

President Speech — USAID HECD Event

August 24, 2022

Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of NDU, our sincere gratitude to USAID and its support of our students and community. Our University's partnership with USAID has begun and we look forward to making it a consistent source of inspiration to develop and expand our role in higher education as an accredited university, providing our students with opportunities that will propel their academic careers and beyond.

Our country has been in a state of disarray for some time now; this instability has permeated every aspect of people's lives, creating obstacles and challenges that need immediate tending to.

Higher education, as a rule, is intended to better our society. At NDU, we are committed to creating and offering programs and other services that will rear young adults who are unsatisfied with simply tolerating the workplace and larger society, but instead are ambitious, creative, dedicated, and more than capable of building a better nation and world through their respective fields.

Our University Mission states that we aim to promote "diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good." NDU's NECHE accreditation is not merely a testament to the quality of our curricula, but a wider calling to these aims, in particular to that of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our goal is to tend to these values by targeting several areas. We proudly have a student body comprising multiple denominations, encouraging interfaith dialogue. NDU has three campuses across Lebanon to increase accessibility to higher education by taking convenience of location into account. As for inclusivity in education, through ventures such as our IDEAL program and other means, we have been able to become a leading institution in this respect, and it would be a shame to let ourselves stagnate.

Each of us, without exception, has a gift, informed by our backgrounds, experiences, skills, and worldviews. Nurturing our dignity begins with honoring what each of us has to offer and recognizing our inherent diversity not as happenstance but planted by God for the sake of our cooperation and relationships with one another, strengthening our fellowship so that we may overcome whatever hardships we face.

As such, it is a great privilege that we are receiving this support from USAID through the Higher Education Capacity Development Program. Our students are our pride and backbone, and we thank USAID for believing in our Mission to foster graduates determined to challenge the status quo. NDU is a collective, not confined to campus walls, but always improving our outreach and partnerships with organizations as reputable as USAID, and this acknowledgement of our Mission and accreditation is a deep honor.

It is such collaborations that allow us to move forward, and so long as we move forward, our efforts, goodwill, and integrity will always triumph over adversity, and we will do our part to ensure that our Lebanese youth remain rooted in their homeland and become actors of greater change.

Thank you.

Fr. Bechara Khoury