

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

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## About IFI

The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) is an independent research-based, policy-oriented institute that aims to harness, develop, and initiate policy-relevant research. It is committed to increasing and deepening knowledge production in, and about, the Arab region; and to creating a space for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas among researchers, civil society actors and policy makers.

IFI considers that in a globalized world, it is crucial to understand and connect policy issues, problems and subjects on the local, national, international, transnational and global levels with the various players, interests and power structures that shape, interact and respond to them. In this sense, IFI understands policy as embedded in larger historical, social, economic and political contexts, rather than just a technical process to be implemented.

IFI's main goals include:

- enhancing and broadening public policy-related debate and knowledge production in the Arab world and beyond;
- better understanding the Arab world within shifting international and global contexts;
- providing a space to enrich the quality of interaction among scholars, officials and civil society actors in and about the Arab world; and
- disseminating knowledge that is accessible to policy-makers, media, research communities and the general public.

## Research, Advocacy and Public Policy-making in the Arab World (RAPP)

Research, Advocacy and Public Policy-making (RAPP) Program works to forge an Arab contribution to global knowledge about the practice of policy-making. It aims at bridging an existing knowledge gap in policy-making by documenting experiences, replicating successful ones, and assessing and improving weak ones. Its uniqueness lies in being an indigenous effort

by a policy research institute in the Arab world, collectively with other institutes in the region, to assess and improve how research is influencing policy-making.

## **United Nations in the Arab World Program**

The United Nations in the Arab World Program was created with the objective of exploring and analyzing the role of the United Nations (UN) in the Arab region and the impact it has had on regional politics and societies. The aim of the program is to collect, support and generate research relevant to the UN's multiple roles in the Arab region. In addition, the program aims to bring together scholars and decision-makers to discuss salient issues, to be able to develop a rich academic environment in the Arab World, and to inform public policy decisions.

## **Climate Change and Environment in the Arab World Program**

The Climate Change and Environment in the Arab World Program aims to understand the climate change and environment policy process in the region and to define the most appropriate policy recommendations, by linking development in applied sciences on issues related to climate change and environment to social sciences. In addition the program aims to develop an information bridge between research and policy-making, and to influence national and regional debates in international negotiations on climate change and sustainable development.

## **Youth in the Arab World Program**

The Youth in the Arab World Program acts as a meeting point, catalyst, and central repository for Arab-international research and policy on youth, by working regularly with researchers, public policy officials, and relevant institutions in the private sector and civil society. As part of its effort to nurture multidisciplinary research, the program is jointly facilitating the AUB Youth Research Working Group with the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). The working group is advised by a steering committee composed of a multidisciplinary group of AUB faculty, with the aim of researching, synthesizing, and disseminating quality research on youth well-being, while bringing practical, relevant, and situated recommendations to the policy-making process.

## **Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps Program**

The Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps Program is 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 on Palestinian refugees in the region, while driving cross-sectorial analyses and using their conclusions to enrich policy-making by the various authorities and parties concerned.

## Arab Uprisings Research Initiative

The Arab Uprisings Research Initiative, instigated by the office of the AUB Provost and managed by IFI is a long-term, multi-sectorial research initiative on the Arab uprising aiming to harness the university's many resources and assets to engage constructively to better understand the nature and consequences of the changes underway in the region.

## Nadim Makdisi Memorial Fund

AUB-IFI received a generous endowment from the Makdisi family to honor the memory of Nadim A. Makdisi, one of Lebanon's accomplished journalists and publishers. IFI invites annually a prominent or recognized promising journalist or expert in current affairs with particular emphasis on the Middle East to AUB to give a public lecture to the AUB community. The fund also annually awards a grant to a graduate student whose thesis covers relevant issues in journalism and current affairs.

## Bill and Sally Hambrecht Distinguished Peacemakers Lecture Series

IFI inaugurated the Bill and Sally Hambrecht Distinguished Peacemakers Lecture Series in October 2007 and in the course of three years, over a dozen speakers who have mediated national and international conflicts have been invited to deliver a public lecture at AUB and meet with conflict-resolution practitioners. Lakhdar Brahimi, Jimmy Carter, Alvaro de Soto and Amre Moussa are a few of the previous speakers in the series.

## Writer in Residence

IFI offers a resident fellowship at AUB for distinguished Arab and international journalists and other writers to complete texts they are working on while also contributing to the academic and intellectual life of the university. Our first writer in residence was the late Anthony Shadid who was followed by Nora Boustany of *The Washington Post*.