

# THE GENDER & PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM



كلية دبي للإدارة الحكومية  
DUBAI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT





*"Our common prosperity will only be achieved when all of our citizens – women and men, girls and boys – are enabled to attain their potential and contribute their fullest to society. Policymakers and researchers understand that, and are searching for solutions. By fostering innovative and top-notch research and dialogue, the DSG Gender and Public Policy Program helps to make the goal of gender equality a reality."*

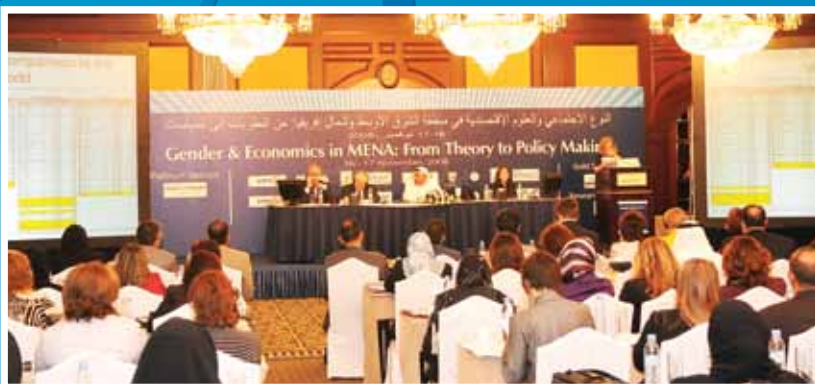
Her Excellency Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

## Established in 2007, the Dubai School of Government's Gender and Public Policy Program

aims to address the challenges facing research and policy making on gender-related issues in the Arab world. Much of the contemporary policy debate about gender in the Arab world details gender inequalities in virtually every aspect of public life. Although gender disparities are global phenomena, gender inequalities in health, educational, political and economic opportunity, legal access, and citizenship rights are often cited as inimitable characteristics of the Arab region. Indeed, despite the diversity of economic, political, and legal conditions among Arab countries, they are all situated among the lowest ranking countries on a variety of global gender empowerment indices. However, there are a number of serious challenges facing a research and policy agenda of social transformation and gender equality in the Arab world. Obstacles include the futility of androcentric approaches to meaningful knowledge production, problematic ethnocentric approaches to public policy, and the lack of both accurate data and a sufficiently supportive environment for networks of scholarship to thrive at the regional level.

*Calls for reform by indigenous activists, women's groups, and Arab development experts, in addition to the mounting "external" pressure from global economic and political actors, place Arab women at the center of dominant discourses on modernity, progress, and competitiveness. This leaves policy makers in the Arab world with the serious challenge of responding with appropriate prescriptions that range from individual empowerment strategies that attempt to "fix the women" to institutional and national level interventions that require nothing short of a paradigm shift.*

The Gender and Public Policy Program supports theoretically and methodologically rigorous research that conceptualizes, problematizes, and analyzes gender gaps while, at the same time, linking the research to agendas and instruments for informed policy action. In addition to applied policy research, the program aims to support the production of innovative social science scholarship on gender in the Arab world which interrogates androcentric biases and challenges ethnocentric assumptions about Arab women. As part of a leading regional institution with strong links to the international community, the Gender and Public Policy Program is well positioned to create a network of regional and international scholars that can contribute to an empowering discourse about men and women in the region. The program continues to work diligently on creating partnerships that help to build a proactive and responsive knowledge base about gender in the Arab world.



Gender & Economics in MENA conference 2007 (organized with CAWTAR)



H.E. Dr Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Federal National Council (FNC) Affairs, speaking at the report launch of *Women in Parliament and Politics in the UAE: A Study of the First FNC Elections*

*Important functions of the Gender and Public Policy Program include informing organizational policy on gender-related issues through policy formulation, filling knowledge gaps on gender issues through knowledge production, and presenting alternative empowering views that challenge hegemonic notions by impacting discourse.*

## Research

The 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, the following: gender equality in health, education, economic opportunity, political participation, leadership, power and negotiation. In addition, the program hosts multi-year research projects that involve collaborations between research teams regionally and internationally and contribute to building DSG's position as a premier regional academic partner on global gender issues.

## Select List of Publications

Gender Equality in the United Arab Emirates: A Driver for Increased Competitiveness? (June 2008)

The Context for Intergroup Leadership Among Women's Groups in Saudi Arabia (March 2008)

Women in Parliament and Politics in the UAE: A Study of the First Federal National Council Elections (March 2009)

Closing the Health Gender Gap: Toward a Wellness-Based Model of Healthcare (April 2009)

The Hidden Gender Gap in Education in the UAE (August 2009)

Closing the UAE's Political Gender Gap: Measures for Effective Policy Change (September 2009)

Beyond "Leader" Development: Advancing New Leadership Development Models in the GCC (October 2010)

*All DSG publications can be found online at [www.dsg.ae/publications](http://www.dsg.ae/publications).*



Participants in the "Negotiating for Leadership" course from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE working on an assignment.



H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, at a luncheon at DSG.

**Research Projects:** To date, the program's major research projects have focused on gender and negotiation. *Gender and Cultural Frameswitching in Negotiation in the GCC* 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. *Cultural Focal Concerns in Negotiation* is a research project forming part of a large, multidisciplinary international and pan-Arab research effort covering seven countries, and aims to construct a conceptual dynamic multilevel model of culture and negotiation in Middle East. In particular, the project explores the relevant intra- and inter-cultural dimensions that are crucial for understanding gender, culture, and negotiation in the Middle East. *Feminist Orientalism* seeks to empirically test the premise of post-colonial feminist theory through a series of laboratory studies in the US and the Arab world.

**Publications:** The program publishes policy briefs, produces working papers and reports on a variety of issues. Past policy briefs have focused on closing the gender gap in education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and political participation. Working papers have addressed topics such as gender and

globalization in the Gulf States, leadership development in the Arab world, and women's groups and leadership in Saudi Arabia. The program also produced a collaborative report with the UAE's Ministry of Federal National Council (FNC) Affairs entitled "Women in Parliament and Politics in the UAE: A Study of the First Federal National Council Elections." The findings of the report were quoted months following its launch, when a vigorous public debate about women's roles in the FNC erupted in the local media.

## Programmatic Activities

**Conferences:** The program organizes annual Arab region-wide conferences and national policy forums in collaboration with strategic partners in order to create vibrant platforms for debate and exchange of ideas. These conferences give an opportunity to researchers concerned with gender and public policy issues to share their research findings with the public, and communicate their results directly to practitioners and policy makers. The program has held joint conferences and panels with the Dubai Women's Establishment, Harvard University, the World Bank, and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), addressing important issues such as women and leadership, work-life balance, culture and gender in negotiation, and gender and economics.



Dr. Rohini Pande,  
Professor of Public  
Policy at the  
Kennedy School of  
Government, Harvard  
University, speaking at  
the Gender seminar  
series



**Seminar Series:** The gender program hosts a monthly research seminar series which focuses 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 has 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



Dr. Suad Joseph, Professor, UC Davis, visits DSG to give a lecture at the Gender program's seminar series. Dr. Tarik Yousef, Dean of the Dubai School of Government is pictured at right.

international speakers such as Her Excellency Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, Assistant Secretary General Regional Bureau of UNDP; Dr. Suad Joseph, University of California, Davis; and, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Founder and President of the Center for Work-Life Policy.

**Policy Forums and Partnerships:** Members of the Gender and Public Policy Program take part regularly in a variety of events, policy forums, panels and meetings related to gender and public policy. Through these types of activities, the program has fostered important relations with leading organizations in the UAE and around the world. The program has collaborated and partnered formally and informally with local organizations, senior

members of government, and policy makers and academics in the UAE such as the Dubai Women's Establishment, the Emirates Foundation, the Mohammad Bin Rashid Center for Leadership Development, the Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, Emirates Nationals Development Program, Zayed University, and Dubai Women's College. Among the program's regional affiliates are CAWTAR, which is based in Tunisia. International collaborators include Harvard University's Women and Public Policy Program, the Center for Public Leadership, as well as the Middle East Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School. The program has also worked with other academic institutions such as the Global Leadership Center at INSEAD and New York University. Other international organizations include the Middle East Association of North America, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, Catalyst and the Center for Work-Life Policy.



Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi,  
Member of the UAE  
Federal National  
Council, attending  
the Negotiating for  
Leadership course at  
DSG.

## Gender and Public Policy Seminars

**Prospects of Liberal Arts Education in the UAE,** Mohamed Tabishat, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, United Arab Emirates University, November 2009

**An Investigation into Whether Emotional Labor and Other Work Strains have a Long Term Impact on the Physical and Mental Health of Women in the Service Profession,** Dr. Alia Serkal, Senior Director of Recruitment at Du, November 2009

**The Effect of the Economic Crisis on Gender Equality in the Arab World,**

Her Excellency Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau of Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme, June 2009

**Ways of Combating Domestic Violence in the UAE,**

Ohood Al Suwaidi, Marketing and Communications Director, Dubai Foundation for Women and Children, June 2009

**The Concept of Gender and the Distribution of Social Roles in the UAE Community,**

Suaad Al-Oreimi, Assistant Professor of Sociology, UAE University, May 2009

**Political Culture and Women's Empowerment in the Arab World,**

Maryam Sultan Lootah, Assistant Professor of Political Science, United Arab Emirates University, April 2009

**Social Entrepreneurship: Is it for the Middle East?,**

Nada Hashmi, Legatum-MIT Center, MIT Sloan School of Management, March 2009

**Making Muslims: Representation of Islam and Muslims in Wall Street Journal Commentaries,**

Suad Joseph, University of California, Davis, March 2009

**Gender and Health in India: Microfinance Products for Rural Women,**

Rema Hanna, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, January 2009

**Powerful Women: Can Exposure Reduce Bias?,**

Rohini Pande, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, January 2009

**The Body and Social Theory,**

Mona Al Bahr, Senior Executive Manager for Social Programmes, The Emirates Foundation, February 2010

**Hidden Treasure: Female Talent in Emerging Markets,**

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Founder and President of the Center for Work-Life Policy, January 2010

*Detailed information on seminars is available on the DSG Web site at [www.dsg.ae](http://www.dsg.ae).*

## Training and Teaching

The Gender and Public Policy Program provides regular lectures in a variety of core teaching areas for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program, and for Executive Education courses offered at DSG. It organizes a highly selective leadership development program entitled “Negotiating for Leadership,” which is attended by approximately 40 senior Arab women working in the private, public, and non-governmental sectors. The program is designed and taught in collaboration with Harvard University’s Women and Public Policy Program. It utilizes a unique experimental approach to teaching gender in negotiation and decision making, and incorporates the results of cutting-edge research on gender and negotiation in the Arab world.

The program is also committed to training and mentoring young students and researchers through assistantships in various research initiatives, and through its internship program. The internship program has trained and mentored 15 research assistants from different UAE universities—including the United Arab Emirates University, Zayed University, and the Higher Colleges of Technology—and continues to do so on a regular basis.



Members of parliament attending the report launch of “Women in Parliament and Politics in the UAE: A Study of the First FNC Elections” at DSG.



(Left to right) Mr. Soren Viemose, Executive Director, KALOVIG Center; Ms. Sara Laschever, Author; and Dr. Kathleen McGinn, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Development, Harvard Business School; and Dr. May Al-Dabbagh, Director of the Gender and Public Policy Program, on the DSG panel of the Second Arab Women's Leadership Forum.

*"The Gender and Public Policy Program at the Dubai School of Government has worked closely with the Dubai Women's Establishment, and was always keen on providing us with the required full support and knowledge. This was clearly seen during The Arab Women's Leadership Forum, and other research projects that focused on developing the skills of women and preparing them for the labor market in the UAE. This close partnership between both our establishments is a clear indication that knowledge can be shared and developed in the Arab world, and such cooperation can result in fruitful initiatives that aim to develop opportunities for sustainable development in this important part of the world. We would also like to mention that the professional team at the Dubai School of Government inspired and motivated us a great deal, and helped us move forward in terms of self development and looking forward to a bright future."*

Ms. Aisha Al Suwaidi  
Director-General, Dubai Women's Establishment



Attendees from the US, Egypt and the UAE at one of the Gender program's seminar series

## About the Dubai School of Government

The Dubai School of Government (DSG) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, DSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

Toward this goal, the Dubai School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in delivering its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world.

The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs, including:

- applied research in public policy and management;
- master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.





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### Dubai School of Government

Convention Tower, Level 13, P.O. Box 72229, Dubai, UAE

Tel: +971 4 329 3290 Fax: +971 4 329 3291, Email: [info@dsg.ac.ae](mailto:info@dsg.ac.ae), [www.dsg.ae](http://www.dsg.ae)

For more information contact: [genderpublicpolicy@dsg.ac.ae](mailto:genderpublicpolicy@dsg.ac.ae)