Experts and scholars who have been studying issues affecting the well-being of youth in the Arab world convened at the American University of Beirut on December 6 and 7 for a research agenda-setting workshop titled “The Influence of Dignity on Health and Well-being of Youth”. The workshop was organized by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy & International Affairs (IFI) in partnership with the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), and included participants from various academic and professional fields from six Arab countries, as well as interested AUB graduate students. The meeting’s aim was to critically think about the concept of dignity generally, contextually, and with a specific link to the current uprisings in order to come up with a research agenda and identify key questions.

The objectives included reviewing available research done on the concepts of dignity and well-being both internationally and regionally, as well as exploring dignity and health/well-being within the context of the Arab uprisings, and expanding various approaches and potential methodologies in the study of dignity. The workshop included two focus groups during which dignity as a concept and as an experience was discussed with youth from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Iraq in order to have a better understanding of the way Arab youth perceives dignity.

At the end of the second day, participants raised a number of research questions that needed to be explored, the main research question being “What are the experiences, meanings, and expressions of dignity among youth in the Arab World?” The workshop set the stage for a mid-term and long-term research collaboration that includes the formulation of a new methodology to be used in the suggested studies.