

## 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 more than 500 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!

In light of the global pushback against gender rights, 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 publication is the culmination of the best work of the 2022–2023 cohort of TLS students and 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 continue to believe in the transformative power of the youth of the region.

Also, the indispensable 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-Ouais, and Ms. Tania Bou Arbid. Thank you for going above and beyond the call of duty for our amazing TLS students.

We are very proud to see their hard work come to life through this issue of Al-Raida. Congratulations to all!

## Lina Kreidie

MEPI-TLS Academic Director

You are published!!  
You are today's and tomorrow's change makers.

Our dear third cohort of Tomorrows' Leaders for gender studies. At a time of political, economic, and social instabilities, your hard work continues to withhold the backlash, and to stand strong towards promoting diversity, inclusivity and respect to all people irrespective of their racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and gender background. We are so proud of you and your passion to promote human rights.

Accomplishments and progress require the vast support of open-minded and courageous people and institutions. You: our Tomorrow's Leaders students have exactly that. Thanks to the Middle East Partnership Initiative at the United States Department of State for providing our students and our institution with the financial and ideological support to pursue the Lebanese American University's (LAU) commitment to human rights and other liberal values. Thank you to the MEPI-TLS team, both in Lebanon and abroad, for your remarkable support for and implementation of this program. Without your dedication, our students would not have the tools that they need to pursue a bright and gender equitable future for us all.

Finally, to our students: Remember, prosperity happens only once social justice has been achieved. Fly high, stay connected, and keep us posted as you move forward beyond the borders of our LAU campus.

We salute your work.