Strictly speaking, it did not officially start until March, yet, things were changing far earlier. In Georgia, we were still going to work in February as usual. Even though there was already some information about the new “virus”, nobody believed it to be a real threat. However, some people were walking through the city wearing a face mask already in February – some criticised them, others followed their example. In this way, our city became a city of face masks – the “face mask city”.

The coronavirus has given us a new, changed status and the idea of equality has disappeared. During the state of emergency in Georgia, many people lost their jobs and many students and pupils lost the opportunity to learn and study. All schools and universities in Georgia have only been able to offer online teaching so far. Consequently, the situation in the mountain regions and the villages near the border has become very difficult as in some of these places, the people neither have Internet nor a computer to participate in online education programmes. Due to the pandemic, many families no longer have any income. Some employers have cut wages. Food prices in the shops have increased. The coronavirus has caused great damage to the Georgian economy and has made life here very hard.

I work at the Sulikhan-Saba Orbelianai Teaching University and I am witnessing how students are forced to stop studying because they or their parents have lost their jobs and the resulting inability to pay tuition fees. Even though we already have a difficult economic situation in Georgia, experts predict an even worse economic situation. And this is not only a Georgian reality – it’s the new reality of the world.

We are obliged to wear face masks in all means of public transport, in almost all buildings and nearly everywhere in Georgia. In many countries around the world, these measures are taken to prevent the corona virus from spreading. Just as Tbilisi became one day a city of face masks, so the entire world is now a “world of face masks”. Sometimes face masks are so expensive that they are almost impossible to afford or sometimes they are simply all sold out. Then it is up to you to sew a face mask – but what if you don’t know how to sew? Even if you manage to sew one, you might then be confronted with 35 degrees of heat wondering which one would be the lesser of the two evils: to die of the coronavirus or death by suffocation caused by a face mask? Do not forget that it is still not August yet! But be as it may, you have no other choice since you will be fined if you do not wear a face mask. We all have to get used to the “world of face masks”, it is our new world, a “face mask world” and the virus’ inheritance.

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