



**AMERICAN
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OF BEIRUT**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Efforts to increase women-inclusive HR practices in the MENA:

New phase of the Support and Accelerate Women's Inclusion (SAWI) Project launched

The American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa are proud to begin a new phase of the Support and Accelerate Women's Inclusion (SAWI) project. The project is a multi-country and multi-sector initiative that aims to promote women's economic inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

SAWI is supported by generous funding from the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) at the U.S. Department of State and is the first-of-its-kind to work directly with decision-makers and human resource managers to implement inclusive policies for the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women across the target countries. The project began as a pilot at the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) at AUB working to tackle structural barriers to women's equitable workplace inclusion. SAWI has now transitioned to become a multi-national project with country partners from across the MENA region.

SAWI is an impact-focused and evidence-based project, breaking disciplinary silos, building transnational multi-stakeholder collaborations, to co-create and implement localized strategies for more inclusive workplaces. Through SAWI, over 3310 local employers and 981 women have provided data to help close the data deficit on policies and practices relating to women's recruitment, retention, and promotion in the region. SAWI has also provided a forum for training on women-inclusive human resource

systems and gender-lens investing, and for working with regional employers to co-create more than 100 actionable inclusive HR policies.

Over the next two years, SAWI will continue this work and engage a wider network of researchers, practitioners, activists, policy makers, and economic stakeholders interested in accelerating women inclusion across the STEM, healthcare, banking, and education sectors, and throughout our eight target countries, Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

"The turmoil and crises we face across the MENA have only strengthened our resolve to continue to work collaboratively through SAWI across sectors, disciplines, and geographical borders. All hands-on deck to advance a dignified and inclusive agenda for women's inclusion in the region," said Professor Charlotte Karam, SAWI primary investigator, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa.

SAWI's impact could not have been possible without our country partners and a dedicated team of managers, experts, researchers, activists, and professors who share a commitment to women's economic inclusion in the MENA. The team also includes co-principal investigators from AUB Dr. Fida Afiouni, Dr. Wassim Dbouk, and Dr. Yasmeen Makarem; as well as Dr. Lina Daouk-Öyry from Bi Norwegian Business School, Norway and from AUB; and Dr. Carmen Geha from Soltara Consulting and Pompeu Fabra University, Spain. The SAWI team consists of Dr. Lina Choueiri, managing director, Line Reda, Olfat Khattar, Abir El Danaf, Axelle Meouchy, Elissar Gebrael, Ghadi El Ayash, Mireille El Haber, and Samira El Hazzouri, all from AUB; and Mariam Omar from the University of Ottawa, Canada.

ENDS

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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 800 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 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 365-bed hospital.

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