



THE HERALD

“Rebuilding Beirut”
Joyce Al Hayek

“Women at the Frontlines of 2020”
Araz Pamboukian & Layan Itani

“Problems with the Educational System”
Albert Geokgeuzian

“Food, Sports, and Nutrition in Light of COVID-19”
Dr. Sima Hamadeh &
Mrs. Nanor Karamanougian Seferian

“2020: A Downward Road for Globalization”
Youssef Kel Yacoub

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Four years ago, I published my first article in the *Herald* as a lost Freshman student. Today, I type these letters as both the Chairperson and Editor-in-Chief of a university newsletter, which has been my escape every semester. Along with God's grace, the words "Truth, Freedom, and Service" resonate with me in everything I do and everywhere I go. They have become principles and values beyond the walls of Haigazian's campus. Therefore, as soon as I got elected, I met with both the Student Life Officers and fellow *Herald* Board Members to emphasize our duties: always to speak the truth, serve our community in the best way possible, and, most importantly, to give our writers the freedom to express themselves.

We had to adjust by shifting all our work to the digital world. The meetings, editing process, teasers, and appointments with the Writing Center were all held online. For the first time ever, the *Herald* elected its first public relations officer to handle our social media and reach as many people as possible. In this issue, many brilliant writers tackle a variety of topics that others may not even discuss. We are so proud of our talented students and members for conveying their thoughts and messages, regardless of all circumstances and pressures.

2020 has been an exceptionally difficult year for everyone. It has taken so many lives, and so much of our energy to endure all the unfortunate events that happened worldwide. However, as you read these words, I want you to remember how blessed, brave, and resilient you are. Every day you chose to stay at home, you saved a life. Every time you held any kind of responsibility towards your country and community, you became an example to others. Role models are people who live forever, because they are resuscitated through every good deed that they once taught to somebody else. You are so resilient for never giving up, even after all the bad news you received during this year. You are brave for leaving everything behind and joining fellow citizens in rebuilding your homeland. You are so blessed to be healthy, surrounded by loved ones, and reminded to stay humble and patient. Believe me, your hard work and effort will never be in vain. Remember the days you thought you would not be able to handle any more surprises? Look at you today, you awesome 2020 survivor!

I said this once before and I will say it over and over again: God is with those who pray hard – and work harder! As a student myself, I did not let my fears control my determination and persistence, and neither should you! I give this advice, not because I am sitting behind a screen and doing nothing. In reality, I ran for two very demanding positions even though I am taking 19 credits along with my medical and COVID volunteering shifts – and all the stress that comes with them. I share this little aspect of my life, because I know there is some student who is doubting their abilities and think they do not have the time. Yes, each person has their own capabilities.

Nonetheless, each and every person also has responsibilities and duties to fulfill, especially when they sign up for demanding majors and careers. Do not let this or any other year bring you down. Instead, let it challenge and empower you to do better, be more kind, and search for solutions that benefit everyone and not just yourself. Whatever you may be feeling right now, start today and look past all the obstacles. Do not let anybody or any circumstances shape your life. Above all, remember these two verses from both the Bible and the Quran:

Exodus 18:23 ...God will direct you, you will be able to endure...

Quran 94: 5-6 – Verily, with every difficulty there is relief.



BEIRUT

**We will never forget
those who have fallen victim
to Beirut's explosion.
May they rest in peace,
and may God watch over all those
impacted physically,
mentally,
and emotionally
by this horrific incident.**

August 4 was sudden...

It took mere seconds to reduce parts of the city into a disaster zone.

Upending a whole country, already reeling from a crippling financial crisis.

PEOPLE HAD DESCRIBED IT AS...

“Chaos” “Apocalypse” “Catastrophe”

“**Destruction**” “**Confusion**”

“Turmoil” “Mayhem” “Calamity”



But it wasn't so...

Gemmayze, Mar Mikhael, Karantina, Achrafieh were not so.

Areas that are near and dear to my heart and the hearts of many Lebanese. Remember the days we used to sing, dance and live...

Masterpieces of Art; in abundance on every corner...

Local and International, indie and renowned, the artistic hub of the Middle East.





The young and beautiful, strolling through its timeless streets that have seen the old and ragged, a glimpse of the past.



One of the few preserved areas of Old Beirut, a blend of historic character and modern disposition.



Does this look like a city of art, culture and nightlife?

2,750 tons
of Ammonium
Nitrate.
The cost of
negligence.

200+ DEATHS.
The cost of
corruption.





7000+ injured.
The cost of incompetence.



300,000 displaced.
The cost of blunder.

Oh **BEIRUT**, what have they done to you?





The cost goes far beyond just physical and material damage.

A space for life and ideas, the explosion ripped through the artistic, architectural, and cultural essence of Lebanon's bohemian heritage in Mar Mikhael, Gemmayze, and the surroundings.



It's not all gloomy though...

In a country so unstable and unpredictable like Lebanon, desensitization sometimes plays in our favor.

In an instant, dozens, if not hundreds of organizations, joined with foreign support and specialists, took the initiative to swiftly assess the damaged streets and organize a rescue operation to aid and assist those affected by the blast.

Today, 3-4 months since the disaster, numerous streets have seen reconstruction and repair, breathing new life into streets that saw death and destruction.

Though damage is still present in the areas affected, it is formidable and tremendous how much work has been put by the people and local NGOs, knowing that most are working under considerable limitations of resource and finance.

A nation so adaptive, and a culture so vibrant on volunteerism; it sidelined an inefficient government and took the lead in clearing the area for eventual rehabilitation. So that when the dust settles, the tens of thousands of people displaced would have a home to return to.



Dear reader,

This is not supposed to be a letter. This piece of writing was meant to be an article. But, faced with a task as big as writing about what Beirut is going through has rendered my thoughts incoherent, intelligible, and simply... blank. So, instead of thinking of you as an audience, I will think of you as a person. You are the recipient of my letter, hoping this thought will make writing it easier for me, and reading it possible for you.

First, I would like to take a moment and congratulate you. This year has been extremely challenging, and the fact that you are reading this proves that you have gotten through it all. The strength you are showing the people around you and your country is remarkable, so I applaud you (I literally put my pen down and did it, clap clap!).

As you know, Beirut took a big hit this year, and I would like to talk about her today. I will not be recounting what 2020 has put us through. I trust my colleagues have done a marvelous job at that. Instead, allow me to talk about the present, and what I hope will be happening in the future. Our beautiful, strong, broken Beirut has been crouching, picking up her pieces painfully, and sticking them clumsily on her tired body, trying to live up to the expectations that have been set for her: "Resilient", "Strong", "Relentless", a "Phoenix rising from the ashes!"

But she is tired. She is so very tired. Her low, weak groans were heard only by the youth, who have put their schedules on hold to help her.

In fact, Haigazian students heard Beirut's plea for help. Not only did they take part in the cleaning initiative that took place right after the explosion, but Haigazian University also organized a project called "Parcels of Hope" that lasted for 6 days. It aimed to distribute 65 lunch parcels per day, which fed 25 families in desperate need of care and resources.

Still numb from the shock, I could not bear to meet my friends and greet them with a smile. The mere thought of having to see anyone I knew put me in a state of panic: what if they ask me where I was when the explosion happened? Would they notice how jumpy and scared I was? Had I become too weak?

But the cries of Beirut were louder than my fears, and as time went by, I could not "adapt" and "overcome", as what we are so notorious for doing. But what could I do? I am no architect, no doctor or nurse, I can't drive, and I can barely go about my day without jumping a million times at the slightest sound. But then again, I could not let myself slip into apathy. I needed to act.

So, one day, in a haze, I signed myself up for a slot on a Saturday to volunteer on the ground. "That's it," I told myself, "there's no turning back now".

Amidst the sweat and exhaustion, all I could think of was the person I was carrying this door for, how they will sleep better tonight knowing that they are safe in their home. I could imagine the mom that will sleep in her own room for the first time in 2 months, instead of hugging her children all night. I could picture them, no longer terrified of every sound echoing in the middle of the busy city night, all the way to their windowless room. I thought of the old man who has sustained more injuries cleaning his home than going through the experiences of the past year.

What I had thought to be a day where I would relive my trauma turned out to be the one that helped me heal the most.

Another side effect of volunteering was that I found myself no longer thinking about the corrupted politicians, or about the events that took place.

Somehow, the sound of sweeping glass contrasts with the sound of shattering glass beautifully. I found my feelings of fear, shock, and anger slowly fade away.

Somehow, the physical labor and the intensity of the work doesn't just distract you in the short term. It truly shapes your thoughts: you have moved from spectator to actor, from victim to survivor.

It feels like holding Beirut's hand, and telling her gently that you are there for her, and while you pick up her pieces, you hear her humming a calming melody that heals your own wounds.

This year has been tough; you and Beirut have gone through so much. I do not know what is driving you to continue living: hope of seeing better days ahead? Or perhaps you are curious about what tomorrow will bring?

No matter how you are getting to tomorrow, be it the easy or the hard way, the important thing is that you are reaching it, eventually. I don't want to minimize the challenges of this moment, as they are immense. But I really believe that, even in difficult times, such as these, we must find the strength to go on the best way we always have: together.

You have something to offer.

You can make a difference.

Your choices matter.

Your prerequisite for volunteering is surviving the past year, which I presume you have successfully completed.

Hoping to see you on the ground,

Joyce Al Hayek.



Lebanon's Path to a Political Recovery

Jack Jizmejian



When the Lebanese uprising began on October 17, 2019, it was an opportunity for the people of Lebanon to finally voice their anger and despair towards corruption, which eventually prompted the resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri's government. Following his resignation, the Lebanese parliament elected Hassan Diab as the new Prime Minister, whose cabinet couldn't gain the interest aggregation needed to form a functional government. This led to two cabinet resignations in just a year, placing Lebanon in an abyss lurching from one problem to another. Now, on the verge of a pandemic and an economy which is in a decline, Saad Hariri has been re-elected as Prime minister. The goal now is to fix the many gaps and the loopholes in the government, which Hariri previously failed to do so. In this article, I aim to objectively point out the primary issues of our country, which are deterring any form of change to occur. I will also be mentioning the necessary steps that the Prime Minister could undertake while forming the next government, in order to possibly gain back the trust of the Lebanese people.

To begin with, Lebanon's political and cultural environment is very well known to be quite complex. The problems circulating our country aren't just found in the political sector, but also in the public domain.

If the Prime Minister wishes to succeed in the formation of a new cabinet, the interest articulation of the Lebanese people should be taken into consideration. Why? Because, if the people's demands and needs aren't delivered, then the cabinet wouldn't be considered legitimate. In terms of institutionalism, Lebanon has many independent and durable institutions that could be very beneficial for our country, if used in a proper way. Nonetheless, the corrupt elites have taken advantage of these institutions for their own personal interests. Overcoming such an issue would be possible by forming a technocratic government, where the necessary reforms could be a huge step towards repairing the damaged political system in our country. Additionally, it is where both the inputs and outputs of the government would finally be balanced. Strong reforms are also required in the economic sector. This is especially true since, for almost 2 years now, our country has been going through a severe economic crisis, with a debt that has reached \$68 billion, mixed with a high unemployment rate. It is also worsening on a monthly basis. These circumstances are due to the fact that politics in our country dictate the economy. On the other hand, in economically developed countries, it is the economy that dictates the politics. This rate of corruption has stretched all the way to the banking sector, where the discovery of a Ponzi scheme damaged our national currency and helped direct the country to its downfall.

Nepotism, which is another factor of corruption, has played an indirect role in causing mismanagement in our economy, and consequently further boosted the unemployment rate. It has especially affected the youth, who can offer tremendous capabilities for our society. Overcoming an issue, such as this, would be by appointing specialists who have the right amount of experience in the next government. These professionals would abate the level of corruption in the country and show an increase of efficiency in the workforce. Another issue to focus on would be sectarianism. For a country like Lebanon, it's quite common to have different religious views among the population, but instead, it's used as a political tool by the elites to further stimulate division. They do so to secure their influence and control over our society. These primary factors have shown that Lebanon's main problem has to do with how the rule of law is being applied (where the right number of laws to guarantee justice for such acts exist), but aren't being applied in the judiciary system in an appropriate way.

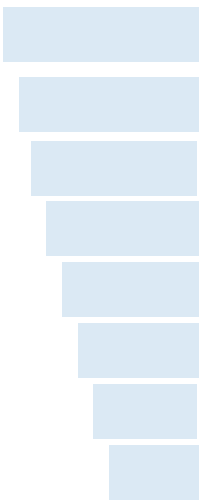


However, ever since the Prime Minister's designation, clashes of interests have hindered his attempt to form a new government. This caused many delays during a time when Lebanon was (and still is) on the brink of collapse. These delays have sparked a lot of criticism, especially from the French initiative. In an article published by the Daily Star, a recent visit of President Macron's advisor of the Middle East, Patrick Dure, was mentioned, where he met with many Lebanese officials and urged them to form a government as soon as possible. He also insisted that they implement the reforms, or else the international community will not be able to participate in aiding Lebanon financially, under any circumstances (Dakroub, 2020). With the current political situation, on a domestic level, these reforms are indeed difficult to be instituted, but, without them, our nation cannot survive any longer.



In fact, due to these reckless ways of handling such a serious crisis, analysts are beginning to describe Lebanon as a **"Failed State"**. This term, if officially coined, would be quite damaging for our reputation as a sovereign country, which highlights the fact that the longer it takes to form a government, the harder it will be to revive our country as a whole.

Being aware of our situation, all political parties should set aside their personal disputes and unite, in order to heal the nerves of our government and save the crumbling economy. Because without the presence of unity in our parliament, the Prime Minister, whoever that may be, cannot succeed in forming a new government. Finally, I would like to end this article with a quote by Nelson Mandela, whose words resonate with Lebanon's current situation, "[m]inds that seek revenge destroy states, while those that seek reconciliation build nations".



Thank you to all the soldiers and citizens in Artsakh that dedicated their lives for their motherland. We pray that the martyrs rest in peace and wish for a speedy recovery to all those affected physically, mentally, and emotionally by this war.



The Struggle for Survival

Mary Krikorian



I sat down many times to begin writing this article. Despite many tries, and the fact that it usually isn't hard for me to write down my thoughts, I couldn't start writing. From the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh war, it felt like Armenians have been talking into the void. Armenian lobbies were working tirelessly worldwide, but nothing seemed to change. I hope this article will motivate you to do your own research and get to know more about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

September 27, 2020. What was supposed to be another normal day ended up shaking every Armenian to his or her core. Azerbaijan (with the help of Turkey) attacked Artsakh, formally known as Nagorno-Karabakh. Artsakh is home to around 150,000 people, inhabited mostly by Armenians. Given that Azerbaijan had a history of periodically making small attacks on the borders, it was not a big surprise to Armenians everywhere.

In fact, the four-day war in April of 2016 was previously the largest escalation made by Azerbaijan in the last few years. With the large-scale attacks that followed, the bloodshed and grief were seemingly never-ending. During the weeks that ensued, Azerbaijan bombarded several areas of Artsakh, including its capital, Stepanakert. No territory was spared; civilian areas, schools, and hospitals...



The death toll kept rising, and Azerbaijan kept violating several ceasefire agreements that were being signed and quickly ignored.

It is hard to put into words what every Armenian has been going through during this war. The Indigenous Armenians of Artsakh, after seeing their own family members go to war, now have to flee their homes, in fear of what Azeri forces might do to them. They have to leave home, not knowing if they will ever be able to go back.

A trilateral agreement was reached on November 9 between the Armenian Prime Minister (Nikol Pashinyan), Russian President (Vladimir Putin), and Azerbaijani President (Ilham Aliyev). The peace treaty involved Armenian troops withdrawing from territories of Artsakh, with Russian peacekeeping troops being deployed on the borders.

For Armenians, this deal doesn't mark the end of our struggle. The histories of Artsakh and Armenia are proof that we, Armenians, no matter the consequences, will never accept defeat when it comes to our homeland. The strength of our people is unmatched, and I have no doubt that defeat is only temporary.

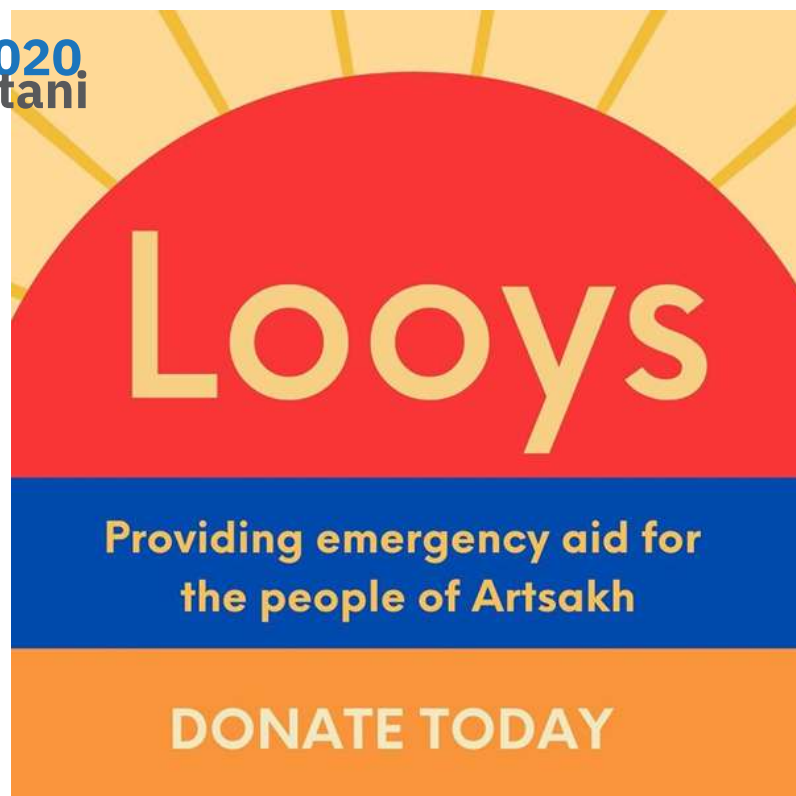


Against all odds, our people have struggled, survived, and won more battles than I could count. Just last year, members of the Haigazian University Heritage club went to Nagorno-Karabakh as part of their "Building Bridges with Artsakh" project. They collected around a thousand books, which were donated to the Artsakh State University. During their trip, Yervant Hadjijan, the Head of the Diaspora Department of the Artsakh Foreign Ministry, guided the club members during their trip and helped them accomplish their project. During the war, he heroically gave his life in protection of Artsakh, the ultimate sacrifice of a patriot. We ought to keep in mind Yervant, the thousands of martyrs, and those injured when thinking of accepting defeat.



Women at the Frontlines of 2020 Araz Pamboukian & Layan Itani

We'd say 2020 has been a rollercoaster, but so far it has only had downs without any ups, especially for the Armenian and Lebanese communities. This is not an understatement of the global pandemic. However, the aforementioned communities are suffering much more than a pandemic. With everything going on in Artsakh, the Armenian people have been reliving the history they demand justice for. The Beirut Port blast in addition to the ongoing economic crisis have shaken the Lebanese to the core. People have been displaced and are in need of aid, and the women of these communities did not disappoint. Not only have women from both communities contributed to the survival and reconstruction initiatives in both countries, but they have also founded said initiatives and provided continuous support for those in need, inspiring hundreds of people. In an attempt to find a flicker of hope in these dark times, the Looys or "Light" initiative for delivering emergency aid to the people of Artsakh was launched by an NGO called "kooyrigs" - Armenian for sisters. Food, diapers, formula, medical supplies, household materials, and so much more were hand-delivered to Artsakh by kooyrigs in Armenia. Evidenced by their frequent social media posts, kooyrigs uses local resources from small Armenian businesses to not only deliver aid, but also support the local Armenian community's businesses. Funding this initiative is the great work they put in fundraising online through holding virtual events and crowd-funding via Venmo and PayPal. In addition to material support, the Looys campaign also sent emotional support,



in forms of letters, to the soldiers fighting at the frontlines, and an on-going poetry book project entitled, "Voices of Resistance."

Even after the announcement of the war ending in Artsakh, kooyrigs continued with their work providing aid by collaborating with Armenian Public Health on Instagram in an informative interview about the Effects of War on Public Health and COVID-19.

Moreover, earlier in the year, kooyrigs launched Hooy or "Hope" - a platform by which Armenian teens and young adults affected by the crisis on Armenia's border could make genuine connections and find comfort in conversations with Armenians in the diaspora. This initiative is moderated by Edit Alavererdyan, M.S., AMFT, who oversees the program.

Moreover, they launched the initiative called "Cyber Alliance" as a response to the Azeri data war on social media. Cyber Alliance is dedicated to transparency and factual documentation of data.

Women at the Frontlines of 2020

On another note, kooyrigs has contributed to providing aid to Lebanese women in poverty through “Period Kits 4 Lebanon” – in collaboration with two Lebanese women-led organizations, Dawrati and Jeyetik – to provide period kits to those in need. The kits were assembled in Armenia with sanitary products, pain medication, and a sweet snack.

In an attempt to help victims locate shelters and speed up the relief process, engineer Aya Mouallem (a graduate student and Knight-Hennessy Scholar at Stanford University) collaborated with the volunteer-led initiative “Locate Victims Beirut”. Together, they developed a very thorough database of known deaths, lost victims, and details to guide families to the victims’ whereabouts. Aside from the Beirut Port explosion, Mouallem has also founded “All Girls Code” – a free program that pushes Lebanese and Arab girls to go for STEM majors in colleges, providing that, “Lebanon’s economy can be greatly saved if we adopt a digital economy.” She added, “[t]ech companies have been able to work remotely, capture international clients, and preserve (and even create) job opportunities for thousands of citizens.”

A second woman-led initiative in Beirut was launched by “Beit el Baraka”, an organization founded and led by Maya Ibrahimchah. It originally supported elderly people to help them with rent and other payments, so that they get to keep their homes. It was one of the first initiatives that helped provide aid, psychological support, and medications. It also helped rebuild homes after the blast.

Another women-founded organization “Nusaned,” directly formed the “Roofs That Shield” and “Goods in Need” initiatives that help with rebuilding homes and providing families with food, hygiene, and clothing materials until they could get back on their feet. They aim to aid a total of 2,050 homes and shops. In collaboration with Colgate and Holdal, Nusaned helped provide hygiene kits to 12,000 families in need.

As evidenced by the aforementioned initiatives led by women in Armenian and Lebanese communities, the days when women worked tirelessly under the radar as tragedies unfolded, are over. Women are now at the frontlines, fighting for survival without hiding behind the name of a man like so many did before.



For months, we have been sleeping to the sound of our crying, for it has become our new lullaby.

Collecting tears, instead of wondrous memories.

Crying to try and wash the nightmares away.

Eyes of despair, eyes of misery.

Heartbeats weakening.

Serenity became a fiction,

And war became a reality.

It is as if happiness is now a dream we yearn to achieve.

At night, silence roams the cities.

At day, counting the seconds, counting our steps to arrive to our destination.

For now, we fear that death rests in any corner, waiting to take us.

Hope these days is what is keeping us standing on our feet.

So we hang on this rope of hope, even if our hands are burning.

We won't let go, not yet.

Through our pain, we will find strength.

We might be falling, but soon we will take flight,

For falling teaches you how to fly.

So witness us soar, and take back what once was ours.

A soft breeze of summer air fiddles with her feathers as a little child cries in the distance. August's warm hand glides alongside her face, then carries her with his hot wave, trying to mend her wounds as an old man cries over what's left of his home. Her insides are blazing up with choler, her eyes are raining buckets of sorrow; she's had enough.

An illness after the other meanders through her once firm, now fine and frail, bones. She prostrates to her fate, that ugly, repellent fate, that whenever he sees her on her knees, bombs her ground with no leniency, and leaves her idle as her feet bleed.



She flops onto her griefs and curses her kings and swayers, the rich and the poor, the land and the skies, the good and the bad. She curses every time she picks herself back up and gives in to her eighth apocalyptic devastation. As her ash dilutes with the wind, Beirut the Phoenix burns for the last time, and she doesn't leave a breathing soul behind.

PROBLEMS WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Albert Geokgeuzian

Education is defined as a process of teaching, training, and learning – especially in schools, colleges, and universities – to improve knowledge and develop skills as per the Oxford Dictionary. In this article, we will check whether the process of teaching in our modern lives is the best process we can have.

The process of education has many factors, ranging from the setting of the learning process, to how we check for it, and to the curriculum itself.

Most experts in education reached a consensus that the process of education – within the general American system – is extremely flawed. There have been countless articles, books, and research written into why it is as such. I will try to convey those problems to the best of my ability in an acceptable frame.

Let's start off from the beginning, when the education curriculum was first set. Once we understand the purpose of the curriculum, it is easier to realize why it is flawed.

The curriculum was set in 1893, based on the recommendation of a group of 10 people, known as the Committee of Ten, appointed by the National Education Association. The Committee of Ten met for less than a week and made their recommendations in 1892. What was their purpose? Was it to discuss learning theory? To discuss the changes that could be on the horizon and how to best prepare students for them? To discuss the importance of education to maximize human potential? No; these reasons, along with many others, weren't their purpose.

Instead, their purpose was to simplify the selection process for college admissions officers by standardizing the transcripts of students graduating from high school. Their recommendation was adopted in 1893, after which layers upon layers of bureaucracies were quickly put in place and their recommendations were frozen rigidly in place.

The design was made as such so that the curriculum is very well at organizing students. However, the purpose of this organization was, and still is, inherently flawed.

Here are some of the issues: the curriculum has no overarching aim; it disregards the brain's need for order and organization; it fails to exploit the teaching potential of the real, everyday world; it lacks criteria for determining what new knowledge to teach, and what old knowledge to discard to make room for the new; it ignores important fields of knowledge; and it fails to capitalize on human variability - the familiar curriculum's failure to model the fundamental nature of knowledge. (Brady, 2011)

Aim of the curriculum.

In his 2011 book, *What's Worth Learning*, Brady dives deep into the problems that plague our educational system (Brady, 2011). He asks questions about the aim of the educational curriculum; questions that most of us have never thought to ask about, such as, "[w]hat is the bottom-line aim of schooling?"

Is it to instill a love of learning?

To sharpen problem-solving skills? Prepare students for useful work? Foster creativity? Transmit societal values?" (Brady, 2011) He poses questions to get us to think, and most of the aims he brings up do have merit, but almost all are absent in today's educational curriculum (Brady, 2011). We simply accept the curriculum because it has always been that way. It has always been messy, and as a result, became normal. As Mr. Brady put it, "[w]hat's taught isn't taught because it's seen as moving individuals or the larger society toward some greater good, but because it's what was taught last year. And what was taught last year was taught, because it was taught the year before that."

PROBLEMS WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

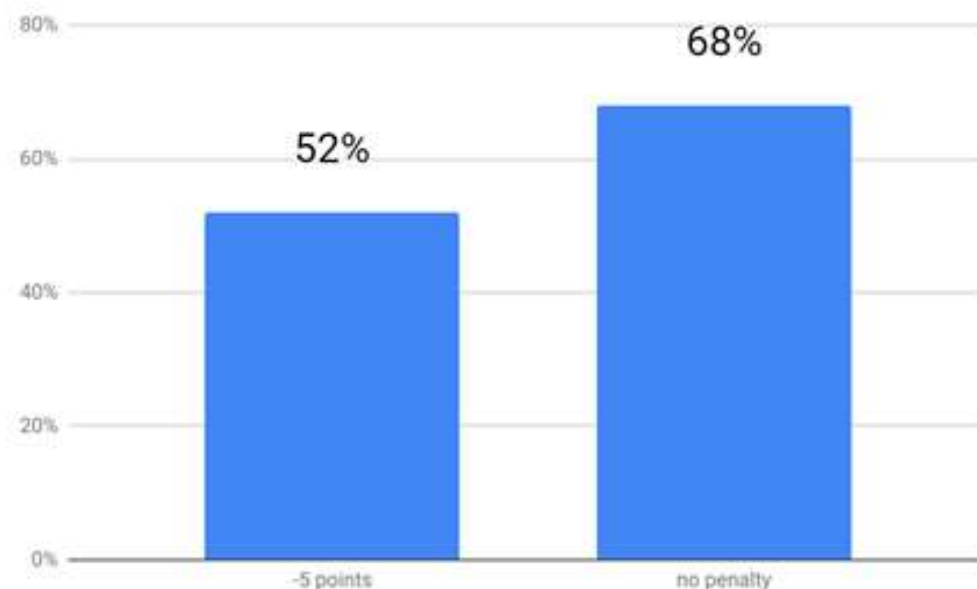
Brady (2011) also discusses how the educational system is not geared towards the needs of the brain. He explains that the brain's memory system is similar to a mental filing cabinet, where files are placed in drawers, which can be inside other drawers, and so on (Brady, 2011). “Transportation” is a big drawer, “[v]ehicle” is a sub-folder, “[c]ars” is a sub-sub-folder, “[e]lectric [c]ars” are a sub-sub-sub-folder, and so on (Brady, 2011). Within each folder, there are multiple entries; within the previous example, under “[v]ehicles”, there are “[m]otorcycles”, “boats,” etc. The entire collective of these levels is a “conceptual structure”. To “understand” means to discover new categories, new entries, etc. Kids are perfect examples of seeing this system in action. At first, every four-legged animal is a “dog”. Kids then learn to distinguish dogs from animals and the category “dog” changes to “animal”. Then, sub-folders are created, such as “mammals”, “land animals”, and so on.

We all make use of this elaborate system, but this system poses a problem for educators. In the current system, the reason why most people forget what they had once “learned”, is because it has restricted our brains from storing the information in our long-term memory. As a result, the information was never filed in a cabinet, but instead, was present in the working memory (also known as short-term memory) long enough for students to answer a question on an exam and get a grade in a class. If the information presented to students wasn’t provided properly, allowing for their brains to digest and store it correctly, then said information would soon disappear. If we don't change our ways, what’s the point of even teaching the information if it will eventually disappear?

Another problem with our educational system is the use of “failure” as a motivating factor.

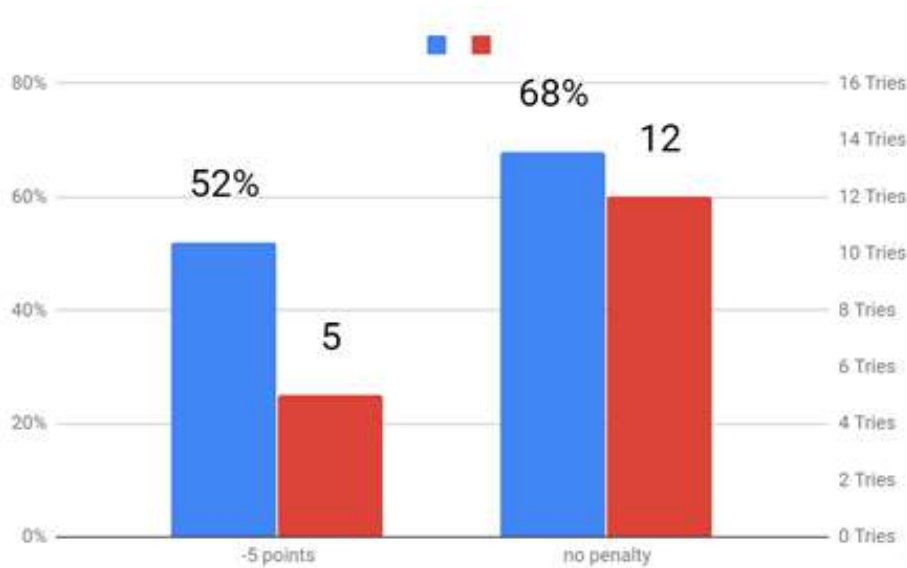
An anonymous online study was conducted with over 50,000 individuals. The study went as follows: There were 2 groups of people. Both groups were presented a quiz and told to solve it. There was only 1 difference between the 2 groups; individuals in the first group who failed were presented with a message “[t]hat didn’t work. Please try again”, while individuals in the second group who failed were presented with a message “[t]hat didn’t work. You lost 5 points. You now have 195 points. Please try again.” The second group lost 5 fake points, the quizzes were online, the subjects weren’t being monitored, and they were the only ones who knew what they were doing.

These were the results of people who solved the quiz.



PROBLEMS WITH THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Another set of data was collected: the amount of tries people had before solving the quiz.



Individuals attempted, on average, 7 additional tries when they received no penalty and when there was no perceived failure to their actions. This study was done by a science YouTuber, Mark Rober, who previously spent 7 years working on the NASA Curiosity-1 Rover. There is a lot that we can learn from this study. We can clearly see what a difference the perception of failure can have on individuals.

Anyone who takes a look at this data can quite clearly see that motivating students by fear needs to go. Grades, probation, and punishments are all bad means to motivate students; it's high time to get rid of them.

I am not claiming to have all the answers or that I know how to fix this broken system. Nonetheless, similar to how you don't need a medical degree to know that a broken bone is bad for you, you don't need to have an educational background to realize that this system is broken.

It is the responsibility of all of us, including teachers, educators, administrators, presidents, politicians, and everyone else for us and for our country to progress. Many will claim that they wish they could do something, but that things are near impossible to change on their own. Teachers, educators, and those who know that this system isn't right: you have a chance; a chance to come together and make a change. I know for a fact that there are multiple individuals in every school who know that the system is broken.

Humans are innately curious species. Our curiosity is what led us here, it is what led us to have smartphones, ovens, books, clothing, beds and so on... If anyone does not have the passion to learn within a system, then the problem isn't with the individual, but rather with the system. The system is broken.

Personal Battles of a Sophomore in 2020

Hoda Al Ghali



We can all agree that this year was nothing short of a surprise, especially in our beloved Lebanon. Throughout this year, several unfortunate events occurred that left a deep dent in today's Lebanese society, such as the revolution, followed by the worldwide COVID-19. The pandemic forced us into house-arrest and quarantine all year, including summer break. After the viral outbreak, the Beirut explosion occurred; an event that was truly devastating to witness. Therefore, as you can probably conclude by now, the year 2020 wasn't an ideal one to be graduating from school, let alone attend your first year of university. For around three years, I waited for the day I get to walk on stage and receive the embodiment of my future in a paper. It might not sound interesting or ideal to others, but it was very important to me.

Due to critical circumstances, my school decided to cancel, not only our graduation ceremony, but also, our prom. Even though my graduation got canceled, I decided to suck it up and put that energy and excitement into my first day of university. Well, even that didn't play out as planned.

Whenever you envision your first day of university, you imagine being unable to sleep the night before. You also imagine your parents dropping you off at university, where you will make amazing new friendships, but I got none of that. I, instead, made myself a warm cup of coffee and got cold slaps in the face from my professors, who decided to directly start with the material and "not waste time". Don't get me wrong; I did have some fun during my first semester. I met some people in my classes, whom I would contact through Zoom and talk with for hours. I also joined a couple of clubs, which brighten my mood with every meeting they host.

Frankly, 2020 wasn't the ideal year for first-year university or college students. It has been hectic and very depressing. Nonetheless, this year has taught us to never take things for granted and spend more time with the ones we love. I hope this pandemic ends soon, so I can surround myself with the people I love once again.



Studentship, My DNA: Reflections of a Lebanese Teacher

Ms. Suha Naimy

This article was published in An-Nahar newspaper on 10-05-2020.

I have been an educator for the past 30 years of my life. I have taught in renowned universities in Lebanon, and for the past ten years, I have been teaching at Haigazian University in Beirut, a university small in campus but huge in impact and merit. Throughout my years of teaching, I have come to the conclusion: studentship is my DNA.

My teaching career started when I was 18 years old. I was a part-time teacher at a language learning center and a full-time student at a university for higher education. Now, 30 years later, I realize that everything around me has metamorphosed and changed, except studentship.

It has been the steady continuum in my life from the time I was a three-year-old student, up to when I became a teacher at 18, all the way to this minute. Studentship has been the bridge that has joined the two ends of my life: the 18-year-old end where both being a teacher and being a student overlapped and the current end where the awareness of being an educator stems from studentship. In both ends, there have been wars, and in these wars, students have been the glue that have adhered the shattered pieces of my life in such a way that the crannies have integrally composed a wholesome vase, a more beautiful one.

Two weeks ago, a municipal car roamed in the streets and roads of Mtayleb, the town where I live, with loud speakers emitting cautionary notes that raise awareness about the perils of Coronavirus (Covid-19): they clarify how leaving home is fraught with danger. "We beg the inhabitants to stay home. A decree has been issued by the government, buttressed by the Mtayleb municipality, asking all the citizens to remain indoors,

For the sake of their loved ones and for their own sake. Do you want to protect your loved ones? Stay home!" Lines that wreak painful memories of the civil war in Lebanon, especially the wars of 1988-1990 that I lucidly recall because I was a young university student then.

Similar to this Coronavirus (Covid-19) phase we are currently experiencing, a car would pass with loud speakers alarming inhabitants to take shelter from the upcoming falling bombs and missiles, in the 1988-1990 wars.

Both extremities, the 1988-1990 and the March-April 2020 are wars: one with bombs falling on our heads and another with viruses invading our lives. And in both wars, the student remains the entity that maintains continuity, with all the measures and the methods available. In the 1988-1990 wars, my mother and I, along with our neighbors of the same building and of the entire block, would sleep in the underground shelter every night to protect ourselves from the terror and the life-threatening bombardments and blasts. During day time, a seemingly normal life would surface: my mother would return to her home chores, and I would resume my studying at university.

Back then, we, as students, were the hope of tomorrow that had already started with our present, a present crowned with our determination to be alive. Students were in need to be alive for their own sake and for the sake of those who died, leaving their hopes and dreams in the hands of the survivors. We had two lives, aspirations, hopes, setbacks and victories to breathe for. Amidst an equation calculated and woven by powerful nations, we created our lives.



Studentship, My DNA: Reflections of a Lebanese Teacher



Respectively, in our present Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, we are in the process of redefining our lives. A different aspect of life and of living has emerged, and the student's entirety of being appears to be at the heart of this pulsating reality. The student, again, is the nucleus of the cell, at home, online, in the teaching-learning dynamics. The Gestalt theory would be relevant here. Whether the focus in the Gestalt experiment is on the rabbit or on the duck, it is the perception itself that matters. Without the student, there is no teacher, no school, no university, no strife, and no life... The student has been a pivoting continuum in my life. Everything in my life has changed; nothing has remained the same within and without. Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, would explain, "You can never step in the same river twice." In this ocean of constant change, DNA has stabilized me: I continue to be 'me' despite the biological change. My DNA has been my assertive continuity. Along the same note, psychologically and socially speaking, my life has been a whirlpool of change: my parents passed away, my habitat changed, my friends grew, I have lost people along the way, I have gained others, but the on-going unchanging dominant continuum has been "studentship."

Studentship is another DNA that has insured constancy despite the multitude of change as my biological DNA has provided the continuity in the amplitude of variation. In different words, the student has been the suave heart that has patched the past with the present. The past is unreachable in the temporal world, and so is the future. But in the ethereal ongoing presence of both worlds, the student is the meaning and the core.

With the online learning taking place now because of Covid-19, the student is once again the center of life to which we cling and upon whom hope depends. After the craze of the disease dwindles, and regularity gradually regains its rhythm, the learner is the defense mechanism for a tomorrow that teems with life.

The student is the help-line, perhaps the guide-line, to which common people who are cobwebbed and entangled in political algorithms have the chance to hold on strong to. For the past three-weeks, I have been teaching with my phone 3G/4G, without any Internet. I got disconnected, and I have not been able to reconnect because of the Coronavirus lock-down.

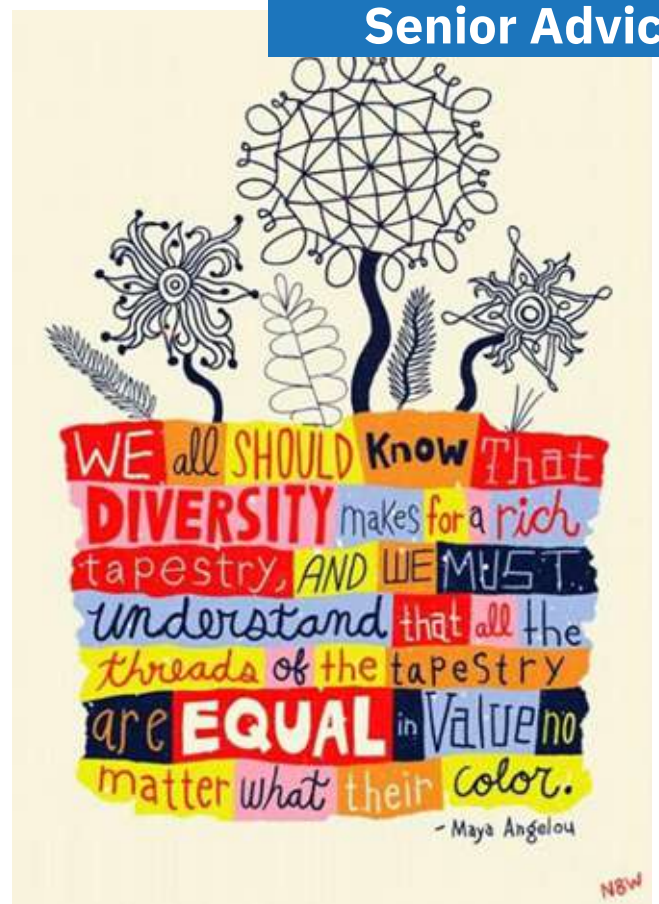
Some students have Internet problems, laptop issues, virtual learning disabilities, connection headaches, family conflicts, but they go on, they do their homework, they maintain their politeness and courtesy, and with their forward motion, the whole nation, the entire globe, moves forward. They are the prevailing force that sculpts the future. When I look at tomorrow, I see it waiting with open arms for a continual growth led by learners, as Lebanon continues to bloom amidst the assailing storms: today, on Good Friday, in our home confinement, a car passes by with Christian hymns echoing in the horizon, praising the Crucifixion of Jesus, reassuring that after the Golgotha, there is Resurrection.



As my four years of undergraduate studies are coming to an end, I want to reflect on a topic of which most students complain, “ugh, those electives”. Many students do not realize their importance and sometimes even consider them a burden. At Haigazian University (HU), there are both mandatory (or required) and free elective courses; both of which are very valuable. Besides learning a new language and raising our GPA, there are many reasons why electives are the best gift a student gets during every semester.

Every HU student starts their academic path with their first mandatory course, Orientation (OR). This elective is best described as your long-term HU assistant. It helps us, as students, learn about our university’s history, background, and general information that will come in handy even after graduation. Other university requirements, like Intercultural Studies (IS) and Religion/Ethics, help students become more tolerant, discover cultures beyond the borders of their country, and learn about the historical and modern-day world. Additionally, Haigazian provides further assistance in developing its students’ communication, presentation, and research skills through mandatory English courses. Showing progress in remedial or advanced English courses may also give students a chance to work in an online magazine, write for the Herald Club, or even sign up as a volunteer at the Writing Center. Of course, being part of a digital world means having to keep up with all the technological advances, to which students are exposed in the Computing and Programming mandatory elective. It’s safe to say that all fields and industries currently include online platforms or require digital services. Therefore, regardless of the student’s major (and minor), it is essential to have a basic background in programming.

Why are we obligated to take these “extra” elective courses? First of all, these courses may change a student’s entire academic or career path. How many times have you heard a friend say, “when I took elective X, I realized I want to become a teacher instead of a scientist,” or vice versa? This happens because students are able to discover their passions and develop other interests past their major. Consequently, students may even sign up for a minor due to a random elective course they once took. Electives also help us evaluate ourselves: how much do I know about other cultures, religions, and communities? Am I accepting of others as I thought I was? Do I need to work on my technical skills? Furthermore, signing up for electives means students learn how to prepare presentations and properly present them. Consequently, giving presentations in front of a bigger audience boosts students’ self-esteem and confidence. It also assists with making new friends and growing our social circle, which roughly translates into a bigger and better support system to help endure university life. Having a broad social circle is not limited to colleagues only, but also includes meeting new instructors. Having multiple instructors per semester is an excellent way to enhance our social skills and prepare for our careers, because it teaches us how to adjust and deal with different characters and mindsets. It is a rare and invaluable opportunity to learn from our instructors and take their advice in certain matters, especially that some courses are given by the Deans and former Campus Minister too! Moreover, signing up for these free or required courses will force students to think outside the box; students are able to explore their creativity and improve their critical thinking skills. Although students may not see it right now, but these electives also give us the opportunity to stand out in our careers. Instead of only having a solid background in a particular major, HU graduates are skilled enough to thrive anywhere they go and excel at any given task!



Finally, I would like to add that it is a lot of fun to take a break every now and then from our busy schedules and routine university life. That’s why electives, such as Music, exist! If all we do is attend the same classes with the same friends and instructors, there would not be much to get excited over or remember at the end of our academic journey. Education is not limited to your major, because your major, in fact, is just a drop in an ocean. The best way to truly prepare for your career is by expanding your knowledge as much as possible, and not only limiting it to HU’s requirements.





**THE HU COMMUNITY
DEDICATES THIS PAGE TO APPRECIATE
THE HEROISM OF HEALTH WORKERS
WHO ARE RISKING
THEIR LIVES FOR OUR SAFETY**

Food, Sports, & Nutrition in Light of COVID-19

Dr. Sima Hamadeh & Mrs. Nanor Karamanougian Seferian



The coronavirus pandemic continues to spread, causing further public health, social, and economic issues. Immunocompromised or chronically ill patients are severely affected by the virus, having severe symptoms and high fatality rates. Since there is no medication and no vaccine for Covid-19, it is the responsibility of our immune system to tackle this virus.

Sudden lifestyle changes and unbalanced dietary habits that occur during quarantine can cause psychological stress, compromising our immune system and making the human body more vulnerable to viral infections. Therefore, each and every one should work on improving and strengthening the immune system to protect himself and his loved ones.

Fortunately, adequate nutrition and an active lifestyle can lead to an optimal functioning of the immune system. This may be associated with better outcomes with regards to preventing infection and complications of Covid-19.

As a general guideline, one's diet should include fresh unprocessed food in order to supply the body with an adequate amount of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Avoiding added sugar, salt and fast food will help the defenses of the body to stay alert, meanwhile preventing several chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease. It is advisable to stay hydrated by drinking water in adequate amounts as it regulates body temperature and helps to get rid of body wastes.

There is no need to follow an extravagant and strict diet to keep a healthy immune system. By prioritizing fresh and raw vegetables and fruits one can ensure that every meal contains a large amount of healthy and vital nutrients. Another means to ensure an abundant amount of necessary nutrients is to replace sugary and salty snacks with fruits like oranges, kiwis, clementines etc. which are high in vitamin C, which increases the white blood cell production, a key element in defending against infections and viruses.





As for lunch or dinner, a big portion of the plate should be fresh vegetables like broccoli, packed with antioxidants and vitamins A, C and E, garlic (an immune booster), ginger, (decreases inflammation), and spinach (rich with antioxidants and vitamin C). Noting that eating raw, uncooked vegetables ensures the maximum beneficence obtained from them.

It is advisable to avoid eating out for two reasons. The first is to reduce contact with other people and lower the chance of being exposed to Covid-19. The second reason is that during outings, people tend to eat fast, processed and unhealthy food which weakens the immune system.

Finally, being physically active helps in the battle against Covid-19. When physically active, working muscles produce compounds that help lower anxiety and stress levels, and boost the immune system, thus making the body less susceptible to infections. Therefore, any form of physical activity is beneficial and encouraged.

Eating healthy and consciously does make a difference in enhancing the body's capabilities in fighting alien bodies such as Covid-19. This doesn't mean that safety measures such as keeping a safe distance and using health masks must be undervalued.

COVID-19: A Different Perspective

Dania Al-Boukhari



By the time I'm finished writing this article, there will be 1,200+ new COVID cases in Lebanon, and they don't seem to be decreasing anytime soon. With this large number of patients, it is likely that we know at least one COVID-19 patient from our social circles. How do they adapt to the circumstances as COVID-19 patients? Is it as scary as we see it on TV and read about it on social media? With these unanswered questions in mind, I decided to interview some recovered patients to know how COVID-19 really is on the other side. First, I interviewed an anonymous Haigazian University faculty member, who contracted the virus from a "false-negative" tested person (the suspected individual tested negative, but the PCR result should have been positive). This faculty member was frustrated to be quarantined again after months of staying home. However, these circumstances aren't really surprising, given the poor enforcement strategies of the government. From the faculty member's experience, it was hard to deal with the physical side effects, such as headaches and muscle cramps, especially on days where they had to teach their students.

I also spoke to one of my close friends from university, Jana, who isn't sure how she contracted the virus. However, she suspects that she was infected through someone she encountered at a small family gathering she attended. Physically, the virus was exhausting to the extent that she slept approximately 18 hours a day with constant headaches. Her inefficacy and inability to concentrate made her constantly worried about her university courses and assignments. Before realizing that she was infected with the virus, Jana had visited one of her friends who lives with her elderly family members.

This made Jana feel guilty after testing positive, because she thought she may have transmitted the virus to someone who won't be able to endure it. One thing that Jana is thankful for was that she shared news of her illness with her small social circles who supported her. She believes that if she had shared the news with more people, they would've shamed and avoided her. They would have perceived her as the virus, not as the patient. Another person who shared their story is Aya Abi Haidar, who contracted the virus from a small party celebrating her graduation from the Faculty of Arts. Aya wasn't expecting to contract the virus, because she thought she was lucky enough to avoid it until that point in time – the same way she avoided gas bombs in the revolution, ISIS terrorist explosions, and even the Beirut Port Explosion. She believed that her precautions and good luck will help her, but COVID-19 doesn't play by those rules. Aya suffered from shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of the senses of smell and taste. She also felt like an intruder in her own house, where she was completely isolated from the rest of her family. She even had to wear a mask, carry detergents whenever she left her room, and disinfect everything she touched – making her live in a constant state of stress and anxiety. The physical and mental side effects were manageable compared to the shame that she had faced from the community. While some called to check up on her, others avoided her and judged her even after testing negative, which was particularly annoying to Aya. For example, the production team refused to work with her until a week passed after she tested



negative for COVID-19. She understood their concerns, but after the week had passed, they asked her for a proof for testing negative or else they'd cancel the shoot. Even after providing the test results, they refused to go near her during the shoot. Aya was hurt and bothered by people's treatment. Nonetheless, she preferred to be responsible and warn those around her, instead of remaining silent.

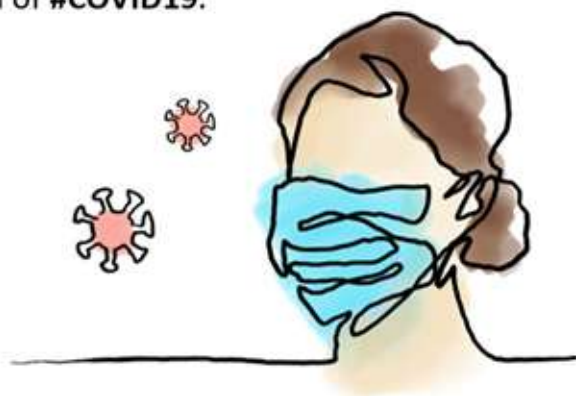
I decided to take a step further and speak to her brother, Hani, who had to deal with the mental, emotional, and social side effects – despite not contracting the virus. Initially, he was in a state of denial, because he did not expect his family members to contract the virus, but that wasn't the case. He also worried about his sister and the severity of her viral infection. Hani had to be quarantined again and not meet with his friends, including his neighbors. While some of his friends kept checking on him and his family, others shamed him and stopped speaking to him. One of his friends even stopped replying to his phone calls, because she was scared that "she will contract the virus through the phone"

. For him, that was both funny and sad. It was the ultimate representation of people's lack of information on the virus and lack of awareness on how to deal with patients suffering from it and their families. Hani was particularly annoyed to be treated as a patient although he did not contract the virus, instead of getting support during this difficult time which he and his family were going through.

COVID-19 changed the course of 2020. Further information on this virus remains unknown to this day. However, this shouldn't change the way we interact with the people around us, particularly those who contracted the virus. COVID-19 patients aren't happy that they fell victim to this virus, especially since they took all the necessary precautions. We, as their friends, families, and even society as a whole, should help those whose bodies are ruled by this mysterious virus. The patients are already suffering physically and emotionally and, therefore, we must be the reason they choose to fight this virus back. This pandemic reminds us to be humane, considerate, and kind to one another, as we don't know what others are going through. If we were in their place, wouldn't we want someone to drop us some chocolate by the door?

Viruses don't
discriminate and
neither should we.

#SolidarityNotStigma fights
the spread of **#COVID19**.



2020 A Downward Road for Globalization

Youssef Kel Yacoub

Without a doubt, the year 2020 brought fundamental changes to our daily lives. In fact, basic activities, such as meeting with other people in a restaurant, shopping, travelling, or even just wandering on streets, were suddenly out of reach. However, global trade and international commerce were no strangers to the “lock-down phenomenon” that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed. Indeed, the COVID-19 effects came just to crystallize a globalization that is retreating and increasingly on the defensive.

Globalization was a product, conceived and championed by the allied liberal leaders, who emerged victorious by the end of World War II. These leaders believed that by creating an ever-interconnected economic world (established on the premise of free market economy and enterprise), they will avoid the horrors and atrocities that destroyed the planet twice. With this aim in mind, they created international trade organizations, opened borders, loosened regulations, revolutionized telecommunication and transportation, and even encouraged language exchanges.

Within the decades’ advancement, an unhindered and an even more complex globalization was being woven. It peaked in the 90s, upon the approval of the United States, to admit China into the WTO (World Trade Organization), thus opening international markets to an unprecedented level of trade and commerce. Indeed, to the minds of many, globalization was perceived as the cure to our hostile world. They believed it lifted millions out of poverty, prevented the breakout of a major global conflict, and connected families and individuals. However, the year 2008 pierced this rosy dream. A major “financial crisis” hit the world at its heart. As a result, trillions of dollars were lost, and millions of working-class individuals were laid off. Most shockingly to the working-class, stimuli packages and subsidies were granted to the same people who were responsible for the breakout of this crisis. In reality, these changes did make the social and political implications even more important than the economic effects.

In the years following the crisis, we saw significant increases in political polarization and the rise of populist movements on both the left and right in Europe and the U.S., culminating in phenomenon such as Brexit in the UK, the election of Donald Trump in the US, and the rise of far-right political parties and personnel in continental Europe, such as Viktor Orbán of Hungary, Marine Le Pen of France, the AfD in Germany, and many others.



Indeed, these political actors did nothing except voice out the frustration and dismay of their local communities with what came to be known as “the political elite” in each context.

These leaders blamed the very same globalization for the troubles of their local communities. A rhetoric based on protectionism, nationalism, and isolationism has been echoed over and over again. The US withdrawing from international regimes, such as the Paris Accord, did speed up the adoption of economic isolationist policies. As a result, they caused the imposition of tariffs and customs. They also triggered a rise in the denouncement of multiculturalism and immigration. Yet, the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic disturbed supply chains, paralyzed international commerce routes, crushed tourism and leisure services, and prevented cross-border trade. It caused more burden to an already-cripling-and-shivering globalization. Finally, with more than 1 million deaths, 4.3% contraction of global gross domestic products estimated for 2020, and 130 million people at risk of living in extreme poverty, the challenges for a recovered globalization seem inevitable. Undoubtedly, all these aspects will shape the course and structure of the coming few decades.



The Mediterranean Diet

Dr. Sima Hamadeh & Nanor Hamamdjian

The EAT-Lancet Commission's report highlights that "food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on earth" [1], suggesting that a person's food choices: the type and amount of food that he consumes, significantly affect both his health and global environment. This report also mentions that the current food system and dietary trends are threatening both people and planet.

Urbanization, industrialization and globalization have marked the last century and affected both developed and developing countries. This had led to a shift in the food system and the people's dietary habits, in favor of a higher consumption of animal proteins, saturated fats, processed foods and a lower consumption of fruits and vegetables. This nutritional transition, or the expansion of what is today known as "western diet", is associated with a higher risk of obesity and chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and others. According to the World Health Organization, the NCDs are responsible for 41 million deaths a year (71% of all deaths globally), hence being the major cause of mortality and morbidity in low, middle, and high-income countries [2].

From "farm to fork", each step in the food supply chain, including cultivation, food production and processing, transportation, consumption, and even waste management have an impact on the environment, either leading to climate change, deforestation, water pollution and loss of biodiversity or preserving the environment. Studies have shown that 30% of greenhouse gases released are due to the food production system [3]. The production of each type of food (animal or plant origin) emits different amounts of greenhouse gases, also known as "footprint". The animal-based foods (meats, cheese, eggs, etc.) have a higher footprint than the plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, etc.). The Natural Resources Defense Council hypothesized that if each American reduces only one quarter pound (113 grams) serving of hamburger every week, the decrease in the global greenhouse gas emission would be identical to taking ten million vehicles off the street, thus emphasizing the impact of the food system and people's eating habits on the environment [4].



During the last decade, the concept of “sustainable diet” has been largely discussed in two challenging issues: human and planetary health. The Food and Agriculture Organization defined the “sustainable diet” as a diet with low environment footprints and positive health outcomes [5]. The Mediterranean diet (MDiet) is known as one of the best sustainable diets. This diet is mainly characterized by the consumption of considerable amounts of fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, whole grains, fish, olive oil, small amounts of dairy products, red wine, and an occasional consumption of red meat and poultry.



Studies have confirmed that the consumption of a MDiet reduces the risk of developing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, certain types of cancer, thus contributing to the reduction of the overall mortality rate. For instance, a large-scale study in 2018 has shown that adhering to a MDiet reduces by 25% the risk of developing cardiovascular infections throughout 12 years [6]. The MDiet’s health benefits are attributed to its richness in beneficial nutrients and its high vitamins and minerals content. In fact, some of the ingredients in the MDiet, such as olive oil, nuts, and fish increase the blood levels of HDL cholesterol, also known as “good cholesterol”, and lower the levels of both LDL cholesterol (known as “bad cholesterol”) and triglycerides. The Omega-3 fatty acids, contained in the MDiet such as fish, seafood and nuts, have other health benefits, among which are their anti-inflammatory effect and their role in enhancing memory. On the other hand, red meat is consumed in small to moderate amounts in the MDiet. This type of meat is rich in saturated fats and its consumption in large quantities can have a deleterious effect on health and increase, for instance, the risk of developing heart disease or colorectal cancer. The MDiet is also rich in dietary fibers, which are carbohydrates, contained in fruits, vegetables, legumes, and cereals that are barely digested by the body. These compounds slow down the sugar absorption rate and help control the blood glucose levels, thus lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes. They also provide the feeling of satiety, thus contributing to body weight management; prevent constipation, thus lowering the risk of colorectal cancers, and reduce the LDL cholesterol level, thus reducing the risk of cardiovascular events. In addition to their dietary fiber content, fruits and vegetables, as well as other ingredients of the MDiet such as the dairy products, are rich in vitamins and minerals which are essential for the body’s healthy functioning and contribute in improving immunity, bone and skin health, etc. Finally, moderate consumption of red wine is encouraged in the MDiet, for its richness in phytochemicals and its anti-inflammatory effect.



Beyond its health benefits, the MDiet also has a positive effect on the ecosystem. For instance, by switching from western diet to MDiet we will notice a reduction of 72% of the environment pressures; 60% of the water requirement for food production, 70% of the land use, and 90% of the energy expenditure. Moreover, changing eating regimen to the MDiet would empower the consumption of local foods, because most of the MDiet foods are grown locally, thus developing the local economy and reducing the long-distance food transportation, which alters both the food quality and the environment. This effect would be enhanced if the crops are cultivated according to a region's climatic conditions and geographical situation.

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The MDiet is more than a diet, since it has multi-dimensional and interdependent benefits. Beyond its health benefits, this diet preserves the environment by lowering the environmental impact of food production and by enhancing biodiversity; it promotes economic growth by empowering the consumption of local products and by encouraging local farming; and finally, it promotes the local culinary cultures by strengthening the relationship between the land, its inhabitants and the locally produced food. As stated during the EAT-Lancet Commission, "A diet-such as the MDiet- rich in plant-based foods and with fewer animal source foods confers both improved health and environmental benefits" [1].

A Little of This and That

Alyag Momjian



Life is full of ups and downs; it is full of mystery and surprise. We can all agree that 2020 had a massive impact on each one of us. I have always looked at changes as fresh starts. I have always thought a change happens for a reason, no matter what its size. It could be as small as getting a haircut or as huge as moving from one country – in the middle of an academic semester – to another to study the major you're passionate about.

Changes make us grow. I look back at last year, when I was a pre-med student in my motherland. I was thinking it was the time to return where I belong and never leave, as I could hear the motherland calling me all the way to diaspora. I thought that was it! I would be staying there, and I loved how the idea itself genuinely made me happy. However, despite being the happiest, my thoughts changed. I had another passion and decided to follow it no matter the circumstances. With a bit of hesitation and a jar of hope, I took the step. The fresh start began; life was not at its best form, but it was moving. Weeks after the fresh start, the global pandemic made its first strides to Lebanon. The stress was indescribable, as you could see the fear in people's eyes.

Fear of getting diagnosed with COVID-19, fear of adhering to the new rules, and not maintaining social distance the way it's supposed to. Time passed, people somehow adapted with the situation, and life was slowly going back to the way it was – with a bit of a twist.

Each day can be a fresh start, which leads us to the fact that each month can be a fresh new start as well. August began by breaking me. Ever since the pandemic started, I've been waiting to travel and return back home to see my family. I wasn't alone in this. I knew many people who were separated from their families and could not get back to them, because of COVID-19 and the new traveling policies (if traveling was allowed in the first place). The first of August was the day I received the news of my first cancelled flight, which I was impatiently waiting for, but the rising cases stopped the whole scheme. Just when I was coping with the idea, and just when I was pushing myself to wait a bit more, the fourth of August came along, and I witnessed the massive Beirut explosion. For someone who has been living in peace, barely hearing a gunshot, experiencing an explosion was an enormous shock.

No doubt, everyone was broken and hurt from inside. It took me a while to realize what actually happened; I was not the person I was before the explosion anymore. An adventurous soul turned into an introvert, who was ready to panic. I thought I was a mess, till I saw stories of the Lebanese people, which reminded me, despite the awful pain, of how blessed I was.

After five cancelled flights, four PCR tests, and many more challenges, I finally reached home. What a feeling it was! A reunion with the people you love the most, in the safest and coziest place on Earth. I was back to our little world in this chaotic universe. I can't express how thankful I was to feel that security at home. Just a couple of days later, I woke up to horrible news. I guess my heart was not shattered into enough pieces; I woke up to a war in Artsakh. A couple of days ago, the war ended; it ended by Artsakh breaking my heart. This was my 2020: a painful year which broke me into a million bits. A year, despite its hard and challenging days, made me feel grateful to have lived and experienced each feeling.

Now, I have a different perspective on life. I am slowly going back to that adventurous soul I was, and it is just a matter of time. Time. What a word it is! Now, I know how to never take anything for granted, how to enjoy life to the fullest, and how to, unapologetically, tell people about my true feelings. It is the hard times that teach us the most valuable lessons in life. Be yourself, do the things that make your heart happy, smile to strangers, spread kindness and positivity, but most importantly, live. Keep this in mind; tough times won't last; they will make you a stronger version of yourself! Now go ahead, face those difficulties, and have the most fun.

Inhale Change, Exhale Acceptance

Dania Al Boukhari

Back in my senior year in high school, I applied to only one university other than

Haigazian University and the faculty of my dreams. I was full of confidence that I'd be admitted to this faculty and start

working on my dream career. I was so sure that I even set up different plans to financially afford the tuition fees. Basically, I did everything I could to achieve my goal at the time by studying, preparing, practicing, and perfecting my application. I was able to ensure my deserved seat in the university I chose. However, no story is perfect, and everything played against me to stop me from finalizing my registration process. At the time, during midsummer, HU was the only place that was warm enough to accept me at such short notice. It was devastating to put so much effort and love only to have all the plans change last minute.

It's as simple as learning acceptance. To be clear, acceptance is not a form of toxic positivity that forces you to be optimistic towards each situation. Instead, it is confronting uncomfortable conditions of reality with an open heart and mind. This will allow you to acknowledge that pain and agony are an integral part of life that happen to everyone. You will be more aware that you will face situations filled with failures, losses, and traumas with little breaks in between where you build your happy and fond memories. Through acceptance, you build a life filled with a more positive attitude towards any life-twist. I understand that all of this might seem a little crazy and impossible, given the constant changes and uncertainties that come with the persistent rise of daily COVID-19 cases.

For the time being, try to accept this change as your new standard, because a significant part of acceptance is based on recognizing the events that you can control from those in which you cannot. In these circumstances, you can neither change the current situation nor stop patients from getting infected with the virus. Nonetheless, the way you deal with the situation is completely up to you. When you panic and get furious about how the pandemic changed your plans, remember that you are not alone, since this is everyone's situation, on a global scale. It is normal to feel frustrated and disappointed that your plans suddenly shifted without prior notice, but this is when you start practicing acceptance with your heart and mind. In your heart, refrain from attempting to escape your sad feelings, but rather welcome them with kindness and allow yourself to experience them – without forcing yourself to be positive. In your mind, notice the way and words you use to react to the situation. Make an inner commitment to accept things as they are by practicing it daily.

How did I do it?

How did I find alternative plans and work on them even though a dream of mine got shattered?

"We are in this together
– and we will get through
this, together."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres



#coronavirus | #COVID19

Inhale Change, Exhale Acceptance

Whenever you are struggling with acceptance, ask or tell yourself any of the following:

** How can I compensate for the plans I already had but could not accomplish?*

** How will this situation help me become a stronger person?*

** If I want to live a life that matters, I have to step out of my comfort zone. I have to accept new situations to level-up from where I am.*

** Practice the serenity prayer:
“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference”.*

Don't forget that acceptance is a choice you make at the present moment to prevent any or further suffering in the future. This will allow you to continue living a meaningful life, regardless of the sudden changes you might face.



Repeat after me: me, myself, and I. I can't stress how important these three words are for your self-development. In our non-stop, ever changing, evolving world, we often forget to take a step back, breathe, and enjoy where we are, right at this very moment. We forget to give ourselves the attention that we so easily give to others. We also forget to take care of ourselves and accomplish our goals; well, let this article be your reminder!

When Lebanon announced its first official quarantine period, I felt like a significantly big piece of my life was taken away from me. I was sad and felt as though "bored" was the best new adjective to describe where I was with my life. The same old routine, reliving the same day every day, not being able to get to the office – and what else need I say? You probably got the point. While I was trying to get on with this new lifestyle, I refused to let even a worldwide pandemic get in my way or the goals I have for myself. With that being said, I woke up one Wednesday morning and decided to start implementing a new daily routine by beginning to write in my journal (as cheesy as it sounds, trust me, it does actually help), doing my research, and working on becoming the best version of myself.

The journey started! As I mentioned earlier, you will need a journal; consider this your chance to get that gorgeous, hardback, marble notebook you saw at the bookstore the other day. We, as humans, generally take things more seriously if they're written on paper, which is why it is necessary to write your daily mini-goals and big monthly goals; maybe even read them during the day whenever you feel down or as though you lost your purpose. The reason you're not writing on your phone is also because it's not considered your most prominent point of peace. Basically, your phone is your point of distraction. It will help you at first with taking notes and writing, but not when your finger automatically finds its way to Instagram, TikTok, Twitter or Facebook. Consequently, whoops! You completely forget about writing the rest of your goals.

The second thing I would do, is set a time to go outside and work out for a bit. Therefore, I also recommend that you search for a domain in sports which you actually love. After converting to the full "online world" with work and university, your eyes need all the rest they can get. Go out and enjoy a 15-minute walk in your neighborhood with your earphones and favorite Anghami playlist.



Me, Myself, and I

Go up to your rooftop and jump rope for 20 minutes while enjoying the view. Take your little furry friends for a stroll around your house where you could both have fun, not just you. When you come back from that walk, jog or stroll, you will feel accomplished! Your heart will be happy, and it will be a change of scenery from all that Netflix you've been binge-watching... but, seriously, how good was Emily in Paris?

What I often forget to do in life is ask about my friends, family members, and people with whom I work. Thus, a main point I want to shed light on, is to constantly communicate with the people you love and care about. Trust me, it will not just make your loved ones feel appreciated and happy, but, simultaneously, it will also give you the sense that you have them right next to you through all circumstances. Have a 10-minute video-call with your friends from university, or a group-chat with all your family members abroad. Check -in with people you know were having problems or had an exam which they were nervous about. All of these small details don't necessarily need a lot of time, but make up for a huge part in you and your self-development.



We have officially arrived at the part where I get to share the greatest advice ever given to me, and it's my honor to hand it down to you: don't be fooled or absorbed by the fake realities of social media. Let's face it, we've all been there. Scrolling through Instagram and seeing all the "perfect" lifestyles of bloggers and influencers, comparing ourselves from top to bottom, etc.... What we so often see on social media is simply a mere second of a representation of their lives, and that is what we need to constantly remind ourselves. Their social media content does not show the bad moments, the struggles, or the unfiltered reality. I mean, when was the last time you saw someone post a selfie right when they got out of bed? ...

Yeah, me neither. No one posts about how they struggled for 2 years as an entrepreneur, only to have a breakthrough the third year by accomplishing her or his goals. Basically, social media is the LinkedIn of life, where you post the good/boast-able moments of your life. It is just like on LinkedIn, where you post the highlights of your working career, so always remember that. There's now a "screen time" option on Instagram, which notifies you of the average time you spend on the application per day. I currently have mine set at 2 hours and 30 minutes, which, I feel, is enough to open Instagram a couple of times throughout the day. Open it, set your limit, and see how much it affects your life!

This is it my friends: your simple 4-step guide to the me, myself, and I movement that can quite easily change the structure of your life. Love yourself and make yourself a priority; it's not selfish. On the contrary, it's healthy and good for YOU! After all, how you love yourself is how you teach others to love you.

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