

# THE INSIDER.



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## A NATION OF WHAT IFS

BY JEYA GEAGEA

What if everything had remained as it once was? What if our homeland had remained just as our childhoods remember it? What if sorrow, fear, aggression, and sacrifice slowly faded away, and all that remained was the echo of our hopes and dreams? What if fewer souls were lost in the confrontation of enemies? But make no mistake, the youth may be hopeful, however we are well aware that corruption and injustice live and breathe among us.

Not only are we trapped in the middle of a battle, we sit with our hands tied to a courtroom bench, waiting as the trial of our future unfolds, while the judge remains faceless. All we can do is listen for the sound of the gavel that will either condemn us to ruin, or grant us freedom. We close our eyes, and we hope that it will set us free; free enough to stand once more beneath the cedars that have outlived every storm before us.

Today's news seems to carry no reprieve within it. Instead, it carries terrifying developments, especially those related to our homeland. We open our phones, and we are faced with the terrifying reality of the destruction that seems to follow this country, while we are expected to go about our lives as normal. How can one do that while countless "what ifs?" are haunting our prospect of a future within our home?

As the situation develops and worsens, we find ourselves sinking alongside a colossal ship. Even as it drowns, its magnificent grandeur is impossible to ignore. Its passengers, oh-so-resilient, strive to save it, even though the mission seems impossible.

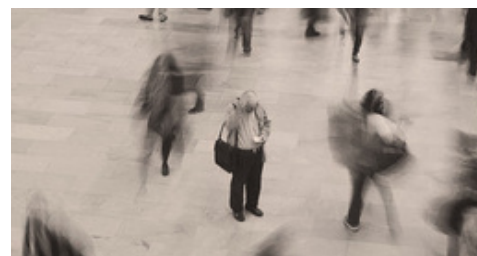
It has become clear that war is no longer only missiles and destruction, but a tragic struggle that shapes future generations.

The question "what if?" remains a cry that grows louder with every heartbeat of a nation's youth. A youth that still hopes and dreams despite its homeland's sorrows, and that homeland is **Lebanon.**

## UNSUNG HEROES OF LWIS AIS BY SERENA SALIBA

When we think about our school, we tend to think of students and teachers. However, there is a group of people who play an essential role in our lives and aren't given the recognition they deserve: our school staff.

Our school consists of various staff members each serving a different purpose. For example, our school security stand at the gate every morning and welcome us with a smile. They tend to create a sense of safety and security in our shared environment.



Our cleaning staff's roles are vital in ensuring we are able to learn in a clean and healthy environment. They work from morning till night to keep our classrooms neat, our hallways clean, and our shared environment healthy and organized.

*"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are scared with scars."-Gibran Khalil Gibran*

Our cafeteria staff work hard to prepare food and ensure our students have access to proper food throughout the day.

Finally, our administrative staff help ensure that everything runs smoothly and that various school aspects are well-managed and organized.

In conclusion, our school staff are the heroes behind it all. Their presence is crucial and the roles they play are essential in our daily lives. Overall they are the backbone of our community and they deserve all the recognition and appreciation they can get.

# TEACHERS' DAY

BY KYE AOUN

Every year, students take advantage of teachers' day in order to appreciate educators at LWIS AIS. Teachers do far more than just explain lessons from a book; they help inspire students, build confidence, and even form close bonds with them. They guide students through obstacles both inside and outside of the classroom. That is why at LWIS AIS, teachers are celebrated and recognized for their efforts.

Teachers behind the scenes work tirelessly to ensure that hours are meaningful, educational, and most importantly, engaging. They prepare activities to introduce new concepts, provide fruitful feedback on projects, and even answer students' questions late at night. Teachers at LWIS AIS do not simply meet the bare minimum; they constantly go above and beyond to inspire students.



Perhaps the best quality teachers at LWIS AIS possess is their friendliness to students. Students do not view teachers as superiors or authority figures; they are capable of communicating with them on a very personal level. Students will often tell teachers about their weekends, hobbies, and lives outside of school. A close relationship exists between the two, and that is why many students that graduate from our school do not remember educators as only teachers, but also as friends, with whom they share many great memories. As a LWIS alumni stated, "My teachers have a special place in my heart forever.

They were and still are family to me, and they played a huge part in shaping the person I am today." All these reasons are why on teachers' day, students appreciate and commemorate their teachers. The truth is, teachers' day is not enough to celebrate the work educators put in at LWIS AIS. However, it serves as an important reminder that without them, students at LWIS AIS would not be the high achievers that they are today. (Also all students know teachers talk behind their backs).



## THINGS STUDENTS WISH THEIR TEACHERS REALLY KNEW

BY AYA DERSTEPANIAN



"A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning." – Brad Henry. This idea can portray what many students truly feel in the classroom, but also what they sometimes deem as missing. From the outside, our classrooms are seen as simple. The teacher explains, then the students listen and take notes, lessons progress, and repeat. But for some students, the experience isn't always as straightforward as it seems. What looks clear on the surface doesn't always reflect what is actually happening in the moment, especially lessons that move faster than some can process. Students aren't always able to explain that understanding cannot happen at the same pace as everyone else. These small gaps aren't obvious. But they are there.

At LWIS-AIS, student voice and choice are always encouraged, and many students do feel heard, but even then, students still struggle to express themselves. There are moments when pressure is built quietly, and this pressure may not always push students to do better. Instead, it has the opposite effect. Instead of offering motivation, it can make them feel stuck or even discouraged, especially when they feel the need to constantly prove themselves. Students were asked the question: "What do you wish your teachers actually knew?" and their answers offered both insight and honesty.

One IB student described this pressure as overwhelming, even saying that it sometimes feels like teachers treat them like "animals in a zoo". Even if it sounds extreme, it represents how intense academic pressure can feel from a student's perspective.

Beyond the pressure, many students feel like they can be defined too quickly based on their academic performance. Deeva Keyrouz, a Grade 10 scientific student expressed this directly, stating "there's more to us than just our grades". When tests are handed back, students who often score lower than most, do not want to be subjected to comments such as "You're not studying hard enough" or "You're not focusing in class". Students want their efforts to be seen, even when their marks are not ideal.

Still, students do appreciate their teachers. Many of us are aware that teaching is not an easy task, and that behind every lesson there is always planning and intention. However, what often makes a difference is not the content of what's being taught, but the way the students are supported throughout it. When a teacher shows patience, takes the time to explain something again, and encourages a student regardless of failure, it completely changes the way a student sees that subject. Michael Zakhour, a senior student simply said, "we appreciate our teachers". It may not always be said directly, but it is seen in the way we as students keep trying, even when things don't come easily.

# ماذا لو؟ بقلم إيلي الراعي



لا يزال نعيش صراعات مختلفة؛ صراعات داخلية تنمو مع تراكم الضغوطات، والأزمات وبينما ننتظر الفرج، نجد أنفسنا في وسط دوامة من التساؤلات\ تسلب الراحة والاطمئنان في وطن عالق وسط الزحام، تائه بسبب الضجيج والضوضاء التي تحيط به وتمنعه من إخراج نفسه من تلك الحفرة. ومع تأزم الأحداث، نجد أنفسنا نغرق مع سفينة عملاقة، خلافة، لها هيبة مربعة رغم غرقها، وتحمل ركاباً أقوياء وجبارين يعملون لإنقاذها رغم أن المهمة تبدو شبه مستحيلة. أصبح واضحاً أن الحرب لم تعد مجرد قذائف ودمار، بل أصبحت صراعاً داخلياً يؤثر على أجيال المستقبل يبقى السؤال "ماذا لو؟" صرخة نابضة من قلوب شباب وطن يشبههم؛ وطن مفعم بالأحلام والسمود رغم أزماته، وذاك الوطن يدعى لبنان.

ماذا لو بقي كل شيء على ما يرام؟ ماذا لو بقي لبنان كما نعرفه منذ الطفولة، وعاد كل شيء إلى حاله، واختفى الحزن والخوف والعدوان والتضحية شيئاً فشيئاً؟ ماذا لو انخفضت نسبة هدر أرواح شبابنا في مواجهة الأعداء، رغم أننا على يقين أن بعضهم موجودون بينما يتعممون بالفساد والظلم؟ إننا في حقبة من الزمان هيمنت عليها التطورات التكنولوجية التي ساهمت في جعل الأوضاع أكثر خطورة؛ فالأخبار في يومنا هذا تتراكم تدريجياً حاملة العديد من التطورات المرعبة، خصوصاً تلك المتعلقة بالعدوان تجاه الوطن الغالي لبنان. تبدو الأخبار وكأنها لا تحمل الخير معها، حيث لا يزال عالقين في وسط المعركة، غير قادرين على القيام بشيء سوى البحث عن إيواء وانتظار صدور القرار الذي يحكم بالرحمة والحرية، أو القرار الذي يحكم بالدمار وخيبات الأمل

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## THE QUESTIONS WE'RE AFRAID TO ASK

### BY JEVA GEAGEA

In times of conflict, uncertainty and fear follows students into classrooms and hallways. For many students, the most striking reality is not just the war, but the silence surrounding it.

When asked how they felt, and what their thoughts were on the ongoing conflict within their nation, many students expressed frustration at what they described as an unspoken taboo. Many said that they have questions to ask, and things to say, but feel like there is little to no space to voice them.

"Talking is healthy," Aya Derstepanian, a Grade 10 student, said. "It helps us process what's happening. Politics are a part of life, so they're naturally a part of conversation."

Students emphasized that they are not asking for arguments or division, they simply want respectful dialogue. They acknowledge that teachers must intervene when discussions get disrespectful, but they feel as if some conversations are often shut down even when they remain civil.

"There's a gray area where people can disagree respectfully," another student said. "But questions don't really feel encouraged."

Beyond frustration, interviews revealed a deeper sense of disillusionment. When asked whether they thought Lebanese people were heroes, or ignorant observers of history, a majority of students chose the latter.



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Beyond frustration, interviews revealed a deeper sense of disillusionment. When asked whether they thought Lebanese people were heroes, or ignorant observers of history, a majority of students chose the latter.

Several expressed a loss of hope, which they blamed on recurring political patterns. Students referenced elections and repeated leadership, questioning whether meaningful change is possible when the same people continue to hold power.

When asked whether he feels like the government has failed its citizens, Grade 10 student Zein Hemadeh said “It has not only failed its citizens, it has failed itself.”

Mrs. Samar Sleiman shared a heavy perspective, saying “Your routine stays the same, but you no longer feel safe long-term.

Our middle school counselor, Mrs. Rita Comair emphasized that students process this reality in many different ways. According to her, reactions often appear as anxiety, distraction, or irritability. She mentioned how students often absorb fear from parents and their surrounding environment.

“Sometimes the fear presents itself physically,” she explained, noting symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and dizziness. She also highlighted the role that social media plays in shaping how students perceive events. “Through social media, students are seeing things that they shouldn’t be exposed to,” she elaborated.

At the lower campus, school counselor Mrs. Randa Wehbe observed similar patterns among younger students. She noted difficulty focusing in class and, in some cases, children speaking about nightmares. She shared that students at this age may not understand the situation, but they absorb the anxieties of those around them.

When asked about the long-term effects that war could have on young children, she told us that the school does its best to ensure that students are learning to process their emotions rather than suppress them. This is done with the goal of reducing lasting psychological impact as they grow older.



School principal Mr. Alex Husni reflected on the difficulty of leadership during such periods, especially when addressing students directly. He noted how delivering the same assembly about safety in case of an attack was heartbreaking.

“One of the hardest things,” he explained, “is that I have no control of the outcome. All we can do is watch and hope for the best.”

He also spoke about a broader challenge: getting through to students in a country where a unified national identity is non-existent.

“I love Lebanon. I enjoy being here,” he said before adding that he does not believe a national identity truly exists at this time.

Regarding students’ calls for open discussion, Mr. Alex agreed that conversation can be healthy and necessary. However, he expressed concern about maintaining respectful dialogue in a community shaped by differing viewpoints.

When asked whether Lebanese people are resilient or ignorant, he offered a complex answer, ultimately leaning toward ignorance. He explained that many people distance themselves from suffering, believing that those affected are somehow responsible for their own circumstances, a perspective he strongly disagrees with.



Across interviews, one theme remained constant: uncertainty. Students, teachers, and administrators alike described living between **normalcy and anxiety, routine and unpredictability.**

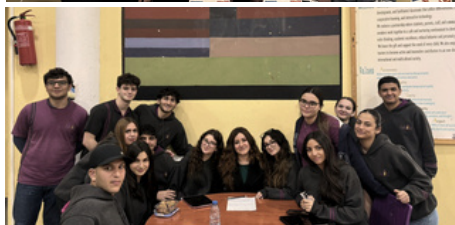
The conversations revealed no single narrative about war, identity, or responsibility. Instead, they exposed something quieter but equally significant: a generation searching not only for answers, but for permission to ask the questions out loud.

## JOIN YOUR HONOR SOCIETY: AVAILABLE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students at LWIS AiS now have the opportunity to join the Honor Society Clubs, a new initiative started by student Chafic Chebat to encourage **academic excellence, leadership, and collaboration** among peers.

The Honor Societies create a supportive network where students can grow, lead, and connect with others who share similar academic goals. Being part of a society can also help students strengthen their CVs, challenge themselves academically, and earn a graduation cord.

To join, students must have an average of **80 or above.**



Students can apply to societies in different academic areas, including:

**Languages:** English, Arabic, French

**Sciences:** Chemistry, Physics, Biology

**Humanities:** Social Studies, Psychology

Honor Society members will have opportunities to work together, explore subjects they enjoy, and take the next step in their academic journey.

Students interested in joining are encouraged to sign up and become part of this growing community of motivated learners.