

LB TAMAM Project: Home-Grown School Reform in the Arab Region

What TAMAM Is and Where It Comes From

- **TAMAM** is a research-and-development initiative based at the **American University of Beirut (AUB)**, launched in 2007. Its name comes from an Arabic phrase meaning **school-based improvement**.
 - It emerged as a response to common problems in Arab education systems: highly bureaucratic, top-down reforms, heavy reliance on imported projects, and teachers treated as passive implementers.
 - Under the leadership of **Dr. Rima Karami Akkary**, TAMAM has grown into a long-term regional project that works with schools across at least eight Arab countries (including Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Sudan, and Palestine), focusing on **building leadership capacity for sustainable, school-based reform**.
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The Core Idea: Theory of Change

TAMAM views reform as a **complex, non-linear process** that happens through the interaction of three elements: **Practice, Research, and Policy**.

- **Schools and educators are the starting point:** Reform is school-based and bottom-up, with teachers, leaders, students, and families seen as **agentic actors**, not passive recipients.
 - **Action research** is the main methodology: teams identify a problem, review research, co-design an initiative, implement, collect data, reflect, and refine.
 - **Policy gains legitimacy by being informed by practice;** TAMAM pushes for coherence between bottom-up innovation in schools and top-down enabling policies.
 - The ultimate goal is a **self-renewing school** that continually learns, adapts, and improves.
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Capacity-Building Design and Impact

Capacity Building Program

- The program is built around a set of **leadership competencies** (\$\text{11 “pillars”}\$) and a **job-embedded learning journey**, where teams work on a **real improvement initiative** in their school (not a theoretical exercise).
- This design has been implemented in dozens of schools in nine Arab countries, building the leadership capacity of more than **\$\text{1,300 practitioners}\$** and impacting over **\$\text{35,000 students}\$**.

Jordan Case Study Findings

- A private school team redesigned their **student behaviour and discipline system** using the TAMAM process.
- **Findings on Teachers:** The lead team showed **measurable growth in all TAMAM competencies**, practiced **participative leadership**, systematically used **data-based decision making**, and reported higher **self-efficacy, agency, and ownership** of school improvement.
- **Findings on Students:** Increased **self-confidence** and student leadership, stronger **sense of belonging**, and a more **positive, cohesive school culture**.
- **Key Message:** When teacher teams are empowered and supported over time, their learning “**cascades**” into improved climate and student outcomes.

Building Teacher Leadership

TAMAM zooms in on **teacher leadership**—defining teacher leaders as collaborators, providers of professional learning to peers, policy advocates, and **systems thinkers**.

Design Elements:

- **Job-embedded learning:** Teachers learn in their own context, facing real obstacles.
- **Stable, multi-disciplinary teams:** Teams include teachers from different subjects and roles, ensuring **stability over time** to build **trust** and vulnerability.
- **Action research as a backbone:** Gives teachers a **structured process** to diagnose needs, plan interventions, collect and interpret data, and strengthen teachers as **data-informed advocates**.
- **Attention to school conditions:** TAMAM explicitly works with schools on **time allocation** for teams to meet, structures for collaboration, and leadership practices that support teacher initiative.

Instructional Supervision and Coaching

- **Coaching Model:** TAMAM's coaching model is **human-centred, context-sensitive, and multi-dimensional**, adapted specifically to Arab school contexts.
 - **Phases: Preparation** (diagnose needs, map profiles, build customized plan), **Coaching** (technical workshops + adaptive practices like mediating conflicts and nurturing ownership), and **Withdrawal/Handover** (gradual reduction of coach involvement to ensure **sustainability**).
- **Instructional Supervision:** This is seen not as a top-down inspector role, but as a **function distributed across lead teachers and heads of department**.
 - **Role:** They translate improvement strategies into concrete classroom practices, build ownership through collaboration, and document effective practices to build **institutional memory**.
 - **Insight: Lasting change is cultural**, not merely technical, and instructional supervisors are crucial to making new practices part of the school culture.

Overall Reach, Impact, and Recognition

- Over almost $\text{\$18 years}$, TAMAM has worked with dozens of schools across the Arab region and influenced **tens of thousands of students**.
- It has produced **grounded designs** (frameworks and tools) on leadership development, coaching, student leadership, network design, and policy design.
- **International recognition:** TAMAM was awarded the **UNESCO-Hamdan Prize for Teacher Development ($\text{\$2021–2022}$)**, one of UNESCO's flagship prizes.
- The segment highlights their pride in being a **home-grown Arab model of school reform** that other regions can learn from.

Key Entities and URLs

Core Project & Institutions

- **TAMAM Project (School-Based Improvement Initiative) Website:**
<https://www.tamamproject.org>

- **American University of Beirut (AUB) Website:** <https://www.aub.edu.lb>
- **UNESCO-Hamdan Prize for Teacher Development Info page:**
<https://www.unesco.org/en/prizes/teacher-development>
- **Arab Thought Foundation – TAMAM Program Page URL (program description):**
<https://arabthought.org/tamam>

Social & Media Channels

- **TAMAM on Facebook URL:** <https://www.facebook.com/tamamproject/>
- **TAMAM on X (Twitter) – @TamamProject URL (inferred from handle listed on Facebook):** <https://twitter.com/TamamProject>