

For Immediate Release



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The Global Health Institute at AUB and Epic celebrate the Sijilli cloud-based electronic health records for 10,000 refugees in Lebanon

In an attempt to facilitate the access of refugees to health services in refugee-hosting countries, the Global Health Institute (GHI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB), through its E-Sahha Program (ESP), launched the ‘Sijilli’ project in July 2018. The project was launched as a response to the increasing need for an innovation that allows refugees and their health providers to access their health information, wherever they are in the world, in a highly secure manner.

Sijilli is a cloud-based mobile electronic health record (EHR) characterized by its contextualized design, applicability in low-resource settings, and potential for upscaling. It aims to serve as a model to securely collect and maintain health data of displaced individuals throughout their displacement journey. The Sijilli EHR can be accessible globally by both refugee patients and their health providers.

The project is a partnership between AUB’s GHI – an academic institution based in a low-income country leading on the project’s operational management and implementation; Epic as a private healthcare software company based in a high-income country providing technical infrastructure; and a network of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) facilitating access to the target population in all areas across Lebanon including Beirut, South Lebanon, North Lebanon, and the Bekaa Valley.

March 3, 2020 marked the celebration of the completion of the first phase of the Sijilli project whereby to date, more than 10,000 refugees are Sijilli holders. The event took place in the Halim and Aida Daniel Academic and Clinical Center (ACC) in the presence of AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, GHI Founding Director Dr. Shadi Saleh, and Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Epic Systems Judith R. Faulkner. The event was also attended by AUB leadership, faculty members from AUB and AUBMC, representatives from the Epic team, local and international NGOs, donor agencies, among others.

“Sijilli is envisioned as a much-needed model to enhance access of refugees to health services throughout their migration journey,” said Shadi Saleh. “We, at the Global Health Institute, are proud to streamline eHealth solutions in low- and middle-income countries,” he added.

President Khuri stressed on the role of the university in the humanitarian sector. “Since it was founded over a century and a half ago, it has always put humanity first, while playing its role as a provider of excellence in education and a contributor in the advancement of knowledge through research. It has been at our core.”

Khuri’s point was shared by Faulkner who stated “I visited a refugee camp today and it was a memorable experience both hopeful and sad. Thank you AUB and GHI for having the heart to help people in need.”

The event also featured presentations on the technical development of the cloud-based EHR Sijilli presented by Amlan Dasgupta, Epic development lead for Sijilli, and Joe Max Wakim, the IT director of the AUBMC processes and systems department. Nour El Arnaout and Jeff Harman, the project’s coordinators at both GHI and Epic, shared their presentation on the field-based implementation of Sijilli. The role of NGOs in the implementation of Sijilli was also shared during the event by Malaak NGO’s Founder Asma Rasamny, followed by the perspective of one of Sijilli’s volunteers on the invaluable field-based experience offered by the Sijilli project that engaged more than 50 volunteers from different universities across Lebanon.

The celebration was followed by a live webinar on the global state of digital health in 2020, focusing on opportunities and challenges of implementation in low to middle-income countries, delivered by Dr. Patricia Michael, co-founder and policy lead of HealthEnabled in South Africa.

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For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar
Director of News and Media Relations
Mobile: (+961) 3-427-024
Office: (+961) 1-374-374 ext: 2676
Email: sk158@aub.edu.lb

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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