

Letters - 19 November 2021

18 Nov 2021 | by The Friend

From Brummana's supporters to Population concern

Brummana's supporters

The dramatic plight of Lebanon continues to be headline news and so it should be. In a country disintegrating, just where Brummana High School (BHS) would be without its Quaker supporters conjures a terrible image: one of students, staff and families at breaking point and a country and region without its educational beacon for 150 years.

Predicted by the World Bank (in June) to be in the top three worst financial crises since 1850, the country is perilously close to disaster. The crumbling economy, political and social upheaval, the explosion, pandemic and geopolitical challenges have put individuals, families and communities on the brink. Without international support the country once revered for banking, medicine, entertainment, nature and education may be little more than a forgotten speck.

BHS now suffers at the hands of the devaluation of the local currency and rampant inflation. Community members are struggling on with over ninety per cent of the value of their incomes scrapped. Still teachers give 100 per cent to their charges. Still parents desperately try to ensure their children's education does not waver. Yet how much harder it could possibly get is frankly difficult to imagine.

Since 1873 the school has found great support through the international Quaker community. Founded by a member of the Religious Society of Friends, the school received support from the UK and US to develop and prosper. It is that same base of Friends who continue to support now. The Quaker International Educational Trust and the Friends of Brummana group are among them. Without their support, along with old scholars worldwide, the community would be on its knees.

In a country with such a sparse state education system, the non-profit BHS has filled the gap for many over generations. Thanks to the Quaker supporters of the present, the school continues to teach individuality, service, tolerance, respect, peaceful resolution and environmental stewardship.

A quality education provides three elements: the relief of poverty; the conferring of human dignity; and the basis of democracy. All three elements are needed in Lebanon right now and all three are in a Brummana education.

The support the school is receiving comes in many different formats yet the most pressing is financial: to provide a living wage to teachers (staff hardship), and to ensure no student is left behind by the crisis (bursaries). If you wish to support one of the last Quaker institutions in the region at its most desperate time of need, please do consider joining for BHS Gives, the school's giving day campaign.

This year BHS Gives is scheduled for 2/3 December and supporters will be able to donate online at www.justgiving.com/q-u-i-e-t.

Please contact me directly if you wish to receive updates for the event at principal@bhs.edu.lb. In giving you will help guarantee the education and lives of hundreds, and hope and optimism for thousands.

Thank you to all BHS supporters past, present and future.

David Gray
Principal, Brummana High School



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