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Third Time's a Charm!

Building on the experiences and successes of the last two semesters, the 3rd semester of Skills4Life started in February 2015. The program is now working with 8 UNRWA schools in the Beirut and Saida areas, with students ranging in age from 9-18 years old.

In addition to the regular activities of Skills4Life, this semester the program has also included the second training of teacher's workshop (TOT), and internships for some students from the second semester.

At the TOT at Crowne Plaza, Hamra, 21 teachers participated in a full day of training including three workshops on conflict

resolution, active learning and public presentation in the classroom. The conflict resolution workshop was a new and highly beneficial addition to the TOT. Teachers were trained by the same facilitator who addresses conflict resolution with their students, and included some anecdotes and observations from the program, as well as activities done by students. The whole day was a success and received good feedback from all. We were honored by the visit of Mr. Abel Piqueras, Education Programme Manager for the EU Delegation in Lebanon, who attended the TOT in the morning, observing activities and giving the team the chance to discuss the project's successes.



Following the second semester's Leadership Academy weekend in January, 25 winning students from Grade 11 and 12 were awarded with internships. Students attended a meeting at ULYP's office in Hamra where they learned about internship etiquette, filled out a personal profile, and chose their preferred sector of work. Students have already begun internships at AltCity and ULYP, where they are volunteering both in the office and on our campus with younger participants from Skills4Life. After their exams more students will begin internships at a variety of organizations including First National Bank, Al Gezairi and more, depending on their interests and future ambitions. ULYP is very proud of these students and wishes them the best of luck on their internships!

Skills4Life is funded by the European Union and is carried out in partnership with Welfare Association and INJAZ Lebanon.



Update from BRIDGE

The BRIDGE program recently finished the second module of its UPC (University Preparatory Course), with 144 eleventh graders from UNRWA schools all over Lebanon. The students participated in a total of 35 hours of SAT preparation classes held on the AUST campus every Friday from February-April. UPC did not only provide the students with SAT prep, but also intensive counselling sessions were incorporated, so the students could explore their personal interests, skills and values. The sessions' aim was to encourage and support personal development, while preparing them for student life. Students were made aware of the wide variety of university majors, the job market in Lebanon, the universities affiliated with ULYP, as well as the different possibilities for scholarships.

Through this, BRIDGE was able to provide the participants with sufficient knowledge to choose the best opportunities available to help them achieve their future goals and dreams. A particularly inspirational and motivational speech was given by Carleton Professor Karim Ismail, which focused mainly on motivating female students who are interested in studying abroad.

The BRIDGE program is also extremely proud to announce the names of four hardworking 11th grade students that were selected for the opportunity to study at high schools abroad:

Mohammad Akel - UWC Norway
 Yousef Abu Nijaj - UWC Wales
 Ahmad Sahrif - UWC Maastricht
 Jehan Naphani - UWC New Mexico



This semester the BRIDGE program is funded by Welfare Association.

BRIDGE Selected for Best Practices Award

ULYP is extremely proud to announce that the BRIDGE program has been selected for a 'Good Practice' award by the Outreach and Practice Unit Faculty of Health Sciences (AUB). The faculty was commissioned by UNICEF MENARO and the UN Inter Agency Technical Task Team on Young People (UNIATTTYP) to document 'Good Practices in Adolescent and Youth Programming in the MENA Region and Globally'. The awards focus on 5 areas: Civic Engagement, Skills Development, Resilience Building, Health and Other (entrepreneurship, social skills etc). BRIDGE's work impressed the faculty significantly and led them to select BRIDGE out of 77 other competing programs as a 'Good Practice' in the area of Skills Development.

The faculty weighed detailed reports on methodology, results, long-term impact and successes, finally choosing BRIDGE after an interview between the BRIDGE team and the representatives from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

We are very excited and proud to have been recognized with this award and are looking forward to the publishing of the official report.



1.5 Million Dollar Donation!

ULYP is extremely pleased to announce that the Government of Qatar and the Qatar Development Fund generously donated 1.5 million dollars to support scholarships for 24 Palestinian students identified, trained and mentored by us. This fund covers their scholarships as they pursue their university education either at the American University of Beirut or the Lebanese American University. ULYP is very grateful to have received the first \$500,000, which is already helping students on their path to success.

ULYP is humbled by this generous donation and is looking forward to helping more and more students reach their potential and acquire university degrees.

Environment Matters!

In February and March the second module of United by Environment was held. The program's main goal is to bring marginalized youth together, and through peaceful coexistence and collaboration, teach them that the protection of the environment is a shared responsibility. "The environment does not discriminate between us, so why do we?"

47 youth, aged 16 – 18 from Bourj al Barajne, Shatila and Mar Elias participated in environmental awareness sessions, conflict resolution and public speaking workshops, and made short films. Environmental awareness sessions included building water heaters that run on solar power; building wind-powered vehicles out of waste materials from the students' communities; and testing rain and tap water from the students' own homes. The students worked in teams on collaborative film projects, using their new environmental knowledge and public speaking skills. These videos were designed to directly address their peers, promoting the protection of the environment as a shared responsibility. The videos will be available on ULYP's YouTube page shortly, once editing is finished! During the weekend retreat while the participants were making their videos, ULYP was honored by a visit from Arabella Bohshali, Grants Program Manager at the U.S. Embassy.



Success Story

While preparing for the videos, Wissam did not want to work, act, or appear in the video because, as he said: "it doesn't matter". After sessions on conflict resolution and public speaking, where students learned that it is their responsibility to take care of the environment and their right to enjoy it and advocate for its protection, Wissam became more enthusiastic. By the end of the program, he had taken the leading role in his group's video. He proudly presented the concept and message of this video to all participants of United by Environment, including Miss. Bohshali of the U.S. Embassy!

The ULYP Island

The first time I came to Beirut was on a short trip in January 2014 out of my bizarre attitude as a political science student to visit areas with a high level of political conflict. Beirut welcomed me with its everyday charm: sunny, humid, loud, chaotic, and mysterious. For the first two days I wandered around during the day, went out at night, and tried to figure out what this place and its people are about. On day three I was more puzzled about this city than ever before. That was when I met Mrs. Melek el Nimer- my friend's mother who worked with an NGO. Melek picked me up and quickly briefed me on ULYP and the plans for the day. Soon I realized that Melek was not only working with ULYP, she is the heart of this NGO.

We drove out of Beirut to "the campus". I had no clue what to expect and got more and more excited the further behind we left the busy streets of Beirut. When we arrived I was overwhelmed by what I saw: green grass, wide view over the hills and clear, fresh air. I felt secure and calm, still in an unfamiliar place but one that makes you feel comfortable within the first seconds. I took a tour of the campus and learned more about ULYP and the projects they are running. Some teenage girls were finishing class - smiley, cheerful and relaxed. I realized it was not only me who felt special in this place: the ULYP Island.

This moment convinced me that I had to get involved with ULYP. The perfect place they hold their projects, the people running ULYP and especially the happy girls I met that day made me come back a year later to do an internship. After two months at ULYP I feel even more like it is a safe island, whether you work in the office with the dynamic and warm team or together with the children and youth on their programs. I am so glad and thankful I had the opportunity to work with these wonderful people and to experience what Lebanon is really about: its diversity and chaos and the people who are not giving up on it.



Hekayat min ACT

ACT's second semester started in March with a new group of 150 boys and girls, all eager to learn. As with semester one, the children come from very underprivileged communities with dire needs for programs allowing them to explore and pursue their potential. After reflecting on semester one, ULYP came up with our best practices to implement this time around. These include more team building activities earlier on in the semester, as the children lack confidence and are not comfortable or accustomed to working with others.

In April, the ACT children learned all about photography from their peers at the American Community School (ACS). This was a continuation of another project ULYP implemented last academic year with ACS, called *Hekayat*. *Hekayat* in Arabic means tales or stories. The previous *Hekayat* project involved ACS children coming to our campus with their cameras to meet and interact with ULYP children and document their stories. This year, the roles were reversed: the ULYP children, namely the ACT participants, were given disposable cameras and charged with the task of documenting moments from their lives. However, before taking their cameras home, mixed groups of ACS and ACT students spent a day learning from each other, and practicing taking photos against the backdrop of ULYP's beautiful campus. The next and final step of these *Hekayat min ACT* will include another meeting between both groups to edit the photos, choose their favorites and write the stories behind them. Thank you ACS for your support of *Hekayat*.



In May, the teachers and caregivers of the ACT children attended a one day TOT. Through two workshops, ULYP passed on our lessons learned, activities implemented and materials used at ACT to the teachers and caregivers, in order for them to sustain the effects of the program beyond its timeline. This is common practice within ULYP's programs, and helps us to strengthen and widen the circle of impact.

Also in May, two HSBC executives visited the program. Thank you to Mr. Peter Yeates and Ms. Sarah Jerejian for your visit, for sharing your smiles with the children and mostly for your continued support.

ACT is carried out in partnership with Future First.



ULYP's First Fundraising Event – a Success!



After two years of debating what the perfect fundraising event for ULYP would be, something unique, fun and offering a great time for all, we decided on a concert. Accordingly, on the 6th of April we successfully held ULYP's first fundraising event ever. The concert was given by the wonderful oud group *Le Trio Joubran* at Music Hall. The three Joubran brothers gave the packed venue a night to remember, filled with amazing music and a fantastic atmosphere. The audience was enthralled and so were the musicians! The Trio has been playing for over 10 years, transforming traditional oud music into an original and passionate mix of traditional local music, jazz and flamenco. Their unique style blends poetry and oud seamlessly together with a superb outcome. Their last album was heavily based around recordings of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry, bringing an unusual depth to their music. They concluded our concert with a unique piece played by the three brothers on one oud. Yes, you heard it, that's 6 hands playing one piece on one oud in total synchronicity. In case you missed it or would like to see it again, please visit ULYP's YouTube page to see them in action <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mptAXUJmdY>.

Most importantly, the event was a great success both in raising funds for ULYP's programs, as well as in increasing awareness of ULYP among the general public. Regular tickets sold through Virgin Ticketing Office were sold out days before the concert; likewise, patron tickets sold at ULYP all went ahead of time. Moreover, in response to popular demand, standing tickets were also sold at the door.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of the wonderful people who believe in ULYP and our mission. Our most heartfelt thanks go to Rami El Nimer for his sponsorship, to Karim Ghattas and Liban Jazz for organizing this amazing evening, to Michel Elefteriades and Music Hall for hosting the event and to all the patron ticket holders, ULYP Board, friends, supporters and concert goers.

Creating the Digital Designers of Tomorrow through TLC

TLC – three letters we all know to refer to *tender loving care*. ULYP's new program, TLC (Together Let's Code), offers this and more. Through TLC we work with marginalized girls providing them with coding and IT skills. But what is coding? Why girls? Why now?

"Coding is a new literacy, and it gives people the potential to create, innovate and quite literally change the world." (Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube and early Google employee.) In simple terms, coding is what makes it possible to create computer software, apps and websites, a few of the elements of most of our daily lives. Coding is quickly picking up speed and entering the vocabulary of children, teachers, businesses and most recently, funders. To code or not to code, is not a question to ask. The future is coding and the future starts now. Around the world, females are a minority in the tech industry as evidenced in the low percentages of female employees at Yahoo and Google (38% and 30% respectively), the largest Tech companies in our world today. This low percentage is also evidenced in the shrinking numbers of girls who see computer science as part of their future. ULYP seeks to change this and prepare the girls of today to lead the digital world of tomorrow.



TLC was launched this spring with thirty 8-14 years old girls gaining the tools and encouragement to unlock their talents and explore future possibilities in the world of IT. Over one year, a total of 105 underprivileged girls will receive training in basic computer skills, coding and conflict resolution along with a lot of inspiration, motivation and empowerment. By the end of the program, each girl will learn how to build her own program and will create a simple game with characters and objects of her choice. In addition, the girls will have better knowledge of human rights, conflict resolution, and mutual respect and understanding, and will themselves see how this affects their daily lives. TLC introduces disadvantaged girls to coding and reinforces basic computer skills, inspiring them to reach for new possibilities so they can become the digital designers of tomorrow!



TLC is funded by a grant from Microsoft YouthSpark.

Young, Strong and Peaceful!-Children Running for the ULYP Cause



On March 22, over 6000 enthusiastic children and youth ran the 5km Youth Marathon in Dbayeh. ULYP's participation in the marathon was made possible thanks to First National Bank (FNB), who sponsored 18 underprivileged children to run. Additionally, children from the American Community School (ACS) paid twice the established race fees in order for a child from a ULYP program to be able to participate alongside them.

In addition to the race, running shoes collected by the Beirut Marathon Association will be distributed to underprivileged children in our network. ULYP is very grateful for the support of the BMA, and hopes that proper running shoes will give these children the possibility to feel the joy of running and to contribute to a healthy and happy lifestyle.

ULYP would like to give a big thank you to all the participants, the BMA, the students at ACS and to FNB for sponsoring children's race fees and transport.

Website: www.unitebanonyouth.org

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