

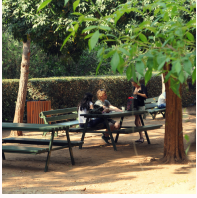
AUBOTANIC

A **Survey** for students by students on campus green spaces and wellbeing



American University of Beirut
AUBotanic





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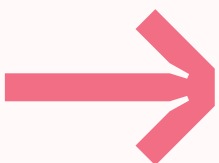
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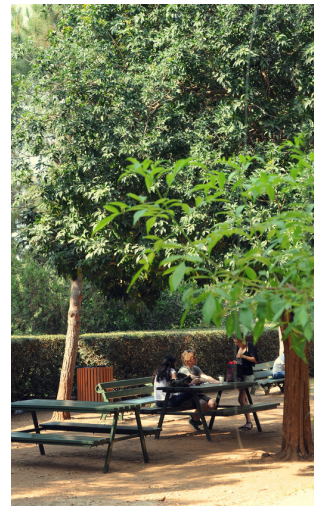
Student Wellbeing Booklet

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AUB students' public health & WELLBEING

A survey made for students, by students

Universities around the world should recognize the importance of having a variety of green spaces on campus as an important asset to students and their wellbeing.



INTRODUCTION

Any kind of human interaction with nature has been proven to significantly reduce stress levels (1). This is specific to green campus spaces, which are typically seen as an essential component of universities globally and a catalyst for the wellbeing of students (2). The available literature demonstrates the benefits of surrounding individuals, specifically university students, by green spaces on their wellbeing and wellness, especially in urban settings. In fact, a 2021 systematic review of the influence of urban green spaces on human welfare found that any type of connection with green spaces reduced stress levels and significantly improved work performance. Frequent association with university green spaces not only improves performance, but also provides a peaceful platform for university students to socialize, reduces confounding stressors, and facilitates positive mental growth (3).

AUB BOTANIC GARDEN

ABOUT AUB CAMPUS; AUB campus is home to one of the biggest and most plant-diverse, outdoor green spaces in the Middle East.

Founded in 1866, the campus has preserved plant species and earned the title of a botanical garden in 2016 with its leadership taking full custody of its natural environment. With around 8,000 students attending the AUB, ranging from freshmen to postgraduates, there still has not been a direct correlation between the availed green spaces on campus and their wellbeing. The Department of Landscape and Ecosystem Management collaborated with the Faculty of Health Science at AUB ventures to grasp the perception of students

regarding the campus' green spaces. This assessment aims to answer the following main key questions among others:

- Do you consider the AUB environment as an important source of stress relief?
- Are the AUB green spaces essential to my academic life?
- Do you believe that the university should invest more in its green spaces for its students' wellbeing?

(1). Seitz et al. 2014

(2). Mogra & Furlan, 2017

(3). Jabbar, Yusoff & Shafie, 2021; Foellmer et al., 2021; Holt et al., 2019; Foellmer et al., 2021; Holt et al., 2019

Our METHODOLOGY

Survey Composition and Why



METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The research was conducted by students from the Public Health Design and Evaluation class in 2022, PBHL 303, taught by Dr. Maia Seiverding of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Monika Fabian and Salma Talhouk at the Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management indicated the need to better understand the value of AUB campus green spaces to students. Monika explained to the students AUBotanic's vision and mission and shared with them previous and upcoming research/projects conducted by AUBotanic. Moving from this perspective, this needs assessment was designed to assess the impact of AUB green spaces on AUB students' mental wellbeing and academic life as well as what were their primary needs from this exceptionally scarce botanic garden in Beirut. All AUB students were the targeted population; hence, the needs assessment reflected all different communities' points of view at AUB. A questionnaire of 21 questions was developed to collect data from the target population.

QUESTIONNAIRE COMPOSITION

The first part reflected the socio-demographic information like gender, age, accommodation in order to see any difference between those living on campus, off-campus, and outside the green space but can still see the green spaces from their homes. Moreover, the socio-demographic part included all faculties to assure the representativeness over AUB students, as well as the different green spaces location, study level, study scheme, and students' classes location to assess if there is any difference between students' wellbeing and needs during their exposure to different green spaces at AUB.

The second part reflected a scale retrieved from the literature about the wellbeing of students in relation to green spaces. All questions were reformulated to be tailored to our targeted populations. The wellbeing questions included the frequency of the exposure of the green space, students' satisfaction, students' preferred place for studying during their exam day, and students' self-reflection about their wellbeing and academic life related to green spaces to understand the impetus of green spaces effect.

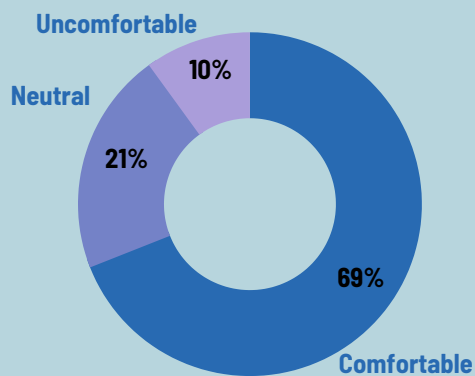
The third part was a cross-sectional survey and consisted of what activities students would prefer to do in green spaces at AUB and what they would recommend to the department to improve and innovate the green spaces. The survey was self-administered to ensure the privacy and anonymity of participants



SURVEY RESULTS

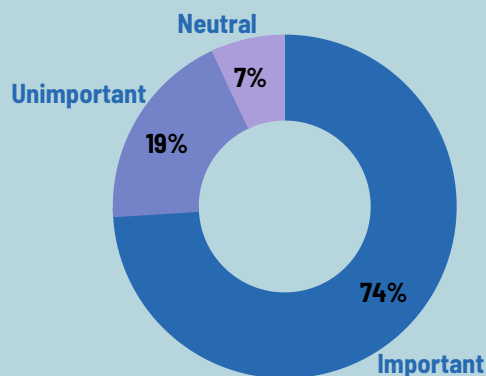
Student Satisfaction of the Outdoors,
194 responses!

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE AUB STUDENTS?



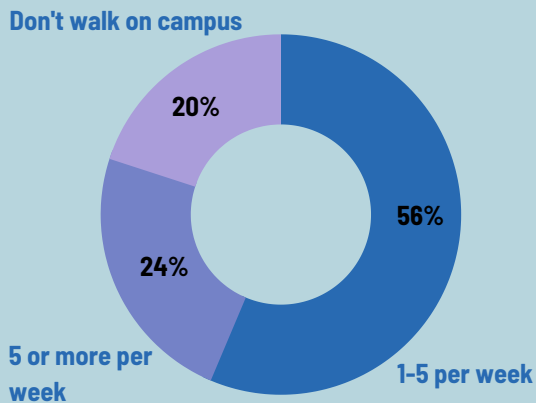
It's interesting to note that the proportion of discomfort levels among students (the 10%) was found to be two times higher among women.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE OUR GREEN SPACES?



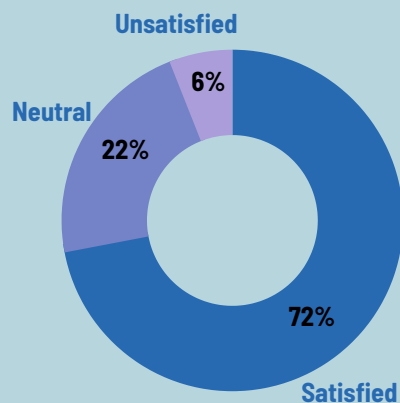
Most students believe that green areas are essential to their academic life. The percentage of students with the idea that AUB's green spaces are important for stress alleviation is proportional to the number of times they walk around campus each week.

HOW OUTDOORSY ARE AUBITES?

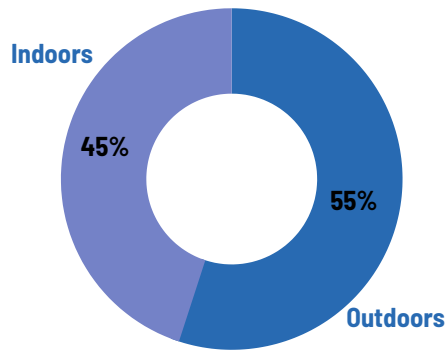


54% of students walking 5 times per week reported that the AUB green spaces are important for stress relief. In contrast, 79% of those who do not walk on campus reported that the AUB green spaces are not essential for stress relief.

HOW SATISFIED ARE THEY WITH THE QUALITY OF GREEN SPACES

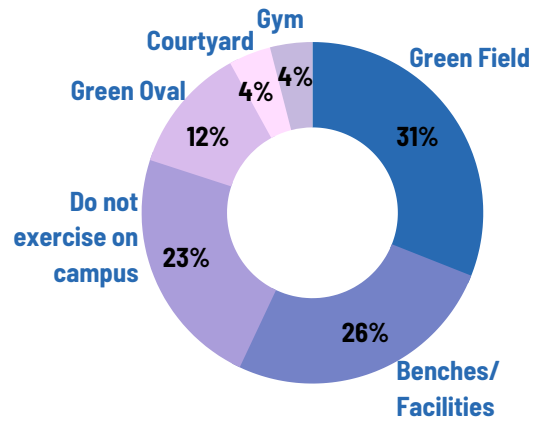


WHERE DO STUDENTS SPEND TIME BEFORE/AFTER EXAMS?



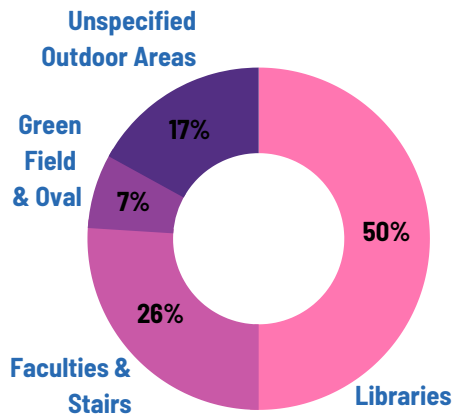
55% of the respondents said they either come before and/or stay after their exam to spend time in the green spaces.

WHERE DO STUDENTS RELAX OR EXERCISE?



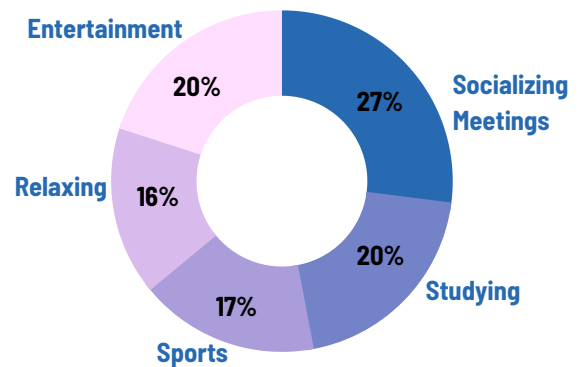
In terms of the on-campus use for relaxation and exercising, the Green Field came first. One fourth of the students did not exercise or relax in AUB green spaces. The 4% mentioned as gym also preferred other spaces such as the rooftops, the Bachtel, The Zoo, etc.

WHERE DO STUDENTS STUDY?



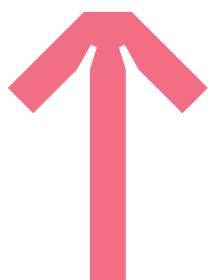
One-quarter of the respondents spent more time in the green spaces when studying.

HOW DO STUDENTS SOCIALIZE IN GREEN SPACES?



Entertainment activities include things like singing, painting, and dancing.

Students' use of OUTDOORS





WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT? RESULTS SAY...

Most students prefer to relax on campus outdoors between their classes, and few preferred relaxing in indoor AUB facilities like libraries and faculty lounges. Only a small minority said they preferred neither and go off-campus instead.

Despite expressing a positive outlook on AUB campus' outdoor spaces, a very large majority of participants believed that AUB should invest more in its green spaces for the student's wellbeing. More than one-third of the students recommended adding more benches and tables near the green areas, and it was also recommended to place power plugs and provide internet connection throughout the green spaces.

This needs assessment was aimed to assess how well students are using campus greenery to promote their wellbeing and to identify areas where improvements are needed. About a third of students agreed that the AUB natural environment is an important source of stress relief, and more than two-thirds of students also agreed that the AUB green spaces are important for their academic lives.

THANK YOU TO...

The information in this booklet is based on a research paper written by

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THIS BOOKLET WAS PRODUCED BY AUBOTANIC
IF YOU'D LIKE TO CONTACT US FOR
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