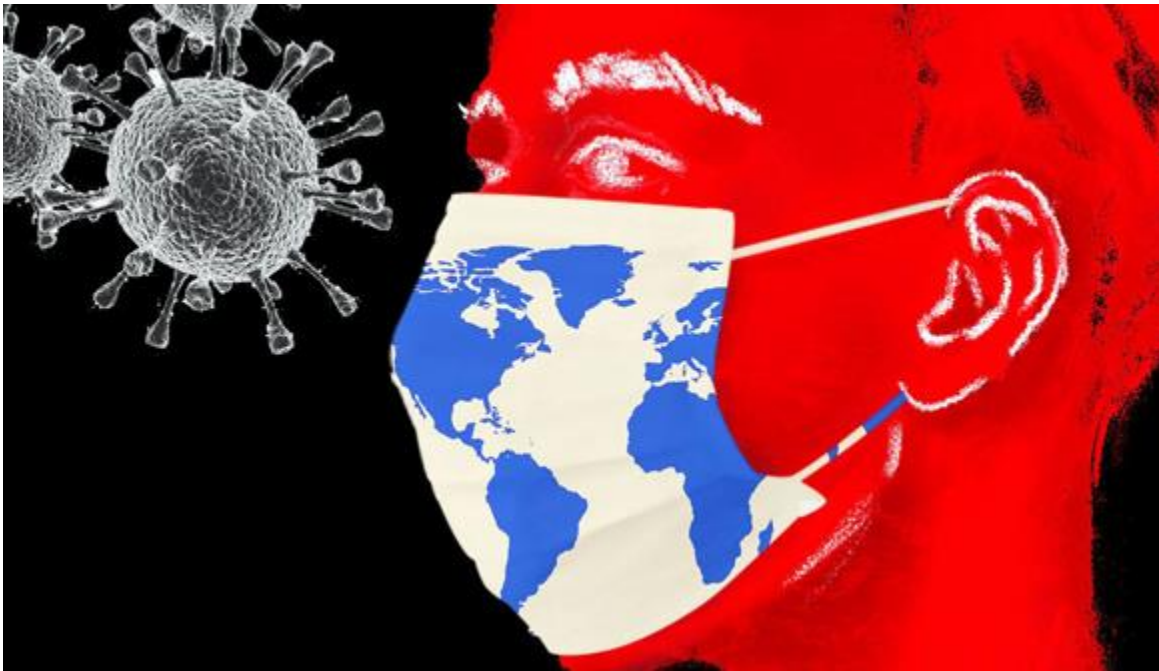


Will our lives be different after Covid-19?

We have just finished the lockdown. A few of us disregarded the self-isolation rules and still went out, exercised in parks, drank together and raced on bicycles. Naturally anyone forced with staying at stay at home feels upset, however, I now want to discuss the future lives of those who complied with the social restrictions and those who did not. One thing we know for certain is that our lives have been turned upside-down and we must decide how to adapt and live in peace, without wasting our precious time.



Will our lives be different after Covid-19? (Photo. New York Times)

How has the environment been affected while most of the world were staying indoors?

Roads devoid of vehicles suddenly became clean and spotless, with little noise and fewer accidents. Rivers, canals and the ocean became clearer and cleaner. Air quality in cities all over Vietnam improved remarkably. Dolphins appeared in Nha Trang Bay and whales could be seen for the first time off the French coast. Life suddenly changed for the better. We must now reconsider our future. The pace of life has slowed right down and we have suddenly grown measurably closer to each other, more in harmony with nature and more at peace.

The Vietnamese are spiritually patriotic people and, throughout history, have had to fight off endless foreign invasions, disasters and epidemics to survive. They have learned how to become independent in times of peace and plenty but, whenever a new threat arises, their fierce spirit of solidarity turns out to

become an unrivaled strength. The prime minister mentioned that we should: “Fight the disease as if it were an enemy and, if our challenges and difficulties double, then our efforts will have to triple.” And that’s how it has been and now I hope that, after the epidemic, our economy will now take off again. One economist said: “An economy in difficulty can show many different trends. The preferred outcome is, after a rapid economic decline and a short period of disruption, a quick recovery and resurgence of business, with a very narrow trough.” (*Tran Hoang Ngan: Tuoi tre, April 11, 2020*)

In education, students attended online classes at home, which could quickly become a new trend in Vietnam, compared with Europe and America, and it has achieved greater acceptance here. Our educational system, especially at universities, will be transformed, with much more emphasis on online teaching. However, universities in Vietnam must go through even further changes in the future to benefit a society where growth in the economy depends on knowhow, initiative and innovation.

Advances in information technology and communication have changed the way information is used. In future, each university will have more online classes, online libraries and social networking, no longer just locally but encompassing students in the entire country and the world. Students will have more important things to consider, like social injustice, climate change, epidemics and other crises to broaden their challenges. Previously, they had adequate intellectual and financial capabilities but in the future, everyone will be able to go online, learn about and choose their fields of study according to their personal interests and abilities. They will focus more on research, so leadership skills must be exploited and individual responsibilities clearly defined to put their knowledge to the service of all.

However, the development of information technology also has its disadvantages. Students will tend to study alone more, their communication skills will suffer and university life will lose its sense of community. Lecturers will be restricted in dedicating themselves personally to their teaching, in shaping student personalities, setting examples and conveying human values. In reality, a blend of a traditional university education, based on personalities, and human experience and modern online teaching is now necessary, even at DTU.

(Media Center)