

For Immediate Release



## **New AUB center to provide policy-makers with scientific knowledge to inform their policy-making**

Beirut, Lebanon- 13/03/2015 - The American University of Beirut has launched a new center called Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center, whose aim is to provide policy-makers with high quality, evidence-based scientific research to help them produce more effective and relevant policies, especially when it comes to health-related matters.

“In public health and in other sectors that impact health, poor decisions, not informed by evidence and knowledge, are costly to human lives and render those who make such decisions subject to criticism,” said Dr. Fadi El-Jardali, K2P director. “K2P’s approach is focused on creating a culture of regular and systematic use of evidence in decision-making.”

He added, “Our aim is for science to be in the service of decision-making; decision-making to be in the service of policies; and policies in the service of society.”

To do so, K2P, the first of its kind in the Arab region, will deliver high-quality, relevant, and optimally-packaged “products” to its end users, who will include politicians, policy advisors, and manager.

The “products” include policy briefs, briefing notes, rapid response, dialogue summaries, evidence summaries, and media bites, each catering to a different audience and circumstance. All products will be available in Arabic, in order to maximize their uptake by policy-makers in Lebanon and the region.

“At K2P, we rely on our strengths and expertise in producing, analyzing, and compiling relevant research in easy-to-use formats for our respective target audiences,” said Dr. El-Jardali. “We also engage a wide range of policymakers, researchers, experts, and civil societies to influence policy agendas,” added El-Jardali, who described K2P as “a scientific emergency hub.”

Faculty of Health Sciences Dean Iman Nuwayhid said that the region’s researchers have so far been disseminating their findings only in scientific venues at a time when policymakers are becoming more aware of the need to build their policies on scientific evidence. “The K2P Center will fill such a gap by providing summaries of scientific and tacit knowledge, organizing policy dialogues, producing relevant products, and building capacity of researchers and policymakers,” said Dr. Nuwayhid. “Our vision is for K2P Center to become a leading hub for strengthening public health policies and practice and improving health outcomes in the Arab world through collective problem-solving.”

Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center was established by the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the American University of Beirut with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). K2P aims at strengthening and influencing policy and promoting evidence-informed decision making at the national and the regional level.

It was launched in an official ceremony and panel discussion on March 12, 2015. The ceremony was inaugurated with a keynote speech by Dr. Walid Ammar, director-general of the Ministry of Public Health on behalf of Minister Wael Abou Faour, who had to cancel at the last minute for an emergency meeting. Dr. Ammar said that the problem does not only lie with politicians, but also with researchers who produce studies that are not relevant to the needs of policy-makers. “This is why having the K2P Center is important, since it will produce and compile studies that are relevant to the needs of policy- and decision-makers,” he said, emphasizing his joy for learning that such a center now exists, and encouraging K2P members to conduct focus groups with decision-makers in order to listen to them and learn of their needs.

Besides Dr. Ammar, panelists included:

- Dr. Atef Majdalani, member of the Lebanese Parliament and head of the parliamentary committee of health and social affairs, who said that K2P will help legislators either defend a draft bill or even devise one based on scientific evidence;
- Dr. Charbel Nahas, former Minister of Labour, whose message was gloomy, arguing that “there are no decision-makers, only money and foreign ambassadors” who decide what laws or policies get passed;
- Dr. Tarek Mitri, director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at AUB and former Minister of Culture, who said that everyone is bombarded with a lot of information, but that does not mean they become knowledgeable. He also warned that researchers and policy-makers should not find themselves in a face-off, but should engage each other as well as the media and public opinion in order to receive the needed support;
- Dr. Walid Khoury, member of the Lebanese Parliament and member of the parliamentary committee of health and social affairs;
- Mrs. Roula Mouawad, An Nahar journalist;
- Dr. Rima Nakkash, K2P associate director and associate professor at AUB. The panel was moderated by Mrs. Rania Baroud, K2P media advisor.
- Mr. Ghassan Moukheiber, member of the Lebanese Parliament, member of the parliamentary committee of law and administration, who said, “We need K2Ps in all sectors, not just health.” He added, “When policies and laws are married to science, they turn out of much better quality.”

During the launch ceremony, AUB Associate Provost Nesreen Ghaddar, speaking on behalf of Provost Ahmad Dallal, considered the establishment of K2P as serving one of AUB’s core objectives. “One of our core values at AUB is not only to advance cutting-edge research but to disseminate new knowledge widely and accessibly to relevant stakeholders,” Ghaddar said.

“Providing research-based evidence to enhance policy decisions is a key civic role of the modern University.

Since its establishment, K2P has convened policymakers and stakeholders in several policy dialogue sessions to inform deliberations on pressing issues. K2P has prepared and disseminated a variety of optimally packaged products on priority topics such as mental health, access to care for Syrian refugees, food safety, universal health coverage, salt fluoridation and others. K2P is currently working on priority topics related to governance of the pharmaceutical sector, performance contracting with health care providers, and patient safety. K2P has held a number of local and regional capacity-building workshops on knowledge translation for policymakers, stakeholders, researchers, media, civil societies and students.

K2P is affiliated with McMaster Health Forum, Canada; EVIPNet at the World Health Organization, Geneva; and the Center for Systematic Review in Health Policy and Systems Research (SPARK) at AUB.

ENDS

**For more information please contact:**

Maha Al-Azar, Director of News and Information, [ma110@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ma110@aub.edu.lb),  
01-75 96 85

**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 700 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.

**Stay up to date on AUB news and events. Follow us on:**

Website: [www.aub.edu.lb](http://www.aub.edu.lb)  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/aub.edu.lb>  
Twitter: [http://twitter.com/AUB\\_Lebanon](http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon)