

## *American Higher Education Standards in the Heart of the Middle East*



### LAU - MEPI TOMORROW'S LEADERS PROGRAM

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## *A Word From the Editor*





# Here We Are!

More than fifty students from across the Arab world gathered together by the banks of Nahr Ibrahim, Lebanon. It was a telling scene: My Moroccan friend teaching her Syrian roommate the correct way to pronounce "Tajine", a famous Moroccan dish. Me informing my Jordanian friend about the latest Egyptian economics conference. My Algerian friend singing "Zeina" in a soothing, peaceful tune sending shivers down our spines, now that we understood most of the Algerian lyrics.

This serene entangling of cultures, the undeniable urge embedded within each and every one of these 50 students to teach and learn, give and take, inspired a sense of pride and achievement. It served as a reminder that the internal and subconscious boundaries and borders we establish within are but mere representations of fear of that which we do not know, that which we do not understand.

In very few places in the Arab world would one find two seemingly opposing elements of harmony and diversity co-existing among young men and women; fusing in a manner that liberates pre-conceived notions born of indifference and gives rise to reverence and humility. Over the past three years, not only have we danced together, eaten together, argued together, sung together, and debated together, we have grown together. Fortified with nothing more than respect for the differences we each brought to the table, we saw that mountain peak, we reached that river, we sowed those seeds....

This latest edition of the LAU- MEPI TL Majalla aspires to embody this laudable human spirit in the hope of conveying, through the medium of words, the grandeur of what can be achieved, of what is possible.

What was happening in this tiny spot on the banks of Nahr Ibrahim mirrors that which happens on a daily basis in the LAU-MEPI TL program. This process of interaction gave birth to many "Ahaa" and "now I understand" moments. Epiphanies that can only be realized given the exposure to the cultural diversity and human uniqueness afforded by the TL program; an opportunity to notice, appreciate and respect the differing tunes and beats we all chose to dance the song of life to.

This very diversity is the reason we chose the theme of this edition to be "my country". We have realized that each one of us has something to say, something to give, something to learn. Thus, we offered the podium and the rest took care of itself!

I hope that after reading this issue, one idea resonates with you: it is ok to be different; in fact, we should cherish our differences.

May 2015  
Mohamed M. El Gohary  
Editor In Chief

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## ABOUT LAU MEPI-TL

The Tomorrow's Leaders Program is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the Lebanese American University (LAU). The program, which is coordinated by LAU's University Enterprise Office, was launched in 2008. It provides higher education opportunities to youth from around the Arab world who demonstrate outstanding leadership potential but who may otherwise not have the chance to study in an American educational system.

The program's mission is to prepare future Arab leaders for the complexities of the 21st century. Through high-quality academic support, leadership development activities, and civic engagement opportunities, the program fosters professionalism, ethical conduct, and tolerance in order to enable students to become globally competitive leaders and agents of change in their respective societies.

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# From One Home to Another

*For many international students living together, as is the case with TLers, the collision of different personalities, habits and social backgrounds has the potential to create an unsettled environment. But for me, the great variety of opinions that people have towards every aspect of life has made my everyday life all the more interesting.*

By Muna Saeed | Cohort 7

I like the fact that whenever we discuss an issue, each one of us brings to the table a different opinion, some of which I would not expect to hear. It's enlightening, interesting and thought provoking. Given that we all come from different backgrounds and were raised in different societies, the various outlooks and viewpoints that we inevitably hold are always stimulating to hear. Whether we are discussing religion, politics, habits, even food, we discover that despite our different and oftentimes conflicting views, we are able to

maintain the harmony through mutual respect. We take advantage of our time living together and consider it a prime opportunity to learn to acknowledge and appreciate diversity. Nurturing the traits of acceptance and tolerance will prove to be an invaluable lesson when we return to our home countries as tomorrow's leaders. Sometimes, we share traditions from our cultures in an attempt to bring us closer to each other. And what is better than food to unite a diverse group of individuals? On one

occasion, I was cooking spicy Yemeni food for lunch; while my Libyan and Bahraini friends were excited and anxious to try it, my Algerian and Syrian friends were not so enthusiastic. This difference in willingness to try my dish boiled down to what we are each accustomed to; what we can relate to. However, over time, my Algerian and Syrian friends tasted my Yemeni dish and found an appreciation for the different flavors it presented. This example can be extended to all issues of difference, on all levels. Although we start out

as strangers, each one believing that she/he is different from the other, it all changes as we get closer and become friends. The more we got to know each other through the various LAU-MEPI TL activities and events, the more we realized that we are all the same; we all have our fears, dreams, family issues, school concerns, and love dilemmas. I'm glad and lucky to have made these friendships and I'm sure they will last far beyond graduation. Being an international student as part of the esteemed LAU-MEPI TL program has proven to be

so much more than just leaving your county to fulfill your academic goals and meet new people. It's about working on yourself as an independent individual, opening your mind and improving your social behaviors, pushing your limits and venturing beyond your comfort zone. It's about learning how to accept others, how to handle tough situations, how to build friendships, how to enlarge networks, and so much more. For those who have ever wondered what it is like to be an international student, I say it's about finding yourself and others too.

By Jad Misri | Cohort 7

# A Syrian Tale

At the end of the day, each and every one of us has a unique story to tell. Although a lot boils down to how well you tell your story, the essence of your tale is just as essential. I am not the best of storytellers, but I have been told that I have a story worth telling. The events of my story range from the 25th of August, 2013 Aleppo-Syria to the 16th of January, 2015 Queen Alia International Airport, Amman-Jordan. Granted, at first it may sound all too confusing somewhat like a whirl-winded novel with one too many borders involved and two years in between. But, yes, this is my story, and a thrilling one at that: A Syrian boy talking about his adventure in Lebanon, which eventually ends in Jordan.

## CHAPTER 1

AUGUST 25, 2013

ALEPPO

I woke up in my room to find my mom awake, red-eyed, laying in silence so as not to disturb me in my brother's empty bed. She made me coffee. She had been up all night long. We shared a coffee and a cigarette on the balcony for the first and the last time in complete silence. She was staring at me without a blink. She would never get enough of me. The creak of the door broke her gaze. It was my grandmother, red-eyed and holding back her tears. My uncle doesn't want me to see him crying, she told me. Shortly after, my other grandmother and aunt came, but they weren't holding back their tears. They too told me that my grandfather and uncle couldn't stand to say their goodbyes either. I took one last glance at the room where I learned to speak, read and write. The room where I learned how to love and what it means to be loved. I turned off the lights and

kept going. I gave my father the keys to our home and his office. His hands were shaking. Then, suddenly, my mom hugged me from behind. As she buckled a golden necklace with a cross around my neck, she whispered: "Jad, please don't get emotionally attached to this. This is your back-up money." We headed to the car, walking my last mile as I dragged my memories in a bag through my childhood play ground. Barely holding back the tears, I hugged my family goodbye before I made my way to my friend's place where the bus taking us to the airport would pick us up. The pain in my parents' cries was deafening. The bus passed through the streets scarred by war, unrecognizable and hard to believe that they were once anything more than the pile of rubble we were looking at. Dreams and hopes, past and future, all were buried

under the wreckage. Soon enough, and before we stopped at any checkpoint, we caught sight of the airport, which had been closed for the past year and was officially out of service for civic use – only the military used it. Then, the driver whispered: "I have no idea who these people are." We were extremely afraid. What an end to an awesome journey. Although we had only traveled twenty kilometers, it was the furthest I had crossed in three years. The checkpoint was full of Iranian soldiers who didn't know how to speak Arabic. They asked for our ID's and then we crossed in peace. I was at ease. It seemed that everything was going to be okay. We reached this far with no problems. I was sure that someone was taking good care of me and keeping me safe. We finally reached the airport, but to my surprise

we weren't using the guest nor the traveler's entrance - we weren't using any entrance! We parked next to a suspicious-looking door and there, much to our shock, was another checkpoint. "Who are you??" My friend bravely answered with a name. "Wait, let me check." We immediately got our cross necklaces out from under our shirts and made sure that they were visible. "Lieutenant Fadi wants you right away." I turned to my friend and asked him if he knew the lieutenant. HE HAD NO IDEA...

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The rest of Jad's story can be found on his online blog at [www.asyriantale.wordpress.com](http://www.asyriantale.wordpress.com)

By Ahmed Ali | Cohort 7

# Bahrain Waking Up

## Blat, Lebanon

I remember when everything started moving slowly one afternoon and it seemed as if time had stopped for a while. I was strolling down the streets of Blat, making my way back to my dorm after a long day. I could smell the humidity and feel the heat of the sun stinging my forearms. The sounds of everyday life around me were synchronized to conduct a symphony of unbearable noise: The drivers honking their horns, the old man yelling at a kid who was driving his fancy car too fast, the mom screaming at the vender because the vegetables she bought weren't as green as she wanted them, the laughter of the children playing in the street....

I was there amidst all of that noise, all that commotion, but somehow, for a brief moment, it was all silenced when I looked up and saw how familiar the sky looked.

## Diraz, Bahrain

The sky was a smooth yellow. It was 6:30 in the morning. The sun was slowly making its appearance to greet the restless eye. I was tucking in my shirt and making sure that my uniform was as tidy as possible. They were very strict about the uniform. I always hated the combination of white and green for a uniform. I hated how early it was. I hated how I did not get enough sleep. I hated how my first class that day was physics. I hated that I had to go to school. As we were waiting for the

car to start moving and take us to that dreadful place, I saw an old man getting ready to start his day and open his store. His arms were blank pages and his veins were the words that spoke of imprinted memories. I could see the stories about the salted sea and fishing imprinted on his forearms. It was 6:30 in the morning for him too, but he didn't seem to mind at all. He had a smile on his face that lit the sky brighter than the sun that day. It was almost as though this old

man's smile was contagious, infecting everyone that walked past him. He played some music that danced around in the air as he prepared some tea with milk.

From the tea stains on his *thoub*, it was obvious that he didn't lead the most luxurious life. Yet, the laughter in his eyes was so pure that it washed the stains away. As I looked at this old man from the car, I saw my country, the land of pearls. I heard the songs that my grandmother

used to whisper into my ear as I dozed off to the smell of *bakhoor*. I felt the happiness and the comfort of a family gathering during Eid. I saw Bahrain in that man's smile. I felt home. I felt Bahrain.

Just before the car moved, he smiled at me, and I smiled back. The combination of green and white stopped bothering me. I looked at the sky once again and it appeared a lot brighter.

## Blat, Lebanon

By the time I made it back to my dorm, the sky looked pretty much the same as it did that epiphanic morning; it seemed and felt just as bright. I went to my room and hung up the Bahraini flag which I had been meaning to do for some time, but had never gotten around to. When I stood back and admired my national flag, I swear I saw the old man's smile between those five triangles.





# My Country

By Asma Jaziri | Cohort 7

*There's a popular saying you're undoubtedly familiar with*

*"We only know the true value of something when we lose it."*

Ironically, this well-known expression strikes but a silent cord in anyone who has yet to experience this tragedy, which is embedded in all our fates. Before this inescapable pain of loss one day crumbles the walls around you and within you, this saying is only as honest and painful as those around us, those who have been crumbled and shattered, say it is. Unfortunately, this translates into a common and unconscious human

trait of taking for granted all that fills our life with meaning, never once contemplating nor envisioning that what is here today may be gone tomorrow, senselessly assuming that the hustle and bustle that fills our lives today will be just as loud and inviting tomorrow. This is not human fault; this is human nature. And I, being as human as the next person, assumed that waking up to an empty lull just wouldn't

happen to me. But it did. All that I remember from that rainy day in December, when the coldness of the weather did nothing but accentuate the frigidness of my deserted heart, is waking up in a room bordered by yellow curtains. A room that was not my room, in a house that was not my house, in a land on the other side of the ocean to the place I called home. I was conscious of the things around me and

I was more than wary of what had happened. My mind, however, was elsewhere, in a more familiar place – a place where it really belongs. I can't clearly recall what happened that December day; it was as though I was struck by a high-voltage shock that made it hard for me to accept my truth – the truth that was now my undeniable reality: I lost my home. Before becoming a LAU-MEPI TLER, this word, HOME, a simple

four-letter word, bore little if any value to me. It was something that was always there, something I took for granted and not once stopped to reflect upon. But today, being thousands of miles away, drowning in a feeling of loss, barely breathing through the pain, I know what that popular expression means. I know the true value of my home, my country; it is the embodiment of love, belonging, attachment and unconditional loyalty.

# The Key to You

By Asma Jaziri | Cohort 7

*What makes our world a curious case are the differences and the diversities of our people: our race, origin, culture, beliefs, our paths and our preferences. Combined, these elements at the core of our individuality form a colorful, harmonious field of flowers. However, we, the inhabitants of this world, have abolished all kinds of geographical boundaries and accentuated our affinity through travelling. Accordingly, travelling has a remarkable effect on a person's life as it is a means to abrogate pre-judgmental ideas, to maintain a healthy spirit, and to build oneself.*

Despite music typically stealing the thunder, I consider travelling to be the real universal language. Generations of youth have been spoon-fed common misperceptions concerning different nationalities, religion, and all that makes one culture different from another. Unfortunately, such misperceptions are, well, misplaced. Somewhere along the line, the lies of the

elders become the truth of the youth. Travelling, embedding yourself in another's way of life, discovering their beliefs and values, is the only way to be a fair, self-appointed judge of right and wrong. It can't but lead to increased tolerance and decreased notions of corruption and falsities. To take a case in point, westerners who travel to the Middle East and North African countries

realize that, unlike what they have been informed through the media and what has eventually been adopted as their own personal convictions, we are not all terrorists and not all Arabs are barbarians. Indeed, we are predominantly simple people with big hearts, carrying the Arab gene of generosity. No wise elder's fable or fairy tale, no magazine's article or interview can teach us that which

travelling does simply because the lesson is one that has to be learnt through first-hand personal experience. Being part of the LAU-MEPI TL program has offered me this opportunity, allowing me to travel the world right here in within the borders of Lebanon. From Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Morocco to Bahrain, Syria, Iraq and Egypt, I have mixed and mingled with different cultures,

traveled from country to country and reaped the benefits of doing so. My perceptions of life have been refined and all my previous misconceptions replaced by truth thus enhancing my spirit and unchaining my mind from retrograde notions of difference. My travels have allowed me to find myself, but my journey is not over; traveling is a lifelong process and I look forward to the rest of the ride.

# WE WILL NOT GO DOWN

By Maha Yomn Sbaa | Cohort 7

*When brainstorming for the paper I was assigned to write under the theme “My Passport, My Visa” as one of the LAU-MEPI TL projects, I thought of all that we, the Tunisians, have achieved and accomplished thus far. I was proud. This is undoubtedly the first emotion I feel when speaking of my country. That was until a series of events turned my seemingly endless and abundant pride into fear: fear of the present, fear of the unknown.*

March 18, 2015

*“Tunisia witnesses an attack at one of its famous monuments: Bardo National Museum”*

Only two days after locals took to the streets of Habib Bourguiba in celebration of the national day of heritage and traditional clothing, three terrorists in military uniform attacked the Bardo National Museum in the Tunisian capital Tunis. Hostages were taken and twenty-one people, mostly European tourists, were killed at the scene. Fifty others were injured.



March 29, 2015

*“Thousands of demonstrators take to the streets of Tunis for an anti-terrorism march”*

A sea of red and white national flags filled one of Tunisia's main boulevards. More than 10,000 unified voices chanting “تونس تونس حرة و الإرهاب على برا”:

Tunisia is free! Terrorism out!  
“The Tunisian people proved today that they do not bow to terrorism, and that as one man and one woman, they defend the nation. When Tunisia is targeted, the whole nation stands as one,” commented Beji Caid Essebsi, the current president of Tunisia, as he paid tribute to his citizens' defiance.



## “NOW THAT TUNISIA HAS A SECULARIST GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS BROUGHT STABILITY AND PEACE, SOME ARE TRYING TO BREAK US”

We do not need such tragedies to realize how strong and perseverant my country is. Of all the regional counties fighting for freedom, Tunisia has made the most successful transition toward democracy, recently completing presidential and parliamentary elections

and a peaceful rotation of political power. Now that Tunisia has a secularist government, which has brought stability and peace, some are trying to break us. Unfortunately for them, they face a tough opponent: with 3,000 years of history, Tunisia is a centuries-old fierce

fighter. It is the land of civilizations, the land of diversity, the land of tolerance. With seas, mountains and deserts, it is the best of the world in one place. We might fall down, we might bleed, but we are Tunisians, we are fighters. Our Berber tattoos are marking our angry, determined

faces. Our big hearts and our enormous pride are our weapons, so no worries, we will get up, forget about the pain, fight the devil and win. This is my message to all those traitors who would love to see my country go down - we will not go down. Through all our pain and glory, sorrow

and gratitude, we, the people of Tunisia, will remain united against all the threats that want to destroy our beautiful, thriving country. We will fight against terrorism. No matter how long it will take. We will do it. Yes, we will.





# Topic

By Mohamed M. El Gohary | Cohort 4

## Covering the Debate Training

"We are only in favor of economic cooperation with the Islamic State," announced Shadwa Alaa. "The reason is that our economies are suffering and this cooperation will bring in much needed support since they control much of the oil fields in the region," she continued. Two minutes later, Mohamed El Gohary took to the podium declaring that: "Moral principles are indivisible my lady. By fostering economic cooperation with ISIS, you are effectively endorsing their acts. Those who preach hatred and killing have been morally and logically defeated. This house should vote in favor of the opposition."

The preceding dialogue did not take place in the Oxford Union in a country with a centuries-old tradition of democracy and debate. It took place at the Lebanese American University, in a region plagued by violence and turmoil. This LAU-MEPI TL debate was indeed a beautiful scene: young men and

women coming together to debate whether this house should support the Islamic State - a topic not easily discussed by their more experienced, decision-making elders. Contrary to what is typically expected from this part of the world when a controversial, emotion-evoking topic is discussed,

there was no shouting, no cursing, and no threatening. Rather, what ensued was a debate that conformed to the rules of civility and disciplined logic. It is times like these that a better future is possible and the candle of hope can be ignited - a spark that once lit, is forever illuminating tomorrow's

path. The participants, as is the case with all Tomorrow's Leaders activities, came from almost all ethnicities, religions, and countries of the MENA region. A stark diversity that could have easily served as a cause for division and conflict was, rather, an impetus for enrichment and variety of

ideas and perspectives. The culture of debate and tolerance has prevailed and all ideas have been presented. The strength and maturity of the TL students have once more exceeded expectations.

# Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

By Tala Jallad | Cohort 5

*"You get a strange feeling when you're about to leave a place. Like you'll not only miss the people you love but you'll miss the person you are now at this time and this place because you'll never be this way ever again."* **Azar Nafisi**

This quote could not have been more perfect at summing up the bitter-sweet emotions that engulf us with the mere thought of graduation. Just a few years ago, we - the LAU-MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders - packed our bags and said our

goodbyes. Each one of us coming from a different country and a slightly different culture, set out for our adventure in a foreign country, firmly believing that it would be the hardest thing we ever had to do. Even with this realistic notion at the forefront of

our expectations, little did we know just how difficult leaving our homeland and the people we became in it would prove to be. Above and beyond all else, living away from home has taught me how to be independent - in every sense of the word.

From the most mundane tasks of laundry, ironing, and preparing somewhat edible meals to the more self-challenging and emotion-evoking skill of picking ourselves up after we fall, independence, and all that it envelops has made me a better woman;

a more conscious citizen of society and a more appreciative individual. Being part of LAU-MEPI TL introduced me to amazing people that I'm proud to call my family and my greatest support system. Being a TLer is not something to be taken lightly; it



compels you to be active, accepting, and ready to embrace a new multinational family; it requires you to study your major while learning eight different Arabic dialects; it demands you to study for

your finals while trying a different cultural cuisine every night. Being part of LAU-MEPI TL is an adventure, and an enthralling one at that. No matter how vehemently we try to ignore, or even

deny, the fact that we will be leaving the place we have called home for the past three years or more, deep down we are all fully aware that our next crossroad is upon us. As such, our every thought

has been clouded by those cliché questions: What comes next? Where will we be in 5 years? 10 years? Who will be the first to get married and have kids? When will the next reunion be?

The only thing I know for sure is that I will miss not only the people I have come to love, but the person I am today, at this time and in this place.

# That Ride to Ithaka



By Zobida Tadj | Cohort 6

*“Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you are destined for.  
But do not hurry the journey at all.  
Better if it lasts for years,  
So you are old by the time you reach the island,  
Wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
Not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.”*  
**Constantine P. Cavafy**

Yes, my passport says that I am from Algeria. It is also true that I hold this place very dear to my heart. Nevertheless, this statement does not define my sense of belonging in a complete fashion. My country is not one place; my country is not even a physical place. My country is this enthralling voyage to Ithaka, wherever I see, hear, taste, speak, love, and feel. My country is in every soul I fall in love with and in every idea that dares me. Crowded airports, tranquil cafes, rusty

mountains, lazy Saturday mornings and overly enthusiastic friends are my home. I experience that strange feeling of serenity when I am in a space of growth. I feel I am home when I am physically, intellectually and emotionally stimulated. Do not be mistaken by my gay tone. My journey is not always as captivating as I like people to believe. Joining the LAU-MEPI TL program and living away from home in a sudden adult-like fashion brought my feet back to the

ground. There are days when I miss my mother terribly as she and I are very close; others when I am surrounded by many people and still feel lonely. There are times when I do not find the courage to face reality, and others when I feel misunderstood. There are instances when I experience internal conflicts and others when I can't find the words to express my emotions. There are days I get ripped off by taxi drivers, and others when I fail an exam. I remind myself in

the moments of darkness that feeling pain, nostalgia, loneliness, homesickness, anxiety and failure is better than feeling tedium, or even worse, not feeling anything at all. I also believe I am not meant to live confined in my comfort zone - which, by the way, I do miss at times. I belong to this moment when I'm feeling alive. Whether I will be back living in my homeland or not, whether Ithaka is a physical place, a person or a state of mind

does not hold much significance to me. What is more significant, what being a TLER has proven, is how I choose to live now, looking ahead not more than a couple of steps. Acceptance of the moment is the key. At this very moment, while I am writing this, I am home.

# “WOMEN LEADERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE”





"The Role of Women in the Changes that are Taking Place in the MENA Region" event was organized by the University Enterprise Office (UEO), and the Institute for Women Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at LAU, in partnership with the Middle East Partnership Initiative, bureau of Near Eastern Affairs of the U.S. Department of State (MEPI) and took place from July 27 to 31, 2015 in Beirut, Lebanon.



# International Conference 2015





# *We're More Than Big Guns*

By Rawand Al Haress | Cohort 7

*«Through art we portray both what we see and what we are yet to see.»*

What's the first thing that crosses your mind when you think of Libya? Is it guns? Oil? Or is it revolution? Well, we're much more than that; we are a community of creative people involved in a multitude of things, in particular the arts: Graffiti, Portraits, Still life, Photography, Calligraphy, and so on. Sadly, focus is predominantly on the amount of oil we're producing, or, more accurately, losing, rather than on the potential we possess. We hope to familiarize you with the amazing talents that Libyan people have, and to put Libyan art under the spotlight once and for all.





# The “Do-you-want-more-bed-sheets?” Guide to Moving

By Sarah AlNemr | Cohort 7

Come September and you'll be hugging your family goodbye with lumps in your throat. The cord is about to be cut and this dawning leaves your stomach aching and your heart trembling. You'll surely experience an internal battle of emotions; on the one hand you are overwhelmed with excitement, jubilation, and self-pride, while on the other, you have a nebulous feeling

of apprehension, the uneasiness that comes with facing the unknown, the new, yet-to-be-treaded path. Bear in mind though that you are not alone. You are not the only one, or the first one, to cram their life into 32 kilograms, leave their comfort zone, and prepare to inhale Phoenician air. You will, however, be pleasantly surprised to discover just how fast Tlers learn to get along and forge

a relationship. Being away from your family means that you are now your own boss (more or less), so have fun with your newfangled freedom. Stay up till the crack of dawn talking about your ideals and ambitions with your dorm buddies. Have pizza for breakfast and ramen noodles for lunch. Go out and about with your new friends, maybe you'll find THE spot. Remember, though, such

new-found independence and the enticing world of LAU-MEPI TL should not underpin nor compromise your sense of responsibility, which, although initially may seem like quite a weight on your shoulders, you'll ultimately get the hang of. Yes, you'll eventually stop being asked where you're from and what your major is. Yes, you'll catch up with the demanding homework and writing assignments, and yes,

you will organize your study schedule. Don't be alarmed by how all of this may or may not make sense; being a Tler is the time when you find yourself, the time when you learn what you're made of. Living with the responsibility of maintaining a 3.0 grade point average, but not the responsibility of having to keep a roof over your head, ideally helps with the transition into “the real world”.

That said, you may as well *Carpe Diem* (seize the day), and here's what my experience has proved to be sound advice:

**1** \_\_\_\_\_  
At times, you will get too lonely, too busy, and too broke to do anything really. So expect that there are moments, days even, when the magnitude and scope of it all will hit you all at once.

At the end of the day, you've come a long way. You're living a new experience, making new memories, finding new friends, learning new things. Enjoy the opportunity you have been handed and make the most of every new experience.

**2** \_\_\_\_\_  
Everyone's starting out with clean social and academic slates, so forget about the very existence (or non-existence) of your glory days at high school. It's over. What you do now is what counts.

**3** \_\_\_\_\_  
Don't skip class. Just don't!

**4** \_\_\_\_\_  
Know how to deal with your homesickness. Though it varies from one person to another, calling your family every single night or isolating yourself as you drown in your sorrow, does not help.

# The Great Responsibility of my Generation

By Nuran Ben-Musa | Cohort 7

*“The Youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.” Benjamin Disraeli*

The Libyan's youth determinative journey of liberation began a few years ago when they, comprising the majority of the population, decided to march their way to a revolution against the then current tyrannical government; a form of so-called leadership that was dragging the country downward instead of building it up.

The Libyan youth were bursting with purpose and optimism. This journey they had wholeheartedly embarked on was the only path that led to liberty, freedom and independence; the path that would ignite a new era of prosperity for their homeland.

They united as one with a sole and common cause. They had had enough of dictatorship. They knew the time had come for them to reclaim their country and decide their own destiny. After 40 long years of dictatorship, various Libyan cities from the far north to the south reaching the eastern and the western sides of the country were all moved by the winds of the Arab Spring. The trigger that they were waiting for had come and they knew change was inevitable. They knew it was their turn now!

This communal decision marked one of the few occasions in this century when the majority of the citizens unanimously agreed on a common objective: that the revolution is a must by conscience and that once started, there is no turning back. The people of Libya were ready to sacrifice for their land, just as their grandparents did in the face of imperialistic fascism exactly one hundred years prior. Two different generations, two different causes, both struggled and gave their lives for the soil of their nation that had been watered from the blood of its sons.

A few months into their journey and the Libyans were successful in their feat. The dictatorship was toppled. The youth tailored this revolution with a new spirit; they set its values and they led the battle. A new chapter was opened the morning after victory was achieved and the revolution had said its last word.

But there was no happily ever after. This was not the end. Four decades of tyrannical rule leaves a stubborn stain, a stain etched in the very foundation of the nation and its people. There was no basis from which a new and free Libya could flourish. Reconstruction in the face of corruption proved to be a challenging and burdensome task. Once again, the Libyans were marching, but this time the result was not in their favor. Suddenly, the gap between them and their free Libya – their ultimate objective – was growing. With

each passing day, their revolutionary spirit was being murdered, their values being degraded, and their sacrifices going unnoticed.

Although with the toppling of their dictator their path to liberty was initially and seemingly complete, the road that awaited them proved to be a much harder one to walk. Nonetheless, the youth of Libya are not to be underestimated. Their inner determination, mounting sense of responsibility, unrelenting faith in a better tomorrow, and willingness to sacrifice can go a long way....walk a long path.



*Olive tree dedicated to  
TL class of 2014*

# بيروت في رائحة الياسمين

دمشقُ أتيّت و من بلاد الياسمين

دمشقُ أتيّت و قلبي مملوءٌ بالشوق و الحنين

أحكي و أروي قصصاً قد حدثت مع الملايين

أرى بيروت حسناء

أرى في شوارع أرضها عذراء

لا أدري كم هي جميلة و عفراء

أناديها بكل يوم و يوم الحب لا يكفيه النداء

بيروت يا قلب الأرض إني في بكاء

بحب الجمال بأرضك أم بالعراء

و ياسمين زار الأرضة تغزل بها و رأى جمال الشتاء

لا أدري هل ساحلك جميل أم جمالك في روح يحي قصة يحن له وداعك و الفراق

By Nathir Haimoon | Cohort 7







# TL Retreat

## 2014





# Alumni News

*“ I graduated from LAU, Byblos in 2012. I earned a Master’s in International Business Management in Lithuania. Now, I am back in my home country, Lebanon, and I work at IAxcess, an ICT reseller, where I am responsible for internal sales.”*

**Carla Monzer, Lebanon**

*“I am currently enrolled in a master’s program in Istanbul-Turkey at Marmara University majoring in Radio & Television. I am on a full scholarship called Turkeye Burslari, which is assisting me with my tuition fees, living expenses and providing me a year-long Turkish language preparatory course which I am currently half-way through.”*

**Ferdaous Naili, Tunisia**

*“I am currently doing my Master’s in Corporate and Financial Management at Lund University- Sweden.”*

**Joud Zaumot, Jordan**

*“I am currently the coordinator of the Migrant Community Center (MCC) at Anti-Racism Movement. I also work part-time as a research consultant with different NGOs.”*

**Ramy Shukr, Lebanon**

*“I am a third-year medical student, soon to start my fourth, at LAU. I am also working on the Nabha: Because We Care project, which involves the renovation of a dispensary in a rural area in Bekaa. Hopefully, the opening will be in the near future.”*

**Ghid Amhez, Lebanon**



LAU Alumni Welcome Ceremony for the TL Graduating Students - 2015

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