

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB and USAID Celebrate** **the Graduation of 60 USP Scholars**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the American University of Beirut (AUB) celebrated the graduation of 60 scholars from Lebanese public schools who successfully completed the University Scholarship Program (USP). The graduation ceremony took place at AUB's Charles Hostler Auditorium and was attended by USAID Assistant Administrator for the Middle East Bureau Michael Harvey, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Middle East Bureau Jason Foley, USAID Lebanon Mission Director Dr. Anne Patterson, in addition to AUB President Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB Provost Dr. Mohamed Harajli, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at AUB Dr. Salim Kanaan, Director of USAID-USP 6 at AUB Dr. Malek Tabbal, Director of USAID - USP 7 Dr. Samar Harkouss, graduates, and AUB deans, faculty and staff.

Through USP, USAID supports public school graduates with full four-year scholarships including tuition fees, housing expenses, medical insurance, laptop, textbooks, and a monthly stipend. Equal numbers of male and female scholars from Lebanon's 26 districts are selected in a fair, transparent, and highly competitive process based on academic merit and financial need.

At AUB, the University Scholarship Program (USP) began during academic year 2011-12. Since then, a total of 219 USP scholars graduated from AUB. During their studies, the scholars participate in volunteering activities, non-professional internships, and community service projects implemented in coordination with the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) at AUB.

At the opening of the event, Director of USAID-USP at AUB Dr. Malek Tabbal welcomed the attendees. AUB President Dr. Fadlo Khuri then delivered the AUB welcoming remarks. He said that since its inception, "the University Scholarship Program has managed to open doors of education to extraordinarily academically gifted students from some of the most disadvantaged

and marginalized communities in Lebanon.” Khuri continued, “But this program does much more than just provide access to education,” explaining that USP helps build a transformative experience that provides future leaders the opportunity to bring about positive change in their country and communities. In other words, it is an investment “in building the leaders of tomorrow, and the right type of leaders.”

A video titled “USP Women LEAD to Transform” was screened during the ceremony, shedding light on the transformation and empowerment journey of three USP students. The video highlighted how AUB and USP have contributed to the empowerment of these young women and how they are now empowering other women in society. This was followed by testimonials by graduating USP scholar Sultan Al Awar and USP alumnus Mirna Hussein, majoring in business administration and Nursing at AUB, who shared their inspiring journey with USP.

“Here I am, an AUB USP graduate,” said Al Awar, “and I can proudly say that my journey at AUB is a long-lasting one that has widened my scope and leveraged my capabilities to pursue a passion of developing my-self personally and professionally along with initiating an impact in my community.”

Hussein expressed her heart-felt thanks to the USAID personnel, who believed in and supported the scholars. “They took a chance on me and on my education, and the least I can do to pay them back is through the investment in my community, working hard to become the leader of the change I seek every day.”

In his speech, USAID Assistant Administrator for the Middle East Bureau Michael Harvey said, “For those of you who come from little villages and towns and families, who are truly the groundbreakers, the path-makers, who are the first maybe to come to a university like this, bring your cousins, bring your neighbors with you. Let you really be the people who open that door for kids all across this country who otherwise might not be able to come to such a beautiful place.” The graduation ceremony concluded with a musical performance by USP scholars and an Iftar dinner at AUB’s Reynold’s Hall rooftop.

**ENDS**

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**Note to Editors**

### **About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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