

 THE AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

**100** YEARS | SCHOOL OF  
**BUSINESS**

# Behavioral Economic Solutions for Egypt 2019

## Conference



**Tuesday, December 3, 2019**



## Agenda

- 9:30-10:00 **Registration, networking and coffee break** (Shafik Gabr Hall)
- 10:00-10:15 **Welcome address**  
*Dr. Sherif Kamel*  
*Dean, AUC School of Business*
- 10:15-10:30 **Opening remarks**  
*Dr. Abla Abdel Latif*  
*Director, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies*
- 10:30-12:30 **Panel Discussion on Behavioral Applications in Policy and Business**  
*Moderator: Dr. Samer Atallah, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, AUC School of Business*
- Panelists:**
- Dr. Shabnam Mousavi, President of the Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics (SABE), Germany - **How “smart” a policy needs to be?***
- Dr. Fadi Makki, Founder and Head, Nudge Lebanon - **Key success factors for setting up nudge units in the Arab region***
- Dr. Chaning Jang, CSO and Vice President, the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Kenya - **Using behavioral decision-making labs in developing countries***
- Dr. Mohamed El-Komi, Economics Professor and Director of BEDMLab at AUC - **Getting to know behavioral economics and how it is applied on the ground***
- 12:30-13:30 **Launching the BEDMLab (Behavioral and Economic Decision-Making Lab)**
- 13:30-14:30 **Lunch and networking** (Moataz Al-Alfi Hall)
- 14:30-15:30 Roundtable discussion on: **How do we apply behavioral sciences? A method for efficient behavioral design**  
*Josh Martin, Managing Director, ideas42, USA*
- 15:30-16:00 **Closing remarks**  
*Dr. Abla Abdel Latif*  
*Director, The Egyptian Center for Economic Studies*

## Conference Description

The purpose of this specialized conference is to bring together a group of high-profile international experts in behavioral sciences to closely interact with interested stakeholders in Egypt, in order to explore the applications and policy solutions that are provided by behavioral economics. Behavioral economics is the integration of economics and other related disciplines including psychology, neuroscience and behavioral sciences. It provides soft, cost-efficient and easy-to-adopt solutions for policymakers. Governments and businesses alike have been benefiting from the many applications that are provided by behavioral economics. Hence, many countries have created Behavioral Insights Units to provide their institutions with tailor-designed and evidence-based behavioral solutions.

### **Moderated by:**

#### **Samer Atallah, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research and Associate Professor of Economics, AUC School of Business**



**Samer Atallah** was a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law at Stanford University in 2016 and a Visiting Scholar at the University of Chicago Center in Paris during the winter of 2014.

He currently serves at the University Budget Review Committee. He served as the Co-Chair of the Council of School of Business and the School Senator at the University Senate. He also served as the Chair of Academic Affairs Committee of the Department of Economics. He has been involved in a wide range of impactful service activity inside and outside AUC. He has received two appreciation awards by the School of Business in 2015 and 2017.

His research interests are in political economy and development economics. His research includes game theory applications of the political economy of democratization and quantitative analysis of election results.

He earned his PhD from McGill University. He also holds a MA in Economics from McGill University, a MSc. in Engineering from University of California at Berkeley and a BSc in Mechanical Engineering from American University in Cairo.

## How “Smart” a Policy Needs to be?

**Dr. Shabnam Mousavi, President of the Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics (SABE), Germany**



**Shabnam Mousavi** is the president of the Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics and a fellow of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, who has held faculty positions at the Johns Hopkins, Georgia State and Penn State universities. She serves as the editor-in-chief for *Mind and Society*, and board member of Behavioral Economics for Public Policy, Behavioral and Experimental Economics, Economics, the Bank of Italy BEFAIRLY initiative, and Technical University of Munich’s Ethics Labs. Her work has been awarded by the University of Chicago’s Wisdom Project, Think Forward Initiative of the ING Bank, and Volkswagen Foundation’s “Original --isn’t it?”. She is co-author/editor of *Handbook of Behavioral Economics* (2017), *Behavioral Finance Revolution* (2018), *A Fast and Frugal Finance* (2019), and is writing her forthcoming book on the implications of the cognitive sciences for policymaking and the study of individual behavior and organizations.

**Presentation Description:** Drawing on the Beauty Contest put forward by John Maynard Keynes and popularized by Richard Thaler, this interactive session builds towards an assessment of the level of reasoning that is theoretically assumed to be required for best strategies versus what experimental studies and actual human behavior has established. Viewing policies as strategies with crucial consequences, this exercise highlights one element of effective policymaking.

## Key success factors for setting up nudge units in the Arab region

### Dr. Fadi Makki, Founder and Head, Nudge Lebanon



Fadi Makki is the founder and president of Nudge Lebanon and the Consumer-Citizen Lab and heads B4Development. He has more than 23 years of experience in public sector reform, socio-economic development, trade policy, behavioral economics and social entrepreneurship. He is a pioneer in the application of behavioural insights and nudge concepts to public policy in the region, where he led a large number of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in areas of healthy life style, compliance and rule of law, inclusion, sustainability, education, and workers' welfare.

He served as Undersecretary/ Director-General of the Lebanese Ministry of Economy and Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister where he led multiple national economic reform programs and initiatives including Lebanon's accession process to the WTO. He worked for Booz & Company Middle East and Cisco. He was member of the World Economic Forum Future Council for Behavioral Sciences between 2016 and 2018. He obtained his PhD from Cambridge University, Master degrees from LSE and Hull University, BAs from AUB and the Lebanese University.

**Presentation Description:** Dr. Makki will draw lessons learned and highlight key success factors from recent regional trends of establishing Nudge Units in public and private sectors as well as NGOs.

## Using behavioral decision-making labs in developing countries

### Dr. Chaning Jang, CSO and Vice President, the Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Kenya



Chaning Jang is the Chief Strategy Officer, at the Busara Center for Behavioural Economics. As a Chief Strategy Officer, Chaning is responsible for the effective and efficient achievement of the strategic, operational and financial management goals and objectives of the company under the guidance from the Board of Directors. Chaning also oversees our research arm and serves as our VP, Research.

Chaning has been with Busara since 2013. During that time, he has served as VP Research and Chief Strategy Officer; where he oversees both Busara's internal and external strategy, operations in our headquarters in Kenya and our international offices in Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia & India, and provides supervision and mentorship to a team of Engagement, Technical & Support Directors across the organization. Prior to his time at

Busara, Chaning completed a PhD in Economics with specialization in behavioral economics, development, experimental economics, at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. After his PhD, Chaning was a postdoctoral research associate at Princeton University in the Psychology department and Woodrow Wilson School for Public Affairs. He was born in the United States and has lived in Kenya since 2013.

**Presentation Description:** Busara Center for Behavioural Economics has set up labs in Kenya, India, Fiji and other East African countries over the past five years. In this session, we will share our experiences running different types of labs (fixed labs, lab in the field, mobile labs) across developing countries. Busara will share their learnings and challenges working in these regions and with low-income populations. Learnings range from interacting with academics and industry clients from WEIRD settings, to contextualizing recruitment processes, protocols and reimbursement methods to fit local contexts.

## Getting to know behavioral economics and how it is applied on the ground

### Dr. Mohamed El-Komi, Economics Professor and Director of BEDMLab at AUC



Mohamed El-Komi is Associate Professor of Economics at the American University in Cairo. He worked as an Assistant Professor of Finance and Economics at Durham University, UK, Adjunct Professor of Economics at the University of Texas-Dallas and visiting scholar at James Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. His main areas of research are behavioral/experimental economics and Islamic finance. He was the Deputy Director of the Center for Behavioral Economics and Finance at Durham University. He is now the Director and founder of the second experimental economic lab in the region, the Behavioral and Economic Decision-Making Lab (BEDMLab). Mohamed has MA from Warwick University, MSc and Ph.D. from the University of Texas-Dallas. Mohamed published the first paper applying experimental economics to Islamic finance, JEBO 2012. He organized several conferences on Islamic finance and has been the initiator and guest editor of JEBO's special issues on Islamic finance. He is currently Egypt's representative for SABE (Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics and PI for J-PAL, MIT in Egypt. He also published on poverty and microfinance.

**Presentation Description:** Introducing behavioral economics and how it is relating psychology to economics, while giving a brief overview on its possible applications for public-policy, capacity building and changing human behavior for better economic outcomes. It will also describe the newly established Behavioral and Economic Decision-Making Lab and its potential uses for the public, private and non-for-profit sectors.

Roundtable discussion:

## How do we apply behavioral sciences? A method for efficient behavioral design

### Josh Martin, Managing Director, ideas42, USA



Josh Martin is a Managing Director at ideas42 where he works primarily to facilitate the uptake of behavioral innovation in developing country governments. Prior to joining ideas42, Josh was a policy advisor in Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Planning and Development, with various prior roles at Princeton University, the World Bank, the National Democratic Institute, and others. His primary domains of interest include cash transfer programs, governance, education, conflict dynamics, and religion. Josh has a masters from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and speaks fluent Arabic and French.

**Presentation Description:** This session will focus on ideas42's framework for identifying behavioral problems, diagnosing contextual influences, designing interventions and testing these using examples from case studies in applied behavioral design.