

By Invitation



Prof. Odeh Al-Jayyousi

**Innovative stories: Sustainability simplified**

**W**hy sustainability science needs a story? Scientists are criticized of not being the best communicators since they compile their facts in a series of ANDs. Simply said, scientists must be able to tell us a compelling story which includes AND, BUT, and THEREFORE. This is the key message that Randy Olson (a scientist in Harvard who became a filmmaker in Hollywood) is conveying in his inspiring book "Houston, We Have a Narrative; Why Science Needs a Story". In many cases, a simple understanding in economics can resolve major policy debates like carbon tax, waste management, water tariff, and climate policy. In addition, a basic knowledge in biology and chemistry can inform policy makers and the public about the concept of sustainability. How can scientists tell the story of sustainability to both policy makers and the public?

Digital technology contributed to create a generation of screenagers who lost touch with ecology and suffer from "nature-deficit-disorder". How a tree takes carbon dioxide and makes oxygen through photosynthesis is one basic lesson in sustainable circular economy. Re-thinking our daily habits like taking a shower, drinking coffee, and driving a car is vital to shape public policy and market incentives. Therefore, to mitigate climate change human needs to re-think their daily habits since "little things matter". One lesson is to know our water footprints in our daily diet and activities. For example, a 100-gram chocolate bar consumes about 1700 liters of water; 1 kg of beef consumes about 150 liters of water and one tree makes about 8,000 sheets of paper.

Sustainability is about asking the right questions about consumption patterns and life styles. How palm trees in Bahrain and GCC contribute to planet health and human wellbeing? This question can be a topic for an action research for students to understand the concept of eco-system services and trade-offs. How plastic bags can harm coral reefs in the Hawar Island and Red Sea? This is a good way to teach life-cycle analysis and the cost of plastic litter on marine life.

Sustainability is about collective action. Re-examining the basics and having a fresh look at ecology can provide new insights to a sustainable society. When I asked students in the Middle East whether they are aware that a palm tree has a male and female, only few are aware of this fact. Therefore, I use this example to reflect on the meaning and value of understating the hidden connections as seen in waste-energy processes, bio-mimicry, and the dynamics of water and life cycles. System thinking and imagination is another important lesson in sustainability. Sustainability is about hindsight and foresight. Reviving historical memory of Saba' dam is a basic lesson in sustainability. Sustainability is about smart solutions that make sense to both people and nature, but screen-agers do not read reports, therefore scientists must Tweet and develop a video game and infographics to get message across.

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*(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)*

# Ban junk food to fight diabetes, says expert

Mohammed Zafran/DTNN  
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**Manama**

**J**unk food must be banned in schools and hospitals as a step to fight the prevalence of diabetes, according to Prof Nam Cho a world-renowned researcher in diabetes.

Prevalence of diabetes has grown at a rapid rate in recent decades and the reason behind it is the changing lifestyle and diet, said Cho, who is the president of International Diabetes Federation said.

He said that governments need to be proactive in fighting diabetes. "The government can take steps in increasing the awareness about the disease. This is something that is very important. The mass media should also be involved in this," he told DT News.

"I would absolutely recommend banning unhealthy



Prof Nam Cho

food in schools and hospitals. Hospitals have cafeteria with food providers making junk food available, why is that? The simple answer is that fast food is easy to prepare and convenient, but it is unhealthy," he said.

Speaking about the increase in diabetes cases, he said, "It is because of the lifestyle changes. Society now is more

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westernized now, when I say westernized I am talking about the junk food and the modernization that has led to lack of exercise. While the lifestyle change and the diet change has contributed a lot towards the increase in diabetes, things like pollution also negatively affect ones health," he said.

"Serving size also matters, we have a World Health Assembly meeting in Geneva in May, the theme of the

meeting will be 'junk food and serving size. We are taught to finish our meal even if we are full, but this is not healthy," he said.

"Diabetes is a disease which the patient has to be proactively be involved in managing the disease, the doctor cannot do it for them. The doctors can give him an insight of the disease, provide medicine and teach how to manage the disease. But it is the patient who is eating the food," he said.

**Ring Road expansion**

**Manama**

**M**inister of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning Essam bin Abdulla Khalaf toured Muharraq Ring Road Expansion Project site at the section located between Hidd Interchange and the Interchange of Amwaj entrance and Galali.

The project is now 75 per cent complete.

The minister said the present phase of the project comprises expanding the road at the part extending from Amwaj Entrance to Hidd Entrance from two lanes at each direction to three lanes at each direction.



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**Travel frenzy**

Public lined-up for a rare promotional offer at Country Mall on Thursday evening. The promotional offer brought a huge crowd to the mall. The just BD1 offer was part of opening the new branch of Dairy Travel, a local travel agency, which offered trips, reportedly to Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. The offer included bus tickets, hotel stay and even food. Hundreds flocked to the mall to purchase the packages.

