



**AMERICAN
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ministry of Social Affairs and AUB Sign MoU to Strengthen Lebanon's
Social Development Sector**

Driven by a shared commitment to strengthening Lebanon's social development sector through evidence, innovation, and institutional capacity building, the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs and the American University of Beirut (AUB), through its Government Engagement Platform (GEP), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing a comprehensive framework for long-term collaboration.

The signing ceremony at AUB brought together Haneen Sayed, minister of social affairs; Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB president; Dr. Imad Baalbaki, AUB senior vice president for advancement and business development; Dr. Zaher Dawy, AUB provost; as well as senior university leadership, faculty members, researchers, and representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The MoU lays the foundation for coordinated action, supporting the ministry's efforts to strengthen data systems and analytics, enhance public policy planning, and advance social sector reform grounded in evidence and accountability. By leveraging expertise across AUB's faculties and research centers, this collaboration brings together the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, and the Faculty of Health Sciences, demonstrating the interdisciplinary strength needed to address complex social policy challenges in an integrated and effective manner.

A key component of the MoU is the establishment of a framework to engage AUB students as volunteers in the ministry's social development centers across Lebanon. AUB student volunteers will support the ministry's ongoing social services and community programs in alignment with national priorities.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Fadi El-Jardali, managing director and co-lead of AUB's Government Engagement Platform, emphasized the importance of connecting academic knowledge with public-sector needs. "Today's signing of this Memorandum of Understanding marks a significant milestone in strengthening collaboration between academia and government. It reflects a shared commitment to advancing evidence-informed policymaking, reinforcing institutional capacity, and enhancing the delivery of social services in Lebanon," he said.

American University of Beirut

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon
T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | communications@aub.edu.lb

aub.edu.lb

Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB president, highlighted how the MoU will be actively implemented, focusing on translating academic research into concrete actions and programs that directly support Lebanon's social sector. He stressed the university's commitment to ensuring that partnerships like this produce measurable, real-world impact.

Haneen Sayed, minister of social affairs, emphasized that "this Memorandum of Understanding reflects our commitment to building evidence-informed public policy and strengthening the bridge between knowledge and implementation. At the Ministry of Social Affairs, we believe that effective social protection requires interdisciplinary collaboration, youth engagement, and institutional partnerships that translate research into real impact. This is how we build a modern social state, through cooperation, expertise, and shared responsibility."

This MoU marks a significant step in fostering collaboration between academia and government, positioning evidence, innovation, and capacity building at the center of social sector reform. By translating research into action and engaging students and professionals in real-world policy challenges, the partnership aims to generate lasting impact for the public sector and society at large.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar, PhD

Executive Director of Communications
Lecturer – Political Studies and Public Administration Department
Founding Director – Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory
Former Fellow – Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
Member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Research, Innovation, and Creativity Hub

T +961 1 37 43 74 Ext: 2676 | M +961 3 42 70 24
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 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 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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