



GCEOA



cifal
Lebanon



unitar
United Nations Institute for Training and Research

GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon



Annual Report 2024

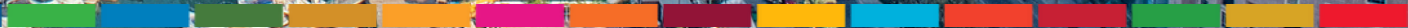


Table of Contents

Message from the Executive Director	3
Executive Summary	4
About GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon	5
Programs and Events Overview	11
GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon Virtual School Platform	16
GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon SDG Webinar Series	19
Strengthening Urban Sustainability: GCEOA and UN-Habitat	26
Fostering Partnerships and Exploring Global Collaborations	32
Strategic Objectives and Plans for 2025	36
Acknowledgement	39



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Partners and Supporters,

As 2024 draws to a close, we take this opportunity to reflect on a transformative year for CIFAL Lebanon. In our inaugural year as a UNITAR CIFAL Center, we encountered challenges that tested our resolve and commitment. Yet, through collaboration and perseverance, we laid the groundwork for meaningful and lasting progress.

Despite these challenges, CIFAL Lebanon remained steadfast in its mission to foster sustainable development through impactful programs tailored to the communities we serve. Our efforts centered on bridging knowledge gaps in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and empowering individuals with practical skills such as English language proficiency and capacity-building for resilience.

Key milestones from this year include the "ESG for Youth" webinar, which engaged 202 high school students from the Silay Institute in the Philippines, and our training session at the World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt, where 251 participants explored innovative digital tools for sustainable urban development.

These achievements are the result of collaborative efforts with our esteemed partners, including ADEC Innovations, UN-Habitat, Ascentify Learning Media, Silay Institute, and many others. We are particularly grateful for the steadfast support and guidance of UNITAR and the CIFAL Global Network, which have been invaluable in advancing our mission. Your collaboration has been instrumental in driving our progress and amplifying the impact of our initiatives.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to expanding our programs, forging new partnerships, exploring diverse funding opportunities, and tackling emerging sustainability challenges. Together, we will continue to advance our shared vision for a more equitable and sustainable future.

With profound gratitude,

James Donovan
Executive Director, CIFAL Lebanon
Chairman, Global CEO Alliance



James M. Donovan
Executive Director
CIFAL Lebanon

Executive Summary

In its inaugural year, CIFAL Lebanon firmly established itself as a key training and capacity-building hub for sustainable development, serving communities in Lebanon, the MENA region, and beyond. Hosted by the Global CEO Alliance (GCEOA) and affiliated with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), CIFAL Lebanon joins a global network of 34 training centers dedicated to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through education, collaboration, and innovation.

The year 2024 marked a series of impactful milestones for CIFAL Lebanon. The Center organized and participated in 19 training programs and events, engaging 1,007 beneficiaries across various sectors. These initiatives were designed to enhance professional and language skills, deepen understanding of the SDGs, and foster regional and global partnerships.

Establishing a Strong Foundation

The establishment of CIFAL Lebanon was officially announced on 15 November 2023, during the 20th Annual Steering Committee Meeting of the CIFAL Global Network in Geneva, Switzerland. A Memorandum of Understanding between the GCEOA and UNITAR formalized this collaboration, with Anchored in strategic partnership with ADEC Innovations, CIFAL Lebanon delivers training and capacity building programs through innovative learning tools, supported by a team of experts and professionals. The Center initially focused its program delivery on SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Today, its programs address a broad range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including health, education, economic growth, sustainable cities, and global partnerships.

Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, CIFAL Lebanon is poised to continue its mission of promoting SDG knowledge and sustainability practices. Leveraging its connections through GCEOA and the CIFAL Global Network, the Center is committed to building more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies. Through capacity-building, education, and innovation, CIFAL Lebanon aims to foster transformative efforts across the MENA region and beyond, driving meaningful progress toward the United Nations 2030 Agenda.





About GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon

Organizational Overview



United Nations Institute for Training and Research

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), established in 1963, is the UN's specialized training arm dedicated to developing individual, institutional, and organizational capacities. UNITAR enhances global decision-making and supports countries in addressing challenges through innovative training in areas such as peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, and disaster risk reduction.

The CIFAL Global Network, a UNITAR program, delivers regionally tailored training and capacity-building programs to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Operating under UNITAR's oversight, CIFAL centers act as local hubs for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and dialogue, empowering leaders and fostering sustainable development at the local and global levels.



CIFAL Global Network

The CIFAL (Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders) Global Network consists of 34 International Training Centres for Authorities and Leaders, coordinated by the UNITAR Social Development Programme. These UNITAR-accredited CIFAL centers provide innovative training and dynamic hubs for knowledge exchange among government officials, the private sector, and civil society.

The goal of CIFAL is to enhance human capacities to address development challenges and facilitate City-to-City (C2C) partnerships. Through efficient knowledge management, CIFAL centers provide networking opportunities that drive collaboration, peer-to-peer learning, and exchange of best practices.

Organizational Overview



Global CEO Alliance

Global CEO Alliance (GCEO) is an international non-profit organisation with one call to action - to bring about shared sustainability and transformative impact. The organization works to provide expert, innovative, and sustainable solutions to support development and implementation of programmes aimed at achieving the SDGs.

GCEO unites global leaders, governments, multilateral organizations, academia, and civil society to drive transformative change in the communities they serve. Through impact sourcing, education, investment, and targeted programs and projects, GCEO strives to create meaningful economic and social impact.



ADEC Innovations

ADEC Innovations, a global ESG and business solutions provider, plays a strategic role in supporting CIFAL Lebanon through its partnership with GCEO. This strategic partnership enables CIFAL Lebanon to broaden its impact by leveraging ADEC's expertise, extensive network, and technological capabilities in sustainability, ESG, and impact-driven programs.

By providing data-driven solutions and industry-leading sustainability practices, ADEC Innovations enhances GCEO and CIFAL Lebanon's capacity-building efforts. This support allows the Center to advance its mission of fostering sustainable development through innovative training and impactful programs.



About Us



CIFAL Lebanon was established in 2023 as part of UNITAR's global network of 34 training centers dedicated to advancing sustainable development through education, training, and capacity building. Hosted by the Global CEO Alliance (GCEOA), an international NGO accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, CIFAL Lebanon serves as a dynamic platform for knowledge sharing, skills development, and fostering collaboration across regional and international stakeholders to tackle pressing sustainability challenges.

Our Mission: Sustainability Shared

CIFAL Lebanon's mission, Sustainability Shared, is grounded in the belief that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires collective action, strong partnerships, accessible education and innovative tools. By bringing together diverse stakeholders and offering tailored programs, CIFAL Lebanon empowers communities to drive and implement transformative change for a sustainable future.

Core Values

Inclusivity

CIFAL Lebanon remains dedicated to addressing the needs of all communities, particularly underserved and marginalized groups. Through tailored, context-specific initiatives, the Center focuses on reducing inequalities and empowering individuals and organizations to drive meaningful, sustainable change.

Innovation

CIFAL Lebanon places forward-thinking strategies and innovative technologies at the core of its programs. By integrating modern methodologies and leveraging digital tools, the Center equips beneficiaries with essential skills needed to navigate today's dynamic landscape and promote sustainable solutions.

Collaboration

Building bridges across sectors—public, private, nonprofit, and academia—amplifies the impact of sustainable development efforts. Partnerships serve as the cornerstone of transformative change, with each initiative reflecting a spirit of collaboration and shared purpose.

Sustainability

Sustainability lies at the heart of every initiative, guiding practices that prioritize environmental stewardship, economic resilience, and social well-being. Every effort is thoughtfully designed to create lasting benefits for communities and the planet.

Partnerships and Collaborations

CIFAL Lebanon's initiatives are driven by strategic collaborations with external organizations. These partnerships enable the Center to expand its reach, enhance program delivery, and amplify its impact, contributing meaningfully to sustainable development goals.



United Nations Institute for Training and Research: As part of UNITAR's global network, CIFAL Lebanon is provided access to resources and training methodologies that align with the United Nations 2030 Agenda.



UN-Habitat: Partnering with UN-Habitat strengthens CIFAL Lebanon's efforts to address urban challenges, with a particular focus on sustainable urban development and fostering inclusive cities.



Ascentify: Enhancing CIFAL Lebanon's capacity-building programs through scalable eLearning solutions that enable tailored course delivery and foster effective learning.



ADEC Knowledge Management: Enhancing CIFAL Lebanon's capacity building initiatives through expertise in learning design, program management, and content development.



American University of Beirut: Exploring potential collaborations for course development, training programs and other knowledge exchange initiatives on SDG themes in the region.



Forward MENA: Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in the region, with a focus on fostering employment and sustainable economic growth.



Silay Institute (Philippines): Engaging students in SDG and ESG education, empowering future leaders with sustainability-focused learning opportunities.



Southern Ocean Carbon: Supporting knowledge-sharing initiatives on the Blue Economy by offering expertise in marine sustainability and conservation, promoting environmental awareness, and driving impactful action through education and advocacy.

Through strategic partnerships, CIFAL Lebanon strengthens its ability to deliver impactful programs that address diverse SDG themes, including climate action, urban development, sustainable business practices, and youth empowerment and employment. These collaborations remain central to its mission of fostering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities across the MENA region and beyond.

Leadership Team

James M. Donovan

Chairman, GCEOA
Executive Director, CIFAL Lebanon



A business leader with over 25 years of expertise in business process outsourcing, sustainability, ESG, and impact investment, James is the Co-Founder and CEO of ADEC Innovations, where he has grown the company to 4,500 employees across six continents. As Chairman of the Global CEO Alliance, he champions sustainable development by driving collaboration between and amongst businesses, governments, multilaterals, academe, and civil society.

Maria Corina Padilla

Deputy Director, CIFAL Lebanon



An international lawyer specializing in public administration and governance, international labor migration, and corporate law, Corina brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her roles as Head of the ADEC Innovations Foundation and Deputy Director of CIFAL Lebanon. Previously, she served as Head of the Migrant Workers Office at the Philippine Consulate General in Milan, Italy, where she played a pivotal role in expanding opportunities for overseas workers in Europe and contributed to key bilateral agreements on the safe and sustainable deployment of Filipino migrant workers abroad.

Michelle Tan

Managing Director, CIFAL Lebanon



With years of experience in corporate organizations, Michelle leads the Research and Development division at the Center and oversees the organization's United Nations programs. She is a Certified Sustainability Reporting Specialist and holds academic credentials in Business Management, Energy Risk Management, and Political Science.

Youssef Haj Ali

Country Director, GCEOA Lebanon



An experienced executive specializing in strategic planning, business development, and international NGO management, Youssef has a strong background in leading socio-economic and education projects. He has successfully managed donor-funded initiatives and organizational development for various NGOs and UN agencies. Currently serving as Country Director for GCEOA Lebanon, he is focused on supporting local programs, initiatives, and identifying funding opportunities for CIFAL Lebanon.

Sandy Zakhem

Senior Programme Manager, GCEOA Lebanon



A seasoned technical advisor and program manager with over 12 years of experience in the humanitarian and development sectors, specializing in program design, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, and donor relations, Sandy brings a strong track record to CIFAL Lebanon. She plays a key role in implementing impactful projects and strengthening partnerships across organizations in Lebanon.



A Year of Impact: Programs and Events Overview

Programs and Events Overview

1,007

Total Beneficiaries

30

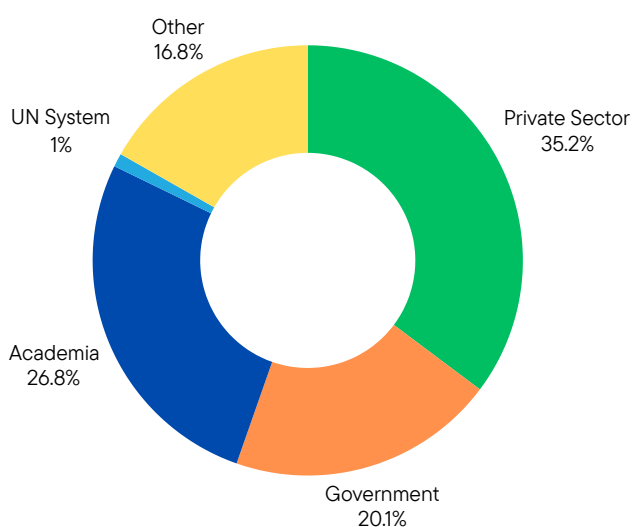
Countries Represented



51%



49%



10

 Learning Events

4

 Public Awareness Events

5

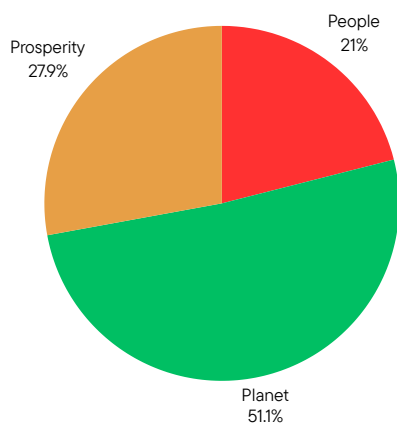
 Research Events

Note: All programs delivered by CIFAL Lebanon are anchored in strategic partnerships with various institutions. The data presented reflect available records. Some events may have incomplete data, and overlaps may occur when events covered multiple thematic areas, SDGs and Agenda 2030 pillars.

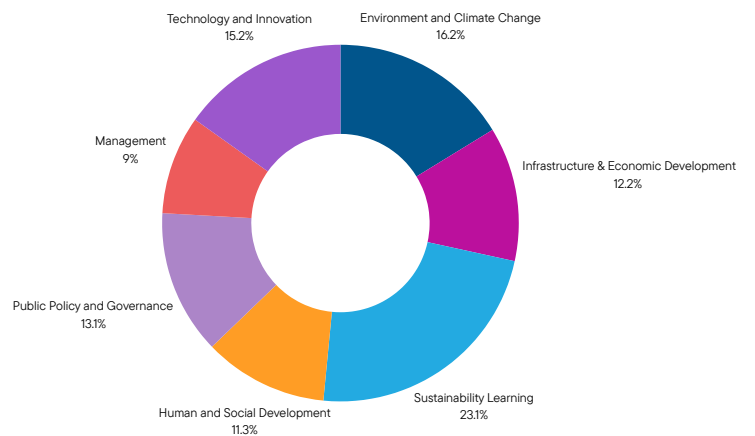
Programs and Events Overview



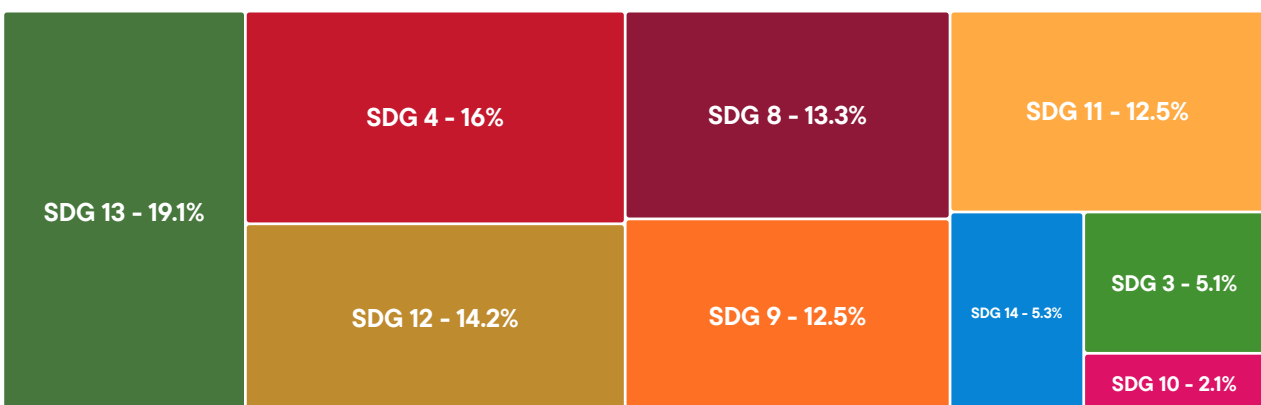
Beneficiaries per Agenda 2030 Pillar



Beneficiaries per UNITAR Thematic Area



Beneficiaries per SDG



Note: All programs delivered by CIFAL Lebanon are anchored in strategic partnerships with various institutions. The data presented reflect available records. Some events may have incomplete data, and overlaps may occur when events covered multiple thematic areas, SDGs and Agenda 2030 pillars.

Programs and Events Overview

In 2024, CIFAL Lebanon, hosted by the Global CEO Alliance, advanced its efforts in capacity building, knowledge sharing, and community engagement. Through targeted SDG programs, public awareness events, and research initiatives, CIFAL Lebanon expanded its reach across Lebanon, the MENA region, and beyond. Guided by the mission of "Sustainability Shared," CIFAL Lebanon is committed to amplifying collective efforts toward a more sustainable future.



Impactful Reach and Inclusive Participation

CIFAL Lebanon engaged 1,007 beneficiaries from 30 countries through 19 organizational events, fostering learning and skills development among a diverse group of participants. These events attracted a balanced audience, with 51% female and 49% male participants, representing sectors from the private sector, academia, government, and civil society. This broad participation highlights CIFAL Lebanon's commitment to fostering inclusivity and collaboration, and building partnerships across industries, institutions, and communities to advance sustainable development.

Empowering through Learning Events

Learning events comprised 50% of CIFAL Lebanon's initiatives, addressing key SDG topics such as ESG for Youth, ESG in Healthcare, the Blue Economy, Impact Sourcing, and Sustainable Supply Chains. Notable highlights include: (i) the "ESG for Youth" webinar, which engaged 202 young participants, equipping them with essential knowledge on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles; and (ii) a joint training session with UN-Habitat during the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum, which brought together 251 attendees and provided practical training on SDG-focused digitalization and capacity-building for cities, fostering sustainable innovation.

Advancing Knowledge with Public Awareness and Research

In 2024, CIFAL Lebanon formalized a strategic partnership with UN-Habitat under the SDG Cities Global Initiative, facilitated by its host organization, GCEOA. An MOU signed with the American University of Beirut laid the foundation for future collaborations in sustainability education. Additionally, engagements with CIFAL Centers in Shanghai and Istanbul, along with participation in key global events such as the World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt, the GIIN Impact Forum in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and the UNITAR Global Water Academy event in New York, USA, expanded CIFAL Lebanon's presence in sustainable development initiatives.



Targeted Outreach to Priority Groups

CIFAL Lebanon prioritized inclusive outreach, with particular focus on women, youth, and marginalized communities. Approximately 51% of participants were women, and 10% were youth aged 20-30, underscoring CIFAL Lebanon's commitment to gender inclusion and youth empowerment. Programs such as the "ESG for Youth" webinar were designed specifically for young participants, fostering and inspiring future leaders in sustainability.

Building Partnerships for Sustainable Impact

Throughout 2024, CIFAL Lebanon strengthened its partnerships with key organizations, including UN-Habitat, Forward MENA, the American University of Beirut, the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), and ADEC Knowledge Management. These collaborations have bolstered CIFAL Lebanon's capacity to deliver impactful programs and innovative solutions, fostering cooperation in critical areas such as ESG, sustainable supply chains, and language education.

Looking Ahead

As CIFAL Lebanon moves forward, it remains committed to capacity building and cross-sector collaboration in advancing the UN SDGs, as well as the mission and vision of UNITAR. Through a combination of knowledge-sharing events, practical training, and innovative solutions, CIFAL Lebanon empowers professionals, students, and community leaders to drive sustainable change within their communities and beyond. In the coming year, CIFAL Lebanon aims to explore and expand its focus on additional SDG areas, while broadening collaborations and seeking new funding opportunities.





GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon Virtual School Platform

GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon Virtual School Platform



CIFAL Lebanon's Virtual School offers a diverse range of online training programs aimed at empowering individuals and organizations through innovative learning opportunities. These include specialized certificate courses and training designed to enhance knowledge and skills in various aspects of sustainable development.

In collaboration with **Ascentify Learning Media**, CIFAL Lebanon utilizes advanced e-learning platforms to deliver its programs, aligning with its mission to provide capacity development and training both locally and globally.



English Language Masterclass

Beneficiaries Reached: 68

Date: 10 May to 07 July 2024

Partner: Ascentify Learning Media

The English Language Masterclass was the first course offered through GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon's Virtual School, providing free, asynchronous learning opportunities for individuals seeking to enhance their English fluency and communication skills.

Designed for learners of all proficiency levels, the course focused on improving grammar, expanding vocabulary, and building confidence in articulation and coherence, supporting CIFAL Lebanon's mission to deliver accessible and impactful education.

GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon Virtual School Platform



English Academy for BPO Professionals

Beneficiaries Reached: 35

Date: 31 July to 25 September 2024

Partner: Ascentify Learning Media

The English Academy for BPO Professionals (EABP) was another key offering from GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon's Virtual School, specifically designed to support individuals in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector.

This asynchronous program provided a flexible learning platform, enabling participants to improve their English fluency, expand their technical vocabulary, and develop effective communication skills tailored to the BPO industry. The course equipped individuals with enhanced language skills, supporting their professional development and readiness for career advancement opportunities.

CIFAL Lebanon also partnered with **Forward MENA, a Lebanon-based non-profit dedicated to advancing digital and professional skills**, to deliver a Language and Business Communication Program that benefited 17 participants.

This program helped support Forward MENA's mission to equip individuals with the tools needed to meet the demands of an evolving job market.







Webinar

The Blue Economy: Pathways to Prosperity in South-West Asia

 **Adam Brancher**
 Blue Economy Specialist

 **Online**

 **29-30 August 2024**

 **9:00 - 10:30 AM CEST**







HFMA Region 2 ESG Webinar Series

 **James Donovan**
 Co-Founder and CEO, ADEC Innovations
 Chairman, Global CEO Alliance

 **Online**

 **12 September 2024 | 13 March 2025**
12 December 2024 | 13 May 2025

In Collaboration with:








Webinar

Impact Sourcing: An Overview of Social Responsibility in Business

 **Matthew Clarke**
 Impact Sourcing Specialist

 **Online**

 **23-24 September 2024**

 **9:00 - 10:30 AM CEST**

[Register Now](#)







Webinar

Advancing the Green Economy: Sustainable Supply Chains

 **Ben Wilde**
 Group Innovation Director
 ADEC Innovations

 **Niranjn Waghmare**
 Managing Director, Global ESG Solutions
 ADEC Innovations

 **Online**

 **28-29 October 2024**

 **9:00 - 11:00 a.m. CET**

[Register Now](#)



GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon SDG Webinar Series



GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon SDG Webinar Series

In 2024, CIFAL Lebanon organized a series of impactful webinars aimed at advancing knowledge and fostering dialogue on critical global issues, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These sessions brought together industry experts, thought leaders, and practitioners to share insights, discuss emerging trends, and offer actionable strategies across various fields.

Some webinars included:

- **Sustainable Supply Chains:** Explored how environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles integrate with business objectives to promote responsible supply chain practices. Speakers Ben Wilde and Niranjana Waghmare from ADEC Innovations provided valuable insights into global supply chain challenges, the business case for sustainability, and future trends like AI-driven supplier engagement and emissions tracking.
- **Impact Sourcing:** Led by Matt Clarke, Impact Sourcing Specialist and Managing Director of Workforce Solutions at ADEC Innovations, this session delved into the integration of social responsibility with business goals, addressing challenges, mitigation strategies, and the tangible benefits for businesses and communities.
- **The Blue Economy:** Presented by Adam Brancher, Blue Economy specialist and Founder of ADEC Kedge and Southern Ocean Carbon, this webinar introduced participants to the concept of the Blue Economy, its alignment with the SDGs, and real-world applications through case studies, with a focus on challenges, opportunities, and best practices.
- **ESG in Healthcare:** This webinar, conducted in collaboration with HFMA Region 2, focused on integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into the healthcare sector. GCEOA Chairman and ADEC Innovations CEO James Donovan led the discussion on ESG principles and frameworks, sustainability strategies, social responsibility initiatives, and other governance frameworks tailored for healthcare organizations.



ESG for the Youth: Introduction to ESG and the SDGs

Beneficiaries Reached: 202
Date: 26 January 2024
Partners: Silay Institute,
 ADEC Knowledge Management



In January 2024, CIFAL Lebanon, in collaboration with the Silay Institute, hosted its first webinar and learning event, "Introduction to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and the SDGs." Led by CIFAL Lebanon's Executive Director James Donovan and Managing Director Michelle Tan, the session introduced participants to the core principles of ESG and their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The discussion emphasized the importance of integrating ESG into organizational practices and highlighted the role of individuals and institutions, including the youth, in advancing sustainable development, marking a strong start to CIFAL Lebanon's series of impactful webinars.



The Blue Economy: Pathways to Prosperity in South- West Asia

Beneficiaries Reached: 107
Date: 29 to 30 August 2024
Partners: ADEC Innovations,
Southern Ocean Carbon

The Blue Economy in South-West Asia webinar, featuring Adam Brancher, Blue Economy specialist and Founder of ADEC Kedge and Southern Ocean Carbon, provided participants with foundational knowledge of the Blue Economy and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The session covered key concepts, challenges, opportunities, and real-world applications through case studies, offering insights into best practices and successful outcomes within the global Blue Economy context.





HFMA Region 2 ESG in Healthcare Webinar Series



Beneficiaries Reached: 102
Date: 12 September 2024
 12 December 2024
Partners: ADEC Innovations,
 HFMA Region 2



The Global CEO Alliance and CIFAL Lebanon, in collaboration with HFMA Region 2 and ADEC Innovations, hosted a 4-part webinar series focusing on the pivotal role of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) in transforming the healthcare industry.

The first session, held on September 12, engaged HFMA Region 2 members in discussions about the significance of ESG in healthcare and its value to both organizations and the communities they serve. This series connected business innovation with sustainable development, offering healthcare organizations practical insights and strategies for integrating ESG principles into their operations to achieve greater impact. The second session, held on December 12, continued the conversation with a focus on ESG frameworks and regulations, as well as the social aspect of ESG in the healthcare sector.



Impact Sourcing: An Overview of Social Responsibility in Business

Beneficiaries Reached: 42

Date: 23 to 24 September 2024

Partner: ADEC Innovations

The webinar on Impact Sourcing, led by Matt Clarke, Impact Sourcing Specialist and Managing Director of Workforce Solutions at ADEC Innovations, introduced participants to the integration of social responsibility with business objectives.

The webinar covered key concepts, the business case with real-world examples, common challenges and mitigation strategies, and future efforts in the field. An interactive Q&A and actionable takeaways provided participants with insights into the benefits of impact sourcing for both communities and businesses.



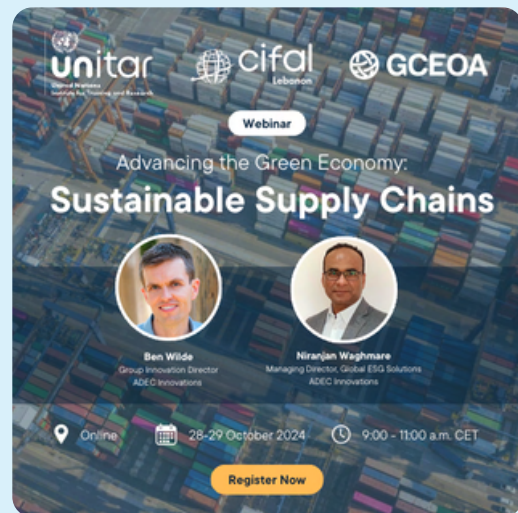


Advancing the Green Economy: Sustainable Supply Chains

Beneficiaries Reached: 184

Date: 28 to 29 October 2024

Partners: ADEC Innovations,
CleanChain



The Sustainable Supply Chains webinar, featuring Ben Wilde and Niranjan Waghmare from ADEC Innovations, provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of integrating ESG considerations into business objectives.

The session covered the global supply chain landscape, the business case for sustainability, and its benefits, including enhanced reputation, risk mitigation, and innovation. Additionally, it explored emerging trends such as AI-driven supplier engagement and advancements in emissions tracking, offering valuable insights into the future of sustainable supply chain management.



 **GCEOA**  **cifal**
Lebanon  **UN-HABITAT**

Strengthening Urban Sustainability: GCEOA and UN-Habitat

Strengthening Urban Sustainability: GCEOA and UN-Habitat

On 28 February 2024, Global CEO Alliance (GCEOA) and the UN-Habitat SDG Cities Global Initiative took a significant step forward in strengthening their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Amendment. This collaboration emphasizes the shared commitment to advancing sustainable urban development through digital tools, capacity-building initiatives, and data-driven strategies.



A key milestone in this partnership was the launch of the live version of the Capacity Assessment Toolkit in September 2023. Developed with contributions from GCEOA, this innovative toolkit empowers cities to effectively evaluate their capabilities, facilitating better decision-making and strategic planning to address complex urban challenges.

As part of this collaboration, GCEOA continues to play a critical role in providing technological innovations and strategic support to initiatives like the SDG Cities Learning Path. These efforts enable cities to leverage data and tools to help achieve financial resilience and long-term sustainability.

Own Source Revenue for Local Governments E-Course

Within the framework of this broader collaboration, GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon has partnered with SDG Cities and UN-Habitat to co-develop the Own Source Revenue (OSR) for Local Governments course. This self-paced, interactive e-learning program is designed to empower local governments to strengthen their financial systems and enhance resilience.

The OSR course provides practical tools and strategies, including:

- Property Tax Reform: Helping governments optimize a critical revenue stream.
- Citizen Engagement Strategies: Promoting participatory governance and transparency.
- Streamlined Accounting Systems: Simplifying processes for efficient resource management.



[Learn More](#)



CIFAL Lebanon at the 12th World Urban Forum



GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon WUF12 Training Event: Strengthening Local Institutions Through Transformative Digitization and Capacity Building for the SDGs

As part of the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12), GCEOA-CIFAL Lebanon, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, organized the training event titled "Strengthening Local Institutions Through Transformative Digitization and Capacity Building for the SDGs." Held on 05 November 2024, the session showcased the innovative use of digital tools and strategies designed to empower local governments and institutions to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The training event, divided into two parts, offered a comprehensive exploration of the SDG Cities Global Initiative and its digital tools for capacity-building and urban planning, co-developed with GCEOA. Moderated by GCEOA's Michelle Tan and Youssef Haj Ali, the session featured demonstrations and interactive discussions led by experts from GCEOA and UN-Habitat.

CIFAL Lebanon at the 12th World Urban Forum



The session began with opening remarks by James Donovan, GCEOA Chairman, who emphasized the importance of leveraging digital solutions to advance sustainable urban development. This was followed by an introduction to the SDG Cities Global Initiative, including its mission to provide practical, scalable resources to local governments worldwide.

Participants were introduced to several innovative tools and strategies, including:

- City Scan Tool and UMF Indicators, presented by Daniel Githiria from UN-Habitat, focusing on geo-mapping and data collection.
- Pilot Launch of the City Scan Tool, led by Johanna Bautista from GCEOA, which demonstrated how municipalities can use the tool to assess their progress toward SDGs.
- Tools for governance, urban planning, and mobility were explored through presentations by experts from UN-Habitat, including Samuel Njuguna, Salvatore Fundarò, and Yuki Takada.

A Q&A session allowed participants to engage with presenters and discuss how these tools can be applied in their respective contexts.





CIFAL Lebanon at the 12th World Urban Forum

The second half of the training transitioned to capacity-building approaches, beginning with an introduction of CIFAL Lebanon by Maria Corina Padilla, Deputy Director of CIFAL Lebanon.

Presentations included:

- The ROSRA Tool, explained by Kate Cotty from UN-Habitat, which focuses on finance and economy planning for sustainable urban development.
- The SDG Cities Learning Path, detailed by Anna Saracco and Xiaoqing Wang from UN-Habitat, which includes e-learning modules and self-diagnostic tools to guide local institutions in their sustainability efforts.

Interactive activities and discussions emphasized the importance of aligning local actions with global SDG objectives while leveraging digital innovation to ensure equitable and inclusive outcomes.

251 

Beneficiaries
In-Person and Online

WORLD URBAN FORUM 

 **GCEOA** 





Event Takeaways and Outcomes

The hybrid training event, conducted in person and online through live streaming, provided participants with:

- A deeper understanding of the SDG Cities Global Initiative and its four-track process.
- Hands-on experience with digital tools such as the City Scan Tool, Urban Planning Tool, and the SDG Cities Learning Path, designed to enhance municipal capacities.
- Practical insights into the importance of governance and needs assessments in achieving equitable outcomes.

Through this collaborative initiative, CIFAL Lebanon, GCEOA, and UN-Habitat reaffirmed its commitment to supporting local institutions in harnessing digital transformation to achieve sustainable development. The event highlighted the critical role of technology in creating scalable solutions to address urban challenges while fostering inclusivity and innovation.

Looking Ahead

The training event at WUF12 emphasized the importance of partnerships and knowledge-sharing in advancing the SDGs. By equipping participants with practical tools and strategies, the session empowered local governments to take actionable steps toward creating sustainable, resilient, and inclusive urban environments.





Fostering Partnerships and Exploring Global Collaborations



Fostering Partnerships and Exploring Global Collaborations

In 2024, CIFAL Lebanon engaged in visits and initiatives to strengthen partnerships, promote knowledge exchange, and deepen its expertise in sustainable development, enhancing its capacity to support global sustainability goals.

CIFAL Shanghai Visit

CIFAL Lebanon Executive Director James Donovan visited CIFAL Shanghai to exchange insights and strengthen collaboration within the CIFAL Global Network. The visit focused on sharing best practices and exploring joint opportunities to enhance capacity-building initiatives.



Visit to CIFAL Istanbul and the Launch of the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center

CIFAL Lebanon visited CIFAL Istanbul and attended the launch of the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University. The visit reinforced ties with CIFAL Istanbul and emphasized the importance of collaboration in promoting peace and sustainable development initiatives.



SDG Cities Balikesir Hub Visit

CIFAL Lebanon Managing Director Michelle Tan visited the SDG Cities Balikesir Hub in Balikesir, Turkey. The visit provided an opportunity to exchange insights and explore potential collaborations for transformative learning and capacity building.



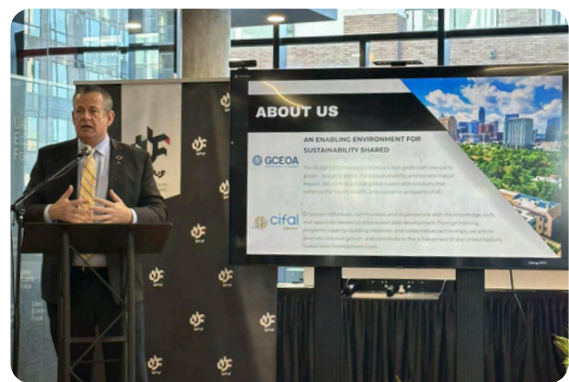


Fostering Partnerships and Exploring Global Collaborations

In 2024, CIFAL Lebanon engaged in visits and initiatives to strengthen partnerships, promote knowledge exchange, and deepen its expertise in sustainable development, enhancing its capacity to support global sustainability goals.

World Summit on SDG Cities and Urban Finance in Toronto, Canada

Executive Director James Donovan spoke at the World Summit on SDG Cities and Urban Finance in Toronto, Canada, during a session on “Cities as Vectors for SDGs and Quality of Life.” The event held on 13-14 February 2024 focused on urban resilience, climate action, and inclusive growth, highlighting the critical role of capacity building and training in advancing sustainable urban development.



Arab Forum for Sustainable Development

CIFAL Lebanon participated at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development held on 5-7 March 2024 in Beirut, Lebanon. The AFSD is the primary regional mechanism for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region.



MOU Signing with the American University of Beirut

CIFAL Lebanon formalized its partnership with the American University of Beirut by signing an MOU in April 2024 to promote research, education, and capacity-building efforts. This collaboration paves the way for joint initiatives aimed at empowering communities and supporting sustainable development.





Fostering Partnerships and Exploring Global Collaborations

In 2024, CIFAL Lebanon engaged in visits and initiatives to strengthen partnerships, promote knowledge exchange, and deepen its expertise in sustainable development, enhancing its capacity to support global sustainability goals.

6th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6)

CIFAL Lebanon attended the 6th United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya in February 2024. Discussions emphasized promoting sustainable cities, a circular economy, and advancing other key areas of sustainable development, highlighting CIFAL Lebanon's dedication to capacity building and fostering impactful regional partnerships.



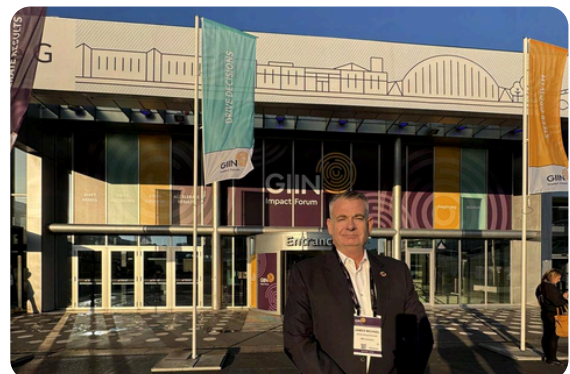
UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Side Event on Global Freshwater Quality

CIFAL Lebanon, represented by Global CEO Alliance Director Hunter Donovan, participated in the "Pathways to Resilience: Advancing Solutions for Global Freshwater Quality" side event during the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2024 in New York.



GIIN Impact Forum in Amsterdam

GCEO-CIFAL Lebanon, along with partner organization ADEC Innovations, attended the GIIN Impact Forum in Amsterdam last October 2024. Through its affiliation with GCEO, CIFAL Lebanon aligns with global efforts to leverage impact investments as a tool for sustainable development.





Strategic Objectives and Plans for 2025

Strategic Objectives and Plans for 2025

In 2025, CIFAL Lebanon remains committed to its mission of advancing sustainable development through a multifaceted approach. Through these strategic initiatives, CIFAL Lebanon aims to empower communities, drive sustainable change, and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the SDGs.



Expanding SDG Themes and Focus Areas: CIFAL Lebanon plans to broaden its program offerings to cover a wider range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring a more comprehensive approach to addressing critical global challenges.



Strengthening Local and Regional Collaborations: Collaborating with universities, businesses, and NGOs in Lebanon and the broader MENA region will be a key focus to build a supportive ecosystem that enhances the impact of CIFAL Lebanon's initiatives.



Enhancing Collaboration Within the CIFAL Global Network: Active engagement with the CIFAL Global Network will be pursued through collaboration with other CIFAL centers, leveraging collective expertise and resources to develop joint programs and initiatives.



Exploring Funding Opportunities: Diversifying funding sources will be explored to support growth, ensure program sustainability, and expand CIFAL Lebanon's reach and impact.

Strategic Objectives and Plans for 2025

CIFAL Lebanon announces its planned webinar series for the first half of 2025, focusing on key topics in sustainable development and capacity building. The series provides a platform for discussions on sustainability challenges and solutions, fostering knowledge-sharing, skills development, and progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG Webinar Series Calendar of Events (January - June 2025)

- **January:** Building Resilience: Comprehensive Emergency Response Planning (Part I)
- **February:** Building Resilience: Comprehensive Emergency Response Planning (Part II)
- **March:** Empowering Migrant Women Workers: Strategies for Economic Inclusion
- **April:** Driving Excellence: Integrating Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning for Effective Programs (Part I)
- **May:** Driving Excellence: Integrating Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning for Effective Programs (Part II)
- **June:** Smart and Sustainable Cities: Integrating Technology for Urban Resilience and Sustainability

While this calendar reflects current program plans, session dates and topics may be adjusted as needed to accommodate emerging priorities and partnership opportunities. Any updates will be communicated through CIFAL Lebanon's official channels.

Acknowledgement

CIFAL Lebanon extends its sincere gratitude to all partners, stakeholders, and participants who supported its mission of advancing sustainable development and capacity building in Lebanon, the broader MENA region, and globally.

The center acknowledges the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) for its leadership in driving the CIFAL Global Network and providing valuable guidance and support.

Special appreciation is given to the Global CEO Alliance (GCEOA), CIFAL Lebanon's host organization, for its continued collaboration and support in advancing the center's initiatives.

CIFAL Lebanon also recognizes its key partners, including UN-Habitat, ADEC Innovations, the Silay Institute, and others, whose collaboration has been essential in delivering impactful programs and fostering meaningful knowledge exchange.

Finally, sincere thanks go to CIFAL Lebanon's dedicated team, whose professionalism and commitment remain central to its success.

Looking ahead, CIFAL Lebanon remains committed to expanding its programs, strengthening partnerships, and contributing to sustainable development in Lebanon and beyond.





Ground Floor, 320 Ain Mreiseh Real
Estate, Rue Clemenceau, Beirut,
Lebanon



cifal.lebanon

T: +9611 752 400

E: info@cifal-lebanon.com