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Ministry of State for Administrative Reform, AUB, and UNESCO Launch Initiative to Strengthen Youth Engagement in Local Policymaking in Lebanon

The Ministry of State for Administrative Reform; the American University of Beirut (AUB), through its Business Practice and Policy Initiative at the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Regional Office in Beirut; announced the launch of Y-IMPACT—Youth Involvement in Multi-Level Policy and Community Transformation. The event took place at the Grand Serail, under the patronage of Dr. Nawaf Salam, president of the Council of Ministers in Lebanon, represented by Dr. Fadi Makki, minister of state for administrative reform.

Y-IMPACT is a national initiative designed to strengthen the participation young people in governance and policymaking across Lebanon. The program engages Lebanese youth in participatory policy dialogue, capacity-building activities, and the development of youth-led policy recommendations to address key priorities in local governance and community development.

Highlighting the importance of collaboration between young participants and local authorities, the launch brought together national and local leaders, including Kamal Abou Jaoude, governor of Bekaa, and Mansour Daou, governor of South Lebanon. It also marked the participation of Lebanese youth from leading academic institutions, including the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese University, the Lebanese American University, and the Beirut Arab University, reflecting the initiative's inclusive and nationwide reach.

Through interactive workshops, panel discussions, and youth-led policy labs, Y-IMPACT equips participants with the knowledge, tools, and practical experience needed to contribute meaningfully to public policy at both local and national levels. The initiative creates a structured platform for young people to engage directly with policymakers, academic institutions, and international organizations, bridging the gap between youth perspectives and public decision-making.

During the opening remarks, Dr. Yusuf Sidani, dean of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business at AUB, emphasized the importance of empowering youth as active partners in shaping Lebanon's future. Paolo Fontani, director of the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut, highlighted UNESCO's commitment to supporting youth engagement and inclusive governance.

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. Fadi Makki, minister of state for administrative reform, underscored the ministry's vision of institutionalizing youth participation as a core approach within the administrative reform process and strengthening public institutions.

Dr. Neveen Ahmed, director of the Business Practice and Policy Initiative, presented the initiative's mission and vision, reaffirming its commitment to connecting academic knowledge with public policy and national reform efforts.

The project was officially launched by Raghda Kawass, knowledge and public policy specialist at the Business Practice and Policy Initiative, who introduced Y-IMPACT's objectives, structure, and national scope, emphasizing its role in empowering young civic actors to move from dialogue to policy and become active contributors to reform and community transformation.

The launch event also featured a panel discussion titled "From Local Challenges to National Reform: Advancing Policy Transformation through Youth, Institutions, and Academia," moderated by Raghda Kawass. The panel brought together Dr. Fadi Makki, minister of state for administrative reform; Dr. Fadi El-Jardali, professor of policy and health systems and managing director and co-lead of the Government Engagement Platform at AUB; Assem Abi Ali, Education Program coordinator at UNESCO; and Dr. Simon Kachar, lecturer in political science and founding and current director of the Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory at AUB.

The discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration between youth, public institutions, and academia in advancing evidence-based reforms, and emphasized the critical role of youth as active partners in shaping responsive, inclusive, and sustainable public policies in Lebanon.

Y-IMPACT represents a significant step toward strengthening inclusive governance in Lebanon by institutionalizing the engagement of young stakeholders and fostering a new generation of informed, skilled, and engaged leaders capable of shaping sustainable public policies.

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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