

Basil Fuleihan Foundation names winner of 'Good Governance' competition

Fadi shayya takes home \$12,500 with winning essay

By Anthony Elghossain, Daily Star staff

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BEIRUT: The Basil Fuleihan Foundation (BFF) announced the winners of the second annual Basil Fuleihan Innovative [Good Governance](#) competition during a conference held in Beirut on Thursday. With this project, held in honor of slain former Economy and Trade Minister Basil Fuleihan, the foundation bearing his name seeks to promote "innovative practices in good governance" through a research paper competition, in which applicants tackle issues of governance and in Lebanon.

The Good Governance project limits entry to residents of Lebanon (noncitizens may apply) or people of Lebanese origin, aged 18 to 30, and seeks to preserve anonymity by providing each paper with a serial identification number, thereby preventing "confessional identity or personal connections" from entering the selection process.

Yasma Fuleihan, the former minister's widow and founder of the organization, explained during a

speech that five proposals were selected as finalists by a screening committee of professionals and experts from Columbia University in New York and Haute Etudes Commerciales of the University of Geneva.

Of these five, three winners were selected, although the "quality of this year's competition" resulted in the awarding of two honorable mention distinctions. The winner, Fadi Shayya, will receive \$12,500 and a month-long internship in Switzerland for his [essay](#), "Invigorating a Park in the City: Alternatives for the Good Governance of Horsh al-Sanawbar in Beirut."

Houda Sahyoun's "Innovative Good Governance in the Electricity Sector in Lebanon: Adaptation of the Electricity Governance Initiative" won second place, which consists of \$7,500 and a two-month governance internship in the Lebanese public sector. Rebecca Semrani took home third place and a \$5,000 for "A Federal Lebanon? Agent for Good Governance or Cause of Dispute?"

BFF also announced new efforts targeting a younger demographic: namely, the publication of a book authored by Yasma Fuleihan herself and the creation of an essay competition for young Lebanese students.

According to a press release issued by BFF, the "inspiration for the book 'Who Am I' came to Mrs. Fuleihan after the horrific events of the 2006 summer war with Israel," as she was

concerned for "the welfare of all those suffering from the bombing campaign," but particularly troubled by the negative consequences of violence on the young psyche.

Fuleihan hopes that the book, proceeds of which will go the foundation, will deliver a message of "[peace and tolerance](#)" while allowing children to develop "self-consciousness through personal examination and reflection."

The book launching overlaps and complements the inauguration of the "Words for Peace" project, a children's essay competition for students in Lebanon aged 13 to 18. The project, held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, will seek entries that address or contain "individual ideas for defining peace, and discuss theories of how peace could be achieved."

"Topics may be explored from many angles, including [but not limited to]: friendship, family, neighbors, or school. Papers may have a local, national or international focus, and may be literal, philosophical or a combination [of these approaches]," added the statement announcing the project.

The Basil Fuleihan Foundation was created in honor of the former minister after he died from wounds sustained during the assassination of former Prime Minister [Rafik Hariri](#) on February 14, 2005. The foundation says it seeks to "lay the groundwork for tomorrow's Lebanon" by promoting public sector reform and improved governance practices.

Fuleihan, speaking at the conference, sought to elaborate the foundation's vision, saying: "For the sake of our children, it is crucial that we are able to co-exist peacefully with each other and learn not just to tolerate our differences, but to find a bond in our similarities as well."

"It was we humans who created the spoken and written word, allowing us to communicate with one another, to understand one another," she added, explaining why writing features heavily in the BFF approach. "To this end, the Basil Fuleihan Foundation was [established] ... we seek to encourage the youth of today, who will be the leaders of tomorrow."

The death of Basil Fuleihan represents one of many political assassinations and assassination attempts that have occurred in Lebanon in recent years. The [governing coalition](#), members of which have often been targeted, have blamed the Syrian government or some faction of the ruling regime for the political violence, but the opposition has emphasized that no [formal charges](#) have been heard yet. Syria has denied the charges.

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