Call for Proposals

Informal adaptive mechanisms

Understanding adaptation, resilience, and agency in securing livelihoods in the informal economy among refugees from Syria in Lebanon and Jordan

Deadline: April 4, 2018

The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, supported by the Ford Foundation, has launched the project titled: **"Informal adaptive mechanisms: Understanding adaptation, resilience, and agency in securing livelihoods in the informal economy among refugees from Syria in Lebanon and Jordan".** This two-year research project looks at informal adaptive mechanisms as tangible manifestations of refugee communities' ability to be *resilient, adaptive and have agency* to fend off the crisis they are facing and establish their functioning capacities in securing their livelihoods. Informal adaptive mechanisms are seen to emerge in order to fill gaps in formal institutions[1]. These mechanisms can be *complementary*, *accommodating*, *competing* but not necessarily substitutive of formal institutions[2]. The project aims to understand the various adaptive mechanisms adopted by refugees from Syria, including Syrian refugees and/or Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS), to overcome the challenges and barriers they face in securing their livelihoods in the informal economy[3], by exploring the influence of different dimensions, such as legality, temporality, social networks, connectedness, and geography, among others, on the emergence of these mechanisms. This will be achieved, in part, through commissioned case studies in Lebanon and Jordan.

Eligible countries: Lebanon and Jordan

Eligibility criteria: Researchers must be based in Lebanon and/or Jordan preferably, and must be easily able to travel to these countries during the duration of the project[4]. Researchers are expected to be available to respond to Advisory Committee reviews and comments on deliverables, and to attend workshops and a conference for the project throughout the project timeline of two years.

Project objectives and priorities:

The research should aim to address the following questions in general:

1. How do Syrian and/or PRS refugee communities in Lebanon and/or Jordan build informal adaptive mechanisms to secure their livelihoods in the informal economy?

2. What are the strategies adopted by Syrian and/or PRS refugee communities in Lebanon and/or Jordan when seeking livelihood opportunities in the informal economy?

3. How do informal adaptive mechanisms contribute to equitable access to livelihoods and to protection in the labor market?

This call will fund up to five individual research projects that use a case study[5] approach, which meet the above through exploring one or more of the following dimensions:

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[1] Azari, J. R., & Smith, J. K. (2012). Unwritten rules: Informal institutions in established democracies. Perspectives on Politics, 10(01), 37-55.
[2] Yassin, N., & Chamaa, J. (2016). The informal adaptive mechanisms among Syrian refugees and marginalised host communities in Lebanon. The long-term challenges of forced migration: Perspectives from Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, 6.
[3] As per the ILO, the term "informal economy" refers to "all economic activities by workers and economic units that are –in law or in practice– not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements".
[4] Kindly note that as per Lebanese laws and policies, travelers with an Israeli stamp on their passport are not allowed entry into Lebanon.
[5] Case studies must be community or initiative level cases, examples include Syrian run businesses or micro-enterprises, women's cooperatives, community initiatives, refugee-led humanitarian initiatives, etc.

- What role does **time/temporality** play in the development of informal mechanisms? For example, comparing recent refugee communities to protracted refugee communities.
- How does **legality**, or the lack of it, influence the creation of informal mechanisms?
- What is the role of **geography** in forming informal mechanisms? For example, the difference between camp and non-camp settings, and urban, peri-urban, and rural settings.
- What roles do **social networks and connectedness** (local, national, and transnational) play in forming informal mechanisms? For example, interaction with host community, the role of informal actors or institutions (political, religious, humanitarian, etc.), and/or the role of technology in enhancing connectedness?
- What role do **personal characteristics** such as gender**,** age, socioeconomic status, level of education, previous employment experience, etc. play?

The above dimensions are not exclusive, and any inquiries about other suggested relevant dimensions may be sent to Maysa Baroud at mb95@aub.edu.lb.

Eligible research methodologies:

- Qualitative research methodologies, such as participatory methods, community dialogues, journey mapping, field observations, structured stakeholder interviews, etc.;
- Quantitative research methodologies, such as surveys, analysis of datasets, etc.;
- Capacity building of the target population (targeted skills can be further elaborated in the proposal).

The above list is not exhaustive, and any inquiries about the relevance of proposed methodologies can be sent to Maysa Baroud at mb95@aub.edu.lb.

Expected deliverables

1. A proposal of 4-5 pages in length, to be submitted no later than April 4, 2018, with a clear statement of the topic, the community, the case, and the dimension(s) that will be explored. Proposals must include a detailed work plan describing the scope of the work, a research timeline, associated milestones, and a description of the methodology proposed, including materials (e.g., interview guides, focus group discussion guides, consent forms, etc.) to be used during implementation of the project. Applications must include the total amount of grant requested for the research with a detailed budget breakdown (Kindly fill the Table 1. Budget Template, by including items relevant to your proposal). Applicants are also required to submit their CV and two letters of recommendation. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Proposals may be in English or Arabic.

2. The researcher must use a human rights based and/or labor rights based approach in the proposed research. In addition, the proposal must include a section on ethical considerations for the study, including an overview of how the researcher plans to manage participant expectations, particularly participant expectations of tangible research outcomes, but also, expectations as they relate to short-term versus long-term outcomes of the study. Special attention must be given here to how the researcher will balance between the research benefits, and benefits to the community.

3. Up to eight short-listed candidates will be selected from among the submitted proposals. Short-listed candidates will be invited to a closed workshop in Beirut, Lebanon mid-May 2018 (TBD), where they will give a presentation of their research proposal to the project's Advisory Committee. Final winners will be selected after this workshop.

4. Selected researchers need to submit two brief progress narrative reports throughout the project timeline. The first progress narrative report on the data collection phase must be submitted end of July 2018 (TBD), and the second progress narrative report on analysis and write-up must be submitted in October 2018

(TBD). Researchers will also have to attend meetings (in person or virtually) with the core team at IFI in order to discuss the progress of their work.

5. The first draft of the case study research report must be submitted for review end of November 2018 (TBD).

6. The selected researchers must commit to present their case studies/findings to the project Advisory Committee during a workshop to be held by the end of January 2019 (TBD).

7. Researchers must incorporate reviews and comments from the Advisory Committee into the final draft of their case study research reports. The final draft must be submitted by mid-March 2019 (TBD). All final research reports will be published as AUB Issam Fares Institute Research Reports.

8. Researchers will present their findings to local and regional stakeholders in a learning workshop in April 2019 (TBD).

9. Researchers are invited to participate in a final conference for the project (October 2019/TBD).

10. The grant will be paid in three (3) installments, 25% at the start of the research, 25% upon submission and approval of the first draft of the report, and 50% upon submission and approval of the final draft of the report.

Funding information:

The size of the grants awarded will depend on the scope of the research proposed and the number of grants awarded. The grant should cover all research related activities. Proposals must be for a four-month research project starting in June 2018, though researchers are expected to be available to respond to Advisory Committee reviews and comments on deliverables, and to attend workshops and a conference, beyond this timeframe. The Issam Fares Institute will cover accommodation and travel costs related to participation in the project workshops and conference.

Qualifications:

1. Master's degree or higher in social sciences, economics, or a relevant field. A degree in refugee studies, migration studies, human rights studies, labor studies, and/or gender studies is a plus;
2. Excellent command of Arabic is a must for the purpose of field work;
3. Easy mobility in all regions across Lebanon and/or Jordan;
4. Evidence of having completed the CITI training for the following course: Social and Behavioral Basic or its Refresher, or an equivalent.

How to apply:

The proposal must comply with the abovementioned objectives and eligibility criteria. Proposals must be submitted by email to Maysa Baroud at mb95@aub.edu.lb and Aseel Jammal Caballero at aseeljc5@gmail.com no later than **April 4, 2018**. Proposals received beyond this deadline will not be considered. Shortlisted applicants will be announced on April 18, 2018 (this date is tentative and subject to change). Shortlisted applicants will have to present their proposals during a workshop in Beirut in mid-May 2018 (TBC), after which the winners will be selected.