



**AMERICAN
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AUB Workshop Empowers Women in Healthcare Leadership

In the second cohort of “By Women, For Women: Introduction to Building Women’s Leadership in Health and Public Health,” twenty-two women healthcare professionals from across Lebanon gathered for a two-day workshop at the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

Jointly organized by the Center for Women in Business (CWiB) at OSB and the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the AUB Medical Center (AUBMC), the program brought together women from various medical disciplines to strengthen leadership capacity, build confidence, and foster meaningful professional networks.

After a welcome note from Professor Yusuf Sidani, OSB dean, emphasizing the school’s continuous support to the CWiB and its mission of empowering women leaders across sectors, participants heard from Dr. Hanan Balkhy, regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office at the World Health Organization. Drawing from her global experience in health leadership, Dr. Balkhy shared powerful lessons on resilience, purpose, and leading through uncertainty—underscoring how women’s voices shape stronger, more equitable health systems.

Norwegian Ambassador to Lebanon Hilde Haraldstad also shared reflections on women’s representation in the medical field. She highlighted Norway’s advancements in women’s representation in the healthcare sector, while also acknowledging the ongoing global challenge of women’s underrepresentation in senior leadership roles. Her remarks offered both global perspective and local resonance—a call to continue advancing equity in leadership.

The workshop featured a series of dynamic sessions led by AUB female faculty members and experts, each contributing unique insights on leadership, innovation, and personal growth. Dr. Ghina Ghazeeri, professor of obstetrics and gynecology and head of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at AUBMC, opened the sessions with “Core Competencies Unlocked—Foundations of Mastery in Healthcare Leadership.” Her session explored the essential skills needed to lead teams effectively, balance clinical excellence with organizational priorities, and build confidence as decision-makers. She was joined by Dr. Zeina Chehade, an early-career physician whose perspective reflected the passion and drive of a new generation of women in medicine.

Dr. Rola Chami-Malaeb, assistant professor of human resource management at OSB, led “Leading Change with Purpose,” focusing on managing transformation, inspiring innovation, and

navigating institutional resistance. She was joined by Manal Ayoub, fertility nurse and patient educator at AUBMC, who shared her experience as a nurse leader and mentor—illustrating how empathy, teamwork, and emotional intelligence can transform clinical practice and strengthen healthcare teams.

In “Amplify Your Influence—Negotiating Powerfully and Celebrating Achievements,” Dr. Nada Khaddage-Soboh, director of the Center for Women in Business at OSB, guided participants through the skills and mindset needed to advocate for themselves and others, paving the way for more women to take on leadership roles across the healthcare landscape.

“Empowering women in healthcare isn’t just about professional advancement—it’s about transforming systems from within,” said Dr. Khaddage-Soboh. “When women lead with authenticity, empathy, and confidence, they create ripple effects that strengthen organizations, communities, and ultimately, public health outcomes.”

The second day of the workshop focused on adaptability, digital presence, and resilience. Dr. Jessy Kfoury, OSB senior lecturer in marketing, led “Your Online Presence,” encouraging participants to develop authentic digital identities that enhance professional credibility and influence. Dr. Maya Romani, associate professor of family medicine and director of the Health and Wellness Center at AUB, followed with “Resilient Leadership—Mastering Work-Life Integration and Preventing Burnout,” offering practical strategies for maintaining well-being and modeling balance in demanding healthcare environments.

In the afternoon, Dr. Mona Itani, assistant professor of entrepreneurship at OSB, delivered “Fostering Intrapreneurship in the Workplace,” encouraging participants to embrace creativity and initiative within their organizations to drive sustainable change. The program concluded with “Women’s Leadership in Crisis Times,” presented by Dr. Eveline Hitti, professor of clinical emergency medicine and chairperson of the Department of Emergency Medicine at AUBMC, who shared insights from her extensive experience leading emergency response teams through national crises. Her reflections highlighted the strength, adaptability, and composure required to lead effectively in high-pressure environments.

As the workshop came to a close, participants shared reflections on the lessons and connections formed over the two days. Many described the experience as transformative and empowering, underscoring the importance of peer learning, mentorship, and collective growth.

This workshop marked the first module of a multi-phase initiative designed to build leadership capacity among women in healthcare, raise awareness of systemic barriers, and foster a sustainable community of women leaders driving innovation, inclusion, and transformation in health and public health across Lebanon and the wider region.

ENDS

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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 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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