

**The Asfari Institute
American University of Beirut**

2020 Annual Highlights

The year 2020 was a very unsettling year for Lebanon which navigated from one crisis to the other whilst being ill-equipped to problem solve and weighed down by decades of corruption, nepotism, mediocre governance and poorly functioning state institutions.

The current local and regional contexts, notwithstanding their volatility and short term and long terms dangers and risks they present, constitute for the Asfari Institute a real time laboratory for the study of civil society activism and the various shapes and forms this has taken to address heightened challenges and amplified oppression.

In this short report, the Asfari Institute team seeks to zoom in on key highlights of the year as well as its vision for the next phase in its journey.

Implementation of current programs

Despite the constraints caused by the lockdown and which characterized most of the year, the Asfari Institute successfully completed the activities planned under its two on-going grants this year, namely:

- “The lay of the land: A social mapping of daily practices in informality amongst Syrian Displaced Communities in Lebanon” funded by the Ford Foundation
- “Assessing the impact of social movements in the Arab region” funded by the Carnegie

The knowledge outputs produced under these grants will be described in the section below on communication outputs.

New programs

During the course of the year, the Asfari Institute designed a new pillar of its work namely “The Arab Feminist Activisms Program”. This new program was inspired by our monitoring and observation of the ways in which feminist movements in the region have been vigorously regrouping to resist oppression, economic downfall as well as the impact of Covid19. A detailed strategy for this new program pillar was developed and a specific project proposal looking at feminist mobilizing around the pandemic was also constructed.

Also, and in the aftermath of the Beirut Port explosion of August 4th, the Asfari Institute created a special virtual space entitled “Beirut Anger and Solidarity” and which is solely devoted to activists to share their experience with emphasis on the way they have mobilized to deal with the dramatic aftermath of this explosion. We have tried to ensure that the least visible voices and hear voices are included namely the queer community, migrant workers and others.

Fundraising achievement

By the end of 2020, the Asfari Institute was able to secure two new grants. The first one is from the Open Society Foundations for the amount of 150,000 USD (stretching till the end of 2021) and allocated to the Arab Feminist Activism during Covid. The second is from Carnegie for the amount of 350,000 stretching till the end of 2022 and allocated to MENA states responses to the pandemic.

Communication and outreach achievements

During the 2020 challenging year, the Asfari institute initiated new partnerships with the Arab Political Network, Al Fanar media, Ibn Zohr University in Morocco, Kuwait University, and Rutgers University. We collaborated together on multiple topics and produced webinar lectures and research papers. In addition, throughout the 2020 year, we published fourteen publications for the institute, and they are listed below. Our Social media statistics showed conservative gains this year compared to the previous years, but nonetheless, our outreach was effective and helped us increase our visibility.

Publication List

Lebanon's 2019 October Revolution: Who Mobilized and Why?	Dr. Lea Bou Khater & Dr. Rima Majed
The Diversity of Experiences of Syrian Displaced Persons in Lebanon: Everyday Exclusion, Informality, and Adjustment Tactics	Manar Fliefel
التقرير الثاني عن الناشطة المجتمعية في المنطقة العربية (2019): ساحات تُصادر ومساحات تُنتفض ASAP	Misc.
Displaced Syrians in / النازحون السوريون في لبنان: ما وراء التصنيف وتجانس التجارب / Experiences Lebanon: Beyond Categorization and Homogeneity of	Misc.
رصد وتوثيق تجارب التعليم وإنتاج المعرفة حول المجتمع المدني في الجامعات العربية ومراكز أبحاثها	Misc.
تقرير ورشة عمل الحركات النسوية العربية وعلاقتها وتفاعلها مع الحركات النسوية العابرة للقوميات	د.هدى الصدة
مقاومة الفساد خلال فترة حكم الباجي قائد السبسي	آمنة السماري
What policies / ما هي السياسات اللازمة لحماية النازحين السوريين في لبنان؟ أوليات مهمة / displaced persons in Lebanon? Overlooked are needed to protect Syrian Priorities	Misc.
رصد وتوثيق تجارب الدراسات الجندرية في الجامعات والمراكز البحثية العربية	Misc.
مستقبل وتحديات العمل الحقوقي في المنطقة العربية	خالد منصور
The Diversity of Experiences of Syrian Displaced Persons in Lebanon: Everyday Exclusion, Informality, and Adjustment Tactics	Manar Fleifel
Asfari-AUB-Bahithat Report Dina El Khawaga, Myriam Sfeir, Eileen Kuttub, Balkis Badri, Amal Hamada, Bilkis Zabar, Amel Grami, Jana Badran, Meisoun Ali, Khadidja Boussaid, Nawar Golley, Sara Mourad, Asmaa Jamil, Hanan Ibrahim, Hoda El Sadda, Lama Abou Odeh, and Shereen Abou Elnaga	Various
Urban Rights Consultation Report	Dr. Mona Harb
Mobilization and Advocacy since 2011: Lebanon	Diala Haidar, Dr. Mona Harb, Bernadette Daou, Dr. Janine A. Clark

	Followers /#	Increase since 1st Q 2016	% increase since 1st Q 2016	Total Weekly Reach
Mailing List	5721	3121	120%	
FB	52717	37917	256%	46370
Tweeter	2736	2068	310%	28614 impressions
AI Youtube Channel	146	97	197%	

Engaging with the Asfari Foundation

By the end of 2020, the CEO of the Asfari Foundation visited the Asfari Institute and met with the team. The discussions focused on reiterating the commitment of the Foundation towards the Institute as well as its full engagement within the American University of Beirut, the need to start planning for a new phase in the journey of the Institute whilst addressing the new arising needs of engaging further with grassroots activism, developing knowledge production into formats that can maximise users of this knowledge and strengthening the digitalization process within the Institute.

The Asfari Institute Team
 February 18th 2020