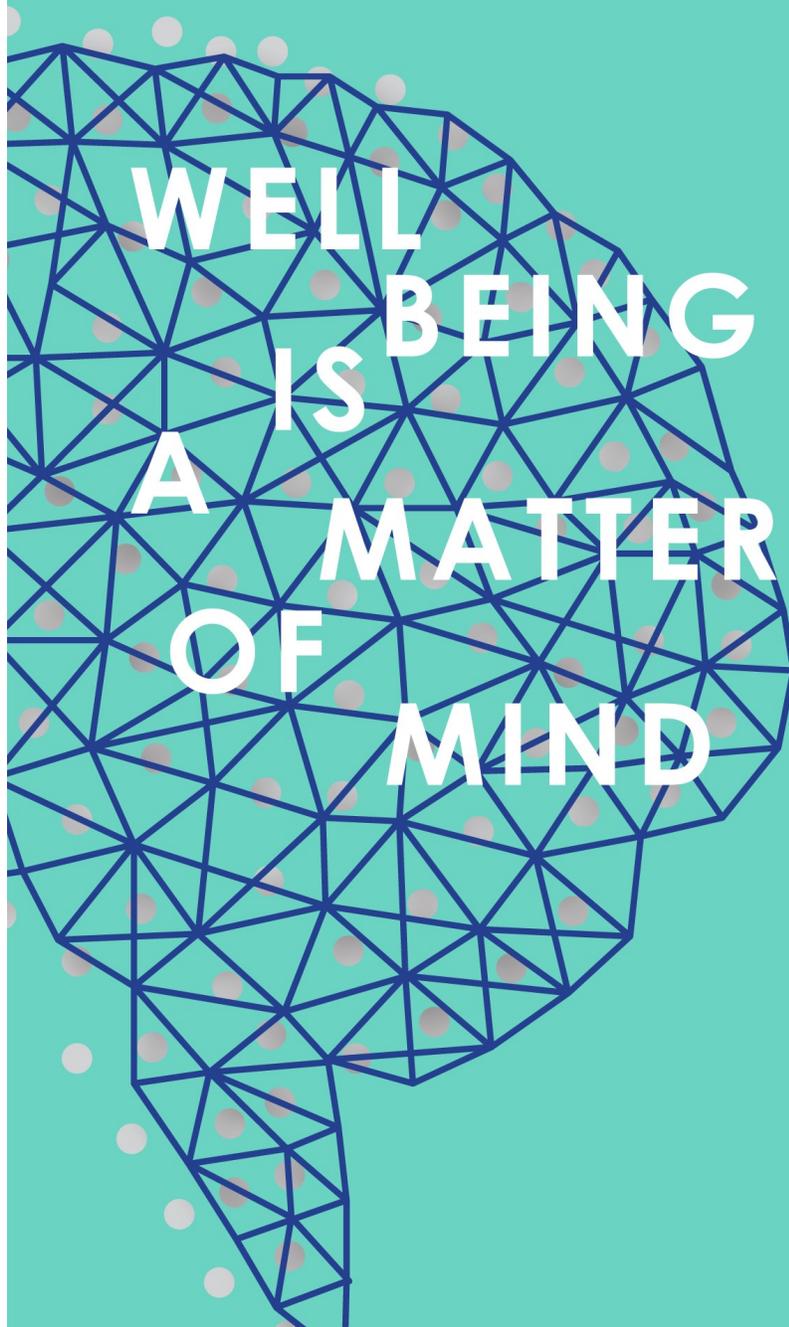


# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015



**IDRAAC'S 2015  
Newsletter**

## 2015: A Busy Year for IDRAAC

Dear Friends,

2015 has been a very busy year for IDRAAC and here is a preview of some of our activities this year.

We had a fruitful year in research, awareness, projects and activities and you can find examples in this newsletter.

This would not have been possible without the support of our partners, sponsors and granting agencies who believe in the importance of mental health for the individual and the community at large.

We thank you all for your support of our mission and hope that you will enjoy going through this newsletter!

The IDRAAC team.



## I- AWARENESS ACTIVITIES IN 2015

### COLLABORATION WITH LEBANESE UNIVERSITIES

IDRAAC has collaborated with different Lebanese Universities in order to work on common projects related to awareness and knowledge-sharing.

In the year 2015, IDRAAC collaborated with around 20 university students who volunteered to help in IDRAAC's project, research activities, and community activities and offered their support in designing youth-friendly awareness materials.

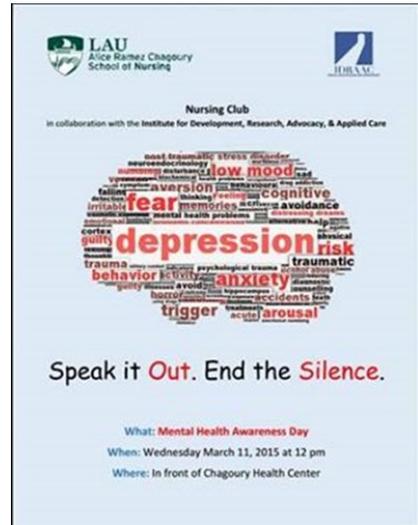


### COLLABORATION WITH LAU'S SCHOOL OF NURSING FOR A MENTAL HEALTH DAY

IDRAAC, in collaboration with the Lebanese American University (LAU)'s School of Nursing have organized a mental health awareness day on Wednesday March 11, 2015 under the title "Speak it Out. End the Silence".

Interested students received 3 short assessment tools: one for depression, one for anxiety, and one for substance abuse, in addition to a "How to manage stress during college" handout. There were also several knowledge games and quizzes about mental health as well as a large board where students were able to write

their impressions and speak out about mental health.



### COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF BALAMAND'S MEDICAL STUDENTS

IDRAAC is collaborating with the University of Balamand's medical students who are part of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Peace (SCORP) and the International Federation of Medical Students' Association to implement the Children's Psychological Abuse Awareness Campaign (CPAAC).

This campaign aims at sharing the concepts of psychological abuse and emotional neglect among Lebanese parents in an effort to educate them about this sensitive issue and to teach them how to avoid it when dealing with their children. A series of awareness lectures are planned for the academic year 2015-2016.



## OXFORD UNIVERSITY'S INITIATIVE: "IT GETS BRIGHTER" IN COLLABORATION WITH IDRAAC

The "It Gets Brighter" campaign is a student-led initiative by Oxford University which invites people from around the world to end the silence about mental health by collecting short videos of hope from individuals that have experienced a mental health difficulty, and those who support them. The campaign seeks to combat the belief that mental illness should not be spoken about and cannot be managed.

As IDRAAC has been the first organization to work on mental health research, awareness, and treatment in Lebanon and the Middle East, we decided to share our experience on an international level in support of the "It Gets Brighter" campaign.

You can check **IDRAAC's video** and many others on [www.itgetsbrighter.org](http://www.itgetsbrighter.org)

You can also share your own video or someone else's in an effort to encourage mental health awareness on an international level!



## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS SESSIONS

IDRAAC has partnered with several partners in order to raise awareness on mental health issues in the community.

Each year, IDRAAC members present awareness sessions on various subjects such as mental health in Lebanon, child mental health, adolescent mental health, adult mental health, elderly mental health, drug addiction, smoking, trauma, among others.

IDRAAC members are very active in the media with several educational articles being published on a monthly basis in newspapers and magazines and several TV and Radio appearances where they share their knowledge with the general public.



## MEETING ON EVIDENCE BASED TREATMENTS FOR TRAUMA AND WAR SURVIVORS IN LEBANON

IDRAAC has collaborated with the Applied Mental Health Research Group at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the United States, and RESTART Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Violence, under the auspices of the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (and in collaboration with the National Mental Health Program and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Taskforce) to organize a workshop in Beirut. Knowledge about evidence-based interventions and building evidence from interventions was shared with mental health and decision making organizations that are helping children and adults affected by trauma and wars in Lebanon. The meeting took place on February 3-4, 2015 at the Holiday Inn Hotel-Dunes, Verdun with the financial support of USAID Victims of Torture Fund, RESTART and IDRAAC. The workshop was attended by experts from the Johns Hopkins University, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, Restart and IDRAAC as well as 35 members from different local and international organizations who shared their experiences in providing mental health and psychosocial support programs and interventions for victims of trauma and refugees. This is of importance in view of the recent influx of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The meeting informed organizations working in Lebanon on current knowledge and effective and feasible mental health and psychosocial interventions for victims of displacement and violence. The workshop also highlighted the importance of sharing results of research to those who need them, since many organizations are not always aware of the effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of different interventions to their respective communities. Challenges to providing mental health and psychosocial support services in Lebanon were also discussed along with monitoring and evaluation practices.



### Atelier de travail « Les traitements fondés sur les preuves pour les victimes de traumatismes et de guerres »



Une vue d'ensemble des participants à l'atelier de travail.

## MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING: PRACTICES FROM THE HEART BY DR. ANTOINE DOUAIHY

IDRAAC organized a conference entitled: Motivational Interviewing: Practices from the Heart by Dr. Antoine Douaihy on April 23, 2015 at 6PM at Batlouni Amphitheatre, St Georges Hospital University Medical Center in Achrafieh. Dr. Douaihy is a world renowned addiction psychiatrist and researcher. He is the director of addiction psychiatry at Pittsburgh University, USA. He is the author of several scientific articles and books. Dr. Douaihy elaborated about the use of Motivational Interviewing in clinical practice which is "a collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change." The lecture was followed by a signing of his latest book: "Motivational Interviewing: A Guide for Medical Trainees". The lecture was open to anyone interested in addiction and was attended by more than 50 attendees.



## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY: VULNERABILITY, DIFFERENTIAL SUSCEPTIBILITY, OR VANTAGE SENSITIVITY? BY DR. MICHAEL PLUSS

IDRAAC organized an educational conference by Dr. Michael Pluess on gene/ environment interplay on May 20, 2015 at the Batlouni Amphitheatre, St Georges Hospital University Medical Center in Achrafieh . Dr. Pluess, Associate Professor of developmental psychology at the Department of Biological and Experimental Psychology at the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Queen Mary University of London, presented the concept of "sensitivity" in mental health. Sensitivity, an interplay between genes and environment (positive as well as negative), is being increasingly researched as an essential variable to be looked at not only in the emergence of mental disorders (or resilience) but equally when analyzing the response to various therapies. Dr. Pluess reviewed his research and that of others. The conference was attended by psychologists, psychiatrists, medical students and healthcare professionals interested to know more about the subject.



## HANDBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION

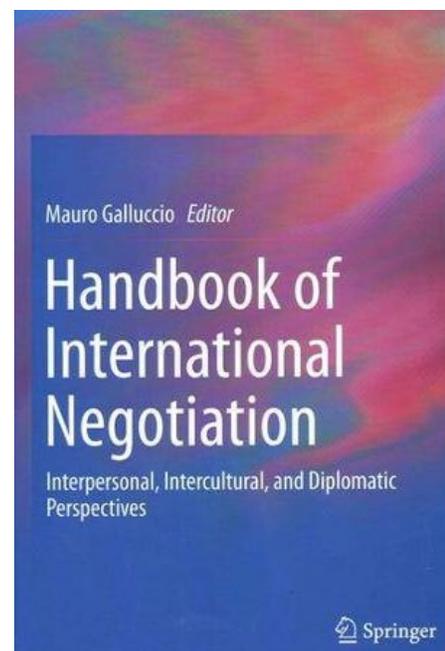
Dr. Aimee Nasser Karam, the chief psychologist at IDRAAC, participated in the development of the Handbook of International Negotiation. 42 leading scholars and experts from many parts of the World have participated to the writing of this cross- disciplinary book. Among them, a chapter written by Dr. Aimee Karam, chief psychologist at IDRAAC, emphasizing how actions of the civil society, vision, culture and goals are described as a component of resistance, resilience and peace building lever; the chapter title is: "Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Inspiring Values in the Planning and Management of Lebanon National Conflicts Resolution: A brief Essay."

The whole book offers leading-edge concepts and scientifically based strategies for fostering non violent alternatives to violent conflicts in a World experiencing an unprecedented destructive potential as never before.

Social cohesion can only be strengthened through the cognitive and emotional inclusion of citizens in the reconstruction dynamics in order to achieve a sense of ownership of the peace agreement.

You can find the book at:

[www.springer.com/psychology](http://www.springer.com/psychology)



## II- FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES IN 2015

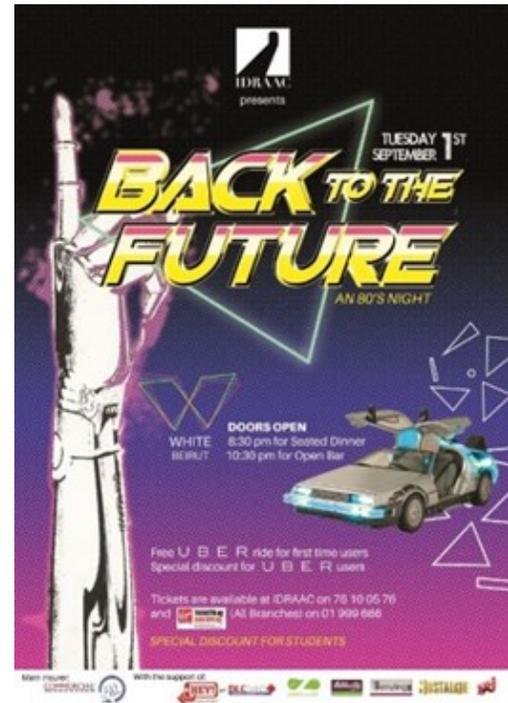
### BACK TO THE FUTURE

“Back to The Future”, took place on September 1, 2015 at WHITE Beirut. The event was themed around the 80s and was filled with live performances by musicians and singers who let the audience relive the most famous 80s hits.

More than 500 attendees enjoyed their time during the event and won several valuable prizes from the raffle draw.

You can check the pictures on the following link:

[http://beiruting.com/IDRAAC Back to the Future /12917](http://beiruting.com/IDRAAC%20Back%20to%20the%20Future%20/12917) & on our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/IDRAAC](http://www.facebook.com/IDRAAC)

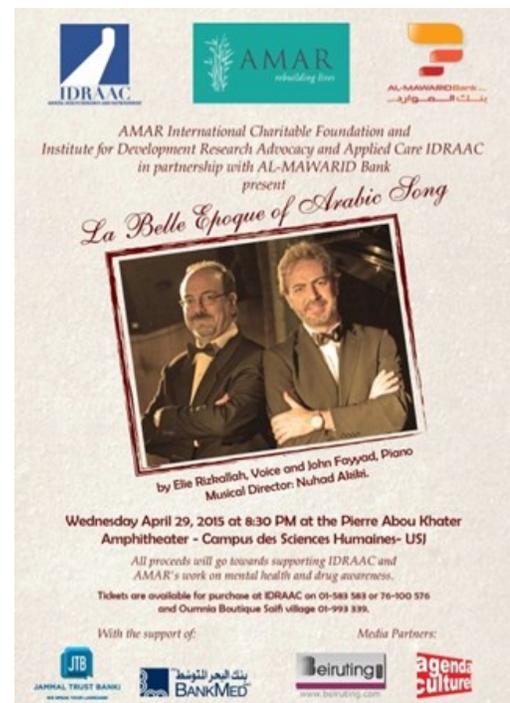


### LA BELLE EPOQUE OF ARABIC SONG

This concert was done in partnership with AMAR International Charitable Foundation did a fundraising event entitled “La Belle Epoque of Arabic Song” featuring Elie Rizkallah (voice) and John Fayyad (piano) with an ensemble of musicians directed by Nuhad Akiki on Wednesday April 29, 2015 at the Pierre Aboukhatier Amphitheater- Campus des Sciences Humaines- USJ.

The concert included songs and music by Mohammed Abdel Wahab, Abdel Halim Hafez, Najat, Fayrouz, Sabah and Zaki Nassif and was attended by around 500 persons of all ages.

All proceeds went towards supporting IDRAAC and AMAR’s work on mental health and drug awareness.



### III- COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN 2015

## ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE TOTAL ASSYRIAN COMMUNITY IN LEBANON

This project is being implemented by IDRAAC with the support of the French Embassy in Lebanon from 2015 till 2017.

It aims at empowering the Assyrian Hosting and Refugee community in Lebanon through providing mental health and psychosocial support to the entire Assyrian community via capacity building of Assyrian volunteers from within the community, and through providing medical and mental health support to the elderly.

The project will address the needs of the total refugee and the hosting Assyrian communities in Lebanon.

Most importantly, it will also build the capacity of local community to address the needs of future refugees.

The interventions will target the Assyrian refugees and the Lebanese Assyrian hosting communities.

It will help in upgrading the knowledge of volunteers from the Assyrian Church to detect mental health problems and of several volunteers from the Assyrian Church to deliver parenting strategies for Assyrian mothers and teachers from the Saint Georges Assyrian school to build resilience strategies for Assyrian students.

In addition, 600 Assyrian elderly individuals will be assessed for their physical and mental health conditions.

This project started in November 2015.



*Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité*

**RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE**

This project is funded by the French Embassy in Lebanon.

## THE ELDERLY EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

IDRAAC has started a project in collaboration with the Municipality of Jbail-Byblos and funded by the European Union throughout 2015 and 2016.

The overall objective of this project is to reintegrate the elderly into the community at large.

As IDRAAC's research has found a strong correlation between lifetime mental disorders and social disability as social disability can increase the lifetime risk of having a mental disorder by 6.4 times which emphasizes the importance of social interventions (ie. support groups, volunteer/work/networking opportunities etc.) when targeting the mental health of the elderly. Lebanon, and many other Arab countries, lack such community interventions specific to the older age group and this is why IDRAAC has initiated the Elderly Empowerment Project.

The project consists of two components:

1- the first component aims to create opportunities for the elderly living in Byblos to be active members of the society by volunteering or holding new jobs. A data base of volunteer and work opportunities is being created by screening all businesses registered in Byblos.

2- the second component aims to increase public awareness about the social rights and the needs of the elderly.

We are very excited about this project.

If you like to help, please do not hesitate to contact us.



This project is funded by the European Union.



This project is implemented by the Municipality of Byblos Jbail.



This project is implemented in partnership with IDRAAC.

## IV- FREE PSYCHIATRIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

IDRAAC members offer free state of the art treatment and follow up to needy patients in the community.

Every week patients are treated at IDRAAC's sister organization (MIND clinics) offices.

In 2015, IDRAAC's members offered more than

# 1800 sessions for free!



## V-RESEARCH WORK IN 2015

IDRAAC members are very active in research in various areas and aspects of mental health.

IDRAAC has partnered with Harvard University and the World Health Organization-WHO (Geneva) for the first national study in the Arab world on mental health. (The Lebanese Evaluation of the Burden of Ailments and Needs Of the Nation (L.E.B.A.N.O.N.) study).

IDRAAC has published more than 160 articles so far in peer-reviewed international journals.

IDRAAC's members have been conducting research since 1982 and have been involved in many national and international studies, targeting different segments of the population and assessing a variety of mental health conditions .

## SUMMARY OF IDRAAC'S CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

(research conducted before 2014 is available on our website):

· Assessing the prevalence of childhood adversities and childhood traumatic events, including war, in the Lebanese population, and studying their effect on the long-term mental health

· Investigating the prevalence and correlates of disorders among the elderly

· Investigating the burden of traumatic events in the Lebanese population in terms of PTSD and its duration

· Studying the association between temperaments and smoking habits

· Investigating the results of the EU Resilience project launched by IDRAAC. The main objective of the resilience project was to build resilience among school children in response to daily stressors

· Investigating the results of a multi-faceted project: The SYRIL (Syrians in Lebanon) project, launched by IDRAAC. The main objectives of this project is to increase awareness about gender based violence and mental health problems among Syrian refugee women and youth as well as teaching mothers how to develop parenting strategies with the goal of decreasing violence and abuse, and to build resilience among public school children in response to daily stressors and war

· Genetics: studying genetic moderations of interventions related to mental health wellbeing of Syrian and Lebanese children. This will be studied by measuring pre-post changes in psychological variables and will allow us to identify specific gene variants in children who are more/less responsive to intervention

· Studying the association between temperament and war exposure on mental disorder outcomes

· Studying the effect of mental disorders such as bipolar disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, major depression, panic disorder, social phobia, schizophrenia, substance abuse, irritability, cyclothymia, and ADHD on several outcomes such as education, profession, relation to children and spouse, social network, work productivity

· Assessing the pattern of treatment in Lebanon: type of treatment, human resources, pharmacologic medications, utilization of services, etc.

· A prospective study on factors (including temperament) that predict clinical outcomes in pharmacotherapy, cognitive therapy, or in combination

· Validating scales that detect dementia, depression and anxiety among the elderly

· Studying the stability of temperaments in a clinical setting

· Identifying the problems inherent in diagnosing Bipolar Disorder across the world among 47,552 subjects

· Assessing ways to improve the detection of Bipolarity in the Lebanese HCL, temperaments

· Conducting reviews about: the prevalence of childhood adversities among Arab adolescents, the outcome of war traumata in the Arab world in comparison with the world, and the prevalence/outcome of childhood adversities in the Arab world



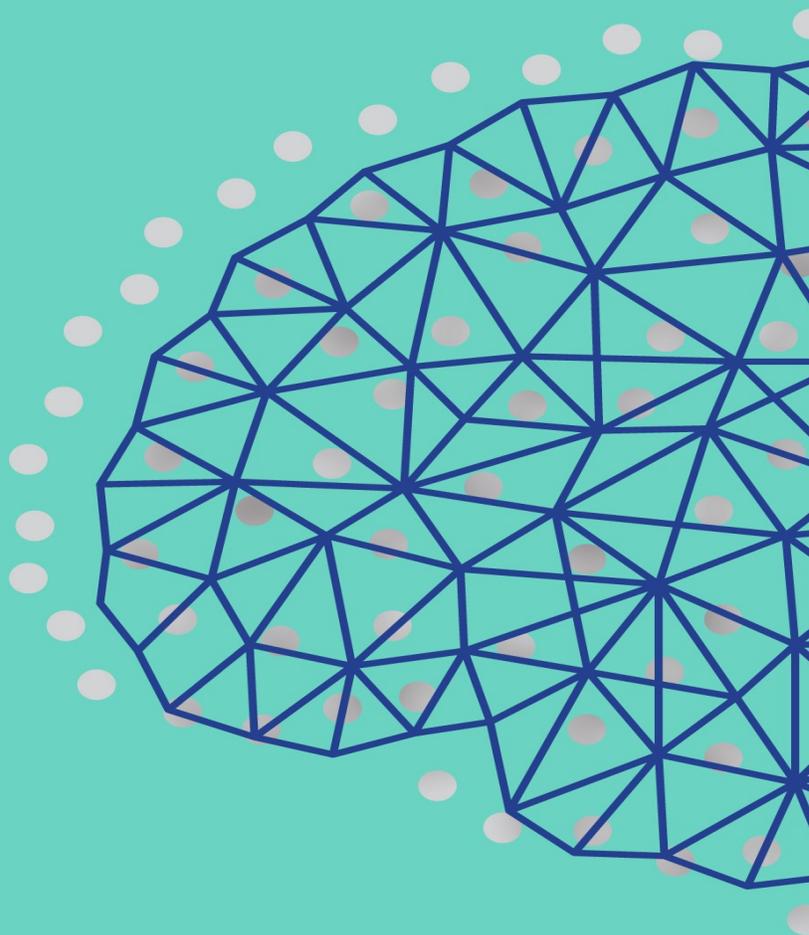
## **LOOKING FORWARD FOR 2016 WITH SEVERAL PROJECTS.**

IDRAAC relies solely on your support: donations, grants and fundraising activities.

If you would like to support us, and finance our activities, please do not hesitate to contact us.

You can make your donation by:

- Cash
- Check
- Online on [www.idraac.org](http://www.idraac.org)



 +961-1-583583  
 [www.idraac.org](http://www.idraac.org)  
 [idraac@idraac.org](mailto:idraac@idraac.org)  
 IDRAAC\_NGO  
   IDRAAC

Reg. No. 63/AD/1997  
P.O.Box: 166227  
Beirut, Achrafieh 1100  
2110 Lebanon