

The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI)

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The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) is a stand-alone institute within AUB that inaugurated its activities in Fall 2006 with a generous endowment grant from His Excellency Issam Fares. It aims at harnessing the policy-related research of AUB's internationally respected faculty to achieve several goals:

- Raising the quality of public policy-related debate and decision-making in the Arab World and abroad, and enhancing the Arab World's input into international affairs.
- Enriching the quality of interaction among scholars, officials and civil society actors in the Middle East and abroad.

Until the permanent building of IFI is completed, its strategic work plan for the first three years comprises an inter-related series of activities:

- Identifying the policy-related research of AUB professors and priority policy issues in the Arab world, and generating linkages between them.
- Bringing together AUB faculty from different schools with common research interests to define a solid foundation of research activity on which to engage with others in the region and globally.
- Organizing public activities that promote IFI's profile in the public realm and help to develop contacts with a network of like-minded colleagues in the Arab World and abroad. The aim of this is to launch sustained collaborative research and advocacy
- Initiating some core programs and projects, namely:
 - The Bill and Sally Hambrecht Distinguished Peacemakers Lecture Series
 - The Arab Public Policy and Think Tank Program, to assess the way public policy is made and implemented in the region, and how and why think tanks and research centers contribute to policy-making.

- The Research and Policy Program on Arab Youth: With a foundation of 23 faculty members involved in youth-related research at AUB, the Youth in the Arab World Program generates research and acts as a meeting point, catalyst and central repository for regional and international research and policy on Arab youth.
- The Research and Policy Forum on Climate Change and Environment in the Arab World: Over 25 faculty members at AUB whose research touches on climate change and environment issues are involved with the program, with several having already presented their research and policy recommendations at the program's inaugural Spring Lecture Series on The Impact of Climate Change on the Arab World.
- The Policy and Governance of Palestinian Camps in the Middle East: IFI and the Center for Behavioral Research (CBR) launched a multi-year research, analysis, and policy-recommendations program to explore the public policy and governance challenges of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza. This program is the first integrated and coordinated mechanism to share the vast amount of individual and collective research that exists, while driving cross-sectoral analyses and using the conclusions to enrich policy-making by the various authorities and parties concerned.
- A project to study food sectors and systems in the Arab world, especially the condition of agricultural communities.
- Visiting fellows, public lectures, panel discussions, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- Publishing policy papers and working papers by AUB faculty and other researchers.
- The Institute's scope of concern in public policy and international affairs is broadly conceived and includes such fields as the environment, public health, agriculture, urban planning, energy policy, in addition to the traditional areas of economics, development policy, governance, and international relations.