

Master's Medical Anthropology and Sociology

Please provide a short presentation of your organisation (key activities, affiliations, size of the organisation, etc.) relating to the area covered by the project (limit 2000 characters).

Al-Azhar University-Gaza (AUG) is a Palestinian, public, non-profit and independent higher education institution. It was established in 1991 in the Gaza City by a presidential decree issued and signed by the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to be a non-conventional lighthouse in the course of higher education in Palestine. AUG had a modest beginning with only two faculties; the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Education. However, numerous improvements were brought in 1992 including establishing four more faculties; the Faculty of Pharmacy, the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment, the Faculty of Science, and the Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences. Due to the continuous development of the university, the Faculty of Applied Medical Science was opened to meet the needs of the Palestinian community in the medical aspects. The success of the Applied Medical Faculty encouraged the university to open the Faculty of Medicine in 1999 as the first medical faculty in the Gaza Strip. The Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences at AUG is considered a pioneer, presenting five distinctive departments: Medical Laboratory, Physical Therapy, Diagnostic & Therapeutic Radiology, clinical nutrition and Nursing. The faculty offers unique education, research and clinical care programs which qualify students to present the highest medical technology and advanced clinical practice in a way that enables the students to meet the demands of current healthcare system, community responsiveness and professional growth. AUG always makes sure to be in the lead and to keep up with the rapidly developed sciences. Therefore, it has taken an important step by opening the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology in 2001 as the tenth faculty of the university. AUG aspires to help the Palestinian society as much as it can. Therefore, Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi Faculty for Dentistry was opened to provide the Palestinian with the opportunity to study dentistry at home.

Thousands of Palestinian students have joined AUG, pursuing studies in different academic fields, and acquiring the Palestinian values to help them take part in the construction of their own state. AUG has currently around 16,000 undergraduate students in twelve faculties (Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Science, Engineering and Information Technology, Applied Medical Sciences, Agriculture and Environment, Education, Economics and Administrative Sciences, Arts and Human Sciences, Law, and Sharia). Moreover, AUG comprises educational centers which meet the needs of the Palestinian community and help its youth majoring in diverse and fruitful fields of post-graduate knowledge. The University has also established postgraduate study programs towards a Master's degree in Pharmacy, Arts, Mediterranean Studies, Law, Education, Agriculture, Water Sciences and Environment, Statistics, Accounting, Business Administration, Economic, Political Sciences, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and IT Computing and Information System as well as a PhD's degree in Chemistry.

AUG aims to satisfy the needs of the Palestinian community with qualified personnel in diverse disciplines of knowledge, applied scientific research, and sustainable development. AUG focuses on integrated discipline that liaison the health and healthcare in a political, economic and cultural context. Such discipline will use social science theory and methods to critically analyze health issues in a globalizing world.

AUG strives to create knowledge, uniqueness, excellence, innovation, creativity and holistic approach through the academics and students; to be one of the pioneering universities nationally, regionally and internationally; to be a beacon of scientific research and development in the Palestinian society; and to be fully committed to comprehensive quality and continuous improvement.

Please describe also the role of your organization in the project (limit 1000 characters).

AUG aims to satisfy the needs of the Palestinian community with qualified personnel in diverse disciplines of knowledge, applied scientific research, and sustainable development. The anthropologists can play an important role at the intersection between patients and citizens, management, policymakers and medical professionals. AUG has a particular focus on developing and using cutting-edge methods to understand how social, behavioral, economic, political and environmental factors influence health. AUG will work with decision makers, practitioners and the public to identify interventions and policies that can have an effective and sustained impact on health and wellbeing, particularly among those most in need.

AUG aims to train the students to understand health, illness and the body from a social science perspective. During the program student will look at contemporary global and local health problems, as well as key topics in social science. It enables them to deepen their knowledge of health, anthropology and sociology, while at the same time acquiring a specialization in a health-related topic.

AUG will continue its on-going role in promoting the education, community health and quality of research in the region. AUG will be a partner with local and international universities. AUG will work to ensure the quality of the implementation of all phases of the project.

Aim: to establish Joint Master of Medical Anthropology and Sociology at three Palestinian Universities.

Specific objectives:

1. To improve research and innovation in social medicine through professional health management, social attitudes, health status and culture.
2. To assess and identify the top priorities of the socioeconomic determinants of the individual, family and community health in Palestine.
3. To enhance the intersection between medical & paramedical students, clients, managements, and policy makers.

4. To bring together the wealth of academic and professional expertise across the Health and Nutrition, Psychology, Criminology and Sociology, Sport and Physical Education subject areas.
5. To prepare students to work in socially, culturally and economically diverse populations based on needs of vulnerable groups.
6. To acquire students for teaching/training posts in social medicine Institutions.
7. To conduct high quality research that will have a real impact on health and wellbeing of the community
8. To bring behavioral changes and empower people through improving health and reducing the inequalities.

Activities

1. Establish need assessment, benchmarking

An assessment process will serve to define the current level of knowledge and practical skills in the field of Medical Anthropology and Sociology. Baseline indicators and benchmarking will be created and prepared to figure out the recent practice and compare it to the best EU practice. Identifying the current situations and gaps are very important pillars in executing the project interventions.

This need assessment tool will be administered to all partner universities and will gather information about the current and potential capacity of the university to deliver programs and activities that address Medical Anthropology and Sociology issues within local context.

2. Operational capacity: Skills and expertise of key staff involved in the project

Competent education workforce is central to achieving universal educational coverage. Quality education is the foundation for developing competent education staff who are equipped with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to deliver quality education. It is imperative that educational institutions are provided with EU support and guidance to develop competence-based curricula for our education programs. As a result of previous, educational sessions for different local education providers, education staff will go through training courses, which are considered as a good step of to understand health, illness and the body from a social science perspective, for the sake of acquiring much more advanced knowledge and experience.

3. Curricula development

With the increasing complexity of Medical Anthropology and Sociology, developing information literacy in students for lifelong learning is a vital element of students' education. Developing curricula involve content Structuring, content matrix, learning methods, student evaluation methods in Medical Anthropology and Sociology program and its applications.

The AUG University will develop, implement, and evaluate an integrated program of their curriculum. The curriculum strand includes a variety of instructional strategies woven through all semesters of the Medical Anthropology and Sociology program with the consultation of the EU staff members and national, international institutes and other partners of the consortium based on need assessment study. Workshops will assign responsible staff, consult partners, development of curricula, and revision of the developed curricula will be also held.

4. Mobility of staff and trainees due to boarder-gates

Based on the need assessment study carried out in the preparatory phase, the process starts by enhancing staff skills through local staff travel to the EU Universities, for short visit, in order to acquire advanced training, knowledge and experience in Medical Anthropology and Sociology programs. Therefore, the acquired experience would be exchanged with staff peers. Additionally, EU staff members visit Medical Anthropology and Sociology departments at AUG university and other partners' in Gaza.

Students are supervised by faculty with a range of theoretical expertise and research projects conducted in many areas. There are also opportunities to link the thesis to externally international EU faculty research projects.

5. Social health corner/unit development (enabling environment)

It will design to support and enable appropriate environment for master program and research conduction by developing and purchasing equipment and facilities for the practical courses at the partners' universities to boost the courses by practical aspects.