

For Immediate Release



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The Non-Governmental Organizations Initiative (NGOi) at AUB's Global Health Institute (GHI) receives \$4.8 million for Arab Alliance for CSO Development

Building on its track-record in serving as a regional hub for the NGO sector development, capacity building, and institutional strengthening, the Non-Governmental Organizations Initiative (NGOi) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) received a \$4.8 million grant to establish the Arab Alliance for CSO Development (AACSD). Supported by the Ford Foundation and the Asfari Foundation, AACSD is a 5-year flagship program of NGOi, dedicated to institutionally strengthen Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in the Arab World through a network of more than 100 partners and stakeholders. The program is envisioned to institutionally support at least 60 CSOs in twelve countries of the Arab world through a contextualized set of service packages. These services include institutional strengthening and organizational development, capacity building, contextualization and Arabization, knowledge sharing, and organizational certification.

“Undoubtedly, AACSD is a major step forward and a flagship program of the NGOi at AUB to support civil society institutional strengthening in the region,” commented Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB’s president. “As a university, we are keen on strengthening our academic and programmatic regional presence in support of more prosperous and inclusive societies.”

Dr. Shadi Saleh, NGOi’s founding director, reiterated the commitment to a transformative vision for the strengthening of NGO ecosystem in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. “We live in a vibrant region that has shown a great level of resilience and social solidarity in difficult settings and contexts. As a flagship program of NGOi, AACSD will further highlight our belief that civil society can play a major role in the social and economic development of the region through effective and transparent CSOs that adopt a contextualized approach,” he stated.

Dr. Noha El-Mikawy, the regional director of Ford Foundation at the time of the grant award, highlighted the foundation’s main goal behind supporting the establishment of AACSD, “Ford Foundation and its partners engaged in intensive discussions throughout 2021 with CSOs in the

MENA region only to discover the need for a regional resource hub to support institutional capacity building of these organizations.”

“To address this need, the foundation has committed to support the NGOi to serve as a regional hub for contextualized institutional capacity development through the establishment of AACCSOD,” she added.

The contribution and partnership role of the Asfari Foundation with NGOi extends many years with the foundation supporting many projects. AACCSOD was an opportunity to further solidify this partnership. “Our support to regionalize NGOi’s services through the establishment of AACCSOD comes as a natural scale-up of collaborative development projects that the foundation has pursued in the past two years with NGOi,” said Saba Al Mubaslat, then executive director of Asfari Foundation. “These projects constituted a proof of concept of NGOi’s capacity to institutionally strengthen CSOs in the MENA region and generate contextualized and accessible trainings and knowledge. We believe that AACCSOD, with the services it offers, will contribute to fulfilling this goal.”

It is envisioned that a call for regional partners and experts to join AACCSOD will be released in summer 2022, followed by a call for applications addressed to CSOs that wish to engage in AACCSOD’s institutional strengthening program. As a result – starting fall 2022 and for each of the following years, AACCSOD will support fifteen CSOs from three different countries yearly to reach a total of sixty CSOs in twelve different countries in the region. AACCSOD’s institutional strengthening program is a twelve to eighteen-month program focused on organizational development as a means for organizations to reach operational excellence.

For more information about AACCSOD, including the enrollment process, visit www.ghi.aub.edu.lb/ngoi-aacsod or contact aacsod-ngoi@aub.edu.lb.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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