

Marina Alphons

Ryme Fouad Interview

**The American University in Cairo****Interview Transcript****Interviewer:** Marina Anis Alphons**Interviewee:** Ryme Bassem Fouad**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup>, February, 2012**Place:** Interviewee's home

14 B Taha Hussien St. zamalek, apt 2

0122-3451-313

**University:** The American University in Cairo ( AUC), Mass Communication  
department**Professor:** Kim Fox**Date Completed:** 21<sup>st</sup>, February, 2012

The interviewee: Ryme Bassem Fouad was born on the first of October in Mansoura, Dakahlya governorate in 1990. She joined AUC in fall 2007 planning for majoring in Mass communication and then after taking some courses she decided to major in Psychology and to minor in Film where she found herself. After graduating she applied on a program called LEAD ON to get her masters easier, so she is working now at a NGO called “ Nahdet El Mahrousa” she is helping in developing the society. She is now a fresh single grade and her main concerns are her future career in the field of the clinical psychology.

My topic is mainly about The American University in Cairo (AUC) and why people would pay that much money for joining AUC. At the same time, many students are assuming that the quality of the education is getting worse and many universities are now better than the AUC

Ryme Bassem is considered the best one to be interviewed because she is a fresh grade and she witnessed both the old campus and the new campus, and also she witnessed the changes that took place after moving to the new campus. In addition to that, she took so many courses in all fields, so she can tell about every department in the university. She also had good connections with her department that allowed her to know more than any other student.

While interviewing Ryme Bassem, she issued some important points that should be considered later such as:

Marina Alphons

Ryme Fouad Interview

- The university's registration system and how students suffer from it.
- The on campus activities and their importance.
- The diversity of the social levels at the university.

Finally, the interviewee suggested some students and some doctors to be interviewed regarding the registration problem, as they can tell more about this problem and how to get it better. At the same time, she was sure that they won't be that courage to talk about the new corruptions at the AUC.

Date: 21<sup>st</sup>, February, 2012

**Alphons:** Can you please tell us about yourself?

**Fouad:** Ok, so my name is Ryme and I just graduated from AUC in spring 011 and I graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology with two specializations actually I took community psychology and clinical psychology. I also come from a different city than Cairo it is called Mansoura it is in the Dakahlya governorate if you are familiar with it. And my mom is Armenian and my dad is fully Egyptian, so I come from a pretty diverse background.

**Alphons:** What is your job right now?

**Fouad:** Since I graduated from AUC, it was a bit difficult to find a job, because as you know after the revolution one want to invest money in Egypt, and they have been like after the recession people have been taken out of their jobs and it is quite hard. So, I was working at the beginning as an assistant psychologist in one of the children psychiatric hospitals in Maddi. And afterwards I took a fellowship at AUC it is called LEAD ON. I was accepted to work there. They give us trainings and at the same time we are placed in different NGOs in Cairo, and I am placed in an NGO called " Nahdet El Mahrousa" in English it is " the renaissance of Egypt" I work there in one of their programs that serve the students from public universities on their graduation year. We help them by funding their graduation projects and we also help them finding the proper training and how when they finish their graduation projects how they can give them to sponsors and I am the program coordinator of that program.

**Alphons:** How is this related to your studies?

**Fouad:** Well, during my studies at AUC I have taken clinical psychology and community psychology and basically the community psychologists or social worker should be working on the community like developing the community so it was very much related to work at a NGO in the development.

**Alphons:** Why did you choose AUC?

**Fouad:** Well, I can tell AUC to be one of the best universities in Egypt, actually in the Middle East to be honest. But I chose AUC because I really like the liberal arts education system for the fact that I didn't have only to study psychology like I studied psychology as my concentration I also took two different specializations, I've taken a minor in film and it was very interesting. Like I can do a lot with that minor I got a job with my minor if I want to, and also I have studied in philosophy, anthropology and sociology so I got to learn so much from AUC.

**Alphons:** What did AUC added to you on the educational level?

**Fouad:** The fact that AUC is a very diverse community is something that personally liked because you know you have students from Cairo; you have students studied abroad and then came back to Egypt. And you also have the international students which is pretty much a diverse community that we have at AUC. Also that the classes system like I can always participate in the class and give my own opinion and professors will really really respect that, we have a chance to express ourselves. And also AUC added a lot to me in the concern of the critical thinking way, like I can learn a lot from just expressing myself in the class or I can even when I am writing my papers, it is not just an exam that you have to memorize things for. It is a really good system that I can create and be really creative and add a lot to what I am learning.

**Alphons:** What about the social level?

**Fouad:** Well, on the social level AUC introduced me to a lot of people and also a different kind of people. And also during the activities and thing like that AUC had helped me in like knowing a lot about the community and knowing a lot about myself. And we could be friend with our professors at auc I don't think it exists at any other different universities.

**Alphons:** Did you do any activities at AUC?

**Fouad:** Ohh, ya yaa, back to our conversation ya. I did a lot of activities at AUC most of these activities were related to the community but I have also traveled to the United States and I've worked there for a whole summer as a camp counselor with an activity called camp America that was publicized and I knew about it from AUC. I've worked for the student union for two years as a strategic planner for the committee. And I have also worked with AISEC for one semester and with AISEC I travelled to Italy doing an exchange there and it was one of the best experiences I've ever had

**Alphons:** Did any of them was related to your career?

**Fouad:** Well most of them, like some of them made me learn about the business and corporate world and how I can go for sponsors to fund raise and things like that. I didn't really use this in my job yet but I'm sure that I've learned a lot knowing about this. But most of the activities I have done were very much related to the community and developing the community and how I can be in touch with my own community not just the isolation world that I have with like my family and my standard. Like I could know more about the community that I'm living in. so ya most of them was related to the community psychology and clinical psychology

**Alphons:** Didn't you think of other alternatives like the German university or the British university?

**Fouad:** Well, my parents were considering sending me off to Canada to study there, but then I thought like why I would be just so remote and isolate from my own community and like living in Canada wouldn't have been my aspiration at that moment. So, I decided to stay in Egypt, and in Egypt of course I would have chosen AUC. Also I have applied to the German university but I heard from some different people like friends and family that the educational system there is like very corrupt and like everyone that I know there hasn't graduated with a really good education like I really prefer AUC honestly.

**Alphons:** Did it make any difference being an AUC graduate while looking for a job?

**Fouad:** Well, honestly at the beginning it was hard finding a job like in Cairo, like what I said the revolution thing and everything. Like AUC has that system like the caps office that helps us find jobs and also being an AUC graduate is always different. Like they can always appreciate you at the work place and they know that you learned a lot during your years there. They are also known that you have been doing internships and that's what AUC actually encouraged us to do. So, ya being an AUC graduate are a lot different. But I can tell when I am doing a job, when I am in a different company how those people are AUC graduate from other people, you always have them with critical thinking, you always have them very creative and they are very like outstanding. So yes being an AUC graduate is different.

**Alphons:** Would you tell us any challenges that you met in work that your experience from AUC helped you in it?

**Fouad:** Well, yaa. Because when like you start a job your boss is always expecting that you don't know much, you have not been exposed to that world before. Even if you have done internships he will always treat you like this, and you will need to prove yourself through the

first couple of months for them to think Oh My God she really worth's the job. So, this is one of the biggest challenges I have met. And to be honest AUC had helped me in this because like at AUC you have to be resistant and like if you failed a class you have the chance to go again and try and they will help you to do it. No that ive failed a class but I am just saying. And also, being in the LEAD On fellowship the people at the fellowship helped me in advising, helping me what to do in the job and like how to overcome those challenges.

**Alphons:** Did you meet any challenges while studying at the AUC?

**Fouad:** Yes because at the beginning I was at a private school and then I went to another public school and I stayed at the public school for few years. So moving from a public school to a private university that was a very much of a challenge. And also being taught in English, like my English wasn't that good when I first joined the AUC and then of course being there had helped me in catching the language.

And I have like a minor comment about the registration, and berocracy at AUC. I feel like the students are very much humiliated, like students have to beg professors and we have to beg the administration to get us in the classes we want and sometimes we have to take classes that we don't want just because you need to take them now to graduate or whatever or only that's the only time available for those courses. I honestly think it is very silly, we are paying for the education and we are being treated really bad, not to mention that the professors are very nice and they used to help us and they would guide us. And the fact that we have advisors which classes to take and which classes not to take add up to AUC

**Alphons:** And finally, would you consider AUC the best university in Egypt?

Marina Alphons

Ryme Fouad Interview

**Fouad:** Well, yes of course like I wouldn't consider it the best university in the Middle East or around the world obviously. I don't really care for the rating whether AUC was rated one of the best universities or whatever because I know like for fact that the Cairo university is rated the best in like Egypt, but really AUC had taught me a lot and at AUC I found like a chance to make really good friends. And at AUC we have the fact that we have research departments that at my major I needed to research a lot in psychology and my professor had helped me a lot and had put me through people that I could interview and talk to, they would tell me about certain books to borrow from the library, and the fact that we have library that we can borrow books, I used to study all the time in the library because I used to stay at the dorms and it was very close. So, I would consider AUC has a lot to offer. Also the sports system, I used to play "SHESH" I don't know what they call in English.

**Alphons:** Fencing?

**Fouad:** Yaa, I played fencing at the AUC and I took one of the championships there. So, it was very challenging in that sense. And also I can like go to the pool and play swimming whenever I want in my spare time. My knowledge of my English world and the English speaking people like the international students was also an asset like to add to AUC. So ya I would consider AUC one of the best and probably the best in Egypt and I feel very proud being an AUC graduate myself.

**Alphons:** Thank you

**Fouad :** You welcome.