

For Immediate Release



Under patronage of PM: AUB launches milestone reference book on public health in Lebanon and region

Beirut, Lebanon- 15/05/2012 -Under the patronage of Prime Minister Najib Mikati, the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) launched on May 15, 2012 a milestone reference book on public health in Lebanon and the region.

Titled “Public Health in the Arab World” (Cambridge University Press, March 2012) the 500-page book is the largest volume of its kind in the history of public health literature in the region. In its English edition, the book has already generated great interest at the global level especially at a time when the Arab World is at the center of international attention. It is currently being translated into Arabic by the WHO, and the Arabic issue is expected to be released by the end of the year.

The book editors are: Samer Jabbour, Rita Giacaman from Birzeit University, Marwan Khawaja from ESCWA (formerly at AUB FHS), Iman Nuwayhid and the associate editor is Rouham Yamout from WHO (formerly at AUB FHS).

The book launch ceremony took place on May 15, 2012, from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the Hisham Jaroudi Auditorium at the AUB Rafic Hariri Nursing School in the presence of PM Mikati and a host of academics and members of international organizations.

Mikati gave his full endorsement of the book, calling it a “massive accomplishment that fills major information gaps in public health.”

“When I was invited to patron the event,” he noted, “I did not hesitate for a moment. Why? Because the event is at AUB, and this institution has taught us a lot and we owe it a lot. It taught us values, tolerance and respect for others and most importantly, that religion is for all but is a private matter.”

He added: “And if I can give it [the book] a boost in any way, I wouldn’t hesitate for a minute, especially since, of the 80 or so contributors, 26 are Lebanese and that gives us great pride.”

Mikati also noted that the section on the effect of violence and wars on public health caught his attention, and he urged everyone to study it and learn from it. He also offered his support for any new editions the University is planning to release.

Speakers at the ceremony included PM Mikati, AUB President Peter Dorman, Health Sciences Dean Iman Nuwayhid and lead editor of the book Samer Jabbour, a senior lecturer at AUB. Professor Huda Zurayk was master of ceremonies.

"Public Health in the Arab World is a prime example of what we, at AUB, want to be doing and, indeed, what we do best in terms of producing research that speaks to the challenges of the region and attempts to address realizable solutions," said AUB President Peter Dorman. "With over 500 pages and 38 chapters, this is the largest volume of its kind in the history of public health in the region and certainly the most ambitious effort to be led by a university in Lebanon."

FHS Dean Iman Nuwayhid noted that the faculty took on this project because "this is part of our mission... to make an impact through our scientific research, our network of connections with sister institutions and our wide-ranging contacts among local communities and decision-makers to improve the state of public health in our region. We base our mission on our commitment to health as a human right and a humanitarian concept grounded in social justice."

Nuwayhid also underscored the importance of AUB's support for the project.

The book is divided into seven sections which address the context of public health; social determinants of health; infectious and non-infectious diseases; the health of certain vulnerable groups, such as women, the elderly, migrants and children; health in the context of war and violence; health systems and health care delivery; and health and the social agenda.

Lead editor Samer Jabbour, a senior lecturer at FHS, said, "The book is a massive collaboration, a common vision, and an ongoing dialogue among over 80 experts from public health and other fields."

He added: "Before this book, researchers and policy-makers would focus their energies on studying the politics, economy, or sociology of the region, without looking into health concerns. But the recent Arab uprisings have shown that a lot of the causes of youth disenfranchisement stems from the unemployment, marginalization, and the absence of social justice. What we have shown through this book is that studying the health of a population can reveal these issues, and finding solutions to health problems can contribute to a more global solution."

All royalties from the sale of the book will go to purchase copies to be distributed for free to students and institutions of public health in the Arab World.

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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 600 full-time faculty members and a student

body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the 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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