

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) is a stand-alone institute within AUB that inaugurated its activities in Fall 2006 with a generous endowment grant from His Excellency Issam Fares. It aims at harnessing the policy-related research of AUB's internationally respected faculty to achieve several goals:

- Raising the quality of public policy-related debate and decision-making in the Arab World and abroad, and enhancing the Arab World's input into international affairs.
- Enriching the quality of interaction among scholars, officials and civil society actors in the Middle East and abroad.

Its strategic work plan for the first five years comprises an inter-related series of activities:

- Identifying the policy-related research of AUB professors and priority policy issues in the Arab world, and generating linkages between them.
- Bringing together AUB faculty from different schools with common research interests to define a solid foundation of research activity on which to engage with others in the region and globally.
- Organizing public activities that promote IFI's profile in the public realm and help to develop contacts with a network of like-minded colleagues in the Arab World and abroad.
- Launching and funding sustained collaborative research and advocacy on public policy issues related to Climate Change, Arab Youth, Palestinian Camps, and the linkages between research and public policy-making.

The Issam Fares Institute has the following programs and projects:

- The Bill and Sally Hambrecht Distinguished Peacemakers Lecture Series
- Research, Advocacy and Public Policy-making program: Assesses the way public policy is made and implemented in the region, and how Policy Research Institutes and research centers contribute to policy-making.

- The Research and Policy Forum on Youth in the Arab World: With a foundation of 30 faculty members involved in youth-related research at AUB, the Youth in the Arab World program generates research and acts as a meeting point, catalyst and central repository for regional and international research and policy on Arab youth.
- The Research and Policy Forum on Climate Change and Environment in the Arab World: 35 multi-disciplinary faculty members at AUB are involved with this program whose research touches on a variety of climate change and environment issues. IFI's Climate Change Forum attended the UN World Summit on Climate Change in Copenhagen (COP-15) to present its findings for Lebanon's National Economic, Environment and Development Study (NEEDS) for Climate Change Project.
- The Policy and Governance in Palestinian Refugee Camps program: IFI and the Center for Behavioral Research (CBR) launched a multi-year research, analysis, and policy-recommendations program to explore the public policy and governance challenges of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza. This program is the first integrated and coordinated mechanism to share the vast amount of individual and collective research that exists, while driving cross-sectoral analyses and using their conclusions to enrich policy-making by the various authorities and parties concerned.
- Food Crisis and Food Security Project in the Middle East: Studies food sectors and systems in the Arab world, especially the condition of agricultural communities.
- The UN Research Initiative: As part the International Affairs program, IFI launched this new research initiative in 2009 to explore the roles, activities and impact of the UN in the Middle East.
- Writer-In-Residence: IFI appointed award-winning former Washington Post correspondent Nora Boustany in 2009-10 as its second resident "Writer-In-Residence" fellow, a post conferred on prominent journalists and writers from the Middle East and other parts of the world. Anthony Shadid was the first fellow in 2008.
- Visiting fellows, public lectures, panel discussions, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- Publishing policy papers and working papers by AUB faculty and other researchers.
- Nadim Makdisi Memorial Fund: In accordance with its mission to contribute to public policy and international affairs debates in the Arab world, IFI funds AUB graduate students with an interest in issues linking public policy with media, communications, journalism and the press.