a venue reconditioned by a cultural heritage enthusiast.

The event drew around 60 attendees, a diverse group including professors, students' families, environmental advocates, friends of LMT, and the general public.

Following a welcoming address, three students shared heartfelt testimonies about the significance of the project and the impact of the Photo Tour on their vision of their country.

Afterwards, each student stood beside their photograph, offering personal insights into their artistic and-or biodiversity choices to the assembled guests.

The three-hour launch concluded with a light lunch and refreshments for everyone.

The exhibition then remained open for a full week at the guesthouse, allowing tourists and locals who frequented the establishment for meals and accommodation to also experience the students' work.

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**PROGRAM:**

**6:00 PM: Welcome and Registration**

**6:30 PM: Opening Remarks (LMTA)**

**6:45 - 7:15 PM: Student Testimonies**  
*Selected student photographers share their Photo Tour experiences.*

**7:15 - 9:00 PM: Refreshments and Networking**

**LMT Photo Tour Exhibition**

**Date: May 2, 2025**  
**Time: 6:00 to 9:00 PM**  
**Location : Beit Toureef Gemmayze (Beirut)**

  
درب الجبل اللبناني  
LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL

  
Med Trails Network

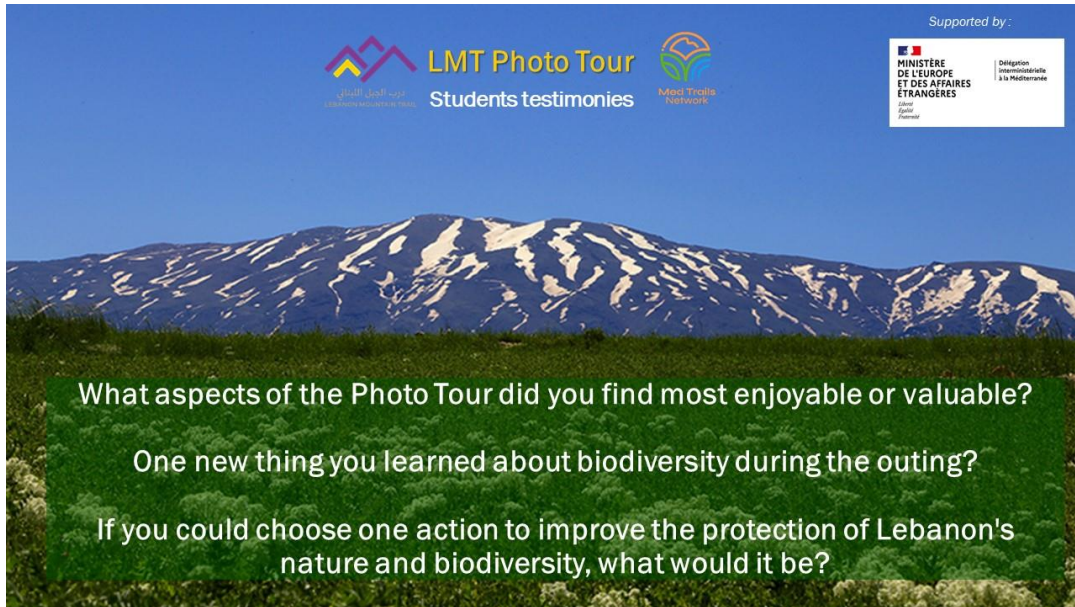
*Photo: Samer Halwany*











The single-day Photo Tour proved remarkably impactful, evidenced by the students' testimonials shared during the exhibition.

**“ Experiencing this photo tour, which perfectly combined my love for nature photography and hiking, was truly impactful. It's an excellent way to foster environmental awareness, reminding us that understanding leads to valuing, and valuing inspires protection. I'm grateful for the opportunity to showcase our dedication to preserving Lebanon's incredibly rich natural heritage as part of this biodiversity hotspot. Thank you for this experience! ”**

*Ghinwa Elias,  
Mountain Guide Student  
Sagesse University*

This experience inspired several participants to become volunteers and interns with the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA). This highlights the crucial role of connecting young individuals with their natural and cultural heritage, reinforcing the idea that what we know and love, we are more likely to protect.

# QUALITY INSURANCE

**Risk Mitigation Measures taken:**

- I. **Scope risk:** None
- II. **Cost risk:** There is no major budget variation.
- III. **Time risk:** Due to two weather-related postponements of the Photo Tour, we faced a time risk with less time to organize the exhibition and select the photos. To address this, we proactively emphasized the timely submission of tasks.
- IV. **Technology risk:** None
- V. **Weather risk:** Bad weather (rain and wind) forced us to postpone the Photo Tour twice. To minimize this risk, we carefully selected the day with the most favorable weather forecast.
- VI. **Communication risk:** none
- VII. **Health risks:** All participants were insured, and we addressed allergies and special dietary needs as indicated in the registration forms. Furthermore, a comprehensive first aid kit was readily available throughout the outing.



## ANNEX 1 – STUDENTS LIST

	Name of University	Name of Student
1	Alba-Balamand	Timea Azar
2	Alba-Balamand	Melanie Feghali
3	NDU (Notre Dame University)	Rachel Matta
4	AUB (expert) (American University of Beirut)	Leila Rossa Mouawad
5	USEK (Université St-Esprit Kaslik)	Pamela El Asmar
6	USJ - IESAV	Sarah Nader
7	USJ -IESAV	Clara Nacouzi
8	USJ (Université St-Joseph)	Maria Saade
9	USJ (Université St-Joseph)	Anthony abdo
10	LAU (Lebanese American University)	Elie Houry
11	LAU (Lebanese American University)	Loyd Daher
12	NDU (Notre Dame University)	Milya Bou Dargham
13	Sagesse University	Ghinwa Elias
14	Balamand University	Samah Amaneldine
15	USJ (Université St-Joseph)	Hayat Kabalan
16	Lebanese University	Hiba Bou Dargham
17	Lebanese University	Lara Bou Imad

## ANNEX 2- SAMPLE PHOTOS FROM THE EXHIBITION



*This photograph captures Cedrus Libani (Cedar of Lebanon), identified by Anthony Abdo from Saint Joseph University. Its IUCN Red List status is Vulnerable globally. It is endemic to Lebanon, Syria and Türkiye.*



*This photograph captures Malus Domestica (apple tree), identified by Clara Nacouzi from Université Saint Joseph.*



*This photograph captures the egg of a Turdus Merula (Eurasian blackbird), identified by Elie Z. Khoury from the Lebanese American University (LAU). Its IUCN Red List status is Least Concern (LC). It is not endemic to Lebanon.*



*This photograph captures Cedrus Libani (Cedar of Lebanon), identified by Ghinwa Elias from the Antonine University.  
Its IUCN Red List status is Vulnerable globally. It is endemic to the Mountains of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin: Lebanon, Syria and Türkiye.*



*This photograph captures Neotinea Tridentate (Toothed Orchid), identified by Melanie Feghali from the University of Lebanese Academy of Fine arts (ALBA) Beirut. Its IUCN Red List status is Least Concern. It is endemic to parts of Europe and the Mediterranean, including Lebanon.*



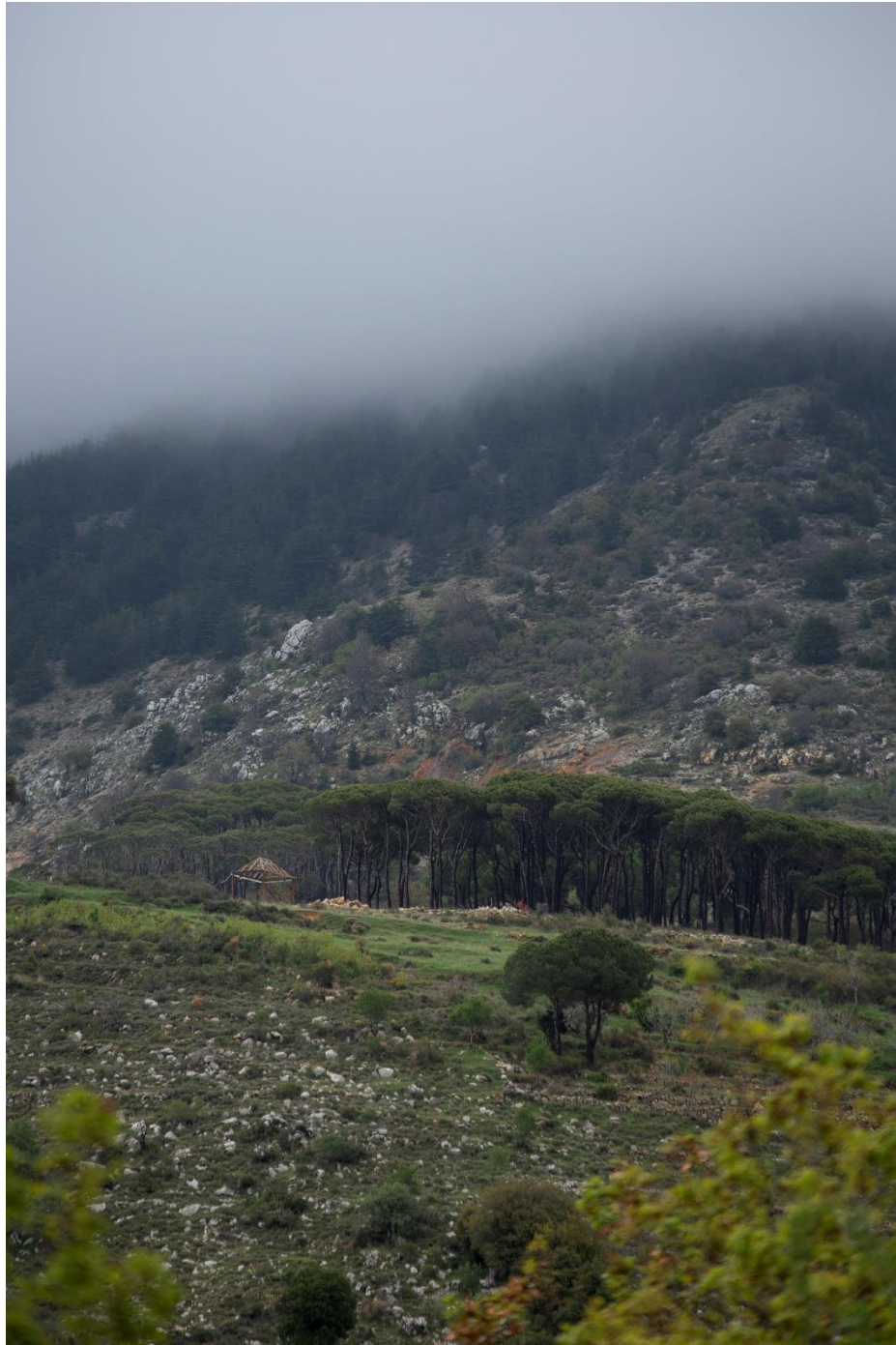
*This photograph captures Tulipa Aagenensis (Agen Tulip), identified by Milya Bou Dargham from NDU. Its IUCN Red List status is Least Concern. Tulipa Aagenensis is native to several countries in the Mediterranean, including Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey.*



*This photograph captures Zygaena Graslini, (moth). Identified by Pamela El Asmar from Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK). It is endemic to the Levant, including Lebanon.*



*This photograph captures Motacilla Cinerea (Grey Wagtail), identified by Samer Halwany from the Association for Bird Conservation in Lebanon (ABCL). Its IUCN Red List status is Least Concern. It is not endemic to Lebanon.*



*This photograph captures Pinus pinea, (Stone Pine), identified by Sarah Nader from the Saint-Joseph University of Beirut. It is endemic to Southern Europe and the Levant.*



*This photograph captures Cedrus Libani, Cedar of Lebanon, identified by Timea Azar from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA). Its IUCN Red List status is Vulnerable globally. It is endemic to Lebanon, Syria and Turkey.*