Ma’an's Regional Case Studies on Best Practices of Civic Engagement
# Table of Contents

- Civic Engagement in Ahfad University for Women (AUW) 4-27
- Civic Engagement in Lebanese American University (LAU) 28-39
- Civic Engagement in The Jordanian University in Amman (UJ) 40-52
Case Study

Civic Engagement in Ahfad University for Women (AUW)
Abstract

This study aims to explore civic engagement practices of Ahfad University for Women (AUW) in Sudan. Given the limited resources and the challenging circumstances, AUW succeeded to provide a unique model for education, women empowerment and civic engagement. Yet, there is huge potential for AUW to have more long-term developmental impact on the Sudanese community, such that a higher social impact could be achieved conditional on good government planning and support. Overall, AUW is a successful civic engagement model within the education sector that needs to be replicated in Sudan, and can be used for other developing countries as well.
Foremost, the Gerhart Center would like to thank Ahfad University in Sudan (AUW) for their hospitality. Even more specifically, Dr. Gasim Badri, the President of AUW, Dr. Balghis Badri, Director of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies (IWGDS), Prof. Hend Boshra, Professor in REED school, Dr. Shadya Abdulraheem, Associate Professor, REED school, Prof. Hend Boshra, professor in REED school, Dr. Ekhlas, assistant professor, gender specialist, regional Institute for Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights, and the coordinator for the Peace program, Dr. Shadya Abdulraheem, Associate professor, school of REED. For taking the time to meet with us for the interviews, and allowing us full access to the university and its activities.

The center would also like to thank all the students interviewed for their enthusiasm and passion to speak about all the great work that they are doing, and understanding the importance of documenting such experiences.

The Gerhart Center would like to thank Ms. Azza Osman for her hard work, in data gathering and Ms. Kareman Shoeir for drafting the case study.

A special thank you is dedicated to the National Endowment for Democracy and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for understanding the importance of documenting such experiences in the Arab region, and their interest and investment in ensuring that this case study is published.
1. Introduction

A low-income, African, Arab country which is politically unstable cannot guarantee a friendly atmosphere to establish an educational institution to empower women and channel their efforts to serve community as a whole. That’s what makes Ahfad University for women (AUW) in Sudan an unusual experience that deserves to be studied in depth.

Ahfad was established on civic engagement philosophy, it equips women to become agents of change by enhancing their skills beyond classrooms. Moreover, it meets its social responsibility beyond donations or direct assistance to the poor. It is worth noting that Ahfad is the only Arab University that is documented in the civic engaged university book which tracks best practices on civic Engagement among all universities in the world.

AUW University was established with a mission to “provide quality education for women to strengthen their roles in national and rural development, and in seeking equity for themselves and fellow women in all facets of the Sudanese society using a combination of well-articulated academic programs, professional training, research, and community outreach activities”. If such institution were operating in a developed country with huge resources with public acceptance, its experience won’t have been that special and unique, its uniqueness is rather stems from the challenging environment at which it was established.

AUW is a rich and attractive material to study because of its unusual approach in education and civic engagement. AUW approach focus on means to expose students to practical experience so that they can acquire sense of responsibility, discipline and awareness of community needs. At the same time, the university offers high quality programs that meets international standards when it comes to academic materials.

This study aims to explore AUW approach in education and civic engagement by analyzing the mechanism in which the university operates from multiple dimensions, in addition to assessing its impact on the community, identifying the challenges it faces, and proposing policy recommendations with social impact.
2. Methodology

It has been found that the best way to approach the targeted research question is through a qualitative case study approach. In addition to the secondary data used, primary data were obtained through conducting in-depth interviews with multiple stakeholders involved in the AUW educational model. Several Variables were analyzed in the study including the institutional framework under which the university operates, approach of civic engagement in higher education that the university adopts, means of funding. In addition to local, regional and international partnership.
Ahfad University for Women (AUW)
is a non-government, non-profit making onlywomen university located in Omdurmannear Khartoum in Sudan.

3. Overview about AUW

The AUW started as the first a school for girls only in 1907, then opened a university college in1966 before it attained the full university status in 1995 by the Sudan National Council for Higher Education.

It may seem strange that Ahfad University is a women-only institution despite the fact of beingsecular apolitical school, as being an exclusively women institution located in the Middle East-especially in a country that experienced religiously motivated civil wars-, may signals that theinstitute is built on religious philosophy, but as assured by the president of AUW Gassim Badri-who is also the grandson of the Founder “Ahfad is women-only not for religious reasons but to give women an institution of their own,.”

The university was established with the aim of empowering women to play an effective role in the development of Sudan through educating them in a non-political campus. Currently, AUW hasseven schools offering various undergraduate and post graduate programs covering different areas serving more than 6533 Sudanese and international student.

AUW is considered a unique model not only because of its philosophy which focuses on “preparing women to assume greater roles in their families and communities, and in the nation as a whole- “, but also because of the way they approach this philosophy. “Funded by the community, run by the community to serve the community”. This is how President Badri defines AUW.

As mentioned above, the university has several schools like any other university, but it is different because the curricula for all areas are geared towards the need of the Sudanese community. Students, staff and faculty are all expected to participate in community based learning and research regardless of their specialization. Moreover, the university has a great role in civic engagement that includes several programs of advocacy, awareness raising, services, capacity building, establishing and offering institutional building, and strengthening of Non-Governmental Organizations, and Community Based Organizations.

In addition to the internationally designed academic courses that the AUW has to offer to meet the international standards of the academic materials, they also depend on other methods of learning like on-the job training, individual research, and community extension activities.
4. Conceptual Framework

There is no agreed upon definition to the term “Civic Engagement”, as noted by Jacoby (2009) “there are probably as many definitions of civic engagement as there are scholars and practitioners who are concerned with it.” Broadly speaking, civic engagement could be defined as “ways in which citizens participate in the life of community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community future. A more specific definition was given by Thomas Ehrlich “civic engagement” means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” For the purpose of this study, the focus will only be on the non-political dimension of civic engagement of universities.

Civic Engagement in Higher Education Institution includes practices that address community’s socio-economic, political and environmental issues, the approach and extent of focus vary from institution to another based on their perspective of community-university relationship. In a broader context, the concept of civic and community engagement in higher education institutions stems from the more general concept of social responsibility of Universities.

In other words, the approach and type of civic engagement adopted by an institution reflects how it perceives the role of university towards community.

In fact, the degree of university engagement in civic activities depends mainly on the institutional strategy that the university adopts. On one hand, some universities could approach civic engagement through simply encouraging volunteering activities, other universities may design community service programs and encourage students to participate in such activities. On the other hand, some universities integrate civic engagement activities into the core of its educational system, this approach is commonly known in American universities as “service learning”.

Integrating civic engagement in universities’ educational system is intended to benefit all stakeholders involved. On one hand, the targeted community it serves would benefit socially and economically from the different services provided. On the other hand, students’ sense of responsibility, commitment and other soft skills would be enhanced through such activities. Furthermore, students will be exposed to practical experience beyond classrooms, while the university and its faculty would benefit from potential opportunities of research funding and projects.

5. Civic Engagement in AUW

Ahfad succeeded to establish a model of a secular, nonpolitical educational institution which focuses on civic engagement to achieve its mission and goals through community-based curricula, community based research and services and outreach programs, all operate in a cross functional mechanism to achieve the targeted social impacts which will eventually feed into the educational process as well. (Refer to figure 1)

Ahfad’s model is based on designing curricula and programs that are internationally sound but community based, while developing adequate institutional policies to institutionalize civic engagement activities and integrate all the AUW community to serve the institution’s mission

**AUW approach to Civic Engagement**

![Figure 1: AUW Approach to Civic Engagement](Ahfad University for Women)
5.1 AUW Curriculum design and Civic engagement

AUW is the only university in Sudan that offers community based university required courses (URCs) taught to all students throughout the university covering various topics like Women Studies, Gender and Development, Environmental Studies, Rural Extension program, reproductive health, Research Methods, Sudanese Studies and Talents Development. Most of the academic programs in all schools integrate community based teaching and research with a strong focus on civic engagement. Moreover, all courses are regularly assessed and updated to respond to changes in community’s challenges and national. Students and faculty from all majors are required to engage in community based-based learning and research projects.
Academic programs with strong civic engagement orientation

Academic Programs in Ahfad are designed based on international standards and national needs and goals, covering issues of gender, democracy, poverty, youth empowerment, population, and human rights at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

- **Rural Extension Program**
  (Mandatory to all students)

Stemming from Ahfad’s Philosophy, Rural extension program was first introduced in 1973 as an integral part of the curriculum of the school health and science - back then known as School of Family - as a response to the needs for improvement of the quality of life of families in poorer rural and urban settlements.

In 1978, the course was assigned as a University Requirement (UR) course for third year students in all schools of the university. Currently, it is a university requirement for all the fourth year students from all schools, except students of Medicine and Pharmacy school who have to register the course in their first year of study.

The design of the program is not only set by academic experts; but rather national experts from governmental and non-governmental agencies, leaders of community and other stakeholders do have a say in the program design and updates. This program is considered to be one of the most effective programs offered by AUW, as it is mandatory to all students from all majors.

As shown in Figure two, the program has three components each is to be graded on its own, Students are expected to cover some theoretical materials in lectures, and then get some trainings on simple and effective ways to deliver messages to rural communities in the practical part of the course using practical learning methods like group discussions and role plays.

After that, the school forms groups of students from mixed- specializations to send them to field trips - which theme and subthemes are decided on by a committee based on widespread phenomena or governmental trend - with their supervisors for real life applications. Before the field trip the university works on structural system prepare both students and supervisors by conducted a workshop about the themes and topics they will be working on during the trip. The university also arranged with other agencies all the logistics required for the trip.

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4 Interview with Prof. Hend Boshra, professor in REED school.
In field trips Students are evaluated by supervisors who are trained by the university on how to evaluate students based on different criteria like contribution, interaction, commitment and others.

Through this program AUW was able to reach thousands of villages across Sudan. Currently, they succeeded to conduct 80 trips per year which means more coverage across the nation. On community level, the Success of this programs is evidenced by the feedback from areas visited before, in addition to the increase interest by agencies to support the program.

One on educational level, faculty members have reported that after witnessing extreme poverty in the areas they visit, students usually return from these trips with better attitude and sense of responsibility towards the community.
Family Attachment program

In this program, students from school of medicine are attached to families in poor urban areas. They have to meet them on monthly basis to educate them about health-related issues like and help them access health services.

The Students Attachment Program

In this programe Psychology, Health Sciences and REED Students are assigned to different organizations located in urban and rural areas of Sudan based on their specialization (such as hospitals, health centers, feeding centers, prisons, psycho-health centers, and psychiatric wards at hospitals, kindergartens, special handicapped centers, under privileged primary and secondary schools and NGOs working in under privileged areas) for a one month period as a fulfillment of their core requirements. This program aims to benefit these unprevilliged communities in addition to the practical experiences that students get.

An interview with Dr. Shadya Abdulraheem, Associate Professor, REED school.
Interview with Prof. Hend Boshra, professor in REED school.
5.2 Research

In addition to the regular research that students are required to conduct in partial fulfillment of their degrees, both students and faculty from all specializations are highly encouraged to carry out commissioned research for local, regional and international organizations.

All types of Research activities weather policy oriented, scientific or action oriented has to be related to issues that concern the Sudanese community, including topics that are related to Social justice, gender equality and women empowerment, peace culture and conflict resolution. The University also has a Research Unit which promotes research by students and faculty especially on topics that help to identify community needs. The university provides training on advanced research and policy communication for youth, women, community leaders, health personnel, researchers and policy-makers.

AUW also have the only scholar journal published regularly in Sudan which is Ahfad Journal: “Women and Change”, it publishes original contributions consisting of reports, researches, literature reviews, historical or critical analyses research notes, and book reviews, or articles discussing the status of women in developing countries and the role of women in development, as well as contributions to social and health sciences.
Extracurricular activities

In addition to the community oriented curricula, Ahfad also offers community-oriented extracurricular activities like celebrating events and occasions that are related to its developmental context, such as International Women’s Day, Violence against women day, Population Day, HIV day and World Food Day.

The university celebrates International Women’s Day and education day every year in the Women’s Week from 3rd-8th March, in such celebrations Students are encouraged plan and engage in activities that reflect different themes that they choose every year. Students are also encouraged to compete for women’s week cup and other trophies by engaging in activities which are judged by an external committee who attends all these activities to give comments and announce winners.

The University also celebrates food day in partnership with FAO office in Sudan and UN. A new theme is to be set by FAO Rome each year, and AUW’s students plan activities related to the chosen theme. The objective of such celebration is to raise awareness about food storage and to combat poverty, manipulation and hunger.
5.3 Direct Services and Voluntary Outreach

The university has formed voluntary organizations to implement its outreach programs in terms of training, awareness-raising, networking, and research. This includes Babikr Badry and Community Animators Friendly Association (CAFA) which are located in AUW campus and most of their members are volunteers.

Babikr Badry works on vulnerable women, and currently targeting women who were released recently from prison, and who face gender based violence like domestic violence, harassment. CAFA assist AUW in identifying the needs of the local community, they assist in conducting outreach programs in terms of training, raising awareness, networking, and research activities.

AUW also have centers that provide direct health services such as “AHFAD Clinic” and “AHFAD Trauma” Center.
Institutional policies and role of faculty in Civic Engagement

Commitment to civic engagement is not only expected from students but also from faculty as well, Ahfad envisions its faculty and staff as vital agents to achieve its intuitional goals and this is highly reflected in its institutional policies.

Since 2001, all faculty new hires are required to sign a contract that oblige them to serve the purpose of the university by directly participating in civic engagement.

All lecturers regardless of their specializations are required to participate on rural extension programs for four consecutive years, dedicating 6-10 hours per week to civic activities including, community research, trainings or consulting. These activities can count to 30% of the criteria for faculty promotion.

This system aims to institutionalize civic engagement practices by motivating faculty members to participate in serving the community even if community service is not on their own agenda. As reported by president Badri the level of enthusiasm differs among faculty as some of them come from different backgrounds and are not familiar with civic engagement. Badri said : “When they were trained at other universities, we have to make more of an effort to get them into the mold of Ahfad.”
6. Funding and Partnerships

The university allocates a proper percentage of its budget to promote civic engagement. President Badri reported that almost 20% of the university’s budget is allocated to civic engagement activities either academic or extra-curricular these funds comes from university’s own resources, donors, sponsors and other supporting agencies.

Achieving more Successes and outreach encourages International organizations, NGOs, donors and government to support University’s civic engagement activities. For example, as briefly mentioned before, in the past, the AUW used to finance its rural extension program from its own resources, but after the field trips achieved notable successes, the university succeeded to establish partnerships with UN agencies and NGOs to support the program with Funds and expertise. In addition, the university gets assistance with pure academic activities from international organizations like UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UN-Women, UNEP, USAID, IDRC, CIDA, DFID, DAAD.

As for partnerships, Ahfad Like any institution working in development, is keen to establish partnerships with local, regional and international organizations in addition to civil societies and the university own voluntary arms like Babikr Badry scientific association for women studies and CAFA which enhance AUW outreach activities. Refer to table 1 for some most important AUW partnerships.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>International</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Omdurman Ahlia University</strong></td>
<td><strong>American University of Cairo, Egypt</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sudan University for Science and Technology</strong></td>
<td><strong>American University Beirut, Lebanon</strong></td>
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<td><strong>University of Nyala</strong></td>
<td><strong>University of Cape Town, South Africa</strong></td>
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<td><strong>University of Alfashir</strong></td>
<td><strong>University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</strong></td>
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<td><strong>University of Shendi</strong></td>
<td><strong>University of Dar-el-Salam, Tanzania</strong></td>
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<td><strong>University of Deling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Makrere University, Uganda</strong></td>
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<td><strong>University of Gezira</strong></td>
<td><strong>African Center Institute, South Africa</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>University of Khartoum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Center of Arab Women for Training and Research, Tunisia</strong></td>
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Table 1: The most important AUW partnerships
7. Challenges and policy recommendations

Despite the fact the Ahfad is an old institution that has been serving the community in different aspects for many years, it was found from the data gathered that it still faces several challenges that may affect the path of its development and expansion.

One major challenge the University faces is the limited resources relative to the highly demandin developmental obligations that it has to meet. In fact, AUW depends on international organizations, NGOs and sponsors in addition to its own resources. This is neither stable nor sustainable. On one hand, according to Prof. Gasmī only 28% of the students pay full tuition because the university offers a wide range of scholarships, which constitute burden on its budget. This entails the need for other sources of funds as depending on the university’s own resources is impossible in the long run. On the other hand, international organizations is highly risky source to depend on, especially in politically unstable environments. In the sense one recommendation is for the university to expand its marketing plan regionally and internationally to attract more international applicants from the region and from the rest of the world, who will be able to pay full tuition, as the unusual experience of Ahfad – only if backed by a very strong and well-structured marketing plan - would be very attractive to students interested in development from all over the world. The lack of a good marketing plan is very evident because Ahfad’s achievements deserve much more propaganda and publicity than it currently has.

Another challenge comes from within the university’s faculty as some faculty members, especially those who are new to the system, have passed their concerns about their workload relative to their counterparts in other universities in Sudan. As in addition to the teaching and research that they have, they still need to carry on civic engagement activities ordered to get promoted. The absence of clear unified assessment scheme for faculty promotion may be constitute such problems, especially for those who are new to the system, this entails the need for such scheme in the faculty promotion process. Integrating civic engagement in the promotion criteria in all Sudanese university may also help lessen this concern.

Making the rural extension program a mandatory course for all majors- though is beneficial from educational and social perspective – is challenging because Sudan is a very conservative society that does not welcome the idea of girls being away from their homes for a while (the effect of this factor is offset by the fact that the university admits girls only), and here comes the role of media to interfere and convince the public directly and indirectly that getting their young girls exposed to such experiences would empower them make them better citizens. Political instability is Sudan as well constitutes a major challenge on Ahfad, as reported by
some of Ahfad faculty members, the support of the government is unstable, although that it is true that now the situation is better but sometimes the government cancels some programs after being prepared for with no clear reason. For example, it happened before that a survey on democracy which was supposed to be done across Sudan was stopped and all the documents and surveys were confiscated, this put the university in a bad situation at that time.

Safety and security concerns is considered another major challenge for AUW, especially in field trips as students don’t visit areas of conflict such as Darfur, Blue Nile, South Kordofan in addition to some areas located in east of Sudan, although these areas are in much need of civic engagement activities offered by AUW.

The impact assessments of most programs are short run and not well structured, this entails the need for a mechanism to evaluate programs impact on the longer-run to avoid waste of resources and seek alternatives if needed. These long-run impact assessments are better to be done in alliance with the Sudanese government and international organizations to unify efforts towards community development.

Surprisingly, despite of the university’s pure Sudanese origin and history, Ahfad is sometimes stereotyped by authorities to be a “westernized” school which create difficulties and obstacles especially when support is much needed. Overall, AUW has potential to create more developmental impact than just awareness or direct services. In fact, Ahfad has the potential to work with government on a long-term, well-structured developmental plan and this will be much more effective on the Sudanese community. The University is well established and witnessed a lot of challenges throughout its life, this fact makes it less vulnerable and more capable of facing current challenges as it was originally established on a challenging concept.

7. Interview with Dr. Ekhas, assistant professor, gender specialist, Regional Institute for Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights, and the coordinator for the Peace program.
8. Results and conclusion

AUW provides an un-doubtfully unique model in education, community development and civic engagement, in terms of the approach and quality of the service they provide. This makes AUW a very rich material for study and research.

From analyzing the gathered data, it has been found that the main reasons of AUW success are as follows:
1. The dynamic approach it follows in the process of curricula design and programs updating
2. The success in establishing institutional framework to serve its objectives

Communities’ needs and priorities are not static in nature, they are rather dynamic and changeable especially in countries that suffer from poverty and under-developments coupled with political unrests.

Accordingly, Ahfad’s system operates in a dynamic mechanism; as courses are frequently evaluated and updated by experts from all fields based on Sudan’s needs. In addition to the Research Unit in the university which works on identifying community needs, Governmental trends are always taken into consideration to allow for cross functionality among all stakeholders working in development. A clear evidence that Ahfad follows a dynamic approach in learning and civic engagement, unlike many institutions in the Middle East, is the committee that meets every year to identify a new theme under which they will base the activities of the compulsory field trips on. In other words, they respond to community needs rather working on vacuum.

Another example: during the time of peace agreement, AUW did a lot of work on building women capacity in peace negotiation and to educate them on peace and accepting others. In fact, as previously mentioned the rural development program itself was first established as extracurricular activity to respond to the need of the community to improve quality of life of families in poorer rural and urban settlements, after that, it was updated and became mandatory requirement for all students because the community needs changed. Currently the program is mainly focused on sustainable and millennium goals.

Moreover, the theme of the women’s day week celebration is also chosen every year based on what is happening at the year of celebration, this makes the students integrated in the community and more aware of its needs. From social perspective, in addition to the previously mentioned direct effects of sending student field trips in rural areas, it was found that those field trips have also an indirect effect which is extremely critical. By sending female students who are well educated, empowered and well trained to poor rural areas where female illiteracy is widespread,
young girls become motivated to go to schools - aiming that they may join Ahfad one day as they see the female students as role models. Moreover, the several scholarships that the university offer make this goal more attainable. This may indirectly help changing the culture of female education and women empowerment in such communities. A clear evidence on this is that many of Ahfad female faculty used to live in these poor rural areas and reported that they were highly motivated to work hard and continue their education mainly because of Ahfad visits which also change family’s views about educated women.

From cultural perspective, the fact that the university is a women only institution makes Ahfad an attractive option for conservative families in Sudan who do not accept co-education for cultural and religious reasons. Also, the idea of sending girls in a field trips away from their homes may not be welcomed by many families in such a conservative societies.

Finally, Ahfad’s approach in education and civic engagement deserves more attention. If well marketed and researched, this experience may present a model to be followed and replicated by many countries in the developing world with aid and support of international organizations. In retrospect, such institutions if well supported could act as a developmental arm to the government in order to achieve long-term sustainable goals.

8. Interview with Dr. Associate professor, Shadya Abdulraheem, school of REED
References


Personal Interviews (2017): Multiple interviews with university faculty of AUW were conducted and used in this research. Interviews managed by Gerhart Center, American University in Cairo. Interviews conducted at AUW campus, Om Dorman, Sudan.

Case Study

Civic Engagement in Lebanese American University (LAU)
Abstract

Higher education has become a major site of contention for the development of nations, especially in the 21st century with the massive proliferation of ICTs across the world, and the current post-globalization context. There’s a growing global consensus that civic engagement is key both for the development of university students and their societies as a whole. This case study is one of a series, aimed at presenting an in-depth look at civic engagement practices in universities across the Arab region.

The case study examines the impact of the Outreach and Civic Engagement unit established at the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut and other measures undertaken by the LAU to mainstream civic mindedness and engagement across their student body. The work will gauge strategic alignment of actions within the university, identify opportunities and challenges and present a qualitative analysis of the effects of civic engagement on the community and the university.

“When the fabric of society becomes frayed, it is the role of the university to develop weavers”

-E. Gordon Gee, President, Ohio State University, 1990-1997

9 Defined by Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis as “active collaboration that builds on the resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community to improve the quality of life in communities in a manner that is consistent with the campus mission” (Hatcher & Bringle, 2004).
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Salma Eissa

Foremost, the Gerhart Center would like to thank the Lebanese American University in Beirut, for their hospitality and particularly the Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit (OCE). Even more specifically, Mr. Elie Samia, Assistant Vice President for Outreach & Civic Engagement, Ghina Harb, Leadership and Civic Engagement Lead Coordinator and Dana Hibri Ashi, Lead Administrative Assistant. For taking the time to meet with us for the interviews, and allowing us full access to the unit and its activities. The center would also like to thank all the students interviewed for their enthusiasm and passion to speak about all the great work that they are doing, and understanding the importance of documenting such experiences.

The Gerhart Center would like to thank Ms. Salma Eissa for her hard work, in data gathering and drafting the case study. A special thank you is dedicated to the National Endowment for Democracy and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for understanding the importance of documenting such experiences in the Arab region, and their interest and investment in ensuring that this case study is published.
Creating a Culture of Engagement

The university’s commitment to civic engagement is asserted in its mission statement. According to Mr. Elie Samia, assistant vice-president to the Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit, these efforts were spearheaded by LAU president Joseph G. Jabbra. The President had previously served as the academic vice president at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and was keen to transfer best practices from an institution that had a longstanding history with institutionalized civic engagement. Mr. Samia stated that Dr. Jabbra’s background at Loyola University was key to instituting civic engagement as a strategic mission of the university in the 2011-2016 strategic plan. In the Strategic Plan, LAU identified six strategic priorities, one of which is Outreach. The ultimate aim of this priority area was to “Extend LAU’s academic, professional and social services beyond the confines of its campuses and provide opportunities for students and faculty to expand their university experience to the community and abroad”.

Civic engagement was mainstreamed at LAU, and particularly in its School of Arts and Sciences. The various departments and programs of the school provide opportunities for the students to engage with the community in two-way learning experiences: benefiting the public as well as LAU faculty and students (Academic Catalog, 2017). Along with the institutionalization of civic engagement in the school of Arts and Sciences, and building on the high level push for a more civic conscious campus, the Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit (OCE) was established in 2010, to cater to the student body at large.

OCE represents a focal point through which all the activities geared towards civic engagement and outreach are managed and directed. With a working staff of 6 members, led by Mr. Elie Samia, the main mission of the unit as described by Mr. Samia is “to spread the culture of civic engagement and volunteerism, and to be an ambassador for LAU in empowering civil society, and creating functional relationships with it”. This task is achieved through managing a number of recurring and standalone projects examined later in this text, in order to understand how OCE has contributed to the creation of a culture of civic engagement and awareness at LAU.

“The Lebanese American University is committed to academic excellence, student centeredness, civic engagement, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person, and the formation of leaders in a diverse world”

– LAU Mission
Established in 1835 by American Presbyterian missionaries as the American School for Girls (ASG), the school went through various phases of metamorphosis. It was transformed into a women’s college, and recognized by the Lebanese government as equivalent to the national License in 1970. By 1973, men were being accepted into some programs, prompting the change in name to Beirut University College (BUC). As the Lebanese civil war raged on, the school remained loyal to its mission and in 1978 established an off-campus program—the Louaizeh Center of Higher Education—in the north (Zouk Mosbeh). A year later, another off campus facility was created—the Makassed Center for Higher Education—in the southern city of Sidon, to provide educational opportunities to young people from various regions of the country (LAU, 2017). The school went through a further phase of expansion, with the opening of two branches in different parts of Lebanon, ultimately leading to the decision by the BUC board in 1992 for the institution to become a university. By 1994, the Board of Regents in New York approved BUC’s request to morph into what is currently known as the Lebanese American University (LAU) (LAU, 2017).
NGO Annual Fair

One of the very first ideas which OCE launched and sponsored in 2010 was the NGO fair. The NGO fair has now become an annual event, held to encourage students to volunteer for community service. This annual event aims to bridge the gap between students and civil society, giving students the unique opportunity to channel their creative potential, energy, and passion into the important networks of constructive and positive social work (Academic Catalog, 2017). The fair was first launched and set up by OCE in 2010 with 70 NGOs participating. The latest figures in 2015 showed that 100 NGOs have participated in the fair thus far. Feedback from the sample indicated a higher level of engagement and awareness of the work of NGOs, and civil society at large as a result of this program.
Programs and Activities

Mr. Samia identified “continuously increasing the number of students involved in civic engagement activities” as the primary goal for the OCE. This is implemented through a three pronged process: civic engagement activities, enrichment activities and leadership activities. The twelve major programs implemented by OCE fall under one of these three activity areas. However, these three branches are not mutually exclusive and often overlap with each other as many activities are intersectional: combining enrichment, civic engagement and leadership.

During meetings with OCE and a sample of the student body with the highest level of engagement, the Global Classroom LAU Model United Nations and its variants: Model Arab League, the Moderation and Justice Academy for Leaders etc emerged as the most prominent activities. The LAU Model United Nations (LAU MUN) high school program was first launched in 2005–2006 with 541 students from 76 participating schools (Academic Catalog, 2017). In 2010–2011, LAU MUN inaugurated its Middle School program and witnessed exponential growth in both the number of students and the number of schools participating in the program. In its 12th year, the LAU MUN program hosted more than 3,000 students from 194 participating schools from all over Lebanon (Academic Catalog, 2017).

For the past 12 years, the program has seen great success; more than 1,008,400 hours of teaching peace building and diplomacy were offered by 2,150 LAU student leaders to a total of 21,700 middle school and high school students hailing from around 174 schools (Academic Catalog, 2017). In 2015, the United Nations Foundation entrusted LAU with the ownership of the Global Classrooms International Model UN conferences in New York City, beginning spring 2016. While, this program does not appear to cater to the largest Lebanese demographic, we must appreciate the intensive development and opportunities which this program offers students across Lebanon. Opportunities such as this one described by a number of students interviewed, who through excelling in this program in high school were able to get a scholarship to study at LAU.
In 2015, OCE partnered with the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development to establish the Outreach and Leadership Academy (OLA), in the southern city of Sidon. The academy is described as “a beacon for civic engagement and an open space for all parents, students, teachers and practitioners to learn more about LAU and to engage in all its leadership and civic engagement initiatives” (Outreach & Leadership Academy Program, 2017).

With its motto “Educate, Empower, Engage,” OLA aims to establish a culture of civic engagement, social awareness, leadership formation and citizenship reinforcement with the ultimate objective of strengthening human development through enhancing social peace, building human capacity and promoting economic opportunities. In 2016, OCE launched another OLA branch in Solidere. This initiative represents the outreach leg of the OCE unit, where its primary task is to engage with the four target sectors outlined by Mr. Samia; educational experts and students, civil society organizations, business corporations and the public sector. Offering trainings, simulations and certification, one example which Mr. Samia gave was the training of public employees in South Lebanon. The success of OLA according to Mr. Samia is its ‘transmissible culture’ which was very well received in Sidon prompting them to open further branches in - Solidere, Beirut.

However, the students interviewed did not seem to possess a significant amount of knowledge in regards to OLA and the activities it conducts. This could be due to the fact that it is situated in Sidon and the students interviewed were at the Beirut campus, and the branch in Beirut is relatively new or perhaps due to the fact that OLA represents a more outward look by the university to engage with sectors beyond the university and strictly immediate community.

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Civic Engagement Course – BUS 299

One of the most prominent initiatives by OCE and the Adnan Kassar School of Business, was the introduction of the mandatory zero credit civic engagement course entitled BUS 299 in the core requirements of the BS Business Studies program, in Fall 2013. This model of institutionalized civic engagement is somewhat popular and can be observed in several universities across the Middle East, such as the American University in Cairo. This course is a guided service experience, made up of two components; a two-day workshop on civic engagement skill building and need assessment and a minimum of 12 hours of documented community service experience (Academic Catalog, 2017).

The BUS 299 experience as described by OCE is as follows:

“Students can enroll in the course in any semester provided they are in good academic standing. OCE trained the trainers and is responsible for the assignment of the students in NGOs in order to fulfill the 12 hours volunteer work required for the course. So far OCE has secured thousands of volunteer positions through 44 NGOs across Lebanon.”

Students who have taken this course, praised the initiative and several stated that the course represented a good outlet through which they could engage with civil society and the community. Mr. Samia stated that his hopes for this course would be to achieve a move from:

“malicious obedience to creative excitement for service”.

LAU-NGO Mobile Application

Perhaps one of the most inspired and innovative programs for civic engagement offered by OCE, was the launching of the “LAU-NGO network” mobile application in the spring of 2014. This innovative application gives the LAU community the opportunity to directly link itself with NGOs and the broader civil society. It provides a directory of youth-related NGO networks in Lebanon, in addition to some prominent international NGOs. Through the application the students are able to apply for internships and volunteer opportunities offered by the listed NGOs.

The entire program is heavily monitored and assessed for quality, as there are requirements for the NGOs who wish to join the LAU network, and the students themselves are then assessed by the NGOs and provide their assessment of the NGOs, and their experience. The constant feedback is used to refine the program and ensure the most impactful experiences on both sides. This application is used primarily in the BUS 299 program, and by other students who wish to volunteer or intern at civil society organizations at LAU.
Conclusion

LAU represents a university with a very rich and long history of perseverance in the face of political turmoil, and a relatively novel approach to civic engagement with the establishment of OCE in 2010. Hence, prompting the Gerhart Center to undertake the task of documenting this case study, so as to share best practices and further aid in the establishment of a body of literature on civic engagement practices in universities across the Arab region. The case involved interviews with staff members from OCE, the assistant vice-president Mr. Elie Samia, and 15 students from different majors and across different years of study at LAU who have been involved in one or more of the OCE activities.

The case of LAU has shown how a general strategic focus on civic engagement spearheaded by the university president has been translated into effective programs and initiatives in a short period of time. The OCE was only established in 2010 and civic engagement was enshrined a priority in the university’s 2011-2016 strategic plan. Mr. Samia also highlighted how all the department deans and lecturers have embraced this culture, and the university functions cohesively in regards to the preparation of graduate students who are academically adept and civic minded, ready to embark on the job market. The strategic alignment of the university management and the articulation of this in the university’s mission and strategic plan, allowed for an expansion in the activities of the OCE in 2011. OCE first started off with the global classrooms model UN program, and the NGO annual fair which OCE manages and now its activities have expanded to include a mandatory zero credit course under the business school which is on its way to becoming mandatory for all LAU students and a leadership academy which offers various social services to its surrounding communities in both its branches; in South Lebanon and Beirut. OCE has also come up with a very creative tool to engage students and NGOs directly, and that is through their NGO mobile application. This application every year adds new NGOs to its directory, and an increasing number of students are opting for volunteer work and internships through the application. These activities and initiatives represent the most prominent of OCE’s activities, but are not the only activities which it undertakes.

Other activities involve outreach and corporate visits to institutions to give LAU students a chance to explore institutions in terms of work environment and civic engagement. Also, residential training camps, reforestation campaigns, and beach cleaning campaigns are among some of their other activities. However, the author chose to discuss the OLA, the NGO mobile application, the NGO internship fair, Global Classrooms model UN program and BUS 299 course due to the fact that they represent a larger segment of the OCE’s work, and have the highest levels of student engagement, along with the fact that they were viewed as being the most novel of the approaches to civic engagement with the highest levels of success.

The case of LAU offers interesting lessons for universities across the Arab region, either to emulate or to avoid some of the pitfalls. The efforts by OCE to achieve a highly civic minded campus are reflected in the level of success of its activities, as well as in the increasing number of students engaged in its various programs. It would seem that LAU is well on its way in paving the way for a generation of more civically minded youth who are both willing and competent enough to take on social work across the various fields.
Reflections on LAU’s Journey with Civic Engagement

Tasked with the monumental mission to establish and institutionalize a culture of civic engagement across the university, OCE and the efforts towards that goal are often faced with some challenges which affect both the impact and application of these activities and initiatives.

Perhaps one of the most striking issues which became evident through the student interviews was the very visible favor which the students gave to the model UN and its various derivatives program, over other activities. This is evident in the fact that all the students interviewed were involved in one of the model programs, and spoke most profusely about their involvement with the programs. While, it’s great to see such loyalty to the program, however this particular program has the highest return for the student himself/herself, in comparison to the community. This is not to suggest that the students must be altruistic by nature, and choose to only benefit the community as it is understood that these programs must offer two-way experiences. However, the university must be wary of situating itself in a position where this program becomes the bulk of OCE activities, and is privileged over others.

One significant and recurrent challenge across the various universities, is funding. As Mr. Samia stated OCE operates as a grant-based program, and while it is not in any current threat, its continuance relies heavily on the availability of funds to expand programs.

The students were also able to highlighted some of the issues which they felt were lacking. The most important of which was visibility of their efforts. The students felt that their efforts and hard work were not documented or shared with a wider audience, which would in turn motivate other students to become civically engaged. The students also discussed the unavailability of an alumni network for students involved in activities with OCE: A professional network through which students are able to help each other and connect following graduation. Finally, some students felt that one of the areas that OCE should expand to is outreach to international organizations.
References


Case Study

Civic Engagement in Jordanian University in Amman (UJ)
Abstract

A growing recognition for the need to develop more socially responsible and civically engaged citizens in the Middle East has made universities eager to graduate students who are both academically strong and civically inclined. In an effort to document these efforts and initiatives, the Gerhart Center through the Maan program has undertaken a series of case studies to document and assess civic engagement initiatives that universities across the region have launched.

This paper present the case study carried out on Jordan University in Amman, and Al al-Bayt University in Al Mafraq. Alongside these universities, the researcher was able to discern that the work of other external organizations was vital to the journey of Jordanian universities with civic engagement. Key stakeholders in this regard include organizations such as Injaz Jordan, and official bodies such as the King Abdullah Fund for Development (KAFD). The case study is based on in depth interviews multiple members from each organization as well as focus groups with students involved in civic engagement activities.
Foremost, the Gerhart Center would like to thank Injaz Jordan for facilitating the interviews and their very gracious welcome. Specifically, we would like to thank Mr. Omar Nimri, Entrepreneurship Development & Job Placement Unit Director and Ms. Thuraya Ibrahime, Employment Programme Officer. The center would also like to thank the Jordanian University in Amman (UJ), and Dr. Rami Aldwairi, King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD) office, Mr. Omar Obeidat the Director of Office of Student Initiatives and the UJ students for their contributions.

The Gerhart Center would also like to extend its thanks to Al al-Bayt University (AABU) for their hospitality and particularly to Dr. Omar Ajlouni, Director of the KAFD local office in AABU, and the very passionate group of students who provided much needed insights into civic engagement functions as AABU.

The Gerhart Center would like to thank Ms. Salma Eissa for her hard work, in data gathering and drafting the case study. A special thank you is dedicated to the National Endowment for Democracy and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for understanding the importance of documenting such experiences in the Arab region, and their interest and investment in ensuring that this case study is published.
The Ubiquity of the Term Civic Engagement in Jordan

One of the most interesting insights which the interviews shed light on was the widespread confusion surrounding the term civic engagement in Jordan. This was visible in interviews with all stakeholders involved in this study. For the purpose of this report, the theoretic definition of civic engagement put forward by Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis will be used. It defines civic engagement as “active collaboration that builds on the resources, skills, expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community to improve the quality of life in communities in a manner that is consistent with the campus mission” (Hatcher & Bringle, 2004). This definition highlights certain behaviors and actions such as collaboration, the improvement of quality of life in communities and finally the campus mission. All these elements were observed in both universities to varying degrees despite the common absence of an understanding of what activities qualify as civic engagement.

Personnel and students running these programs, chose to describe civic engagement as a more specific activity limited to participation in civil society organizations whether through internships or volunteering. In a focus group discussion with 20 Al Bayt University students, that were either interested in or directly involved in work with civil society organizations, none were able to respond to the question of “what does civic engagement mean to you?” One of the coordinators of the sessions interjected, and explained to me that “in Jordan we do not have civic engagement, we have civil society organizations”. A similar response was given in an interview with Mr. Omar Obeidat Head of the Office of Student Initiatives at UJ. The studied sample repeatedly revealed absence of a clear understanding of the term civic engagement with the exception of Injaz staff. Mr. Omar Nimri, Entrepreneurship Development and Job Placement Unit Director insinuated the term’s ubiquity in Jordan, but seemed to possess a grasp of the term and understood that the work that Injaz Jordan does often falls within that category in universities. Dr. Rami Aldwairi, Director of the Career Guidance center and UJ’s King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD) however, did not question the term and gave a definition which highlighted ‘cooperation between the private and public sectors with universities to support students’.

Initiatives for the civic engagement of university students involve a complex set of interactions, complicated by the organizational structure within universities. Students do not directly interact with a particular organization to apply for an opportunity; instead everything is filtered primarily through the KAFD and then the university. Nonetheless, the university also applies the classical CBL understanding of mandatory zero credit hours to volunteer work or community development.
Founded in 1993, Al al-Bayt University (AABU) is a relatively new university with about 20,000 students (UniRank, 2017).

In terms of civic engagement, the university does not offer much, independently from the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD) The KAFD has offices on campus to promote community engagement with small NGOs, the primary focus being on voluntary work in the community (Lamb & Mahasneh, 2014).

Throughout the interviews students defined civic engagement as synonymous with volunteer work, charity work, and one student gave a very descriptive definition where she said ‘universities have centers or offices for NGOs within the university who then engage with the student to benefit the community, through workshops and trainings’. In the first focus group discussion 20 students were selected at random to represent the segment of students who were still familiarizing themselves with volunteer work and community development. Hence, providing the possibility to compare their answers with those of a second group of 30 students who were previously involved with work in NGOs, and primarily through Injaz.

The second focus group provided greater insights in regards to the nature of the work which the students are attracted to, and are involved in. One student mentioned how “when we first started out, we were all looking to charity work as the only venue; but now we look at work that has a more developmental perspective and is sustainable”. Another student spoke of how “volunteer work has become part of Jordanian culture, and has become a part of life for Jordanian youth”. Responses varied greatly from those given in the first discussion group where students had very little information in regards to such activities, and possessed a rather pessimistic outlook in regards to the growth of this sector among Jordanian youth in universities. Students in the second focus group were very impassioned in regards to community work. However, when asked whether the university provided the necessary support; whether logistical or otherwise, students responded that the university’s only contribution is the provision of a place where the students are able to come together, but not much else. This was a point shared by both groups of students.
The students did however did point out that only through Injaz are they able to work, and the fact that the university has an agreement with Injaz means that it is somewhat supportive. Some of the challenges shared by the students in regards to civic engagement, seemed to come down to logistical restrictions, such as distance from Amman where most of the organizations function. Also, some female students pointed to the fact that culture seems to present a barrier for them, as they are not allowed by their parents to leave the city, or work at night. Another cultural barrier for both females and males seemed to be that their parents would not understand this type of work and would prefer to see them do well in their studies. One final challenge which was more evident in AABU then UJ, was financial restrictions due to the dire financial situations of many of the families living in Al Mafraq.

According to Dr. Omar Ajlouni, the director of the KAFD local office in AABU, KAFD works across three sectors; the first being training and development, programs sponsored by the fund and finally with external bodies (NGOs, private sector, embassies etc.). Dr. Ajlouni stated that his office provides access and support to the organizations and programs and acts as a guiding body. However, most of the work with the students referred to in interviews, group discussions and the KAFD’s website was mainly with Injaz. Some of the students also mentioned that it is quite difficult for all NGOs to gain access within the university, but for Injaz that is not the case. When I sat down with Mr. Omar Nimri, Job Placement Unit Director at Injaz, he explained to me that Injaz through KAFD; serving as the umbrella under which Injaz operates in universities, along with government support, specifically the Ministry of Education, has been crucial for scaling the school program, given the ministry’s role in institutionalizing and accrediting programs in schools. In 2010, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC) became another key partner in helping Injaz expand into Jordanian universities and colleges.

Further exploration of the administrative framework for the civic engagement of university students is recommended and will require an examination of the work of the main external bodies in universities after taking a look at the University of Jordan.
University of Jordan (UJ)

The University of Jordan (UJ) founded in 1962, with 45,000 students in 2017, is certainly the largest university in Jordan. UJ’s first steps towards recognizing the importance of reaching out to the local community, and to ingraining such attitudes in their students, began in 1999 with the establishment of the Community Service Office, which has now been renamed the Community Outreach Office. UJ was one of the first universities in Jordan to do so, and the office was founded on the following notions, as stated on their website.

“The University is a vital part of its community and that is represented by its competent faculty members, students, it is also responsible for communication and cooperating with its community through voluntary work and providing unique and quality service to the different governmental and nongovernmental sectors in the community.”

The recognition of the importance of volunteerism and working within civil society was first fostered through this office, and shaped to be more organized and sustainable. With the establishment of the office, it became mandatory for all UJ students to volunteer 19 hours on and off-campus. In addition, the office holds, in cooperation with several UN agencies and NGOs (the Red Crescent Society, and several local and provincial NGOs), as well as with governmental bodies, training courses for students on a variety of topics democracy building, elections, communication skills, women’s rights, children’s rights, poverty alleviation, landmines, water conservation, domestic violence, raising awareness towards aids prevention (UJ, 2017).

The next step UJ took towards solidifying its standing as a university with a high level of focus on civic engagement was the establishment of the Local Community Networking and Development Center (LCNDC) in 2012, the Office of Student Initiatives in 2013 and the University of Jordan Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (UJIEC) in 2016.
The LCNDC was established with the main aim of achieving excellence in delivery of services to the local, regional and global communities. Offering services such as field visits, lectures and workshops, the center caters to a large segment of the student body. One of the programs run by the center is a school environment enhancement program; through which the students are tasked with beautifying a number of school campuses across Jordan, so as to strengthen the ties between the university students and school students (UJ, 2017). However, it is worth mentioning that this center now has been somewhat relegated to a secondary position, as the Office of Student Initiatives and UJIEC has taken center stage due to its more innovative approaches to civic work.

Perhaps one of the most dynamic offices is the Office of Student Initiatives, led by Mr. Omar Obeidat, whose office seems to always be crowded with students who have nothing but words of praise for the office and its director. Mr. Obeidat spoke impassionedly about how the office, has become a hub for student creativity and activity. The office teaming with students, who seem right at home at the office, seemed to provide a safe place for students to come and share their ideas as well as their grievances. Some of the students present during the interview, would interject and provide information as to some of the achievements of the office and their fellow students.

One of the most challenging issues which UJ presents is its complex organizational structure. Several student activities came through primarily two channels: the Office of Student Initiatives and the KAFD which we will discuss at length in the next section. Some of the initiatives by the various centers would also involve these two offices as the two administrative channels within the student affairs unit. When speaking to Mr. Obeidat, he mentioned a number of initiatives which were led by the UJIEC, which also fall within his jurisdiction. One such program, which seemed to be getting a lot of traction at the time was the “Impact Project”. The program was led by youth from the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, comprised of engineering, business and language students, who participated in a Facebook-sponsored event, supported by the US Department of Defense’s NESA Center in Washington, DC, between February 26 and March 3, 2017 (UJ News, 2017). The program was based on the innovative use of technology and social media in fighting terrorism and extremism and the UJ team secured second place in the competition.
The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship first started off as the Innovation center in 2015. The vision of the center, as stated through its website is

To support innovation and entrepreneurship in the University and community in cooperation and integration with the public and private sector in an effort to foster innovation and entrepreneurship and create a generation capable making a real contribution to the sustainable economic development in Jordan.

The center services 19 schools at UJ, and caters to entrepreneurs and innovators from all over the kingdom (UJ, 2017). This center services the community within the university, as well as the surrounding community. Initiatives and projects often lead to collaboration and/or cooperation between the local/international communities and the students within the university.
Mapping the Civic Engagement Web in Jordanian Universities

After having presented the findings at both universities under discussion, it would seem that along with the universities there are other bodies that play a crucial role in engaging students at universities. Perhaps, from what the interviews and research has shown, the most important body which plays a crucial role in civic sphere, is the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD). Established in 2001, KAFD was created as a non-governmental organization to “enhance productivity through implementing development projects that help alleviate poverty and unemployment in partnership with the private and the public sectors (KAFD, 2017).” Dr. Ajlouni, director of the fund’s office in AABU stated that the fund has 25 offices in 25 universities across Jordan, working in universities through the Career Guidance and Alumni Office project.

This project as described on the website works through:

Affiliate career guidance offices, the King Abdullah II Fund for Development in cooperation with Jordanian universities provides university students with career counseling services and opportunities to equip them with the necessary skills to increase their employability and enhance their job search techniques. These centers conduct extracurricular activities and provide students with opportunities to volunteer.
Every Jordanian university has a local KAFD office within its student affairs, or career guidance and alumni offices. The office is often led by a university professor, such as Dr. Rami Aldwairi, who is a marketing professor at UJ and the director of KAFD office. KAFD provides financial and logistical support to the projects in the university. Any programs, initiatives or projects from the students within the university or by external bodies, must get approval from KAFD before proceeding. Therefore, KAFD wields an enormous amount of power in terms of agenda setting and finances, which could of course be somewhat stifling to the creativity and innovative environment that universities wish to achieve through civic engagement.

KAFD does not only set the agenda and finances; it also acts a centralized body through which all civic activities go through, so naturally that also involves the choice of partners or external bodies. One such body which evidently through the interviews seemed to be given privilege was Injaz Jordan. This is perhaps due to - as mentioned by Mr. Nimri in the interview - the partnerships with large government bodies such as ministries of education and planning and international cooperation, or its board of trustees and directors which is made up of very influential members from the private and public sectors. But it could also be Injaz Jordan’s track record, and very successful history in running programs that has given it this privileged place within universities. Either way, this is not a harmful phenomenon as long as it does not lead to the exclusion of all others.
Conclusion

This case study presents stark contrasts when compared to the previous case study in the series that was conducted on Lebanon. An institutionalized culture of civic engagement does not seem to exist in Jordan, as opposed to Lebanon. However, a substantial proliferation in student interest and work in the civil society and volunteer sectors is evident in both countries.

Despite the complex administrative framework through which civic engagement functions in Jordan the inclination towards civic engagement even under severe circumstances such as those prevalent at AABU, was palpable and is telling of a future generation that is truly engaged with their communities and committed to achieving progress for their societies.
References


