The Role of Research Centers in Policy Making: An Interview with the Director of LERC

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Ms. Jana Chammaa of The Issam Fares Institute of Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI-PPIA) of the American University of Beirut (AUB) interviewed the Director of LERC Dr. Guita Hourani at Notre Dame University (NDU) regarding LERC’s role in policy making as a university-based research institute and the opportunities and challenges that the Center encounters in its policy role. The interview is part of a pilot study that the IFI is conducting on the role of university-based policy research institutes and the scope of their work in Lebanon for the IFI project on “Research, Advocacy and Public Policy-making” (RAPP).

The IFI-PPIA was inaugurated in 2006 to “harness the policy-related research of AUB's internationally respected faculty and other scholars, in order to contribute positively to Arab policy-making and international relations.” It aims “to raise the quality of public policy-related debate and decision-making in the Arab World and abroad; enhance the Arab World's input into international affairs; and, enrich the quality of interaction among scholars, officials and civil society actors in the Middle East and abroad.”

The findings of this exercise, said Ms. Chammaa, will “provide a better understanding of the function of such institutes amid the policy-making context existing in Lebanon today.” The results of the study will be the topic of a workshop in January of 2014 in which LERC will participate.