

The Difficulties I Faced in my Academic Journey

My four-year academic journey in Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) was a delicious torment! Four years full of hard work and study passed from my life. I'm truly very proud of getting a bachelor degree with an excellent average from the English department at IUG. My educational life was just amazing! The way to get an access to such a degree wasn't a bed of roses, though. Actually, I faced lots of difficulties which made it difficult for me to do it.

To begin with, the high tuitions were a big obstacle to me and to many university students as well. Students have to study a range of hours that differs according to the major itself. For example, mine is 141 hours. The price of one hour is 15 dinars (100 shekils approximately). And you know, Palestinian families don't have such big amounts of money. And many families have more than one son or daughter studying at universities. This is considered a hard burden upon the shoulders of fathers as they spend no effort in working day and night in order to get money. Guess what? Some mothers sell their pieces of gold like necklaces, rings, and bracelets, etc just to give the money to their sons and daughters so they can pay, register some, not all, the courses and study.

This problem extends to include books, pamphlets, research papers and projects. Each course has at least one book with some stuff in some cases. And of course, getting these books is crucially necessary for studying and following up. The prices of these books along with the tuitions are very high to a normal Palestinian father! I wholeheartedly pity these great fathers who try their best to deprive themselves of many things for the sake of letting their children learn! My father! Oh, how much I love him, and how much I owe him! He is just great, and so is the rest of Palestinian fathers.

Moreover, the transportation is another difficulty added to the previous ones. The Gaza Strip has many governorates like the northern governorate, the middle governorate, and the southern one. Each governorate has some regions and camps. Students for all these regions come to the university either by car or by bus. In both cases, they have to pay in order to reach their universities. And some of them come from another governorate to study at the university, and here the cost is more. The list of the money they have to pay is getting bigger and bigger, unfortunately!

These economic problems hinder the way of succeeding. Many students put off whole SEMESTERS due to the fact that they can't pay and that they don't have the enough money to learn! God! How miserable the case becomes! My university follows the private sector, and you know, this sector is not that easy when it comes to tuition and stuff.

Even when we finish our study and want to take our certificates, we have to pay graduation tuition (50 dinars= 250 shekils). This is applicable in all universities in Gaza. We also pay for the graduation gown and ceremony.

I know this is hard and unbearable, but I need to sacrifice. This was my eternal motivation that I need to be something in my country, and that I need to prove myself. But, this obstacle may depress many students. Therefore, it needs an urgent solution and help. I know some talented students whose economic status deprived them of becoming famous people! I'm the top first student in my section (92.2%), for instance, but, I can't pursue my higher study and get my MA because it costs a lot! This forces me to delay it till I can work and save some money, but it will take a big deal of time. I know this damned well!

This tough economic case includes university students, but it is not limited to them. It also includes school students and complete families. As a result, it has a chain of painful consequences which hinder the way to education. Here, I want to shed lights on a Gazan family whose father was once a tailor. After the closure of the crossings and the blockade, this career suffered fatal damages! Tailors became unemployed and with no salary. Of course, this was reflected on the educational process for their children in the first level. This family has no refrigerator, no washing machine, and no good cupboard. You can imagine the amount of suffering they show! Lots and lots of food get ruined because their old and full of default fridge doesn't work. Also, it causes a bad smell which they can never tolerate once they open the door of that bad fridge- if it is really a fridge!. As for the washing machine, their mother washes the clothes of the whole family just ONCE A WEEK! You know, she definitely needs detergent and stuff for washing like soups, etc, but what can a depressingly poor mother do in such a case? Her husband doesn't have money to give her, nor does he have a job. Their clothes are so few, and imagine, the father and the sons share the 5 pairs of socks and the undies. Approximately, each morning starts

with a quarrel with the children shouting: "hey mom, where is my pair of socks? And another one shouting: where is my blouse? ... the mother stands motionless and speechless before her children calls and questions. She severely hides her tears and just starts helping them find what they want. Their cupboard is broken and unsuitable at all, and their old clothes are just thrown here and there since they can't put them in a cupboard with no doors and no good size. After the wave of shouts and quarrels, they are now ready to go to their schools. Unfortunately, they go on foot, yet they are not upset of that. The thing that makes them sad is that they want a pocket money like their colleagues. I feel you already got the answer, Sir. "Nothing... can they take"

After the beginning of the semester, they are asked to bring some notebooks and stationary. But, they can't bring any. This forces them to collect some empty bottles from the streets and sell them to some people who may get benefit from them. One of them left the school as he can't get what he is supposed to have. In addition, his eyes are going to the worse. He also needs glasses. Another one is patient. He has allergy since he has been three years old.

Even the house itself is not fully equipped. The bathroom has several problems, and it also has a bad smell. It has to be repaired. One more thing, their sister is engaged, and she will get married soon. Her siblings need to buy nice and new clothes for the wedding. But, they cannot!

The educational level of the children is too bad. Hardly can they get marks, and rarely do they make a kind of progress. This family will highly appreciate any help anyone can provide them with. I wish that you have got the true image. Thanks a bunch for your initiative. God bless you. I dearly wish you the best life ever.

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