

IBG NEWS

Spring edition



-Art by Julie Edel Bechmann
Pedersen

Become a plant owner

Since spring is on its way, and we are all quarantined at home, why not spice up your place with a few plants?

That may seem like a big no because you kill everything. But it is not that hard to care for a plant. If you think that you do not have enough sunlight to keep plants, many need very little light and can thrive in the darkest corners of your room. And if you are a

forgetful waterer, there are even more plants than can tolerate you forgetting to water them...

But why should you get them? Of course, they clean the air around you, but it's also scientifically proved that they can boost your mood, productivity, and lower anxiety and stress levels. NASA researched the top best air purifiers, and a couple of them are listed below as some of the easiest to take care of.

People have the need to connect with nature, and since we live in an urbanized world, this can be difficult. That's why many people nowadays get themselves a plant or two to keep them happier. It's also a great way to get your attention on to something else other than homework and school, and you've got something to take care of than only yourself.

Here is a list of 5 easy plants, and a few instructions about how to not kill them.



Snake plant

Sansevieria trifasciata

The snake plant is known for its thick, glossy leaves, and they can get pretty long over time. It releases oxygen at night and filters toxins from the air. This plant tolerates shallow light but will do best with filtered bright light. Water every month or so – it is better to water too little than too much because it can cause the roots to rot. It is also important to have drainage holes in the pot, so the soil does not stay wet for too long.



ZZ plant

Zamioculcas zamiifolia

This is another plant that will refuse to die. It has glossy, dark green leaves, and new growth shoots up all the time. It would be best if you watered it when the soil is dry, like the snake plant, maybe once a month. It can even tolerate a few i-forgot-to-water. It wants bright filtered light but also does well in dimmed light. Water it less if placed in a darker spot. The plant grows slowly but can get up to about 70 cm. The ZZ plant filters toxins from the air, such as benzene, toluene, and xylene.



Peace lily

Spathiphyllum

The peace lily has gorgeous, big, dark green leaves and white flowers. Watering is pretty easy with this one: when the leaves are drooping and look “sad”, it’s time to water. This happens maybe about every three weeks or so. It will bloom in bright indirect light but can survive in a dark corner as well. They won’t flower, though, and may become “leggy”. The peace lily also filters the air from toxins, like the ZZ plant above.



Spider plant

Chlorophytum comosum

This plant is also straightforward and can tolerate some abuse, so it’s perfect for you if you’re a newbie – and if you have pets! It’s one of the “few” plants that aren’t toxic to pets. The spider plant likes to dry out between watering, and the light level should be medium. It gets cute babies like shown in the picture (mostly in spring-summer), which can be cut off and planted in separate pots.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Dragon tree</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Dracaena marginata</i></p>	<p>This evergreen tree is from Madagascar and has pretty, narrow leaves with red edges. It can survive different light conditions, temperatures, and drought, which makes it almost indestructible. Be careful not to water too much, as the roots can rot – Best to give it less water than too much (this goes for practically all houseplants). Although the dragon tree is safe for humans, it is incredibly toxic to cats and dogs, so keep your furry friends away.</p>
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-written by anonymous



A(nother) day in the life of a homeschool student

Since December thousands of students all over the country have been spending most of their time in their rooms, with school and free time blending in a blurred mix, with a sensation of no end in sight.

The alarm clock rings its routinely song, to announce a new day, with a full agenda of virtual classes that await. A weary body hurls itself out of bed and slugs towards the desk, the computer and the many hours of online lessons awaiting. The computer is opened, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, or Zoom following suit, and the meeting along with the school day alas begins. That is the daily routine for the about 55,000 high school students in Denmark, who during these corona times are locked inside, isolated from friends, classmates, and many other people they are used to spend their daily lives with.

In Ikast-Brande Gymnasium things are no different. The approximately 700 students, who are used to being met by the grave brick buildings of the schools, are also forced to stay at home, and log on to Microsoft Teams

daily, to the familiar tune of: ‘Welcome back, let us wait for the rest of the class, then we’ll start in a couple of minutes.’ With the cameras turned on, and



the microphones turned off, the lesson rolls away: English, Danish, Spanish, Physics, Biology, History, Social Studies, Math, and many more. After an hour and ten minutes has passed, one meeting is replaced by the next one on the schedule.

That is the daily routine, five days a week, and has been since the 18th of December, when Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced that every student would be sent home to virtual school from the 22nd of December. Initially, the lockdown was expected to last to 3rd of January, but that date was swiftly pushed to 28th of January, then to 8th of February, and so on, in the same pattern.

Every time there is a press conference, students are anxiously waiting for a final date for this lockdown to be over, hoping that this time the government will announce that they can go back to school, and back to a version of life closer to how it used to be. The latest press



conference at the end of February announced that graduating classes will be allowed to go back to school every other week. Reactions are mixed, as some graduating students are happy to be allowed back into schools, while others prefer home schooling. More mixed emotions are seen among the

students not included this time around, as some demand to go back, while others would rather remain home.

Back in the teenage rooms all over the country, many students finally get to click the red 'leave' button at the end of their final meeting on this day's schedule - sent on their way by their teachers' final 'have a good day'. - they retreat to do their various free time activities. Some move to a different program on their computers, others move to their beds to nap or relax, and some people move to the outside to go on walks, runs or to a safe and socially distanced hang out with friends.

As the day comes to an end, and the homework has (mostly) been made, the students retire to their beds and await another day of the same routine as the one that just passed on the other side of a night's sleep of varying length.

-written by Ida Marie Drammelsbæk Vase

~~~Covid-19 Environmental Impact~~~



It seems to be something hidden behind Covid-19, there is a darker, more sinister problem appearing that will continue to have an impact on our lives for potentially hundreds of years after the pandemic. And it seems we have forgotten about it.

We have seen a prioritization of human health over environmental health - which has led to the delay or reversal of policies aiming to reduce single-use plastic. Disposable masks, PPE, pre-packaged meals, and home-delivered groceries have contributed to the increase in the accumulation of plastic waste; as the pandemic drags on, it is only going to get worse, unless we act now.

So, what can you do now? Some suggestions include:

- Investing in reusable masks
- Reduce the amount of plastic you use when its not health-critical (for example, bring your own bag to the shop rather than buying a plastic one)
- Consider how and when you use PPE (for example, gloves), and whether it is necessary or wasteful.
- Making sure you continue to recycle used materials wherever you can.



-Written by Adam Messerli

When I was an IB student...

How was your experience in the IB? And do you have any advice for current students and soon to be graduates?

Answering that question is quite the mouth full, to be honest. The IB for me, was the two-year IB-diploma program and pre-IB, so in total a three-year rollercoaster ride of essays, presentations, building new friendships, being challenged with deadlines, and learning how to manage my time and prioritize tasks.

When I was in pre-IB I stayed in Agro, an agricultural school in Hammerum. I was only



sixteen and it was my first time living alone. Shortly after moving in there, I arrived at Ikast-Brande Gymnasium, where I met all of my classmates that came from all over the world. We had people from Kenya, the Philippines, Italy, Latvia - you name it!

I think this diversity alongside moving out from home, was one of the reasons for my growth, intellectually and emotionally. The IB is not only a system - it is the whole world in a classroom, pushing you to change your worldview and think broader and larger. It challenges your euro-centric prejudices and mindset and serves you Japanese philosophy and postmodern literature.

The IB is not a rigid program but a living and breathing organism, which you are a part of. It is constantly changing and being transformed, both by the IB-coordinators but also the students, who are the heart and soul of IB. I would dare to say that the IB



environment at Ikast-Brande Gymnasium has shaped me more than any book I read in class. The openness of the IB-students is simply brilliant. This gave me access to engage in conversations that shaped my worldview because by interacting with people with different backgrounds and ways of thinking, I was in a constant learning process with my friends, whether it was in the classroom, eating a crisp sandwich from the cafeteria or at a school party.

My advice for soon to be graduates is to truly take what you learn in IB, and not just see it as dry knowledge which has been

accumulating for two or three years for it all to just be spilled out on a blank piece of paper while writing your exams, but take it as a learning experience for your belief-system, which the IB has had a part in shaping through the last years of your education. For example, I have been noticing that I have been using much of what I learned in all of my subjects with people from all walks of life.

Having lived in Germany for the last 6 months, I have noticed that having previously learned about German culture and traditions in the IB has been a great bridge between me and my new German friends. My knowledge about biology has helped me in my own training and meal planning as a runner.



All the literature I read in Danish and English has helped me understand people who have a modernist or postmodernist worldview, yes, even socialists and Marxists.

Trust me, what you learn In the IB is not just some randomized curriculum checklist, it equips you to be an intellectual conversationalist in the

future and/or an empathetic listener, who is

less judgmental and more open-minded.

What are you currently doing? Studying or taking a gap year?

I am currently doing a Discipleship Training School (DTS) in an organization called Youth With a Mission in a small eastern German town called Herr hut. After IB, I had so much accumulated knowledge but not a lot of time to really interact with people, so I spent six



months in this school, growing in my Christian faith and going for a short-term mission trip to Brazil, lasting two months in total.

I will advise every IB student to take a gap year if they want to grow in their character and learn other life skills before carrying on with studying. I got in total 40 points and was studying a lot of the time and I am sure that it would have been fine carrying on with my studies, however, I think especially very hard-working students can neglect many other important aspects of life, including traveling and real-life interactions and not only reading about such in textbooks.

How is it after IB?

Life after IB is ... rich in adventure, I would say! For most of my life (and your life) we are in some form of education system, not really having a choice in what we are going to do because it is mandatory to study at least 'x' amount of years plus secondary education, which practically means you have a lot of safety simply staying in the system. However, when you finish, there are a lot, and I mean a LOT, of possibilities to travel, work, study abroad or even backpack half of the globe, if that is what you fancy. Having this freedom can seem overwhelming - however, I would encourage every student to take his or her time to simply write down their dreams and deepest longings, do a soul search, and carefully look through the numerous possibilities that are open.

Also, another thing I would note, is that IB teaches you how to be independent and take care of your own study life - as well as every other aspect of your life if you live in the dorms - and you can finally put that into practice when leaving the IB.



However, it can also seem frightening, as the world is so big, and you might not have any contacts or friends in the countries you would like to visit or work in - but I would advise you to go for it and make new friends and open new doors - do not wait!

What did you find to be the most difficult or maybe more challenging part of graduating?

I think it was this sudden shift from studying the whole day for the exams and working hard on my IAs to being in complete freedom and having the whole day to do whatever I wanted. This led me into a time of mild depression, surprisingly enough, because I felt restless for most of the day and I only wanted to play videogames to keep my brain busy. The contrast between the incredible stress of school and the complete freedom was such a shock, that I had a hard time resting.

In order to solve this problem, I forced myself to take long hikes, up to 4 hours, in order to empty my brain and not occupy myself with anything. I needed complete rest and complete emptiness to fully recover and get a normal, daily routine.

What will you advise students who are not sure what to do after graduating?

I would suggest the students talk with teachers about what they could do. If the teacher does not know specifically what the student could do, they for sure have contact with alumni who could help the student - as they have gone through a similar process!

My first advice would be to search, search and search. Do not wait for the perfect idea to come but be open and make google searches on everything you could imagine doing - you'll be surprised to see how many things you can do; everything from volunteering work at workaway.info to cooperating with the European solidarity corps and travel the world while not thinking about your budget!

The IB is clearly much more than a simple educational system, and all of the 'extra layers' it presents you with (TOK, IA's, EE's, CAS etc.) are there for a reason, as stressful as they can be. Take what you learn in the IB and consider how it can serve you in the

-End of the interview

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Treasure the differing cultures walking our halls everyday (Well, once we are back at school anyway), and truly consider how the skills the IB teaches you can and will be applicable to your post-IB life.

-Written by Arnis Prokopovics

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Corona's impact on mental health

Many students nowadays find themselves busy contemplating the lockdown, and when it will allow us to get out of our houses due to the constant boredom that many experience while the pandemic simmers outside.

However, there exists a bigger problem in many people not leaving their houses. It's clear that there exist many people whose social needs are not being met due to being locked in for so long. For others, there may be different reasons that may be negatively affecting them due to the lockdown.

It's no secret that COVID-19 has changed our lives in infinitely many ways, yet there seems to

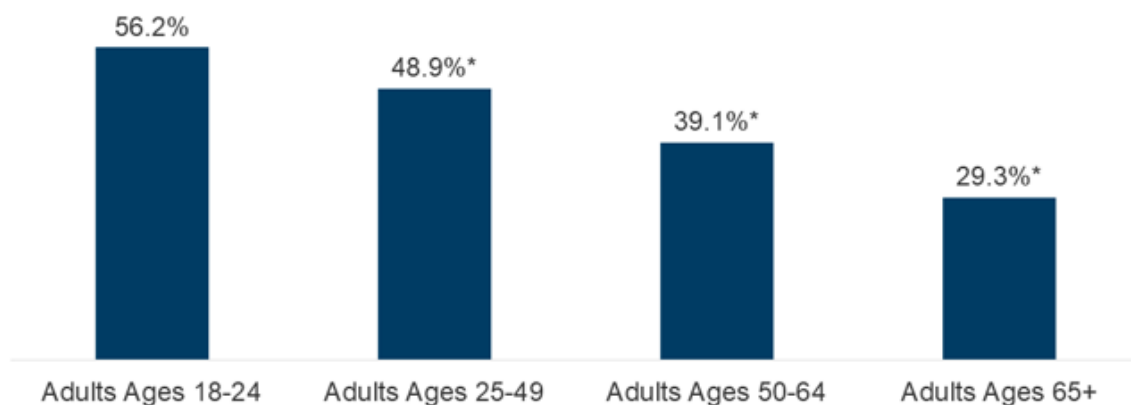
be one topic that you do not hear much about in the media. The topic generally either forgotten or swept under the rug: The effect of COVID-19 on our mental health.

In an article written by the Kaiser Family Foundation titled "*The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance use*". This article mentions that the number of anxiety-related symptoms and/or depression for young adults in the age group 18-24 has increased by 56%. The research further explains that "young adults are more likely to resort to substance use (25% vs. 13%) and suicidal thoughts (26% vs. 11%)" compared to pre-lockdown statistics.

NOTE If you believe you may/are suffering from depression, anxiety or you have suicidal thoughts remember to contact someone, whether it's a teacher, family member or friend, or you can call Livsliniens (Lifeline) on the phone number +45 70 20 12 01. If you feel like you need help you can contact Headspace in Herning where you can receive free therapy. A quick reminder to everyone who feels like they don't belong here or that their life isn't worth it well let me tell you **YOUR LIFE IS IMPORTANT AND I CARE ABOUT YOU I MIGHT NOT KNOW YOU BUT I KNOW THAT THIS WORLD NEEDS YOU MORE THEN YOU THINK** and if you ever doubt you existing remember that there are many people who need you here, even if you may not know it, and more people than you may think would miss you greatly if you didn't exist.



Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety and/or Depressive Disorder During the COVID-19 Pandemic, by Age



This chart clearly visualizes how big of an impact the pandemic has had on our mental health. For many young adults, who are currently living through what are considered the most important years in a person life, are spending them locked in the house with their own thoughts on top of dealing with the burden of decreased learning effectiveness. This results in students having to teach themselves, study and/or revise much more than before since online school doesn't offer the same effectiveness as actual, in-person teaching.

This effect is further amplified when trying to maintain some kind of life outside of school, especially with the restrictions, while still trying to keep up with classes. It can, however, be quite difficult to maintain a good school life as well as a good private life in one room. Since we are constantly at home, there's a good chance for our 'open and 'private' lives to mix, which many would prefer to keep separate, but when done in

Before the pandemic and before the virus even occurred, we had different locations and different environments for each of our responsibilities. Our studying and learning mostly happened in school, while our free time was mostly spent at home, at cafes, with friends or in public however all this is now happening over a screen.

It's funny how the world turned around so quickly.

I vividly remembered how everyone, and every school was trying to minimize screen time for young people and kids by minimizing the screen time during class, Now, the screen, quite literally, IS our school, and by extension our way of socializing as well. The majority of people now spend many more hours of their day in front of a screen, be it for work or school.

Ironic, isn't it? I can personally relate.

From personal experience I absolutely agree that the pandemic has made young adults more anxious and/or depressed. I know, at least from my own experiences with online school, that it's incredibly hard to try to maintain a healthy mental state while receiving online school since it's all happening in the same place. Mental health ends up feeling like an afterthought,



which it really shouldn't. It's so easy to lose

concentration as well, since maintaining

the same room for lengthy periods of time, it can be hard to avoid.

This is clearly evident in the 'Cameras On' rule, which not many seems to follow, likely because they feel it's a breach of privacy into their life at home, and by extension their private life. The problem is this also takes away the feeling of being 'in a class' online, and it's difficult to find a compromise that works. The lack of 'seeing people' can be a factor in the decreased learning effectiveness, but at the same time, is it fair to ask people to allow their student life a glimpse into their private home? Such issues, and countless more, occur constantly because of the conditions the pandemic has forced us to set, and we're clearly still struggling to adjust.



concentration throughout a 70 min class that you aren't physically in is... challenging.

At home we are so easily distracted since there is so much happening around you, be it siblings, cleaning, cars outside, pets, or whatever else. While in school, you sit in a focused learning environment, which consist of students, a teacher, and a board so the distraction are limited since the school facility is built to be a place for students to maximize learning, while your house might not be the right 'place', or interior in a way which provides you a good learning environment. I have personally experienced that I easily tend to hide or not talk during class, not because I don't know the material, or I haven't done the homework but because you can easily be forgotten in a Teams call. In class, where I'm in the same room with

some other students and my teacher I usually feel the urge to participate because I want to show the teacher what I am capable of, and what a good student I am, but behind a screen I don't really feel that same urge since I'm not in an environment that makes me feel like I need, or even want to participate at all.

I also know that for many of my classmates it's infinitely more difficult, since they live alone, where they don't have any company whatsoever, which makes the experience much worse since you feel all alone, and you don't, or can't socialize with anyone else.

The online teaching has, to put it lightly, *sucked* for many of us. The lack of physical presence, the team's icons that teachers are desperately

To coming back, hopefully soon.

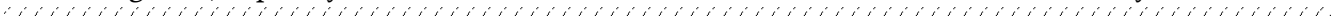
trying to provoke an answer out of, or just the complete and utter lack of motivation to even *look* at more screens. It's sufficient to say that the lockdown has effectively crippled our learning capability, and it's equally as bad for the teachers as well.



Take one thing from this, your mental health is incredibly important. Again, if you feel any significant changes in your emotional state, consider that it could be the onset of something more. It's a gradual process, and letting it creep up on us slowly

during these lonely months will make it all the more miserable. There are opportunities to get help, if you need them, please take them. They exist for a reason, and if you feel they could even slightly help you cope with the lockdown, I urge you to try.

-written by Avin Hassen



Combating loneliness in our youth during the lockdown

The topic of depression and loneliness among the younger generation has been discussed in the media due to being quarantined in 2020. The HOPE project has been researching how democracies cope with COVID-19 and claims that the youth is lonelier and more stressed than ever. A solution to the problem could be to encourage the youth to take every opportunity to socialize, even if it means online.

Danish Refugee Council Youth (DFUNK) is a youth organization whose main objective is to help young refugees integrate into Danish society. DFUNK is responsible for various projects; they host social activities in parts of the country, provide guidance in education and host national events such as summer camps. During the pandemic, they have

had to cancel and postpone all their activities due to the authorities' guidelines.



DFUNKs CEO, Natasha Al-Hariri, took to Twitter to express her concerns: "Loneliness, lack of network and fragile relations make every day extremely difficult. There is a lot of work ahead of us, when we are allowed to meet physically again. A reopening is not enough – I hope everyone with clever heads is aware of this!".

Furthermore, all integration programs have been put on hold, including the Danish citizenship ceremony set to take place in March. This means that those eligible for citizenship will be forced to wait. Other's risk losing the opportunity altogether, as another requirement for citizenship is to have a full-time job, which many have lost due to the pandemic.



Fortunately, DFUNK has received 377.019 kr. In funding from the Tuborg Foundation. Since the lockdown was announced, DFUNK has set up a hotline that you can call to receive help regarding COVID-19 related topics in 25 languages. They also have tutors offering to help students with homework. Furthermore, DFUNKs youth groups have taken steps to digitalize their activities, making it easier to participate as you do not have to travel far. However, volunteers have reported that their virtual activities have fewer participants than their physical ones.

Showing up to one of these events can make a difference. There is a calendar on the DFUNK website of all the activities being hosted, and your location does not matter as all their activities are still virtual. If you want to take it a step further or look for CAS, you could even help plan these events by contacting your local youth group's coordinator. You can find out who you need to contact on Facebook by searching for "DFUNK Ung til Ung" and the name of your town.

-written by Astrid Helene Mortensen



Poem: Stuck in a prison

Stuck in a prison, where I know it's for my best
The walls are intermediate, and the window is wide
And yet I cannot spread my wings escape into the daylight
Looks like I'm held as a prisoner sitting in front of my work,
But I know it's for my best

Feels it's been a century since I saw my family
The stars in the night sky reminds me of each memory we had
And yet this wall of pandemic still blocks me from seeing them
But when this is all over, I will soar in the sky, spreading my wings wide
But for now, whatever is happening, I know it's for my best.



-written by anonymous



Happy
Easter