

For Immediate Release



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**AUB partners with GCHERA to promote EARTH University model to  
strengthen experiential learning and community engagement  
among global institutions of higher education**

The American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon, will partner with the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA) in a project to introduce EARTH University's Key Elements of Success - that have proven over the years to be of great relevance in university education: Values-based education, experiential/participatory learning, community engagement, social entrepreneurship, ethical leadership and decision-making, to three select universities in Mexico and Haiti over a period of three years (July, 2018 - June, 2021). Concurrently, GCHERA will continue to work with universities across its global network to facilitate the change agenda among interested institutions. John Kennelly, President of GCHERA, welcomed the partnership with AUB and lauded AUB on its leadership and enthusiastic commitment to the project. He also thanked the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for supporting a project that will help transform university education in order to form the ethical leaders the world needs. The project is funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Michigan, USA.

“As a founding funder of EARTH University, we have a long history with EARTH and the mission of preparing visionary leaders for service in their home countries. Our founder, Will Keith Kellogg, believed in the capacity of people to change the world around them. EARTH's spirit and purpose is a part of Mr. Kellogg's legacy. This new project to bring EARTH's service learning model to students in many more countries will only widen the circle of this important work,” said La June Montgomery Tabron, President & CEO, W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

AUB's long history in excellence, student and community-centered learning environment, makes it the ideal host for the project. Since its founding in 1866, AUB has set standards in higher education worldwide and is committed to the ideals of critical thinking, open debate, and diversity. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has around 800 instructional faculty and

a student body of around 8,000 students. The University encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to graduate men and women committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership. The 2017/2018 edition of the QS Arab Region University Rankings has placed AUB in the first position among 1,000 universities in the Arab world. This is the first time that AUB holds this position.

The project will contribute to educational reform using a new participatory and service learning model that transforms today's students into future leaders and agents of change who make a difference using integrated problem solving, entrepreneurship, environmental consciousness, ethical leadership and decision-making, and community and citizen engagement while giving service to their country and communities. Three select universities in Mexico and Haiti will prepare their graduates to have the skills and attributes to be agents of positive change, and make the institutions models to be emulated in the region and the world by incorporating at least three of the five EARTH University Key Elements of Success in one or more of their schools and departments.

The project features institutionally-based workshops, faculty and student exchange, and learning networks. Throughout a three-year strategic change agenda, academic programs will be adapted, and evaluation frameworks established and implemented that measure achievement of project goals. AUB, in partnership with GCHERA, will coordinate the overall project activities, ensure successful implementation, and provide fiscal oversight. Participating universities will be broadly showcased to allow their success to prompt others to follow the model, adopting new curricula, developing effective community engagement policies, and revising traditional resource allocation models to better reflect accountability to community change and engagement. AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri noted that he anticipates that, as the first three institutions demonstrate the success of the model, others will follow, bringing changes to many GCHERA universities.

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## **About the Partners**

The American University of Beirut (AUB) is a prominent university in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and a member of the GCHERA (Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences) network. AUB plays a leading role in societal advancement through development projects, knowledge creation, and education that serves to empower marginalized communities and address crucial environmental challenges in MENA and globally. AUB addresses issues such as citizenship, policy making, climate change, civil society, entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable development to provide its students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical foundation to become successful leaders and agents of change locally, nationally and globally. Chartered in New York State in 1863, AUB bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. AUB was recently awarded the MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship in recognition of developing a culture of service and civic leadership at AUB and was named the Most Civically Engaged University in the MENA region. For more information, visit <https://www.aub.edu.lb/>

GCHERA (Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences), founded in 1998 with assistance from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is a global consortium of universities dedicated to collaboratively addressing global food and sustainability issues. GCHERA was reconstituted in 2011 as the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences. Each higher education association represents its member universities on a regional or a national basis. GCHERA currently has fourteen member-associations that represent over 900 universities worldwide, including EARTH University and AUB. For more information, visit <https://www.gchera.com/gchera.html>

EARTH University uses an innovative educational approach to prepare young people from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and other regions to contribute to the sustainable development of their home communities while constructing a prosperous and just global society. EARTH U offers a world-class scientific and technological education emphasizing ethical entrepreneurship and strong socio-environmental commitment. Shepherded by a prestigious international faculty, an EARTH education culminates in a four-year undergraduate degree in Agricultural Sciences. EARTH was established by Costa Rican law in 1986 as a private, non-profit, international university, created with the support of the Costa Rican government, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. For more information, visit <https://www.earth.ac.cr/en/about-earth/>; EARTH MODEL

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to

thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions to help vulnerable children realize their full potentials in school, work, and life. The Kellogg Foundation, based in Battle Creek, Michigan, works in the United States, internationally, and with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to locations with high concentrations of poverty and in which children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority locations in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; internationally, they are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit <http://www.wkkf.org>

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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 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 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 420-bed hospital.

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