



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT



W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION



# NEW BEGINNINGS

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## OVERVIEW OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT

Signed with a commitment of \$1 million, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the American University of Beirut (AUB) have initiated the second phase of the "Transforming Higher Education" project. Following its implementation in 2020 at the four pilot universities (Technological Institute of Higher Education of Calkiní, Technological Institute of Conkal campus Campeche, Technological Institute of Higher Education of Hopelchén, and Quisqueya University), it has [been demonstrated](#) that the shift in the educational model in the agriculture faculties of these institutions, based on the Five Elements of Success, has facilitated a positive change in students, faculty, and communities.

With a timeframe set from August 1, 2023, to July 31, 2025, this phase promises to be a catalyst for significant change in higher education, laying the groundwork for the training of leaders with an ethical vision and a commitment to social progress. The overall goal is to achieve transformative change, preparing university graduates as ethical leaders who serve society, creative problem solvers and innovators, contributing to the well-being of their communities and countries by positively impacting the environment, promoting peace, and understanding, and respecting diversity.

The project has established medium and long-term goals.

### MEDIUM TERM

### LONG- TERM

Universities will participate in transforming their educational models by creating an integrated learning community centered on student learning, systematically incorporating five key elements of success identified as crucial for the professional achievements of the graduates.

Graduates are known for their proactive leadership in seeking new models of agriculture and rural development, focusing on more sustainable agricultural systems and markets, social equity, and community development. Graduates have successfully created innovative, environmentally, and socially responsible businesses and have assumed leadership positions in their communities and countries.

Transformed universities will educate ethical leaders/change agents, proactive problem solvers, entrepreneurs, innovators, and business creators who offer sustainable solutions and jobs for their communities and society.

Transformed universities are recognized for their innovative solutions, community engagement, research for problem-solving, proactive students, and the quality and impact of their graduates.

### What is expected to be achieved in the second phase?



This phase will build on the success of the first phase that introduced 5 Elements of Success in 4 pilot universities in Mexico and Haiti, the AUB, and globally.



Consolidate a profound, broad, systemic, and sustainable change in universities that impacts university culture, students, their families, and communities.



Implement the change process at the American University of Beirut, incorporating at least two elements of success.



Evaluate and demonstrate the impact of the change on graduates' capabilities, institutional culture, and communities.

In a world where society faces increasingly challenging problems in agriculture, higher education institutions of agriculture are facing decreases in enrolment in the faculties of agriculture, the educational models are faculty dominant and not centered on students learning, students are passive learners, and the universities are not engaged with the communities. The relevance of higher education is increasingly being questioned.

The project aims to transform higher education in agriculture to produce proactive graduates that can contribute to the rural development of their communities, create jobs, be employable. The changes in the educational models will emphasize the development of soft skills, including critical thinking and problem-solving skills, ethical leadership, communication and entrepreneurial skills in addition to their technical skills, based on the premise that education is the best instrument for the advancement of societies and individuals.

Contact us



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# EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATION AT THE TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF HOPELCHÉN: INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE 5 ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

To drive educational transformation and promote community engagement, the Technological Institute of Hopelchén has undertaken a significant process of institutionalizing the 5 Elements of Success. In an exclusive interview with Daniel Alberto Panti González, representative of the Transforming Higher Education project, details of this ambitious plan were revealed.

The project aims to integrate the principles of success into every aspect of student and community life, embracing innovation and ethics as fundamental pillars.

*"The idea of institutionalizing these elements arose in response to the need to establish clear guidelines within the institution. To achieve this, a gradual process was implemented involving all areas of the institute, from administration to teachers, and especially students," says Panti.*



The institution has installed posters and other information all around campus to make the elements of success visible for everyone.

The process included creating technical sheets for each activity, specifying which element of success it aligned with. Initially, this generated doubts and debates among participants, but over time, the institutionalization of this approach became more evident, reaching an impressive 90% of technical sheets linked to the elements of success.

Daniel highlighted that the journey was not without challenges. Initial resistance, especially among teachers, required a gradual approach to involve all key players in the process. Induction courses for new students and constant feedback in academic meetings contributed to consolidating acceptance and understanding of the initiative.

Regarding results, Daniel mentioned that while the pandemic posed obstacles in communicating achievements to students, there was a positive impact on enrollment retention. However, the Hopelchén team is working on more thoroughly documenting these results.



*"We are a relatively small institute, the youngest within the entire network of institutes of the National Technological Institute of Mexico—and we're including our three academic programs: business administration, sustainable agricultural innovation, and systems engineering." Panti concludes.*

On an emotional and cultural level, the goal is for students to become agents of change in their communities. The aim is that upon graduation, they not only take with them academic knowledge but also a strong sense of social responsibility and ethics. The hope is that the bonds between the institute and surrounding communities strengthen, generating a lasting impact.

With short, medium, and long-term plans, the Hopelchén Technological Institute seeks to consolidate the institutionalization of the 5 Elements of Success, ensuring that this initiative transcends individuals and endures over time. The goal is clear: to transform higher education not only in academic terms but also as a positive force in society and local communities.



Daniel Alberto Panti González, representative, with students from the Institute during the induction course on the project

# MY FIELD DAY EXPERIENCE

As part of the activities organized by the Tecnológico Nacional de México campus Conkal to showcase its work with communities, the final semester forum of the agronomy engineering program titled "Field Day Experiences" was held on November 17th. Students from the first, third, and fifth semesters of the program presented their experiences working in the community before a panel composed of faculty and staff members of the university. Their efforts were recognized and evaluated, and they were provided feedback to allow them to choose the productive area they wished to participate in the following semester.

According to Jorge Gamboa, the facilitator of the Transforming Higher Education project at the Technological Institute of Conkal, the institution aims to achieve the following objectives with this event:

- 1. Showcase experiences gained during their field days in accordance with the selected productive area. Since students are distributed across 14 areas, this type of forum allows everyone to learn about the various options that they can engage in.**
- 2. Enable students to practice and demonstrate their oral communication skills by explaining and presenting their experiences to the faculty and fellow students at the Institute. Areas of opportunity and potential leaders among the students are identified during the process**
- 3. Promote integration and collective work, as the presentations are group-based, consisting of students linked to the selected productive area.**
- 4. Select outstanding students to form a brigade dedicated to community engagement.**
- 5. Evaluate the incorporation of values, ethics, environmental care, and conflict resolution during the presentations. Additionally, promote the importance of experiential learning and the identification of ideas for entrepreneurship and innovation.**



We'd like to use this newsletter to congratulate all the students who participated in the forum and encourage them to continue seeking opportunities to become agents of change and bring progress to their communities. You can read the complete list of participants and the topics they presented, as well as view a photo gallery on [the web version](#) of this note.

## FOOD FOR THE SOULS AT THE HIGHER TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF CALKINÍ

At the end of October and the beginning of November, students from all levels of the Sustainable Agricultural Innovation Engineering program at the Higher Technological Institute of Calkiní, participated in the exhibition of Hanal Pixán altars to commemorate the Day of the Dead. This was done as part of the activities of the systemic value-based educational program. This celebration is deeply rooted in Mexico since ancient times, especially in the southeast of the country where the Institute is located.

The Maya tradition, very similar to the Day of the Dead we all know, aims to remember in a special way those loved ones who are no longer with us. The altars are adorned with food, candles, photos, and other elements that pay tribute to these individuals.

### • How are the 5 Elements of Success applied to the traditions and customs of the Institute?

**Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution.**

The preparation of the offerings requires specific products, so they use their knowledge to obtain the highest quality raw materials, which sometimes requires planting their own species.

Some of these products include banana leaves, corn for making the dough, which is the raw material for preparing "pibipollos," tomatoes, beans, various regional chili peppers, among others, obtained from their family gardens.

**University commitment and participation with communities.**

The students come from different localities with particular customs despite belonging to a very close geographical area.

**Experiential and Participatory Learning.**

The revival of the Maya language is another area of opportunity that stands out in the activity. The explanation of the elements that make up the altar is done using this dialect, which fortunately, many students still use with their families.

**"Given that the presentation of Hanal Pixán altars is part of co-curricular, cultural, personal growth, and professional development activities, the objectives achieved include strengthening teamwork, promoting leadership, integrating into the community, and fostering cultural identity," says Mario BenHur Chuc Armendariz, facilitator of the Transforming Higher Education project at the Higher Technological Institute of Calkiní.**

According to the Yucatán Government's [website](#), some of the most common foods prepared during this festival are "mucbipollo" (a large tamale made of corn flour and lard, filled with chicken and pork meat, and seasoned with tomato and chili) and "pan de muerto" (bread of the dead).

Through the revival of customs and traditions of the indigenous peoples of Yucatán, the Higher Technological Institute of Calkiní and the Transforming Higher Education project teach students the importance of honoring their roots, contributing to their families, and valuing the culture that surrounds them.

For more details about the activity, you can watch the following [video](#).

