

**ГРАЖДАНСКОЕ СВЕТСКОЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ
ЛИВАН: ОЦЕНКА УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКОГО УЧЕБНОГО
ПЛАНА (CIVIL SOCIETY EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF
LEBANON: AN EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM)**

Through out Lebanon's history, civil society organizations have filled the vacuum created by the absence of the state (Abu Assi 2006). After the conclusion of Lebanon's civil war, civil society organizations began to play an even more expansive role, as they worked to alleviate the suffering caused by fifteen years of conflict. The assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, the subsequent withdraw of Syrian forces, as well the Lebanese government's desire to cooperate with civil society, led to the introduction of new principles in Lebanon, namely, participatory democracy, sustainable development, good governance, transparency, and accountability (Karam 2011). These events encouraged civil society organizations to shift their attention towards social development activities (Khaldoun 2006). At the same time, institutions such as the World Bank and the European Union began to support projects that focused on local government, human rights, women's rights, rule of law, social justice, and political participation (Karam 2011).

In recent years, Lebanon's third sector has experienced two important changes. On the one hand, Lebanon's civil society organizations have rushed to hire ever-larger numbers of employees, which means that these organizations have become significant economic actors (Flanigan, 2010). On the other hand, in their search for transparency and accountability, domestic and international donors have begun to monitor the work of Lebanon's civil society organizations (UNDP 2004). Consequently, there have been calls to improve the skills and expertise possessed by individuals employed within Lebanon's civil society organizations (UNDP

2009). In line with these calls, this paper will address the following question: to what extent, and in what ways, do Lebanon's institutions of higher education promote professionalism and subject matter expertise in students interested in working for civil society organizations?

Data was collected from the forty-five (45) institutions of higher education that are registered with Lebanon's Ministry of Education. The 2012–13 course catalogues for each university were secured through a campus visit or a search of the relevant university websites. The content of these course catalogues were reviewed to identify: programs related to civil society; curriculum and courses related to civil society; and the techniques used to prepare students civil society careers. Relevant data was stored in an *Excel* spreadsheet, which will be used to generate the descriptive statistics needed to answer the research questions. We anticipate the data will indicate that Lebanon's institutions of higher education have a limited, but expanding, focus on civil society. The findings generated by this study will be significant for two reasons. First, they enable researchers to evaluate civil society education in a Middle Eastern country, a region that has been largely overlooked. Second, they will be used to contribute to the redesign of the academic curriculum within American University of Beirut's Department of Political Studies and Public Administration.

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