

Gender and Public Policy Program

Annual Report 2012

















The Gender and Public Policy program is committed to supporting the Dubai School of Government's goal to promote good governance and contribute to capacity building in the region. Accordingly, the program is actively engaged in enhancing the UAE's capacity for effective public policy through tackling gender-specific policy issues such as female employment, health policy, educational policy, personal status laws, entrepreneurship, and national/local identity loss among young men and women in the UAE. We believe that research driven policy-making is an important way of ensuring that political decisions yield more than immediate short term benefits and will positively affect the lived reality of Emirati citizens.

The activities of the program are divided into three main areas: Research, Teaching, and Programmatic activities.

Our *research* publications are produced in both Arabic and English and combine two types of venues: high quality scholarly venues and applied venues targeted at policymakers.

Our contribution to *teaching* is based on original research conducted at DSG which focuses on the needs of the UAE and the region and it includes both academic and executive education programs.

Our *programmatic activities* focus mostly on the UAE, with collaborations from the Arab world and our global academic partners.

Accomplishments in 2012:

Research

The Dubai School of Government's Gender and Public Policy program functions on the principle that gender is a crucial factor in the structuring of society and focuses on the dynamics of gender by executing and disseminating research that illuminates economic, political and social policy issues affecting women. The program produces reports, policy briefs and working papers on a variety of public policy issues which include but are not limited to: gender equality in health, education, economic opportunity, political participation, leadership, power, and negotiation. In addition, the program hosts multi-year research initiatives that involve collaborations between research teams regionally and internationally and contribute to building DSG's position as the "regional" academic partner on global gender issues.

Rethinking Women's Leadership Development Programs in the UAE

At the core of the UAE government's strategy throughout the past decade has been the support and empowerment of women, and the recognition that they are crucial players in the nation building process. Women are outnumbering men in higher education and are encouraged more than ever to enter the workforce, in private corporations, as entrepreneurs and as government employees. Through both private and public sector initiatives, women are given increased opportunities to move up the ranks and take on leadership roles. The growing focus on development initiatives to empower women in the country has been met with a plethora of women leadership programs of various types and scales: national leadership development programs, sponsored and led by the government; programs incorporated within university curricula; programs within private sector companies or nongovernmental organizations as well as for profit consultancies and commercial centers offering customized and tailored women leadership training. This policy brief underlines the

successes of the UAE with regards to women's leadership initiatives and asks important questions: What more can be done to continue improving and building on these achievements so far made? With all the rapid changes unfolding in the world and in the region, and with increased financial constraints within all sectors, how can we better design women leadership development programs? What can be learned from recent experiments and what ways can they be improved in the future? What challenges have leadership development programs faced and how can these challenges be overcome? The publication is a DSG policy brief published in December 2012.

Women and Globalization in the GCC: Negotiating States, Agency and Social Change

As a result of a workshop that the Gender program co-organized and co-chaired at this year's Gulf Research meetings in Cambridge (details in programmatic activities section of report), the Gender program is preparing a detailed joint proceedings report as a DSG publication to document the scholarly exchange during the workshop. Collectively, the workshop featured 15 papers, which together, provide a critical analysis of globalization and its impact on women in the GCC delving into scrutinizing the ways it has impacted women's lives and status in society. This publication represents an important step towards illuminating the analysis of the dynamics of globalization in the GCC especially as it related to women. It looks at ways state institutions are heralding modernizing efforts that target women and the advancement of their position in society, as well as modes in which women interact and define processes of modernization that also re-define their position in society. Work on the publication began in end of 2012 and will be completed and published in early 2013.

Negotiating Identity: New Perspectives on the Globalization and Identity Debate in the GCC

This policy paper looks at the cultural impact of globalization and presents a broad overview of what cutting edge research from cross-cultural and social psychology can tell us about the process of acquiring new languages and cultures. This research shows that by acquiring a new culture, the individual does not necessarily "lose" their original culture. It also shows that under certain conditions individuals are able to foster integrated identities that reflect their ability to uphold their original culture without necessarily derogating or rejecting the new culture. This research challenges popular assumptions about the inevitability of culture loss to provide new ways of understanding and dealing with the perceived threat of globalization. The policy paper was presented in several scholarly venues and submitted for publication in late 2011. In 2012, further literature was reviewed for the paper. In 2013 we plan to collect new data and launch a new experimental study based on received feedback in order to finalize the publication and resubmit.

Gender and Cultural Frameswitching in Negotiation in the GCC project

This project uses a negotiation lens to explore the gendered school-to-work transitions among young men and women in the GCC. The research has drawn on gender in negotiation theory and cultural psychology theory to explore gender inequality in organizations in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. This research is conducted jointly with professors from Harvard University and forms the basis for knowledge partnerships with government entities focusing on women's leadership. In 2011, the research was submitted to a leading peer reviewed journal and preliminary acceptance has

been granted upon revision of a draft. More experimental studies and further data collection were needed. In 2012, major data collection efforts were made through the distribution of an online survey at leading UAE universities (Zayed Dubai, Zayed Abu Dhabi, HCT Al Ain, Dubai Men's College and Dubai Women's College). A second video experimental study was conducted with DSG and Harvard University with the assistance of a film production company and partnership with industry leaders. Data analysis for the experimental studies was conducted and a reworked draft of the paper will be resubmitted to the journal upon final analysis and revision in 2013.

Teaching/Training

Capacity Building in the UAE: New Approaches to Job Negotiations: Empowering Emirati Youth in a Global Economy

As part of our commitment to building capacity in the UAE, the Gender program, in collaboration with Dr. Hannah Riley Bowles from Harvard University, organized a workshop for Emirati undergraduate students enrolled in some of the country's leading national universities (such as Zayed, DMC, DWC, HCT Al Ain). This workshop culminates a multi-year joint research initiative between researchers from the gender program and Harvard University which investigated the nature of the interaction between young graduates and employers through a series of experimental studies on job negotiations in the UAE. The workshop included the perspectives of practitioners from various sectors and industries (both private and public) from across the Emirates, including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah who shared their experiences about how to think strategically about building a career and contributing to society more broadly. The workshop was designed to provide an interactive platform for students to speak with a select group of male and female role models in the UAE about their experiences with jobs, job interviews, career transitions, and ambitions. The keynote address was given by HE Noura Al Kaabi, FNC member and Head of Tawasol and Human Development and CEO Designate of twofour54. Mr. Rebea Ataya, founder and CEO of Bayt.com and Dr. Fatma Abdulla, a longtime supporter of DSG were among the panelists, in addition to eight Emirati role models from diverse backgrounds and sectors. At the end of the workshop, a detailed evaluation was conducted, an exercise which is important for the program to continue developing and enhancing activities. Evaluations were positive and the majority of students (90%) gave a rating of "excellent."

Visiting Delegations

The Gender Program also raises awareness on gender issues in the Arab world through dialogue with visiting delegations to DSG. The program is regularly involved in presentations to visiting delegations. In 2012 these included formal presentations by the Gender program to visiting delegations from Simmons School of Management and the University of San Bernardino.

Programmatic Activities

The programmatic activities support research efforts of the program and help with our mandate to disseminate and share knowledge in the region, and fulfill our role of being the regional academic partner on gender and public policy.

Gender and Public Policy Seminar Series

The gender program hosts a research seminar series focusing on a variety of gender and public policy issues. The series brings prominent researchers, scholars, and practitioners alike to the discussion table to share their research findings and views on opportunities and challenges facing women's leadership in the Arab world. The series began in 2007, and covers a variety of issues including (but not limited to) women's political, economic and social participation, as well as women's empowerment, entrepreneurship and leadership. The seminar series also explored women's formal and informal involvement in the labor market, social exclusion of women, women and the law, gender equality, education, family, migration, negotiation and conflict resolution. It has hosted renowned local, regional and international speakers.

In 2012, the following seminars have been held:

- Redefining Gender in the UAE: An Analysis of Government Initiatives for Women's Empowerment, January 2012, Dr. Suaad Oraimni, Director, Center of Family and Gender Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, UAEU
- Working Women in Federal Government Sector Jobs: Assessment and Recommendations for the UAE, Ms. Aisha Al Suwaidi, Acting CEO of HR Policies Sector, Federal Authority for Human Resources (FAHR)
- Gender and Educational Reform: Transforming Gender Norms among Young Adolescents for Lasting Social Change, Ms. Soha Ellaithy, Director, Gulf Partnerships, Save the Children

Rethinking Women Leadership Development Programs in the UAE

The Gender and Public Policy Program team along with Harvard University Professor Dr. Hannah Riley Bowles organized a roundtable discussion on women leadership development programs in the UAE. The event brought together a highly select group of senior level managers, program directors and academics with diverse backgrounds from the private and public sectors as well as academic institutions who have been involved in developing and running women leadership development programs. The goal of the roundtable was to present key recommendations to policy makers in the UAE about how to improve and strengthen women's leadership development programs. The roundtable was the backdrop for a DSG policy brief.

The Gender program in collaboration with the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Lund co-organized a workshop in July 2012 as part of the Gulf Research Meetings at Cambridge University. The workshop entitled: "Women and Globalization in the GCC: Negotiating States, Agency and Social Change" provided a vibrant forum for a research driven discussion on the relationship between global processes and the position of women in the Gulf region. The overall aim of the workshop was to problematize the "position" of women in the GCC by situating their experience within the framework and rhetoric of globalization in order to arrive at an understanding of the diverse institutional and cultural mechanisms that influence gender dynamics in the region. Collectively, the 15 workshop papers explored the complicated and contradictory interactions between women, states, and societies in the Gulf region which shape (and are shaped by) globalization processes. The two day workshop allowed for critical analysis and brought together scholars from different disciplines ranging from literature, anthropology, sociology, and business and covering a wide variety of topics such as social policy, security, business, entrepreneurship, education, law, family, migration, intercultural dialogue, and even sports. Given this broad spectrum of disciplines, approaches and research questions, various ways of conceptualizing globalization were presented, analyzed, and critiqued.

Partnerships

Emirati Women in the Forefront of Social Change Networking Group

The program was invited to attend a highly selective workshop from UAE government and public sector entitled "Realizing Potential: Emirati Women at the Forefront of Social Change," which brought together over thirty professional women from the UAE (from government, private sector and academic institutions). Organized by the Center for Global Affairs at New York University (NY), the workshop explored politics, policies and strategies that have led to the remarkable achievements of women over the past decade and to identify outstanding challenges regarding the social and professional situation of women in the Gulf. Among the keynote speakers and panelists were H.E. Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimy, Minister of State, H.E. Afra Al Basti, head of the Dubai Foundation of Women and Children and FNC member and Fatima Al Jaber, COO of Al Jaber Group and head of the Abu Dhabi Businesswomen's Council. Workshop participants form the core group of a network of Emirati Women in the Forefront of Social Change. The program was also invited to be one of five members of the executive committee of this network. Next meeting will be held in April 2013.

UAE Gender Studies Consortium

The gender program is a knowledge partner on the UAE gender studies consortium, along with the American University of Sharjah and the University of Maine. As part of this partnership, in 2012, the gender program was on the organizing committee of the inaugural conference which brought together practitioners, scholars and academics from all around the world. The program organized two DSG panels entitled: "New Perspectives on Globalization and Gender in the GCC" and "Translating Gender: Opportunities and Challenges of Research and Teaching on Gender in

Arabic," in which four papers were presented by Gender program team members highlighting research conducted at DSG.

Arab Gender Studies Consortium

As a result of the conference on Gender and Women's Studies in the Arab Region and the UAE Gender Studies Consortium, a need for developing an Arab regional consortium was identified to support the development of gender and women's studies across academic institutions throughout the Arab world. As an initial step, the program was invited to attend a regional workshop, "Building Regional Alliances--Institutionalizing Gender and Women's Studies in the Arab Region: Paths Forward" which was hosted at the University of Jordan in Amman and organized by the Director of the UAE Gender and Women's Studies Consortium. Such a consortium would create a network in which scholars focused on gender and women's studies in the Arab region could share their research, discuss educational initiatives, and develop collaborative research projects and train new generations of scholars. The workshop brought together a small core group of fifteen from around the region who will be key in the planning and launch of the consortium. Representing the UAE were DSG from Dubai, AUS from Sharjah and Abu Dhabi University from Abu Dhabi. Other countries represented within this core group are: Morocco; Saudi Arabia; Sudan; Egypt; Jordan; Lebanon; Palestine; and Tunisia. Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Women's Studies from the University of California Davis, Dr. Suad Joseph, and Professor of Economics and Women's Studies from the University of Southern Maine, Dr. Susan Feiner, were also in attendance in an advisory capacity. DSG's gender program is currently on the by-laws committee and the organization committee for upcoming global conference in 2014.

Outreach and Supporting DSG Administration

Part of the Gender and Public Policy Program's mandate is to support research and institutions focused on gender and women's issues in the UAE and the broader Arab region. To this end, the program's outreach efforts encompass a wide range of initiatives, presentations and meetings with stakeholders including government institutions, other research programs, academic institutions etc. The Gender program is also committed to supporting DSG Administration and other departments. Although the program meets on a weekly basis with interested stakeholders, several of the key outreach efforts of 2012 are highlighted below:

Executive Council Abu Dhabi

The Gender program gave a presentation entitled "The Psychological Effects of Globalization in the GCC," which featured a three year research project that the program has been engaged in, dealing with the cultural impact of globalization, particularly on school to work transitions. Three experimental studies and their findings were presented in detail. The results of these studies have important implications for education, employment, nationalization, and gender equality policies in the GCC. The presentation was given to a team of Emirati researchers as well as senior managers of both the Human Development and Social Development Sectors of the Executive Council. Following the presentation was a Q&A and open discussion with members of the teams.

Bridging the Gulf to Girls Education Workshop

The Gender program was part of a two day global workshop entitled "Bridging the Gulf to Girl's Education" which was co-organized jointly by Dubai Cares and Plan International. The purpose of the workshop was to share good practice on promoting girls' education, addressing mind-sets and cultural barriers by presenting case studies and exploring the challenges and opportunities of building effective multi stakeholder partnerships. The event was attended by a number of key experts and players from various countries, program partners from the field and regional donors and was under the patronage of H.E. Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimy, Minister of State who was also the keynote speaker.

Presentation by HE Dr. Meetha Salim Al Shamsi, State Minister

Gender program attended a presentation and networking luncheon organized by the Federal Authority for Human Resources. The presentation was given by Her Excellency Dr. Meetha Salim Al Shamsi, State Minister and Chairwoman of Marriage Fund as part of the Federal Authority for Human Resources HR Talks series entitled: "Women's Leadership Role in UAE Development." The presentation traced the role of women in the nation historically and until present day. The event was attended by many representatives from government as well as the private sector and many senior officials.

Women in Leadership Forum-Middle East and North Africa

The Gender program represented DSG at the 2012 Women in Leadership Forum for the Middle East and North Africa held under the Endorsement of H.E. Dr. Maitha Salem Al Shamsi, UAE Minister of State in Dubai. The forum brought together over 200 representatives from government, the private sector, civil society and academia from the UAE, the region and globally to discuss the legal, cultural and social barriers and challenges that women in the region still face in the workplace and in business. The forum provided insights into new initiatives for women; evaluated diversity and inclusion program case studies from local and global countries; and gave inspirational knowledge from some of the world's most successful women and men. The Women in Leadership Awards for 2012 were also held during the Forum, with Guest of Honor Her Highness Princess Ameerah Al Taweel, Vice Chairwoman & Secretary General of Al Waleed Bin Talal Foundation.