

# INSTITUTES AND CENTERS

## A. Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) was founded in 1973 to honor LAU's legacy as a school for young women. More than four decades later, the institute enjoys wide recognition as a pioneering research center focused on gender issues and women's rights in the region. Intent on empowering women and achieving gender equality through research, education, development programs, and local and international outreach, IWSAW radiates as a hub of intellectual activity and positive activism.

Recently, IWSAW received a 15-month grant from Management Systems International to build and coordinate a network of organizations focused on human rights issues in Lebanon, starting December 2016. Through the grant, the institute facilitates shared efforts and advocacy on issues ranging from women's rights and children's rights to improved legal environments for drug users. The project brings together local experts and policy makers to build collective capacity and address key human rights and gender issues in Lebanon, enabling the creation of a shared agenda that is both local and trans-regional in scope.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of IWSAW's journal *Al-Raida*, the pioneering Arab journal on gender issues, IWSAW digitized all past issues since its inception in 1976, making *Al-Raida* fully searchable by title, author, theme, country and keywords, free of charge.

Over AY2016-2017, IWSAW strengthened its academic programming to ensure that education on gender studies would be available at the undergraduate, graduate and continuing education levels. It launched an interdisciplinary M.A. in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, the first of its kind in Lebanon, in conjunction with LAU's School of Arts and Sciences, and initiated an innovative continuing education program — the Gender in Development and Humanitarian Assistance (GDHA) Certificate — in conjunction with LAU's Continuing Education Program and Human Rights Education Associates (HREA).

The institute continued its tradition of hosting provocative lectures, workshops, book launches by prominent writers, and other learning events on topics related to gender in the region. Most notably, IWSAW launched an online video competition for Arab youth as part of its awareness campaign during Lebanon's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Kourken Papazian, an LAU student, was awarded the top prize. IWSAW's monthly informal speaking series, Food for Thought, attracted a wide audience for lectures on topics ranging from self-defense for women to gendered implications of Lebanon's waste-management crisis, among others.

IWSAW engaged with stakeholders in the community in a range of ways, actively expanding cooperation with the government, civil society, United Nations agencies and other partners. Among other examples, it pioneered a capacity-building effort aimed at law enforcement personnel to identify, prevent and respond appropriately to gender-based violence, and to increase gender awareness and equality within the security sector.

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In collaboration with the National Commission for Lebanese Women and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the event on “Women in Municipal Councils in Support of Local Development” raised the issue of women’s lack of political participation in Lebanon while highlighting the positive link between female participation in local governance and development.



In June 2017, IWSAW hosted a play shedding light on violence against women. Titled "No Demand, No Supply", the play highlighted the traumatic experience of 75 girls and women trafficked and forced into sexual slavery at two clubs on the outskirts of Beirut.



In March, IWSAW marked International Women’s Day with a student-led discussion dedicated to gender and language that brought together more than 100 participants at the Safadi Fine Arts building at LAU Beirut.



In January 2017, LAU paid tribute to Julinda Abu Nasr, an LAU alumna (‘55) and founding director of IWSAW, who served the university for 24 years. To honor her, IWSAW together with LAU libraries inaugurated the Julinda Abu Nasr Women and Gender Collection.

The Institute organized an international conference on the United Nations Women, Peace, and Security Agenda to address and assess progress and challenges in the Arab region. The conference engaged international, regional, and national stakeholders in strategic dialogue on women, peace and security, culminating in the launch of the "Beirut Call for Action", a collaborative document with recommendations to advance women, peace and security in the Arab region.

## B. Center for Lebanese Heritage



In 2017, the Center for Lebanese Heritage (CLH) focused on documentation, studies, and research, growing into an academic hub devoted to writing and publishing a variety of texts, providing scholars with access to new or old, original or translated literary works related to the Lebanese heritage, its pillars, and the Lebanese global diaspora.

### Publications

Launch of *The First Lebanese Immigrants to America at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* by Salloum Mokarzel and Habib Koch, first published in 1908 in both English and Arabic by the newspaper Al-Huda (New York). The book contains detailed evidence of the Lebanese diaspora's distribution across every state at the turn of the century.



This year, the CLH published *Sowers of Joy*, a co-authored work in Arabic, English, and French containing studies by expert researchers on Lebanese Zajal. The book covers this tradition's history, techniques, and features, its corresponding oral heritage in the West, and the linguistic and social approaches to the patterns of this type of oral verbal poetry between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.



## C. Centre for Lebanese Studies

The university this past year entered into a unique collaboration with the Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS), to have it operate at LAU. Both institutions recognize the need to advance the education of the public and further research into the historical, economic, geographic, sociological, and cultural issues relating to and affecting Lebanon and the Lebanese population.

Among different events, CLS at LAU organized a workshop that gathered researchers, academics and educators to discuss the development of online courses to build the capacity of educational communities in Lebanon. In anticipation of a national campaign on inclusive design, the center collaborated with UNESCO to organize two workshops targeting young professionals on advocacy and leadership for the rights of people with disabilities in Lebanon.