

For Immediate Release



AUB's TAMAM launches Lebanon's first Educational Reform Hub

Beirut, Lebanon- 12/11/2015 - The first Lebanese hub for the initiative on educational reform in the Arab world (TAMAM) was launched Wednesday at the American University of Beirut after winning on September 30, 2015 a five-year grant from the LORE Foundation in support of the improvement of education in Lebanon.

TAMAM, an acronym for the phrase “school-based reform” in Arabic (al-Tatweer Al-Mustanid ila Al-Madrasa - التطوير المستند الى المدرسة) is an initiative that combines research with development to trigger and support school-based initiatives for sustainable school improvement.

Based on a memorandum of understanding between AUB and the Arab Thought Foundation (ATF) in 2007, TAMAM was formed to build the capacities of teachers and school administrators to initiate school-based improvement and transform the culture of schools so they can be leaders in optimum improvement in education. TAMAM aims to build a home-grown, evidence based theoretical understanding of effective school reform that improves students' learning within the particular culture of the Arab region. The ATF has funded the project since its inception and in 2015 issued its third grant to support it for three more years (2015-2018).

The initiative is run by two co-principal investigators who are professors at the Education department of AUB: Dr Rima Karami, associate professor of Educational Administration and Leadership, and Dr Saouma Boujaoude, professor of Science Education; in addition to an executive team of researchers and consultants: Rola Katerji, Diana Sarriddine, Suha Harb, Rayyana Saad, and Dr. Rasha ElSaheli Elhage. A support team comprising of research assistants and interns also contributes to the work in TAMAM.

In 2007, the TAMAM initiative started working with school practitioners from nine participating schools in three countries: Saudi Arabia (3 schools), Lebanon (3 schools), and Jordan (3 schools). Today, TAMAM works with 29 schools in six countries (Qatar, Lebanon, KSA, Jordan, Oman, and Egypt). It currently has a professional community of 130 professionals (school practitioners - teachers, principals, administrators, coordinators, university researchers, academicians, and Ministry representatives) and reaches a total of 17,000 students through the schools it supports. Moreover, TAMAM has a fully developed Research-Based Professional Development Model tailored for the context of the Arab world and more than 8 publications documenting the TAMAM experience in the region. The “TAMAM School Improvement Journey” has also been adopted as a framework for improvement by the Ministry of Education in Oman.

At the onset of TAMAM's 8th year of implementation, it sought to expand to more schools and countries. Upon receiving a five-year grant from the LORE Foundation in 2015 toward the improvement of education in Lebanon, TAMAM has set off to closely support and facilitate the

reform journeys of underprivileged Lebanese schools in disadvantaged communities through its newly established hub. “We want to change the fabric of society to one that is more caring, homogeneous, creative, entrepreneurial and autonomous and came to the conclusion that the best way to do so is to focus on education. Our aim is to provide every child in Lebanon with the best education possible. To have the maximum impact, we will be focusing our effort on improving the quality of schools and teachers. This is how we got introduced to Dr. Karami and her work at TAMAM. We looked at TAMAM, looked at the details of what TAMAM had done across the Arab world, and decided that creating a TAMAM Lebanon hub would be the appropriate way to reach our objectives,” said the Founder of the Lore Foundation, Mr. Fawzi Kyriakos-Saad.

The hub has been launched with a vision to focus school improvement on developing students holistically and preparing them to be productive and responsible citizens; improving teachers’ performance and involvement in the school improvement process; and engaging the school’s community in the shared responsibility of this improvement process. The strategic goal of the TAMAM Lebanon hub is to complete a five-year pilot phase with schools in preparation for a large-scale expansion in Lebanon. The pilot phase consists of building the leadership capacity of a fully trained school improvement lead team composed of a strategic team [formal school administrators] and a pedagogical team [teachers/coordinators] to lead sustainable school-based improvement; preparing coaches to lead the activities of the hub; refining the TAMAM model in the specific context of Lebanese schools; establishing the governance structure of the hub for expanding its services to additional Lebanese schools; and connecting the hub to the external community so as to secure sustainable resources and support for the schools.

The launch of this first educational reform hub in Lebanon took place at AUB in presence of the hub’s Advisory Board: Dr. Bahige Tabbarah, former Minister of Justice; Mr. Bassam Yammine, CEO of Excelsa Development Holding and former Minister of Energy and Water; Mr. Fadi Yarak, Director General of Education; Dr. Adnan El Amine, President of Lebanese Association of Educational Sciences; Dr. Munir Bashshur, Professor at American University of Beirut; Mr. Ghassan Kansou, Vice President for Academic Development at Sabis Educational Services; Myrna Attalah, Executive Director at Alfamar; and Mr. Ramzi El Hafez, Founder of InfoPro SAL. Representatives from AUB, the Arab Thought Foundation, the Lebanese University, the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), the Lebanese Association for Educational Sciences (LAES), the Arab Educational Information Network (Shamaa), heads of educational institutions, as well as school principals and educators also attended the event.

The event opened with speeches by AUB’s interim provost, Dr. Muhamad Harajli, the chairman of the Department of Education, Dr. Anies Al-Hroub, and the founder of the Lore Foundation, Mr. Kyriakos-Saad. Provost Harajli said, “TAMAM is a pioneering AUB initiative and an attempt at educational reform in the Arab world. It adopts a design that makes culturally grounded knowledge production and the critical adaptation of International conception its central goals.” “AUB’s guiding vision and mission, which drive its educational efforts to serve Lebanon and the region, have framed the work of the TAMAM project while it’s delivering excellence in educational reform and producing culturally grounded knowledge,” he added.

“AUB’s department of Education has acquired more than 35 grants related to teaching, research, leadership, and international exchange. TAMAM is one of these but is unique in that it is a long term project that aims at providing services to schools, practitioners, and

teachers-as-researchers. We believe in this project because we are interested in leadership, learning, and professional development in the broadest sense and at every level, from international policy to local schools,” said the Chairperson of the Department of Education at AUB, Dr. Anies Al-Hroub.

Director of the hub, Dr. Karami-Akkary, then introduced the project and provided background information about TAMAM. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session and the event ended with a closed session during which the hub’s advisory board members and team instigated a school selection process and a plan for the hub’s pilot phase.

To date, the AUB TAMAM initiative has been granted around 2.5 million dollars since 2007 - provided by ATF and LORE foundation. The team works toward spreading the project to other countries and developing new educational hubs through further grants and partnerships.

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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 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 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 420-bed hospital.

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