

A Word from the MEPI-Tomorrow's Leaders Executive Director

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A Word from the MEPI-Tomorrow's Leaders Executive Director

Dina Abdul Rahman

Executive Director, MEPI-Tomorrow's Leaders Programs at the Lebanese American University

I have been working on MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders-funded programs since 2015. By far, the Tomorrow's Leaders Gender Scholars (TLS) program has been one of the most powerful and impactful to date.

Since 2020, LAU enrolled almost 400 TLS scholars, all of whom have successfully completed the one-year program requirement. Our TLS alumni not only completed two gender courses as part of their bachelor's degree requirements, but they also attended a series of seminars and workshops on gender issues and produced policy papers to be considered for publication; all of this while being active ambassadors to raise awareness on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion within their scholarly disciplines and communities. Wow!

Today, we at LAU are proud to say that we are graduating a new generation of change-makers: interdisciplinary leaders who are empowered and well-equipped to make the changes needed for a better tomorrow. It is the new generation of what I would call Inclusive Leaders!

This effort would not have been possible without the continuous support and trust of our partners at the United States Department of State and the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), who never lost the faith in the youth of the region. Also, the precious support of many valuable LAU departments, staff, and organizations was essential to the success of the program, including LAU's School of Arts and Sciences and its esteemed faculty and Writing Center, the Arab Institute for Women and the staff of Al-Raida, and LAU's SDEM unit led by Vice President

Elise Salem. Lastly, it goes without saying that we all owe a major debt of gratitude to the TLS administrative team. A message of gratitude goes out to our amazing and fearless team, led by Dr. Lina Kreidie, Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, and Ms. Tania Bou Arbid. Thank you for going above and beyond the call of duty for our amazing TLS students.

This publication is the culmination of the best work of the 2021–2022 cohort of TLS students. We are very proud to see their hard work come to life through this issue of Al-Raida. Congratulations to all.