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Women in Data Science Conference at AUB Gathers Award-Winning International Experts

The 8th edition of the Women in Data Science at the American University of Beirut (WiDS@AUB) conference - the largest data science hub in the region - convened a remarkable gathering of more than 25 international, regional, and national speakers from diverse backgrounds offering technical talks, panels, and workshops; alongside over 1800 registrants and 1,050 attendees for an eventful day under the overarching theme of “Data Science in Humanitarian Crises.” The event was organized by the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) at the American University of Beirut.

The conference was dedicated to sharing best practices and the latest advancements in the field of data science, with a focus on critical issues such as trust in Artificial Intelligence, safeguarding personal data, data for crisis response, optimizing aid through data science, data analytics for humanitarian logistics and supply chain resilience, data science in healthcare crises, health-oriented programmatic decision making in humanitarian crises, and measuring impact.

Held both on campus and online, the WiDS@AUB conference attracted more than 900 in-person participants and additional attendees from 24 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, America, and Australia via virtual participation.

The event featured high-profile female experts from renowned institutions including Harvard, MIT, Yale, George Washington University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the University of Manchester, and the Alan Turing Institute. Representatives from leading corporations such as IBM, Intel, Google, Nvidia, YouTube, Meta, Siren Analytics, and Vested AI also participated. Notable figures from organizations like the World Food Programme and the Kuhne Foundation were also among the numerous contributors.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Fadlo Khuri, president of the American University of Beirut, highlighted the pivotal role of data science in addressing global challenges, emphasizing the potential of data science to foster impactful solutions.

“During an era where there are so many challenges facing mankind like overpopulation, pollution, war, famine, and—sadly in the 21st century—growing inequality in every aspect of living; it is by looking for solutions in the data science domain that we can start to put

American University of Beirut

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon
T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | communications@aub.edu.lb

aub.edu.lb

together agreements, understandings, and impactful solutions to the challenges that plague us.”

Dr. Yusuf Sidani, dean of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, advocated for a more human-centric approach to data science, stressing that “we need more empathy in this field, more humanity, more compassion. Data should be in service of all people, all ethnicities, all races, all religions, all backgrounds; and not in the service of companies which are primarily driven by profit.”

Dr. Lama Moussawi, professor, associate dean of research and director of WiDS@AUB, underscored the vision of WiDS to enhance the representation of women in data science in the Middle East. “WiDS unites the brightest minds in the field: women who are breaking barriers and pushing boundaries to redefine what is possible in data science.”

“Through the power of data science, we are better equipped to provide insights and solutions to create opportunities and overcome crises collaboratively. Together we can use data science to empower humanitarian responses and recovery, innovate, optimize crisis relief efforts, and measure the impact of data-driven solutions,” added Moussawi.

About WiDS@AUB

WiDS@AUB is an independent regional event organized by the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business which feature outstanding Arab and international women making significant contributions to the field. WiDS@AUB is the largest WiDS event globally, and it aims to inspire and educate data scientists worldwide, regardless of gender, and to support women in the field, promoting a higher representation of women in data science in the MENA region. It provides a platform for discussing the latest data science research, business development, and applications; encourages mentorship and interdisciplinary collaboration; and connects regional researchers and practitioners with pioneering global data science networks.

For more information, visit the event's [website](#).

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For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar, PhD

Executive Director of Communications
Lecturer – Political Studies and Public Administration Department
Founding Director – Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory
Fellow – Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs

T +961 1 37 43 74 Ext: 2676 | M +961 3 42 70 24
sk158@aub.edu.lb

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

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than 750 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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