

**New AUB study: Less noise – better life**  
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Research by Fulbright Professor Marjaneh Fooladi from the Hariri School of Nursing aims to assess and reduce environmental noise level in Beirut.

“I’m only here till June, planting seeds which hopefully others will nurture to fruition,” said Fooladi, who has been working on two proposals to help decrease noise in the capital.

The first proposal, funded by the Issam Fares Institute, aims to influence environmental noise policy changes, while the second will study the effect of noise on people’s health and hearing.

The latter study will include a convenient sample of 100 equally divided adult men and women from the streets of Hamra; these volunteer participants, who will receive a token of appreciation for their time, will be surveyed and their hearing tested for damage. The noise level will be tested in Hamra streets and measured against the international standards of an allowable 75 decibel maximum.

Fooladi plans to submit the results of this project to the authorities and lobby for noise policy enforcement so that violators responsible for habitual car honking, excessive noisy generator use, and construction noise will be fined.

“With the fine money collected, we can plant trees in Hamra to serve as noise absorbers that block the noise projection into the tall and hollow residential buildings,” said Fooladi.

According to Fooladi, because Beirut is a city where commercial and residential zones are in the same place, drivers must realize that unnecessary horn honking echoes in homes where families sleep and rest.

Loud and persistent noise causes the vibration of eardrums and signals the brain to produce harmful chemicals; annoying noise leading to increased stress, irritability and rage can be harmful to health by increasing gastric acid, desire to smoke and drink coffee, restless sleep, and the inability of children to concentrate.

Adults under stress manifest socially unacceptable behavior in the presence of children by honking horns and speaking foul language. Children helplessly watch their parents and copy them. According to Fooladi, “This vicious cycle must be broken.” Public campaigning can increase awareness of the health hazards of noise.