

AUK president outlines developments AUK had undertaken in congruence with current standards

AUK kicks off new academic year with e-learning fall semester

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 27: AUK began the 2020/2021 academic year with the fully-online fall semester; new and returning students, staff, and faculty were welcomed to the University through online meetings and a series of orientations that introduced the new online processes and platforms that will serve the campus community in academic and administrative efforts.

During her speech to the campus community, AUK president Dr. Rawda Awwad outlined the developments the University had undertaken in congruence with the current standards. "We have embarked on a process of digital transformation of our campus that aims to provide you the learning tools anytime and anywhere. We have expanded and further developed our facilities, and recently added new programs. Our cybersecurity is second to none, and our physical health measures has been expanded to minimize risks associated with the transmissions of COVID-19."

AUK continued with the series of online orientations using Zoom with



AUK President Dr. Rawda Awwad during her welcoming speech to the campus community.



Vice-President for Student Affairs, Dr. Hanan Muzaffar addressing the students during the virtual orientation.



Student Life staff member liaising with a group of students.

sessions for newly admitted students. Vice-President for student affairs, Dr. Hanan Muzaffar started the meeting by welcoming the newcomers, "We have a lot to offer you, from support as you navigate your way through your classes and life at AUK in general, to opportunities to develop and nourish those skills and hobbies you already

have." The students were then addressed by several departments - Scholarship and Financial Aid, IT Department, Library, Writing and Tutoring Center, and the Counseling Center - that introduced all the online services and features that would help the students with their daily online interactions and studies.

The students were then divided into smaller groups in several chat-rooms where they introduced themselves, played ice-breaker games, and entered a raffle for prizes. This activity served a chance for students to virtually meet each other and initiate friendships.

The start of the fall semester saw a

series of online activities held by the University's Student Life Department, Division of Student Affairs to foster open communication between staff and students, and promote campus clubs and organizations that students can join to stay active within the University.

The fall 2020 semester at AUK is

fully conducted online with virtual classes, meetings with course instructors, recreational events and activities, and administrative services available throughout working days to ensure the campus community remains safe while also providing ample support to the students for a well-rounded university experience.

Disruption in education

Poverty impact likely to be much more 'severe'

This is the seventh part of World Bank Group Report on MENA Economic Update — Editor

As Covid is making itself felt, distribution-neutral macroeconomic projections suggest a significant impact on poverty in the MENA region. Furthermore, the estimate may well be an underestimation, as the assumption of a distribution neutral impact is a strong one, and evidence from phone surveys suggest that poor households have been disproportionately hit by policy measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

In the short run, the poverty impact is likely to be much more severe. Using micro-simulation models for Tunisia and Jordan we are able to drop the distribution neutral assumption; and model a non-uniform intertemporal shock that is steep at the outset and gradually dissipates. Once these assumptions are included in the projections, we find a potential doubling of poverty in the short run. This is commensurate with phone survey evidence that suggests that many households reduce food consumption and incur debt to make ends meet. The poverty projections show too, how well-targeted social interventions can prevent the worst poverty outcomes. In Jordan, for instance, a well-targeted social protection program can reduce poverty by as much as 5 percentage points during the height of the Covid pandemic. In practice, however, we find that the cash transfer programs are progressive, but also that much of their resources still go to non-poor households. More importantly, we find that the majority of poor households remain out of reach of cash transfer programs.

Effects of the Dual Shock on Education

The pandemic had also triggered an unprecedented disruption in education. According to UNESCO, as of early August, more than 1 billion students — more than 60 percent of the children world-wide who were enrolled in school — are directly affected by nationwide school closures. Such closures put vulnerable and hard-to-reach children in particular danger of dropping out of the education system.

Funding

According to UNICEF, the agency has tripled its estimated funding requirement of Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) for 2020 world-wide — and almost quadrupled it for the MENA region. Available funding in MENA is expected to fall short of the funding requirement by almost 70 percent — among the highest of all regions in the world. Of the \$357 million HAC fund required for the MENA region, \$146 million is earmarked to "support access to continuous education, social protection, child protection, and gender-based violence services".

1.4 Policy Response

MENA countries have reacted quickly to the dual shocks, putting in place health-related steps such as social distancing and taking a range of fiscal and monetary measures to support their economies. Because they have sizeable buffers, the GCC governments could implement unprecedentedly large fiscal and monetary policies to help soften the impact of the two shocks on the public and formal private sectors — mainly through eased lending and wage support. Developing MENA countries, some with international help, also have taken many fiscal and monetary measures. Many countries have postponed taxes, enhanced unemployment benefits, and transferred cash to vul-

nerable households as discussed above. Central banks in the region have generally responded proactively, injecting liquidity (Tsakas, 2020). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), by April liquidity support measures averaging 3.4 percent of GDP, had been announced in seven of the MENA countries. In Tunisia, the central bank injected 9.9 billion dinars to increase bank liquidity. In Morocco, Bank-Al-Maghrib injected more than 30 billion dirhams to support the economy and took measures to support credit institutions on a prudential level, covering liquidity and equity requirements and loan provisioning.

Loans

In Egypt, particularly dependent on tourism services, a government guarantee of EGP 3 billion on low-interest loans by the central bank has been announced for the tourism industry. The central bank also approved an EGP 100 billion guarantee to cover lending at preferential rates to the manufacturing and agriculture (IMF, 2020b). By July, nine central banks in MENA (Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE) and neighboring countries (Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) had injected more than \$40 billion into their financial systems to support liquidity. In addition, another nine countries in the region resorted to foreign-exchange interventions, reflecting the prevalence of exchange rate pegs.

Because the dual shock will have a persistent effect, it is important early in the crisis to look beyond Covid-19 and reflect on the sustainability and efficacy of policies. Following is a framework for authorities to consider now and after the pandemic:

1. Tailoring policy responses:

To deal with the dual shock, authorities can tailor their responses to the severity of the shock. They should focus first on responding to the health emergency and the associated risk of economic depression. When feasible, authorities should postpone fiscal consolidation associated with the persistent drop in oil prices until recovery from the pandemic is well underway. To create much needed fiscal space, the current focus should be on reallocating spending to deal with the immediate crisis and making such spending more efficient.

2. Focusing on masking, testing and contact tracing.

Lockdowns were imposed to buy time to develop more a targeted, less-disruptive approach — namely, mandatory masking, testing and contact tracing (see Eichenbaum and others (2020) for a discussion). Authorities could boost spending on health — to produce or acquire masks, testing kits and contact tracing technology, to mobilize and pay health workers, to add health infrastructure, and to prepare for vaccination campaigns, among other things. Scaling up testing and contact tracing for Covid-19 is especially important because they enable countries to determine the dimensions of the infection and to detect and isolate cases — which will be a factor in deciding whether and how to reopen the economy without causing a second wave of infections. The GCC countries are having early successes in controlling the virus thanks to widespread testing. Nevertheless, the virus appears to be mutating. Moreover, it is not guaranteed that vaccines, if and when they are available, could completely eradicate the virus. This scenario would make controlling the virus more like a marathon than a sprint.

To be continued tomorrow

Closure of domestic labor offices causes great 'harm', says KUDLO

Some labor office owners facing legal problems: Al-Dakhnan

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 27: Kuwait Union of Domestic Labor Offices (KUDLO) Chairman Khaled Al-Dakhnan said the continuous closure of domestic labor offices since February due to the ongoing global fight against corona and efforts to curb the spread of the virus has caused great harm to employers and citizens, reports Annahar daily.

Speaking to the daily, Al-Dakhnan revealed this is also the result of the fake recruitment offices' exploitation of the citizens' need for domestic workers; especially since the contracts of about 50 percent of the domestic workers already expired and they returned to their home countries.

Al-Dakhnan said the some labor office owners are now facing legal problems as cases were filed against them due to the accumulation of unpaid rents and their inability to meet financial obligations such as the salaries of employees and other expenses.

He added: "We previously appealed to the concerned officials to allow the reopening of domestic labor offices and resume normal operations provided they strictly comply with the new health regulations. We contacted the Council of Ministers and Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), during which we presented a proposal to implement a recruitment mechanism in coordination with the concerned foreign entities to ensure the workers strictly adhere to the health regulations until they arrive in Kuwait. He stressed the need to take this step considering the countries surrounding Kuwait resumed the operations of their domestic labor offices in view of the recent developments, citing the requirement for domestic workers to submit a health certificate proving they are free of the disease. Upon

Nomination enhances GUST's influence on regional policymaking

GUST faculty member appointed to ERF's BOT

KUWAIT CITY, Oct 27: Dr. Fida Karam, Associate Professor of Economics at Gulf University for Science and Technology, has been appointed to the Advisory Committee of the Economic Research Forum (ERF)'s Board of Trustees (BOT) as a member of the ERF Advisory Committee. The nine-member Advisory Committee is appointed by the Board to advise the Board and Managing Director on substantive issues of relevance to both the research community and policymakers, and to screen nominations for ERF affiliations.

The Economic Research Forum (ERF) is a regional network of academics, policymakers, and influential figures dedicated to promoting high quality economic research to contribute to sustainable development in the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey. ERF operates from two offices in the region, in Cairo and Dubai, with its main office located in the Egyptian capital.

It is supported by multiple donors, both regional and international, such as the World Bank, the United Nations

Development Program (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD).

ERF activities include mobilizing funds for well-conceived proposals; managing carefully selected regional research initiatives and providing training and mentoring programs to junior researchers. It also includes organizing seminars and conferences based on research outcomes; and publishing research output through multiple channels including working papers,



Dr. Fida Karam

books, policy briefs and through the ERF Policy Portal - The Forum.

Dr. Fida Karam, Associate Economics Professor of Economics at Gulf University for Science and Technology, said, "In the 9 years of my affiliation with the Economic Research Forum, I have seen the economic research on the Middle East and North African region grow in strength every year and I am continually amazed by the achievements of the ERF network. I am honored, as a GUST faculty member, to have the opportunity to serve in the ERF BOT advisory committee. This nomination will enhance GUST's exposure to international and regional research collaboration as well as its reputation in promoting impactful research."

This is a prestigious nomination that will enhance GUST's exposure to the international and regional level of research collaboration and reputation, and will enhance the place and influence GUST maintains amongst the top universities that can contribute in economic research on the Middle East and North African region.

arrival in the country, the domestic workers should be quarantined in a hotel for a week, then they go to their sponsors' houses. We are still in contact with them and hold meetings to prepare for the opening of recruitment offices."

He revealed that families are in dire need of domestic workers now; considering some of them are taking care of elderly and people with special needs, while those employed among them have reported back to their workplaces.

About the fake labor offices, Al-Dakhnan explained the State is not authorized to engage in domestic labor recruitment so the absconding workers are employed daily at inflated prices; taking advantage of the citizens' need for domestic manpower.

He went on to say: "Unfortunately, the citizen's need compels him to deal with these offices. On our part, we are keen not to deal with these offices. Besides high wages, they previously committed violations and do not comply with health regulations; hence, the high probability of transmission of diseases. This makes it difficult for them to be entrusted with our homes and lives, especially since the law does not allow such system of temporary work."

On the action taken in case a domestic worker escapes, Al-Dakhnan affirmed: "We closely follow up and continuously announce absconding workers. Such cases are referred to the Domestic Labor Department for action. Nevertheless, some people resort to

fake labor offices without ascertaining the legality of their activities, which could lead to problems and crimes."

He added the union is coordinating with the approved recruitment offices in the countries that export domestic workers, so it is fully prepared to recruit workers to cover the local domestic labor market's need. He disclosed the most important domestic labor recruitment destinations include the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India.

He asserted the union is working hard to ensure that the recruitment charges remain the same, indicating there have been attempts to reduce the charges and facilitate the recruitment process to ease the burdens of citizens.

GCC Customs Union Authority tackles law's amendments & AEO agreements

ABU DHABI, Oct 27: GCC Customs Union Authority convened its 24th meeting chaired by UAE, the president of the current session through video conferencing, reports wam.ae.

Ahmad Abdulla Bin Lahej Alfalasi, General Manager, FCA chaired the meeting with the participation of Sheikh Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Chairman, Bahrain Customs; Suliman Altwajri, Vice Governor of Security and International Cooperation in KSA Customs, Khalifa Bin Saeed Alabri, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs, GCC General Secretary; Brigadier General Khalifa Bin Ali Alseyabi, Director-General, Oman Customs; Counsellor Jamal Bin Hadel Aljalawi, Director-General, Kuwait Customs General Authority, and Ahmed Bin AbdullaAljammal, Chairman, Qatar Customs General Authority in addition to the UAE delegate encompassing Alyia Alarmoom, Managing Director of Customs Affairs Sector in the Authority in addition to several officials and departments heads in the state and gulf customs.

Alfalasi initiated the meeting expressing deep condolence to the demise of the prince of humanity HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and welcomed the members of participating delegates while applauding

the high-level cooperation between state members of the GCC Customs Union Authority and their endless keenness to provide all forms of support to bring success to the trajectory of cooperation and gulf customs union.

During the meeting, participating delegates addressed many issues and matters of customs agenda in the Gulf states the most prominent of which is the requisite amendments to the unified customs law, unified customs duties, customs unified guidelines, the unified guideline of foreign products clearance, mutual recognition of the Authorised Economic Operator, AEO, common Gulf market, the measures on exempting industry inputs, implementing the resolutions and arrangements on combating international trade malpractices, in addition to exploring some customs studies and state members' proposals on facilitating technology advancement to support and facilitate supply chain and customs-risks management.

Ahmad Abdulla Bin Lahej, meeting chairman, noted that during the meeting, delegate members discussed the proposed amendments to selected articles under the unified customs law especially those related to updating and developing customs declaration, customs duties on government needs in the security sector, given international trade development and emergent updates.

Required for Immediate start at Private American School

Kindergarten:

- English Teacher - KG1
- English Teacher - KG2
- Art Teacher
- Admin Assistant
- Pool Lifeguard
- Teacher Assistant

Elementary:

- Science Teacher -Grade 3
- MIP Specialist

MSHS:

- Graphic Design Teacher/ Yearbook
- Graphic Design Teacher/ Newspaper
- Middle School Vice Principal

Human Resources:

- Onboarding & Employee Relations Officer
- Training & Development Office
- Payroll Officer
- Recruiter - Overseas
- Recruiter - Local
- Government Relations and Licenses Officer
- Admin Assistant
- Admin Manager
- Housing, Cars, and Drivers officer
- Visas Section Officer
- HR Assistant

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