



**UNITE  
LEBANON  
YOUTH  
PROJECT**

# ULYP Fall Newsletter

Welcome to ULYP's last issue of 2017. Since our last publication, we have served 1,391 children, youth, parents, women, university students, and teachers. We are also proud to report that this period has been filled with significant impact, recognition, growth, and awards.

We highlight for you some of our activities and achievements and express our wishes for a blessed season and a Happy New Year.

## ULYP by Numbers: Fall 2017



# Awards and Recognition

The recent months have been filled with awards and recognition of ULYP's practice. These act as significant validation that ULYP's mission statement and methodology are well intertwined and that our interventions are valuable, effective and appropriate.

## ULYP's Recognition



"Receiving the TAKREEM Special Distinction Award... means you agree that doors need to be open to all underserved and that respect has to be expanded to the marginalized, but most importantly that everyone should have the right to education" said Melek El Nimer, ULYP Founder, on receiving the award this November.

Melek El Nimer received three special awards and distinctions this fall for her humanitarian work and impact at ULYP. In the name of ULYP, Melek was awarded the Outstanding Humanitarian Award by the Arab American Association, the Outstanding Efforts "For Humanity" Award at the 8th Bosphorus Summit and the TAKREEM Special Distinction Award for continuing to play "a key role in shaping a better perception of Arabs worldwide and in inspiring present and future generations."

## Best Practices Disseminated

"Childhood belongs to children and it is our responsibility to make sure every child, including the marginalized and refugees, lives her and his childhood." This is how Nicole Eid Abuhaydar, ULYP Executive Director, concluded her talk at the Arab Conference at Harvard in November. Nicole sat on the 'Empowering the Next Generation' panel at Harvard, disseminating the best practices of ULYP's HAPPY program and suggesting ways to take this program to scale.

While in Boston, Nicole also addressed students of the Peace and Justice Studies Department at Wellesley College. She spoke about her personal journey with education, how she leverages education for social development and the models of intervention implemented at ULYP. "Schools and universities are not enough to meet the growing needs of society. There are too many underserved and working children, unemployed youth and disempowered women." She encouraged the Wellesley students to ask the right questions when looking for solutions "You are the future, and you can make a difference starting today!"

Such recognition and opportunities to spread our message are humbling to receive and we are increasingly inspired and motivated to expand our reach and impact into the new year.



## Another Year of HAPPY Faces!



With leaves falling and the weather changing, our HAPPY preschool program was packed with activities. The 112 children engaged during this period explored the world around them and learned about hygiene and healthy nutrition along with math, English and outdoor activities. Songs were sung from the top of their lungs, stories were read and acted out and the smiles and laughter during class were contagious!

As always at ULYP, we concluded the program with a Training of Trainers (TOT) designed to sustain the change and expand the opportunity for more children to experience the learning that HAPPY promotes. The teachers from participating preschools attended the session focusing on methodologies, theories and practices to increase math and literacy essentials in their own programs. After the training, teachers

understood that one story can be read in many ways and for different learning purposes. One said, "I can't wait to do a shared reading with my students to get them more engaged and speaking in English in class!"

This season concludes a year of HAPPY in partnership with UNICEF and Taawon Lebanon, within the Support Early Childhood Education Development Program. We look forward to learning with more HAPPY faces in the new year.

## Ever Seen a Rainbow go Full Circle?

Above and beyond the interactive and specialized English tuition that characterizes the Rainbow program, our students engaged in a multitude of thematic life skills workshops that enforced their learning and broadened their horizons. Exploring the importance of environmental awareness through planting seeds in repurposed water bottles, learning about the various cultures of the world through music, food, and languages, and disseminating hygiene education by presenting group posters are examples just some of the interactive and holistic workshops that transformed the students' worlds and typified this semester's Rainbow.

With smiles and positivity abound, we witnessed our students grow and learn with the content of Rainbow. Field trips saw them exercise proper basketball and football techniques and gave them a platform upon which to enforce and practice their team building, communication and respect skills. The Rainbow has truly gone full circle and we, as teachers, have not been left out - we have also learned and grown alongside our students.

This semester concludes the Rainbow program that started a year ago, and this semester has reflected what has been a beautiful year of holistic education, positive attitudes and smiling faces.



# FLY with Flying Colors



The FLY program, For the Livelihood of Youth, was concluded in December with a touching closing ceremony to celebrate our beneficiaries' achievements. The closing included testimonials from FLY participants, trainers from the LAU Continuing Education Program and the Malia Group.

The outcomes of the program were beyond the expectations of the partners, FLY participants and all involved. 100% of the FLY participants achieved working proficiency in the English on the TOEIC exam (Test of English for International Communication) and took this aptitude and sense of confidence with them into the internship component of the program. In challenging and stimulating

internships, our FLY students honed their professional English and business skills and developed their confidence and independence. They are now equipped with the skills needed to successfully make the leap from education to work. Mabrouk to each and every FLY participant! FLY is implemented in partnership with Taawon-Lebanon and Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

## Student Spotlight - Badrieh, FLY

Badrieh Darwish, age 24, started the FLY program in June. Since graduating with flying colors from the English and business preparation classes of FLY, Badrieh has gone from strength to strength.

Badrieh, a Physical Therapy graduate from the Beirut Arab University, secured an impressive internship within her field of study at Medical Aids & Rehabilitation Supplies (M.A.R.S.) – Saida. Three months down the line, Badrieh has excelled in her internship. "My experience has been very rewarding and I have gained valuable insight in my career as a physical therapist... my internship with M.A.R.S. has allowed me to work in a professional way with a professional team." ULYP is so proud of Badrieh and can't wait to see what the future holds for her.



## Math4Success? We Cracked the Code!



The weeks added up quickly and we have reached the end of the Math4Success program. From singing songs about order of mathematical operations to drawing a robot and finding its perimeter, 129 students engaged in fun and interactive activities that connected math with the world around them. Math4Success supports student learning by providing additional instruction on topics they are covering in school. One mother said, "My son's teacher was shocked when he already knew the concepts at the beginning of a new unit in school. He is ahead of other students in the class because of what he is learning at Math4Success!"

Students also saw the application of math to coding as they completed tasks and created their own games. At the conclusion of the program, 129 students became teachers as they taught their peers math concepts using computer games that they coded. The program was a great success, and future students will continue to benefit thanks to a Training of Teachers (TOT) and the provision of equipment to the participating schools. The Math4Success program is part of Towards Inclusive Education, supported by UNICEF and in partnership with Terre des Hommes Italia.

## A Little Opportunity Goes a Long Way

If technology is not just the way of the future but of the present, it is crucial that youth and women in Lebanon have the opportunity to gain the skills needed to succeed in today's innovative economy. Maharat, funded by Microsoft Lebanon, creates this opportunity by providing trainings in computer basics, digital literacy, coding, entrepreneurship and social media. ULYP has provided customized Maharat trainings in coding to 150 youth and has also provided the opportunity for 60 women to engage in a full six-week program of computer basics, digital literacy, entrepreneurship and social media.



# Bridge Program

## Bridge Star - Awad, Alumni

Our Bridge graduates continue to amaze us with their talent, drive and passion. After graduating from Lebanese American University (LAU) in 2016 with a BA in Communication Arts, Awad, recipient of a scholarship from the Bridge Program, directed and produced “Ayoubé أةبويأ”, a play that was shown at Metro Al Madina in Hamra, Beirut over the summer.

The play highlights the struggles of Palestinian women in refugee camps in Lebanon, inspired by the stories Awad was told by his grandmother, Ayoubé. The play tells the story of her struggle to survive and raise her children without compromising their education and well-being.

The play was well received and was such a success that the team was requested to perform twelve more shows in Metro Al Madina and one in Saida. There is no doubt that Awad’s creativity and vision will fuel many more minds and hearts! We can’t wait to see what Awad’s future holds.



## Another Journey Begins

Bags unpacked, new friendships formed and exams around the corner – 131 Bridge students are nearing the end of their first semester at 31 universities in 10 countries. This new phase in their journey as Bridge students is off to a good start and ULYP is proud of them.

This journey is just about to begin for the next cohort of Bridge University Scholarship Program students. The ULYP team has been visiting schools and university fairs across Lebanon to reach out to qualified and deserving students. We have met driven and passionate students aspiring to continue their education. ULYP can’t wait for them to apply, begin their Bridge journey and grow and develop into the students and people they should have the opportunity to be.

## Student Spotlight - Ibtissam, Maharat and MOMs



“English is the universal language; it is necessary to learn, and two years ago I did not know any of it, not even the letters. Because of ULYP I learned English. I learned how to introduce my self and how to get to know others. In the last two years I attended two programs at ULYP, MOMs and Maharat. During the programs, I attended several workshops about personal well-being. I also learned about entrepreneurship during the Maharat program with Microsoft and ULYP. I recognize that the lectures have increased my awareness and understanding on the psychological and social level. They also prepared me for the responsibilities of being a great housewife, and how to be an ideal mother.

The programs also taught me that I can follow my dream of becoming a journalist while being a mother.

Thank you ULYP for everything.

Thank you for embracing me and holding my hand through difficult times.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to extend my education.”

## Twice as HAPPY!

As ULYP grows to meet the needs of Lebanon’s youth, we are excited to announce the inauguration of our new preschool in Dibbiyeh on December 19, 2017. The new space allows ULYP to accommodate two classes at a time of 25 students, their teachers and parents for HAPPY. This means double the learning and double the joy!

ULYP is thankful for the generous support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Taawon Lebanon and Give a Child a Toy that made building and equipping the new preschool possible.

## Give a Coat, Warm a Heart

Though many are welcoming the snow and winter season, others are dreading the colder months ahead. During October and November, donation boxes were placed all over Beirut as part of our fourth annual Caring Coats Campaign. We are delighted to say that over 3,500 hearts will be warmed this year thanks to the generous donations we received.

The coats, blankets, scarves and other warm clothing have been organized and sorted. Through our partner, Social Support Society, ULYP identified families and individuals living in the Beqaa Valley that are most in need and donated the items to them in preparation for cold winter months.

We want to express a huge thank you to all those who donated.



## A Marathon Effort



What do First National Bank (FNB), American Community School at Beirut (ACS) and International College (IC) all have in common? They all ran for ULYP's cause at the 2017 Beirut Marathon and helped make this year our most impactful to date!

Sunday 12 November witnessed 215 runners come together for ULYP's cause at the Beirut Marathon. We want to express a huge thank you to everyone who ran for ULYP, our ACS and Bridge program volunteers who filled our cheering and water station with noise, encouragement and smiles, and FNB who sponsored our students to run. It was a truly inspiring day and one that will not be forgotten soon.

## Volunteer Spotlight - Miguel Ehrenzweig

It has been over three months since I started my internship at ULYP. I was tasked to join the Rainbow program, in which Syrian refugee children are reminded of the colors of the Rainbow they hold within through bringing them the ray of light, in the form of education, to bring it out. Rainbow's special approach is structured in a way that it helps with the healing process for trauma many of them experienced before coming to Lebanon.

My experience with RAINBOW has taught me how programs such as these are not just key for the development of children that have had a big part of their childhood scarred by conflict. They are also providing them with intellectual tools and skills that will be very useful as individuals, students and community members, which in turn makes many of these children grow into potential active agents of change now and always.

Coming from Mexico myself, a country that is currently facing complex social, political and economic challenges, similar to the ones Lebanon is facing, my time in Lebanon and particularly my time with ULYP has been an eye-opener. It has made me realize, among many things, that although there is a huge distance between the two countries and there are several differences, Arab and Latin American countries still share many similarities. This in turn has provided me with a fresh perspective to understand better the situation in my country and inspired me as well as equipped me with tools of change I can implement there and everywhere.





## Looking Forward

2018 will mark our eighth year of operation. Reflecting on this previous year's success, impact and recognition we are inspired and motivated to start the new year with an even stronger commitment to our mission statement, our beneficiaries and all of you who have supported us all along. We can't wait to get going!

We wish you a wonderful holiday season.



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