MIREKOC AND KUASIA SEMINAR

DATE: APRIL 2nd, MONDAY
TIME: 6 pm
VENUE: ANAMED, KOC UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTER
Tomtom Mah. Istiklal Cad. Merkez Han, No: 181

Coping with the Highest Rate of Refugee per Capita in the World:
Muddling-through vs. Adaptive Mechanisms?

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war more than five years ago, Lebanon has received around 1 million refugees (1.5 million according to Government of Lebanon). They currently make up around 25% of the country’s population, the highest rate of refugee per capita in the world. The vast majority of those refugees are destitute with 54% of them relying on food vouchers and assistance. Yet, and in the midst of a protracted political crisis in Lebanon the country hasn't imploded.

In this talk, Dr. Nasser Yassin from the American University of Beirut will address these critical questions and will reflect on the historical, social and political-economic factors that have helped Lebanon handle, so far, the largest refugee crisis in its modern history. He will argue that in the absence of a concerted policy by the Government to tackle the refugee crisis, ‘informal adaptive mechanisms’ have played a significant role in maintaining the ‘resilience’ of refugees and their host communities. Based on his research in Lebanon and across the Middle East, he will show that although informal mechanisms are not recognized by the state and are often neglected by the formal response and humanitarian system, they have emerged as major coping strategy for refugees in accessing essential social services and economic opportunities. He will delve, at the end, on whether the ‘elasticity’ of the informal adaptive mechanisms is reaching a breaking point.

Bio:
Dr. Nasser Yassin is the Director of Research at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, and assistant professor of policy and planning at the Health Management and Policy Department at the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon. He co-chairs the AUB4Refugees Initiative that aims to bring together and build synergy among faculty and departments in AUB responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. He holds a PhD from University College London (UCL), an MSc from London School of Economics (LSE), and an MSc and BSc from the American University of Beirut (AUB). His research and practice interests are in development planning and policy-making in fragile and transition states. He researches and works on policy and social innovation especially in areas of refugee, youth and health policies and programs. His current work looks at how civil society actors, community groups and informal networks can influence policies and programs. He is currently leading a research project on understanding the informal adaptive mechanisms among refugees and their host communities in the Middle East. He is author of more than 30 internationally published articles and reports. His work has been featured in The Economist, Al-Jazeera, The Daily Star and Al-Monitor, among others.

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