

JRMC 202 Interview Project

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Nagwa Ibrahim

Narrator: Wegdan Lotfi

Dates: 19/2/2012

Place: Narrator's office

90 Road Street

New Cairo

College : American university in Cairo

Prof: Dr. Wegdan Lotfi

Date completed : 19 February 2012

Introduction

The narrator is a chemistry assistant professor in the American university in Cairo. Her name is Wegdan Lotfi. She was born in Cairo and she lives in 6th of October city; she is married and had four children. She was graduated from AUC in 1975.

I felt that my narrator is worth interviewing because she is teaching me a chemistry which I benefit a lot from her ideas about protecting environment and how to use science to improve Egypt hard circumstances and how AUC students have a great role in improving their country by using science. Dr Lotfi stressed on thinking scientifically and the stressed also on the importance of science such as chemistry on the entire environment.

In the end of the interview, Dr Lotfi stressed on stopping protesting during the working hours and to increase the cycle of economy especially in these hard days that Egypt passes through and that all Egyptian students, workers and employees must not decline their country by protesting and not working.

Glossary

Cairo University: Egyptian university that Dr Lotfi took her PHD from.

Ain Shams: Egyptian university in Cairo

Al-Ahram Canadian University: Egyptian University in 6th of October

6th of October: Area for occupation in Cairo

Stewardship: To do what is right not looking to others what they are doing

Transcript page

Nagwa Ibrahim

Dr.Wegdan Lotfi interview

19 February 2012

Persons present: Nagwa Ibrahim-I

Dr. Wegdan Lotfi-S

Ibrahim : What is your name ?

Lotfi : Wegdan Lotfi

Ibrahim : What is your profession?

Lotfi: Assistant Professor of chemistry in American university in Cairo

Ibrahim: Where do you live?

Lotfi : 6th of October

Ibrahim: Are you an AUC graduate?

Lotfi: Yes

Ibrahim: Do you think that studying in AUC is better than any other university

Lotfi: Not better than all the universities in Cairo, I mean that Cairo university is a strong university that certain faculties in Cairo university that are good and might be

better than here, but AUC has something different from any other universities that you can study any other topics and learn to be more flexible in your studies have other ideas about other branches. If you are non-science student, you take science courses ; If you are science student ; you take non-science courses. It is very interesting and then you have fantastic library to make use of and you have all the tools that can make you something good. So, that's why I think it is different from the other universities.

Ibrahim : But what do you mean by Cairo university is stronger than AUC ?

Lotfi : There are in Cairo university and maybe Ain Shams also. In Cairo university, you have strong faculty such as political science, engineering and medicine, issues that we do not have here such as pharmacy.

Ibrahim: So, also why have you chosen the profession of being a doctor?

Lotfi : Maybe because both my parents are professors and doctors , so I grew up in this environment and that's why I am giving an environmental course now and sometimes you are brought up with environment that you get affected with without knowing , so teaching is something that I always loved all my life and because both my parents are professors and teachers , I got to like. I do not believe that in life you really choose that issue that goes with you as an undergraduate , I had never thought to be in the academic career.

Ibrahim: it was not a dream of you to be a professor?

Lotfi : Never, it just happened . At first, I wanted to get married and have kids and settle down. A year after marriage, I started working in a teacher in my school – and I started enjoying teaching – and after giving my first kid – I was giving too much to the home, but sometimes you would feel you want to give something to yourself. You

are giving so much of you to everyone around you , but what are you giving for you- do you understand?

Ibrahim: Yes

Lotfi: I felt that my brain has stopped since I had left university – you know after my fourth year, so I wanted to improve my mind and I started thinking –ok , I will do my masters and take courses in the evening and it has no effect on the kids – and just started doing my masters and it worked. After finishing my masters , I said why not to do the PHD – do you understand? It just came slowly like that. I just did not like staying like that at home and do nothing what so ever, I would stay at home, yes, but study at home- I will be reading a book – I will be doing something and when you do that it helps your kids too because you help them in their studies and you think as a mother and as a wife that you are different- yes, it does.

Ibrahim : So, it was a plan for you to work in AUC ?

Lotfi: I graduated from here and I made my masters from here and my PHD I did here, but the degree I got from Cairo University-that's why I am telling you about Cairo university because I met some of fantastic professors and even here in AUC would bring professors from Cairo university when I had my masters presentation – I got professors from Cairo university and my PHD , I studied it here – but I had professors revising it from Cairo university- they are really good – but maybe they do not have the thing that you would need like fantastic classrooms , perfect library, good labs that are well equipped – but mines and brains there are a lot

Ibrahim: But lack of technology

Lotfi : lack of money

Ibrahim : Lack of money?

Lotfi: yes, but brains are very good – they are also travelling all the time abroad in international ceremonies and conferences. I am pro here and there , but of course, here is my home.

Ibrahim: Do you work in other place than the American university?

Lotfi : yes, I work in Ahram Canadian university – it is close to my home in 6th of October- and the president of university was the president of Cairo university . I work there in the faculty of Pharmacy , I teach chemistry and scientific thinking for the first and second years students.

Ibrahim : What is the difference between Canadian university and here in AUC?

Lotfi: Now you have first of all different categories students , I take students from national schools – weak English which is something that I do not mind at all and they are very enthusiastic and they study well – what is the different for me is the different environment – I have been all my life, I have graduated from here- I have been in AUC since 1975 now we are 2012 , so I have been here all my life- when I come to teach I always taught AUC students when six years ago I went to the Al Ahram Canadian university and for time faculty- I started teaching another kind of students and I enjoyed it. So, they are not like the AUCIANS- AUCIANS are different and these are different.

Ibrahim: So now you are a chemistry professor

Lotfi : Assistant professor, not professor yet

Ibrahim: What are your daily methods that you use to protect the environment?

Lotfi: me- my daily methods- first of all I made a children's book and that something I am really proud of because it targets seven to nine years old and that was really nice and the ministry of environment took it from me and give it to primary schools – so this was one way I helping my environment and then I like stewardship as I always say in class to be correct, to be clean , to be perfect, to be environmentally aware and I always encourage people around me to feel what I feel , so this is the way I am helping my environment and I am encouraging my students to have ideas as much as I can and some of them had beautiful paintings and some of them wrote books and some of them had done calendars that are environmentally and re-cycled paper and had nice ideas from students-so this is another way in helping environment and I had gone into projects of course.

Ibrahim: Do you think what you are doing will help in making the environment in Cairo more clean?

Lotfi : It will definitely help, the projects I was in with the ministry of environment helped –definitely because it is a whole team and that was our job for the last ten years and it was life and they were very good projects and they definitely helped-for me on a small scale when I talk to my students it does help because one of my students went to London and did his masters on environment and I met the ministry of environment few years ago and he effectively told me I gave him a D , but he loved the course so much and went to it in his masters-in small scale here I would say I do as much as I can to make my students aware even if they are still bad and their attitude – they at least know it is a bad attitude.

Ibrahim : Have you changed once one of your students attitude , for example, if he is throwing food or drink ?

Lotfi: They never did that in front of me , every time If I entered class and I find something that is not done, no – and some of them starting noticing these things-they start noticing and disliking things as I do – because all of them will have their own home and have their own office and have their own factory maybe or their company – they should be environmentally friendly and aware.

Ibrahim : The problem is that we are cleaning our home and our office , but about our environment nothing/

Lotfi: But if you do not dirty the street you are already helping – you are helping really – If you tell people – if you tell a child not to do this , so you are helping – yeah.

Ibrahim : So , you encourage your students to protect their environment from learning them.

Lotfi: through teaching them and that just not from now – they become something when they graduate-definitely maybe one sentence from the course they will remember-maybe-yeah.

Ibrahim: How can we use science to improve Egypt in such circumstances?

Lotfi: We have to had science –one thing is to think scientifically – really to use science we need money, we need projects-we need to encourage scientists and give scientists their own dignity –notice something in our situations these days and last year's really- really professors in universities are least paid employees-really I mean they are not the best although-they give generations lots of knowledge – they never made a strike – they never did a protest – professors and people that study would think hundreds times before doing a protest in all situation and not as well paid as

businessmen and people working in companies and multi-national companies .So, professors will never do protest and scientists – we have to think right, we have to encourage our students to think right not to believe in rumors all the time not to just follow what people are saying – to think your own , to think with your own sense, to think of your own reason – not just anyone saying anything and I just say yes it is true. So many rumors have been said – anyone telling you anything you should scientifically tell him ok brings me evidence-it happened, ok give me evidence. You said this one stole so much, this one killed this one, this one whatever- give my evidence.

Ibrahim: you are against protesting?

Wegdan: If it stops Egypt's economy or if it stops any of our developments-if you for example in a company or in a hospital –protest but it should not affect your work, you have to protest to get your rights, so most of the people have rights, have points of issues, but do not stop the work, do not make it zero. I do not like that at all. We have to do more effort , not less effort we have to start moving to get better-we are not working , people are more protesting –keep working at the night or in the morning or in the evening or whenever in your shift not in your working hours- Never working for protest.

Ibrahim: But they are protesting in their working hours so they force the government to do what they want?

Lotfi: Not all of them are protesting for the government, some of them are protesting for companies-I am talking about protesting in general

Ibrahim: you are protesting for example to improve or increase your salary, so if you are protesting at night or not in your working hours, they might not do what you want.

Lotfi: I have one of my friends that have hotels and the employees are protesting and want to increase their salaries so, wait till the security comes back again and tourist come back and flourish- do not ask it now when there is nobody using the rooms and no guests in hotels . Can we as Egypt now stand all protests here and there and stopping here and there and we have the right and do it , I am a worker who respect my work even if my salary is not good – do not delay my work- I do not like twisting time.

Ibrahim: Do you think that science will lead to strong economy?

Lotfi: Definitely and think scientifically- do not do a project without thinking scientifically about that project – do it on good thesis – you have to had the scientific head and think if I stopped working – teachers in national schools are low paid , but do not stop education- I am not at all with stopping work and I look for the whole evidence from the beginning till the end.

Ibrahim: you are definitely right

Lotfi: First students and people in your age must learn, in your age cannot take decisions without learning you need to learn , so all the youth must learn and listen to the elder ones and have authority and less to their experience and make your won decision, I would advise students must learn , get more education to become more strong.

Ibrahim: Thank you

Lotfi : Good Luck.

