



Short Bios

Dr. Jad Chaaban

Dr. Jad Chaaban joined the American University of Beirut (AUB) as an Assistant Professor of Economics in September 2006, where he currently teaches development and agricultural economics. Prior to coming to AUB, he was an Economist in the World Bank's regional office in Beirut, where he undertook research related to poverty reduction and economic management, covering Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. While at the Bank he contributed to drafting various policy strategies aiming to rationalize poverty alleviation, reduce unemployment, reform public sector expenditures and foster economic growth in the region.

Dr. Chaaban is the president and founding member of the Lebanese Economic Association. He also currently serves as an expert for the Middle East Youth Initiative at the Wolfensohn Center for Development at Brookings; and as an Associate Researcher with the Toulouse School of Economics in France.

Dr. Chaaban holds an MBA from the European School of Management (2000), a Masters in Environmental and Natural Resources Economics from the Toulouse School of Economics (2001), and a PhD in Economics (2004) from the same university. His current research interests include poverty and inequality in polarized societies; youth development and the economics of agro-food industries. He has published several scientific articles in international academic journals.

Dr. Nisreen Salti

Nisreen Salti got her PhD in Economics from Princeton University and joined the faculty at AUB in 2006. Her research is in empirical applied microeconomics, development economics and political economy, and she has focused on issues of inequity and inequality in health and income in the region and more globally. Her work has appeared in Social Science and Medicine, and is forthcoming in the International Journal for Equity in Health and the Middle East Development Journal.

Miss Nadia Naamani

Nadia Naamani is a Research Assistant at the American University of Beirut as of 2010. She holds a Masters of Science from the University of Reading, UK in Food Economics and Marketing and a Bachelors of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics from the American University of Beirut. She is a licensed dietitian in Lebanon. Her Masters' thesis entitled "Socioeconomic Status and It's Effect on Diet and Health in the Adult Population of Beirut" is currently being prepared for publication.

Dr. Rima Nakkash

Rima Nakkash is Assistant Research Professor at the Health Behavior and Education Department and the Center for Research on Population and Health at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB) since 2007. She holds a doctorate in



Public Health Policy from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK and a Masters in Public Health from the American University of Beirut. Rima Nakkash completed a Fellowship at the International Center for Health Leadership Development. Health Partners Leadership Program-University of Illinois at Chicago and W.K. Kellogg Foundation, U.S.A. She has been working in tobacco control research since 1998 covering research projects in tobacco control prevention and policy. Her dissertation involved analysis of internal documents of the tobacco industry, disclosed to the public through litigation in the U.S. Her work was valuable in exposing tobacco industry tactic and strategies in Lebanon. She is the coordinator of the AUB Tobacco Control research group. She is also involved in tobacco control advocacy at national level, bringing civil society together to advocate for tobacco control policy. Currently she is conducting a number of different research projects to evaluate policies in relation to bans of smoking in public places and other policies such as health warnings on tobacco products. She also has interest in health promotion, policy, and community based participatory and intervention research particularly with youth and disadvantaged populations. Most recently, she has been working on a community based mental health promotion intervention for refugee youth and is a member of the Youth working group at AUB.

AUB-Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG)

The AUB-TCRG was established informally in 1999 through a grant from the International Development Research Center-Research for International Tobacco Control (IDRC-RITC). AUB-TCRG is multidisciplinary team of professionals, with specializations in medicine, epidemiology, biostatistics, health behavior, health policy, health management, chemistry, and engineering. The group has received grants over the years from IDRC-RITC and other funders to describe the epidemiology related to narghile use among youth, investigate the components of smoke, assess the long term health impact of use, understand the acceptability of use among women in the region, compare parent and child dyads attitudes towards use, identify biomarkers of use, understand attitudes of youth and adults to a variety of potential legislations for tobacco control, and describe the policy environment surrounding tobacco control in Lebanon. With specific respect to waterpipe toxicants, researchers from the AUB-TCRG have pioneered the science of testing toxicant yields in waterpipe smoke chemistry using a specially devised smoking machine. These studies reported that waterpipe tobacco smoke contains carbon monoxide, polyhydrocarbogens, formaldehyde, nitrogen, nitric acid, nicotine and other toxicants such as arsenic, chromium, lead and volatile aldehydes.

The AUB TCRG's portfolio speaks for itself in terms of research methods and results. The focus on the narghile as a type of tobacco consumption has provided a niche of expertise. The impact of this expertise is evident through the publication of an IDRC monograph on results of the epidemiologic research, significant contribution of the research to the WHO advisory Note against narghile smoking, active participation of members of the group in the second and third WHO FCTC Conference of Parties meeting, and the appointment of a member of the group as the Chairman of the Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation (TobReg) of the WHO Tobacco Free Initiative.

More recently the group was awarded a grant to focus its effort on dissemination and translation of research to policy as well as building a regional network of researchers involved in tobacco control and more specifically waterpipe tobacco use. At local level, the grant will serve to translate research findings and disseminate them to influence public policy.



Dissemination of findings will catalyze the tobacco control policy debate and contribute towards potentially moving it to the forefront of the national agenda. At a regional level, AUBTCRG has a very good working relationship with researchers in the region who are involved in conducting tobacco control research, particularly regarding the waterpipe. To date there is little coordination between researchers in the region working on tobacco control. Supporting the initiation and coordination of such a network will enrich the research process and ensure that production of research evidence builds on previous findings. The interdisciplinary nature of the network members will enrich discussions and promote joint future research projects. It is also worth noting that the network will also include researchers working on tobacco control in universities in Lebanon other than AUB.

Accumulating evidence to this date supports the need to start working on developing proper cessation interventions as well as interventions to prevent youth and adult uptake of waterpipe tobacco use. The prevalence of this mode of smoking is also increasing globally. Despite the recognized need for cessation and prevention interventions for waterpipe tobacco smoking there is little work that is being conducted. Prior meetings of regional researchers identified the need for standardization of studies of the chemical components of tobacco in waterpipe smoking particularly to better understand the differences among different tobacco used in water pipe smoking. A more thorough understanding of addiction is also needed. A consensus for this purpose among researchers in the region is important in order to jointly identify parameters.

As we increase our research and dissemination capacity locally and regionally, we have a vision to establish a Tobacco control research program at the university to serve Lebanon and the region.

Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB)

Founded in 2006, the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) harnesses policy-related research by AUB's internationally respected faculty to enhance debate and decision-making in the Arab World and abroad, focusing on the following programs and themes: Climate Change, Arab Youth, Palestinian Camps, Food Security and Policy, UN in the Middle East (as part of IFI's International Affairs program), Bill and Sally Hambrecht Distinguished Peacemakers Lecture series, and researching public policy formation in the Arab World (RAPP program).

Funded by the Issam Fares family, AUB, and Arab and international donors, IFI uses these funds to:

- Manage its programs on major issues facing the region.
- Carry out research projects, workshops, conferences, seminars and lectures.
- Disseminate its findings via regular publications, public policy memos, newsletters and cutting-edge web technologies.
- For each of the following programs, develop a public online, fully-searchable database of published and ongoing research projects, researchers, institutions, government and non-governmental agencies, and other relevant actors.

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