



# Arab Foundations Forum Annual Meeting and General Assembly

Beirut, Lebanon

Hosted at the American University in Beirut (AUB)

September 13-14, 2017



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## OVERVIEW

Arab Foundations Forum (AFF) hosted its Annual Meeting and General Assembly on September 13-14, 2017 in Beirut, Lebanon. Hosted by the American University in Beirut (AUB), we welcomed over 80 participants from more than 15 countries for two days of in-depth content and discussions on issues relevant to the region. Our key focus areas were built around AFF's exclusive initiatives and coalitions on youth and data, where we explored the trends in both sectors. Our General Assembly on day two of the meeting is key to our governance and, in keeping with our commitment to accountability and transparency, is open to all participants. This year, we elected one new board member, Oman Development Foundation, and confirmed new officers of the board of directors, electing Sawiris Foundation as Chair, and Gerhart Center at AUC as Treasurer.



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## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Mr. Ziad Abi Chaker, Founder and CEO of Cedar Environmental and self-proclaimed “garbage man,” delivered the keynote address, “This I Believe,” to the Annual Meeting and General Assembly of The Arab Foundations Forum (AFF) on Wednesday, September 13, 2017. Mr. Abi Chaker spoke about the principles and philosophies that guide his work in environmental waste management and treatment. He discussed the challenges of running a company and learning from past failures, the need to generate profit responsibly, the importance of women’s empowerment and inclusion in the workforce, and what kept his company standing and growing over the past 26 years.

Mr. Abi Chaker questioned the conventional wisdom that guides the work of regional and global corporations and nonprofit organizations. He urged against delaying action for the sake of prolonged thinking, planning, strategizing and training. Mr. Abi Chaker encouraged learning by doing versus waiting by quoting British artist, Hugh Laurie: *‘It’s a terrible thing, I think, in life to wait until you’re ready. I have this feeling now that actually no one is ever ready to do anything. There is almost no such thing as ready. There is only now. And you may as well do it now. Generally speaking, now is as good a time as any.’*



Mr. Abi Chaker concluded his presentation by addressing the garbage crisis in Lebanon in which garbage collection stalled for over a year due to governmental structural changes. He urged recycling and composting of left over food and waste to be used as fertilizers to grow vegetables in urban settings. To highlight his point above, it is a crisis that requires action now.

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## SESSION ONE: NGO GOVERNANCE AND GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES - CASE STUDIES

### Facilitated By:

- Alissa Amico

### Presenters:

- Ziad Khalaf - Director General, A.M. Qattan Foundation
- Noha El-Mikawy - MENA Regional Director, Ford Foundation
- Clare Woodcraft - CEO, Emirates Foundation

The NGO governance session highlighted the structural and regulatory challenges of corporate and foundation governance and transparency in the Arab region. The facilitator addressed the ongoing global debate about the role of the state as a stakeholder in governance. Ms. Amico presented the global standards of board governance and compared foundations' board structures in the region to those worldwide. She addressed the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the board of directors, the investment mechanisms of foundations, as well as issues of disclosure and transparency.

This session also featured interventions from Ms. Clare Woodcraft, CEO of The Emirates Foundation, Dr. Noha El-Mikawy, Ford Foundation's Representative in The Middle East and North Africa Office, and Mr. Ziad Khalaf, Director General of A.M Qattan Foundation. Each of these presenters showcased their experiences with governance and transparency, board composition, and function within their organizations.

In conclusion, the facilitator made recommendations to the Arab Foundations Forum, its members, and the greater philanthropic community in the Arab region to launch an online survey for AFF members and partners to systemically collect information from foundations' CEOs on board governance arrangements. This would allow comparison of practices among peers and the identification of best practices. It would also create opportunities to examine the gaps, if any, to the international peers and to the corporate sector in the Arab region. The survey would allow for the collection of data on specific aspects of governance of Arab Foundations such as committees and board members. The survey data would be kept confidential, and the information can be used to generate a report from AFF on best practices and thoughts on improvement.



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## SESSION TWO: DATA COALITION - “DATA AND IMPACT FOR PHILANTHROPY IN THE ARAB REGION”

### Facilitated By:

- Lauren Bradford - Director of Global Partnerships, Foundation Center
- Barbara Ibrahim - American University in Cairo

### Session Objectives:

- Finalize our value proposition – Why the MENA Philanthropy Data Platform?
- What ethical standards guide us? (WINGS data charter)
- Learn how others have proceeded
- Introduce the AFF survey and platform potentials
- Roll-out and name our AFF data platform
- Agree on next steps and move forward

The Data Coalition session highlighted the draft value statement of ***Philanthropy Data for Greater Impact*** as a stakeholder-driven platform to encourage sharing of information about philanthropy and social investing in the Arab region to increase effective giving where needs are greatest and stimulate local and international collaboration, as well as, leveraging greater resources for innovation and evaluation of impact.

Participants gave comments on what needs to be added to the value statement and responded with suggestions including:

- Add the word “Regional” to the objective: “stimulate local and international collaboration”
- Benchmarking the foundation /organization’s performance (a self-assessment through data)
- Use data for advocacy
- Enhance the visibility and profiles of organizations
- Owning our narrative
- Ownership of data as a regional information hub
- Promoting research through data

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## SESSION TWO: DATA COALITION - CONTINUED

The facilitators also presented the subject of data in a global perspective by presenting a brief on the WINGS Global Philanthropy Data Charter that AFF has played a pivotal role drafting alongside the Foundation Center, which is a framework of the importance of data, how to use data and data collection principles that are applicable in multiple contexts. The brief highlighted the importance of the AFF Data Coalition and how it is connected to global philanthropy ecosystem. The facilitators showcased examples of successful cases of philanthropy data collection from Colombia and East Africa.

The participants were given 10 minutes to gather in small groups to discuss the recent AFF survey collection experience and thoughts included the following:

### Advantages of the AFF survey

- Organizations' team members were able to share information on their work, giving each other a well- rounded knowledge of how the organization is operating
- Simple and easy for organizations to fill-out in comparison to other international and regional network's complex surveys
- The cumulative effort of showcasing and sharing the impact of giving

### Suggestions for future surveys and data collection

- Avoid going into details
- Organize the data collected into an info-graphic format
- Apply the data as a resource where we share lessons learned vs. successful programs and projects
- Include a question on how much money the organization is raising and how much it is giving back. What resources is the organization using to receive funding and in return what kind of programs are they supporting
- Clear definitions and terminologies for the users to have a uniformed understanding of the data they are collecting and where it fits
- To be careful not to mislead the sector with the numbers that might be only representative of organizations who filled the survey and not the whole sector
- Ensure organizations have proper data management tools in place for data collection
- To have special and customized features on the AFF interactive maps depending on the user's type of organization
- AFF can be an advocate to encourage transparency and data sharing

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## SESSION TWO: DATA COALITION - CONTINUED

### Obstacles in data collection

- Insecurity on sharing the financial data on a program level vs. data on a foundation's level (how will this data be used? Shown?)
- Transparency especially with sharing financial information
- Data security and protection especially around sensitive topics and programs

Afterwards the AFF survey data findings were shared with the participants, the findings included the summary of the survey:

- 38 surveys sent (at date of meeting)
- 20 responses received (at date of meeting)
- 14 respondents sent budget totals
- 1 respondent sent a line item budget

The facilitators presented graphs and charts of the countries of which the collected survey represented, types of organizations, registration and tax status, sources of income and overall amount of giving, funded sustainable development goals, fields of interest all in the form of aggregated data. An interactive map illustrated what the data looks like across the region and how it can be beneficial for the sector to strategically plan, fundraise and provide support according to the findings. The Emirates Foundations' collected information was presented as an example of an organization's profile along with a sample program information and budget.



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## SESSION TWO: DATA COALITION - CONTINUED

The facilitators shared the AFF Data platform upcoming activities in 2017 including:

1. Organizational data
  - Organization profile (public)
  - Aggregate data (public)
2. Roster of professional expertise (public)

The session discussion shifted into a roadmap moving forward in 2018 and beyond. Participants voiced what they want to include in the data platform and what they think should stay private including the following information:

- Recipient information
- Geographic area served
- Program evaluations
- Grant amounts
- Grant descriptions
- Operating costs
- Reports and philanthropy-related research and documents

Suggestions to collect this data:

- Recipient information should be handled on a case-by-case basis as some recipients (mostly individual) require anonymity and their information should remain private and in some cases even the project titles should remain private.
- Include the audit reports of recipients if they already publish them
- Some donors request to stay anonymous especially in the cases of individual donors
- Some organizations don't feel comfortable sharing the geographical areas of operations depending on the geo-political situation of the country



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## SESSION TWO: DATA COALITION - CONTINUED

AFF will take the lead on convening a working group to determine the level of privacy that can then be tied to the survey directly so that organizations filling out the survey have full knowledge of what will be made public and what will stay private.

An exercise was carried out to propose and select an Arabic and English name for the AFF data platform. Participants were divided into working groups to brainstorm title suggestions and presented to members for a vote.

Some of the suggested titles included:

- AFFPAD (AFF Philanthropy Analysis Database)
- Data Observatory
- Informed Giving
- Arab Social Impact Platform
- Infolanthropy

- بيان العطاء
- مرصد المعلومات
- منصة العطاء الاجتماعي العربي (عون)
- اعرف وعرف عن العطاء



The winning title with the majority of votes is: **Infolanthropy**.

### Conclusion

Ms. Naila Farouky, CEO of Arab Foundations Forum, summarized the next steps and commitments:

- AFF will collaborate with the Foundation Center to tweak the questionnaire based on the suggestions and outcomes of this session
- AFF will work on encouraging the members to contribute data to the survey (100%)
- AFF will populate the new platform with survey data and try to have it published on the AFF website
- AFF will encourage its members to contribute experts' names to be collected into a database and made available as a resource
- The facilitators will create an on-line tool for ease of updating organizational data for the information to remain reliable and up to-date

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## SESSION THREE: YOUTH COALITION MEETING

### Facilitated By:

- Clare Woodcraft - CEO, Emirates Foundation
- Naila Farouky - CEO, Arab Foundations Forum
- Palladium

### Employment and Youth in the Arab Region:

The session clarified an action plan to kick-start the implementation of the AFF Youth Coalition that was launched in Amman in May of this year. The session served to identify members of the various governance structures, secure commitment to the follow up action plan and give attendees a clear idea of what constitutes a scalable and sustainable initiative. Specifically, it determined the next steps and deliverables of the coalition.

Ms. Woodcraft reminded participants that the AFF Youth Coalition was created in response to the high interest among foundations that work with youth, employment and enterprise, and particularly because this region faces the challenges in engaging youth and creating meaningful job opportunities for them. During the Youth Coalition meeting in Amman earlier this year, a large number of organizations working on youth employment and enterprise expressed interested in collaborating and working together as part of the youth coalition. These organizations identified the key activities of the youth coalition as well as key stakeholders that need to be invited to take part in the coalition and the framework that Palladium produced on the mechanism, activities and pillars of impact for the enterprise ecosystem for the youth coalition. Ms. Woodcraft presented sample activities the youth coalition will focus on outlined by members across the 5 impact pillars. She also summed up the role of the AFF in the Youth Coalition and the key characteristics of pilot programs that will be selected and implemented as a pilot project based on the 5 impact pillars in Jordan.

### How Impact Evaluation can Impact Program Design:

#### Presented by:

- AbdelRahman Nagy - Senior Policy and Research Manager, J-PAL (Poverty Action Lab, MIT)

Mr. Nagy, highlighted ways that impact evaluation can enhance program design and provided a quick overview of evaluation methodology. In addition, Mr. Nagy gave a review and synthesis of cutting-edge research from randomized evaluations that map to the various pillars in the Youth Coalition. He showcased examples of rigorous impact evaluations and how they provide useful and actionable information that lead to successful and effective programs. Mr. Nagy also discussed the difficulties of measuring impact and the importance of using randomized evaluations.

### Preparing the Future Workforce:

#### Presented by:

- Bryanna Millis - Director, Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship, FHI 360

Ms. Millis spoke about tools, approaches, and measurement techniques to support development efforts in preparing the future workforce. FHI360 and Insights shared their experience and process of moving from research to action and the importance of data for the future workforce. They gave an in-depth look into workforce research in action through the following examples:

#### PRIMARY DATA

- Graduate Tracking Systems (Palestine)
- Micro and Small Enterprise Survey (Jordan)

*Sources:* Customized surveys targeting employers and employees

#### SECONDARY DATA

- Labor Market Information Systems (Tunisia)

*Sources:* Labor force surveys conducted on a regular basis by Arab bureaus of statistics (unemployment, labor force participation etc.)

#### PRIMARY + SECONDARY DATA

- Labor Market Assessment Tools (Global; Lebanon)
- Skills Forecasting Models: FHI 360 (Global); UNESCO (MENA region)

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## SESSION THREE: YOUTH COALITION MEETING - CONTINUED

### Successful Programs in Youth Employment:

#### Presented by:

- Nour Shammout - Policy manager, J-PAL (Poverty Action Lab, MIT)

Ms. Shammout presented an overview of effective strategies in youth employment. She showcased a graph that depicted youth comprising a greater share of the population in developing countries and youth unemployment rates are high or rising in many developed and developing countries. She also shared the findings of supply and demand barriers on youth employment. She gave the participants a look at interventions that target labor demand, then looked at interventions that target labor supply, and finally interventions that target the matching of supply and demand. She tackled the issues of how programs successfully develop employment skills or human capital, youth lacking information about what jobs exist, what skills are needed, and how to pursue job opportunities, access to capital, market linkages and enabling business environment.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Impact measurement is not separate from strategy; it's an integral part.
- Entrepreneurship is not a universal solution to unemployment. Some people may be more capable and/or interested in becoming entrepreneurs than others.
- Business training programs often help participants start businesses, but do not necessarily help them sustain those businesses. Results are promising when paired with cash grants or other interventions.
- Programs that address credit constraints and target entrepreneurs with high potential for growth are more likely to generate positive impacts.
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#### Interventions and comments from the participants included:

- The use of RCTs to Measure Impact of the youth coalition module should come at a later stage once the module or program has been finalized and operational
- Avoiding duplication in research and data collection
- AFF can play a role in giving foundations and academic institutes access to data and raw data
- We need to keep in mind that in this region of great inequality that not all youths want to be entrepreneurs - some youths are only looking for decent jobs
- Focus on long term learning vs. training
- Focus on programs that provide mentoring and on job training

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## SESSION THREE: YOUTH COALITION MEETING - CONTINUED



### Youth Coalition – Next Steps:

- The pilot will start with program and modules presented by members and partners in Jordan
- The members of the coalition will select a smaller steering committee among itself to evaluate coalition member programs and identify participants
- AFF Jordan Coalition Members to submit programs for review by Steering Committee
- AFF will then communicate the selected pilot programs and start convening working sessions to connect ecosystem actors and start monitoring increase in impact
- AFF will engage members outside Jordan to identify opportunities for similar initiatives in other Arab countries