INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) was established in 2007. It is part of the Department of Social Sciences and is directly accountable to the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Since its foundation, IMS has been interested in developing into an interdisciplinary research institute in the domain of migration as well as a resource center for graduate students and scholars interested in the study of migration and its various impacts on Lebanon and other countries in the region. IMS also has the aim of closely collaborating with government and non-government organizations that deal with diasporic migrant communities and migrant workers in the region.

Lebanese American University (LAU), with its vision for excellence in education and research, and its location in Beirut, the cultural capital of the Arab World, naturally offers the perfect locale for the functioning and success of such an institute.
IMS strives towards cooperation with international institutions and research centers with similar research agendas. We aim to establish affiliations with similar institutes in universities located in Arab and other countries. The objective is to establish an integrated institutional network for migration research in the Arab world housed at LAU. In line with the overall mission of LAU, IMS fosters practice-oriented interdisciplinary research that feeds into cutting-edge academic scholarship. IMS also endorses the view that research should be linked to the aim of providing excellence in teaching. IMS aims to:

a) Engage in research projects

b) Draw on new research findings to evaluate and advocate policy options and effective government practices

c) Disseminate knowledge through academic publications, databanks, and conferences

d) Prepare policy/research briefings and organize roundtables, seminars, and workshops for policy makers

e) Engage in community outreach projects

f) Offer an MA program in Migration Studies

g) Facilitate the research activities of local and international scholars and graduate students working on migration and migrant communities in Lebanon and the Arab countries.
“Our objective is to establish an integrated institutional network for migration research in the Arab world housed at LAU.”
“As a new organization, a main focus of IMS has been to obtain funding for a number of research projects and strengthen our community outreach.”
IMS’ technical and programmatic infrastructure also includes the ability and skills to organize international conferences and workshops on migration issues and policies. It also can mobilize LAU logistic support system and faculty experience to implement its research and community projects.

During the academic year 2007-2008, the Institute for Migration Studies (IMS) has been active on a number of fronts. As a new organisation, a main focus of IMS has been to obtain funding for a number of research projects and strengthen our community outreach. The ultimate goals was to build the credibility of IMS as a serious research body and expand its community network activities.

1. RESEARCH FUNDING

In September 2008, the IMS was awarded a three years $342,000 grant to conduct research on the Lebanese Diaspora’s impacts on Lebanese politics.

In addition, IMS applied for research funding from these different sources during 2007-2008 and is awaiting their decisions:

a) Qatar Foundation (US$25,000)

b) Post Capacity Building in Resource Mobilization (CBRM) Training – Mini Grants, IDRC (US$5,000)

c) Two research grant applications (US$12,000 each) submitted to The Middle East Council of Churches, one on Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, and the other on Ethiopian domestic workers in Lebanon.

2. RESEARCH RELATED ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS

a) Dr. Tabar was an invited speaker at a public hearing on “The Changing Ecclesial Context: Impact of migration on Living Together in Diversity” organized by the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches in April 2008. Dr. Tabar presented a paper on “Multiculturalism: the Australian experience and its relevance to Arab societies”

b) Dr. Tabar was invited by the Arab Journal of Sociology to act as the guest editor of a special issue on Migration in Arab countries. The issue was published in May 2008.
c) Dr. Tabar has a forthcoming chapter called ‘Cronulla riots: community leadership, generational and class conflicts’, in Greg Noble (ed) Lines in the Sand: The Cronulla Riots and the Limits of Australian Multiculturalism. Sydney Institute of Criminology Press.

d) IMS is publishing a book called On Being Lebanese in Australia: Identity, Racism and the Ethnic Field. The book is currently being peer reviewed, and it is co-authored by Tabar, Noble, and Poynting.

e) The European University Institute via CARIM, and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, has commissioned Dr. Tabar to write a 40 pages paper on the political role of the Arab Diaspora in Australia.

f) Dr. Skulte-Ouaiss was invited to participate in a three-week workshop, “Florence School on Euro-Mediterranean Migration and Development”, held at the Robert Schumann Center at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, in June 2007.

g) Dr. Skulte-Ouaiss published a chapter on female migration from the Baltic states in “Gender Matters in the Baltics” to be published in Summer 2008 by the University of Latvia Press.

h) Faculty working at IMS are increasingly peer reviewing articles related to Arab migration. The request for this service is coming from a number of internationally refereed journals, such as Anthropological Forum, National Identities, Journal of Australian Studies and Journal for Intercultural Studies.
3. TEACHING

The Department of Social Sciences offered a senior-level course on migration called: SOC488 Topics in Sociology: Migration – A Sociological and Anthropological Approach

4. NETWORKING

IMS is led by three LAU faculty members (a director and two faculty). It has a research assistant, an office and a meeting room, three graduate assistants, and interns. The University’s IT and office resources provide technical support to IMS. The institute maintains an ongoing collaboration with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Expatriates, the Centre for Cultural Research – University of Western Australia – Sydney and a growing collaboration with IDRC.

During year 2007-2008, IMS:

a) Established a good relationship with The Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University of Cairo

b) Started a relationship with The European University Institute via CARIM and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

c) Was invited by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to participate in the “Capacity Building in Resource Mobilization Workshop”. As part of IMS’s growing relationship with IDRC

d) Is building a relationship with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The aim is to collaborate with them on launch an MA Program in Migration Studies at LAU

e) Established a strong working relationship with the Arab Research Collectives, an NGO working throughout the region

f) Networked with the Department of Lebanese Expatriates at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates. Dr Jihad `Aql, the Director of this department, was invited to present a paper on Migration and Brain Drain in Lebanon.

“We are building a relationship with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to collaborate with them on launching an MA Program in Migration Studies at LAU.”
5. PROJECTS FOR YEAR 2008-2009

IMS is:

a) Organizing an international conference on Gender and Migration to be held in May-June 2009

b) Organizing a workshop on assessing current research in migration in Lebanon

c) Introducing an MA Program in Migration Studies

d) Expecting to receive substantial research funding leading to a number of research projects on the politics of Lebanese Diaspora, migrant Arab families and the practice of marriage and the gender and cultural identity of Ethiopian domestic workers.

e) Planning to form a nationwide pool of scholars, social workers and community leaders working in the field migration
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The IMS faculty team consists of Dr. Paul Tabar, Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, Dr. Imad Salamey and research assistant, Rima Rassi. The skill and expertise of each member has proven essential in implementing IMS tasks throughout the year 2007-2008. The teamwork spirit that characterized their joint activities added more value to this year achievements.

7. SHORT BIOS

**Paul Tabar**
Director of the Institute for Migration Studies, an Associate Professor in Sociology/Anthropology at the Lebanese American University, Beirut campus, and an Associate researcher at the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney. He is a co-author of *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other* (The Institute of Criminology, Sydney University, 2004), and has published many articles on Lebanese and Arab migrants in international journals. He is currently finishing on a book on the cultural practices of the Lebanese migrants in Australia.

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**Imad Salamey**
Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the Lebanese American University, Beirut. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Wayne State University, Department of Political Science in 2003. His research interests focus on topics of ethnic politics, democracy and governance and he has various joint publications related to transitional democracy and electoral reforms in Lebanon and the Middle East. Dr. Salamey is a specialist in public opinion and research methodology. He directs various grant funded research projects in Lebanon.

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**Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss**
Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at LAU. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Politics and International Relations from the University of Maryland, USA (2005). A specialist in postcommunist politics, national identity and women and politics, she has published book chapters and articles focusing on return migration, elite politics and national identity construction in Europe and the U.S. She has taught in the US and Lebanon and has also worked as a researcher on issues of international development. She recently was a guest editor for a special issue of the journal, *Al-Raida*, concerning women, higher education and empowerment in the Arab World. A book chapter concerning women and labor migration from the Baltic states to other states in the EU and the impact of this migration on Baltic national identities was published in summer 2008.

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