

For Immediate Release



AUB professor contributes to acclaimed TV drama addressing religious tolerance

Beirut, Lebanon- 22/09/2011 - A Ramadan television social drama to which an AUB professor served as an independent evaluator was acclaimed by Arab media critics as the best Egyptian Ramadan television drama for 2011. The program, "Dawaran Shobra" discusses religious tolerance between Muslims and Copts in a very densely populated, average-income neighborhood in the center of Cairo, which is historically known for its integrated Muslim-Christian community (of over 2 million people).

Professor Nabil Dajani, chair of the AUB department of social and behavioral sciences was commissioned to provide independent external evaluation for the project.

Egyptian and prominent Arab cinema and drama critics considered this drama as one of the major soap operas presented in Ramadan this year. Most critics noted the success of the drama in delivering compelling social-realism.

The television drama of 30 episodes provides a picture of the social groups that live in this neighborhood and of the special relationships among them which formed the social fabric in the bond among communities. The episodes can be downloaded on:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SVXiyGREkA&feature=BFa&list=SP4DCCF8095365C9F5&lf=list_related

The new social drama is produced by Egyptian production company "Youssef Chahine Misr International Films" in association with the BBC World Service Trust, a British NGO dedicated to the use of media for social development. It is part of a BBC WST project on "Socially Responsible Media in the Arab World." The project aims to improve the capacity of Arab media programming, promote social cohesion and reflect diversity and tolerance in Arab civil society.

Professor Dajani's role included reviewing the treatment and scripts of three TV dramas, (two in Egypt "Dawaran Shobra" and "Zaat", and one, "Amal" in Jordan,) and a web social drama, "Shankaboot", in Lebanon. The production of "Amal" and "Zaat" was delayed because of the Arab spring uprisings.

Zaat presents a picture of an alienated Egyptian woman and provides a platform for marginalized voices. Its episodes deal with the quest for identity and self-determination against the backdrop of traditional society and the demands of modern life. The core theme of the Jordanian social drama "Amal" is breaking class and ethnic barriers.

The BBC WST project perceives the media as an effective vehicle for raising awareness, and facilitating debate on social issues. It targets vulnerable, marginalized and disenfranchised

groups in the Arabic-speaking world and aims at developing lasting media platforms that offer narratives promoting empowerment and decision-making skills among the target audiences.

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For more information please contact:

Maha Al-Azar, Media Relations Officer, ma110@aub.edu.lb, 01-353 228

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 600 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.

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