

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) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) is an independent, research-based, policy-oriented institute. Inaugurated in 2006, the institute aims to harness, develop, and initiate policy-relevant research in the Arab region. IFI is committed to expanding 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's main research programs and projects are:

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

The 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.

Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World

The Refugee Research and Policy in the Arab World program aims to collect, support and initiate research relevant to refugees – whether Syrian, Palestinian, Iraqi, or others. It seeks to harness the refugee-related, policy-oriented research of AUB’s internationally respected faculty in order to achieve several goals: to enhance the Arab world’s input into regional and global refugee issues, to raise the quality of refugee policy-related debate and decision-making in the region, and to enrich the quality of interaction among scholars, officials, international organizations and civil society actors in the Middle East and beyond.

Social Justice and Development Policy in the Arab World

IFI, in collaboration with the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton University, has launched the Social Justice and Development Policy in the Arab World research initiative to try to further understand, through research, the many different meanings of the phrase “social justice” and its social and economic policy implications. The immediate aim of the research initiative is to identify and research the most significant elements of what people throughout the region mean by social justice, and to understand how this could influence the newly emerging structures of Arab countries and their economic policies.

Nadim Makdisi Memorial Fund

IFI-AUB received a generous endowment from the Makdisi family to honor the memory of Nadim A. Makdisi, one of Lebanon’s most 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 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.

