



*Destruction around my neighborhood*

*P.S. All pictures were taken from my personal phone, giving you a real-life lens to the project*

# Restoring Disrupted Educational Landscapes through Individual and Collective Acts of Resistance During Times of Active Aggression and Conflict: Exploring Narratives of Lebanese OT Educators

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# Literature Review



*Students supporting internally displaced communities, as part of their war-responsive fieldwork*

- Literature on education in conflict settings has historically focused on post-conflict reconstruction and primary/secondary education for children
- Rehabilitation, including OT, remains largely overlooked

## The Lebanese context:

- Mobilization of rehab is vital in Lebanon, a country facing persistent crises
- Both a practical necessity and a political, anti-colonial act
- Increased risks of neocolonial influence and control when local healthcare education is disrupted



## In this project, we sought to reflect on:

- Individual and collective acts of resistance that our team used to foster 1) student, staff, and faculty resilience, 2) navigate acute occupational disruptions, and 3) maintain educational delivery and community involvement amidst the most recent (2023-present) active aggressions by Israeli forces
- Explore how these could inform conflict-responsive healthcare education models more globally

*Workshop on Trauma-Informed care during the aggressions to support students' practice in their field placements*

- Deliberate restructuring of OT education delivery and content toward flexible, student- and community-centered, digitally enabled environments
- Intentional contextual adaptations to preserve the meaning of OT education

*" [...] We had to recognize that teaching formats that are fully online or fully in-person are not an option during these circumstances."*

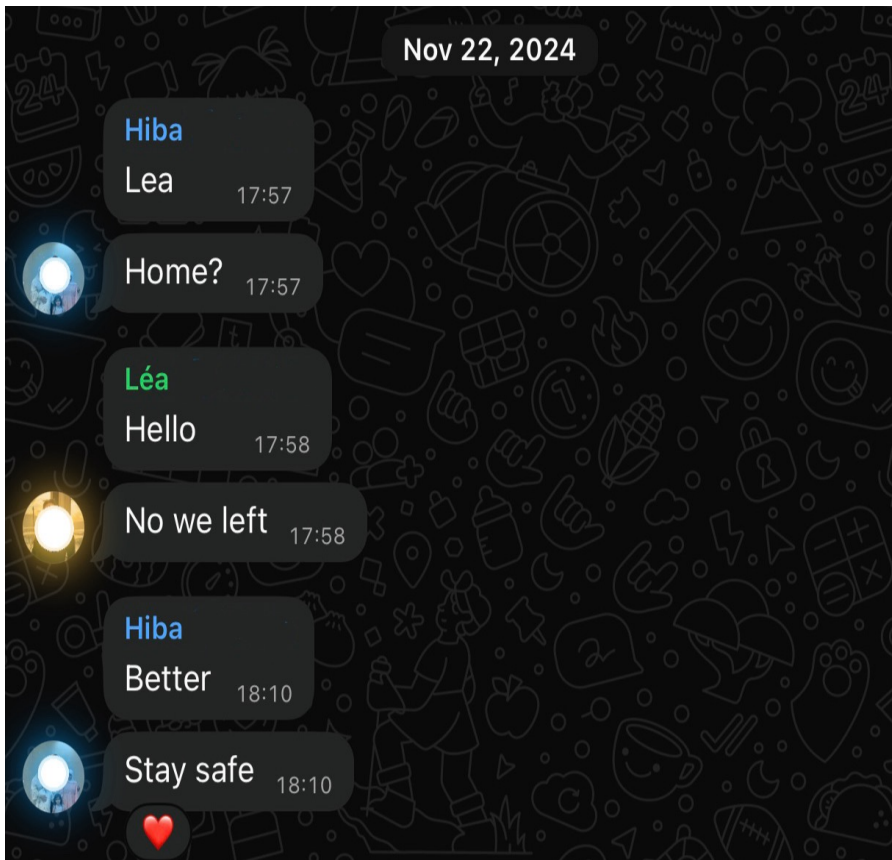
- Carla, Director of the OT Institute & Lecturer

*" [...] Some sites were inaccessible, others completely gone [...] We recognized the need for OT in other contexts, and oriented field work to support four shelters"*

- Hiba, OT Lecturer

# Caring for Self & Others

- Through intentional attention to personal and collective occupational balance to resist the dehumanizing effects of war
- Restructuring professional expectations by replacing rigid hierarchies with fluid systems of mutual aid
- Safety and acknowledgment of privilege guiding the type of mutual aid provided



Checking-in on a group chat after an Israeli strike targeted Lea's neighborhood

*" [...] Personally, I had access to my family house, in a safer region, [...] many of my colleagues and students did not [...] I could take on some more field visits, to support their [displaced colleagues with limited mobility] [...] "*

- Léa, Lecturer & Field supervisor

# Maintaining Occupational Identities/Roles

- Informal gatherings (e.g. student elections, faculty meetings, shared meals, etc.)
- Maintenance of rituals (e.g. parenting, life celebrations, and other meaningful rituals)
- Goal to maintain a sense of “normalcy”



*Holding our yearly Christmas dinner, later in January, in defiance of the aggressions that separated us*

*" [...] Most importantly, we must not lose who we are, as they say, our existence is resistance, we will not be dehumanized"*

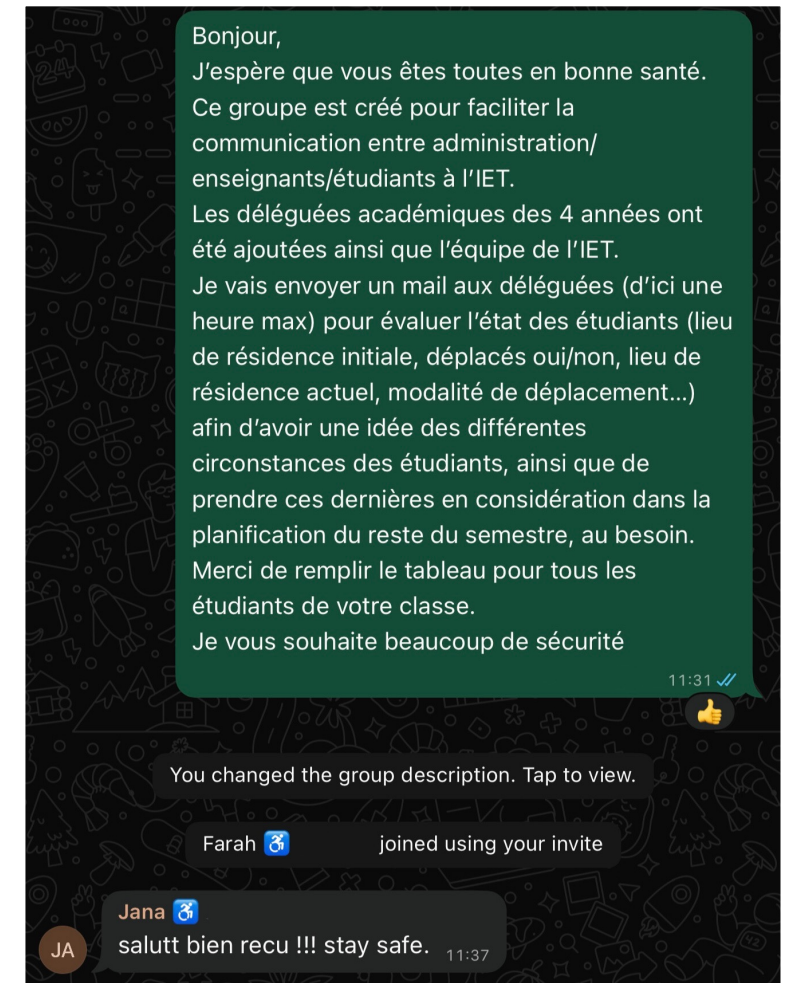
- Hadi, Lecturer & Coordinator for OT Student life

# Intentional Community Building

- Intentional dissolution of traditional power dynamics
- Classrooms (physical and virtual) prioritized safety and well-being before academic progress (e.g. WhatsApp groups functioned as lifelines for daily check-ins, motivation, and mental health support)
- Intentional self-disclosure to foster a sense of shared struggle and community

*" It wasn't just students, we [faculty] were also displaced, hurt and scared, how could we not share that with them? "*

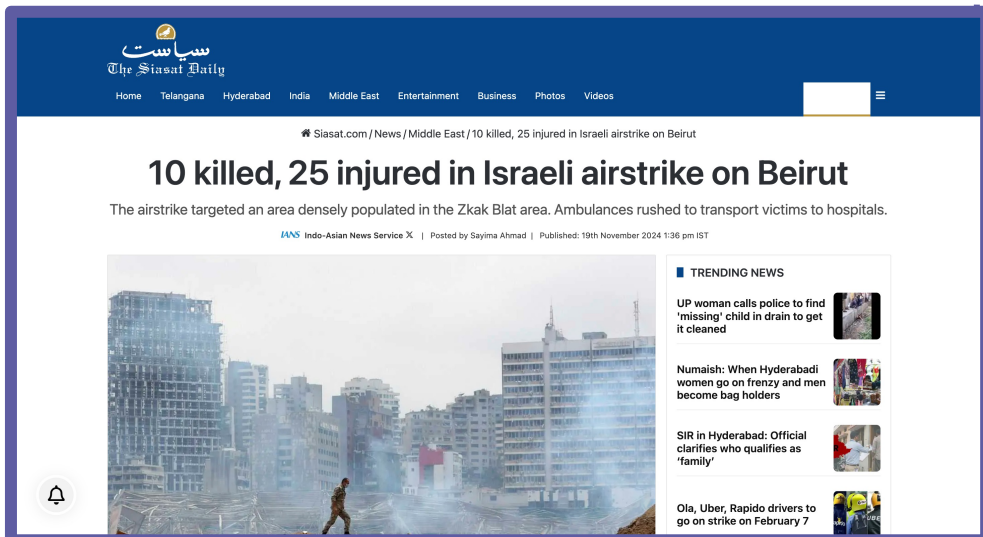
- Dina, Lecturer



*Creation of the first WhatsApp group to establish emergency-related communication within the faculty*

# Maintaining Physical Presence

- The educator's physical body as a site of resistance
- Physical presence as a motivational anchor and a form of infrastructural resistance
- Educators' presence and the campus as a sanctuary for professional community-building



*" [...] When the students saw the educators, that most of them were displaced, come to the university, they were more willing to be present as well [...]"*

- Léa, Lecturer & Field supervisor

*Article covering the closest attack to our campus, within a 300-meter radius. No warning was issued prior.*

# Fostering Hope & Joy

- Celebrating small wins and making space for humor in virtual and physical classrooms
- Prioritizing survival and regrouping to sustain long-term engagement and prevent burnout



*" [...] It was one of the hardest things [...], I think that spirituality played a big role in helping us [...]. Maybe not always joy but hope of having that feeling again, definitely."*

- Alaâ, OT Lecturer

*Broken windows from my bedroom, following an Israeli airstrike, under a beautiful sunny sky*



*Finding joy in new materials for our community care center, through fundraising events*

# In conclusion, this should never be normalized, and...

- A local needs assessment and structured check-ins with faculty and students should be the first step in any conflict-responsive healthcare education model (current gap in literature)
- Healthcare curricula must be flexible, responsive to, and reflective of shifting local realities, while maintaining educational quality (current gap in literature)
- Individual and collective acts of resistance by educators are essential to restoring disrupted educational landscapes and must be nurtured and protected in solidarity