



ULYP Summer Newsletter

September 2018, Issue 27

Welcome to ULYP's Summer Newsletter of 2018. Summer is almost over and we are getting ready for the next season. Since our last publication we have concluded a number of projects, started new ones and further expanded the number of children and adults we support across Lebanon. We owe a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us this year; donors, partners, staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, teachers, schools, and many more. Without your help, we could not make the difference that we do.

In this issue, we will highlight the activities we undertook during this period. For more information, videos and our 2017 Annual Report, please visit our [website](#).



HAPPY Summer

This August, the HAPPY program (Happy Alternative Program for Pre-schoolers and Youth) was in full force, working with 24 children, aged four and five. The program's learning activities focused on English, maths, art and a lot of outdoor time. The HAPPY program approaches the children as active learners, and engages them in an interactive and immersive learning experience, using stories, songs, art, and activities to support the children's development.

With all activities taught in English, children developed a good foundation for learning the language in the coming years. It was also an opportunity for the children and teachers to experience a more interactive and hands-on style of learning. The children showed a huge improvement in confidence levels and really enjoyed the variety of activities covered. The wonderful facilities at the campus were perfect for fun in the sun, with lots of time spent in the playground and a final day in a paddling pool! On the last day, the children also received a book bag with paints, paintbrushes, toothpaste and a toothbrush. These gifts are useful for Grade 1 and gave everyone an opportunity to practice the art skills they learnt during the program. They also help ensure that the children are maintaining their oral health; an issue that was also discussed on the ULYP campus.

In addition to all this, ULYP hosted a teacher-training day entitled 'Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Early Childhood Development'. Sixteen teachers from HAPPY pre-schools across Lebanon attended and increased their ability to support the mental, physical and cognitive development of the children in their care. This project therefore not only improved the lives of the children attending the class, but also of the countless children that will be under the care of these teachers in the future.

The logo for the HAPPY program, featuring the word "happy" in a lowercase, rounded font. The letters are colored: 'h' is red, 'a' is orange, 'p' is green, 'p' is blue, and 'y' is green. A small green smiley face is positioned below the 'y'.

In September, CHANGE welcomed its students to our campus for the last time! This brilliant project was a perfect example of how our work supports the ambitions of young people living in Lebanon.

Since the beginning of 2018, CHANGE has been working with 75 Syrian and Palestinian refugees, from Syria and Lebanon, in Grade 12, to unlock their potential and increase their chances of pursuing higher education. Over the course of two semesters the CHANGE students engaged in intensive English courses and soft skills training. They were also offered college guidance counselling and assistance with their university applications. We are proud of the achievements of the CHANGE students and confident that they will leverage their newly developed skills for their success in the future.

CHANGE is in partnership with The Asfari Foundation.



Student Spotlight: Aya

Aya joined the CHANGE program a shy but independent and hard-working individual with the ambition to go to university and become a successful Arabic-English translator. However, with school being over and exams still a few months away, her lack of confidence in English made this dream feel out of reach. The program's joint focus on English language and Bacc II English preparation re-kindled her determination to chase her dream. Aya took the program as an opportunity to discuss both her academic difficulties and her reservations about her future with CHANGE teachers. She was never afraid to ask teachers for help and to cover specific topics she was struggling with.

So strong was her ambition that she took extra CHANGE sessions and completed over 110 hours of the program, more than any other student. Her confidence grew as did her resolve, and with the support provided by CHANGE, she is once again motivated to pursue her dream of becoming a translator.

"I was studying all the days of the week and always tired, but the days I was going to ULYP I felt comfortable. The program gave me a new energy, and I was benefiting at the same time: studying for the Bacc II and acquiring a new language. All of this really helped me! CHANGE is the best program I have ever seen, it gave me a lot of self-confidence and experiences with new people and new friends."



Education and Hope

The SHARE (Spreading Hope & Reviving Education) program for the children, youth and communities residing in and around the Palestinian refugee camp of Shatila in Beirut, ended on a high this summer.

204 children took part in the program's sports and art activities, the most we have ever had! And after completing the semester successfully, the SHARE students hosted two events to bring the community together: a sporting event where three teams from the Shatila camp went head-to-head in a competitive basketball and football tournament, and an exhibition showcasing the student's upcycled pieces of art for all to see.

Intensive English classes were also held throughout the summer. This part of the program hosted 80 children at our center in Shatila and on our beautiful campus in Dibbiyeh where the participants have access to a recently built basketball court and a football field. These students worked hard throughout the summer, investing their time to learning English beyond their school education and preparing themselves for the upcoming academic year. To end the semester with a memorable event we took our English learners to the great outdoors in Arnaoon village. There, many discovered the thrill of zip lining, the freedom of mountain biking, the serenity of being in nature and much more.

Following the success of this summer, we are proud to announce that SHARE will be back for another semester this fall. A big thank you to the Beit Jiddi Foundation who will once again give us the opportunity to spread hope and revive education. See you soon!

SHARE program is funded by Beit Jiddi Foundation.

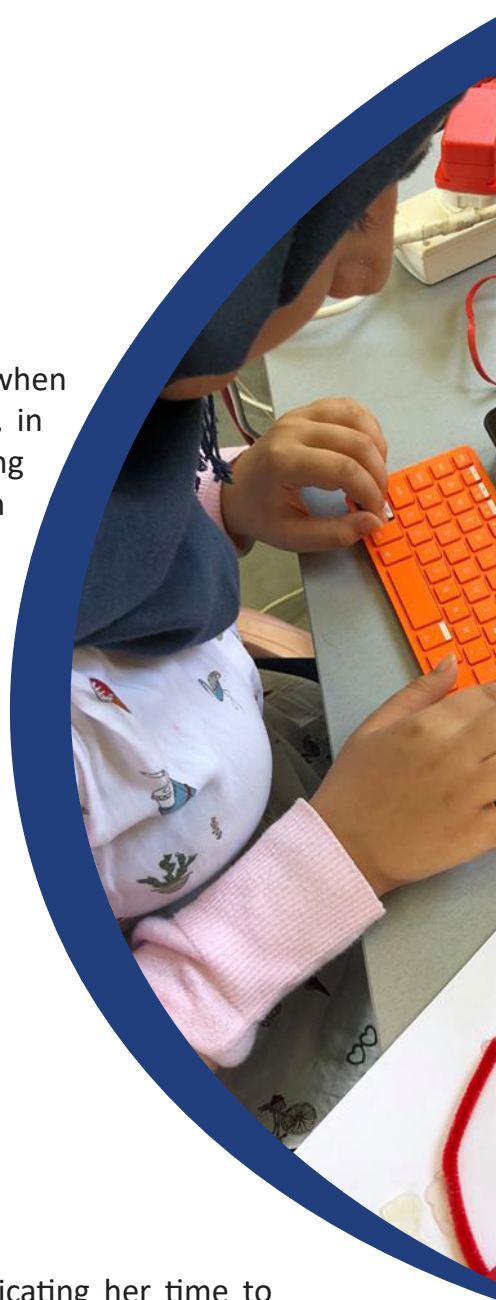


Learning Through Code

“It’s inspiring, motivating, and fun!” One of the girls commented when asked about her experience with TLC, the Together Let’s Code program, in collaboration with TheirWorld’s Code Clubs. Throughout a series of coding sessions, middle-school girls had the chance to become more familiar with computers, including learning all about hardware and software. They were able to write their own programs; coding a piece of art, and even a piece of music! The girls also learned how to integrate the basic concepts of coding into their daily lives, such as how keeping it simple and following exact instructions allows us to organize parts of our lives.

TLC Code Club not only provides computer programming knowledge, but it also inspires the girls, improving their self-confidence, team building and creativity. Expert sessions fortify and strengthen these skills and draw attention to ideas like the celebration of diversity, nourishing and taking care of our bodies, nutrition and mental health. The girls really enjoyed the activities and supported each other throughout.

TLC Code Club is funded by TheirWorld



Volunteer Spotlight - Mira Rahm

Mira has been a very active and enthusiastic volunteer with ULYP, dedicating her time to the Together Let’s Code (TLC) program. She has shared with us her experiences as a volunteer, particularly when looking at how online images can affect body image and self-confidence:

“When I first joined the program, I was asking myself about the importance of these sessions in helping young girls entering the digital world. Whether the girls would be interested in discussing “body image” and “self-confidence” at this young age, and how to convince them that being healthy is more important than being perfect.

I AM WORTH IT!

Shortly after starting my first session, I was amazed by all the energy and interaction present in the classroom. We started our activities and discussions with the sole objective of turning the negative thoughts about ourselves into positive ones, turning flaws into unique traits. We concluded that being healthy by exercising and eating well is far more important than being perfect and looking like the girls in the magazines.

GIRL POWER!

The best part was sharing our dreams and respecting those dreams regardless of all the barriers imposed by the society, especially on girls. Girls are here to lift each other and boost their confidence. Sparkling eyes and heart-warming smiles when talking about dreams and giving each other positive comments were my biggest reward!”

Bridging the Gap

This has been the busiest ever summer for the Bridge Program; we celebrated the graduation of **84** students, matched over **110** new students starting university with scholarships, and engaged **160** potential scholarship students in our University Preparation Course (UPC). We're growing at a pace we couldn't have ever imagined.

DukeEngage

For the 6th year running, eight volunteers from Duke University participated in the DukeEngage Program in Lebanon. The volunteers provided additional SAT preparation to our UPC students. SAT preparation is just one part of our students' lengthy university application process. Over the next two years, these students will be given college guidance and counselling, before being matched with donors and funding for Universities in Lebanon and across the world.

A special thanks to Dr. Maha Al Houssami and Julia Daley from the DukeEngage Programs and the wonderful Duke students for their invaluable contribution to UPC 2018.

Scholarships

Over **110** students, the intake of 2018 – 2019, just crossed the bridge into their universities in Lebanon and abroad. This could not have been possible without the generous support of our donors, staff, and volunteers.

Applications for the Bridge Program will open in October 2018 and is open to all. Here's to another year of students having access to higher education!

Graduation

84 students graduated from the Bridge program this year. Our bright Bridge Program participants celebrated their graduation from university, bringing the number of Bridge alumni to 411.

The ceremony was magical, tearful, sentimental and inspiring. The president of Lebanese American University, Dr. Joseph Jabbra, delivered a moving keynote speech filled with words of encouragement and enlightenment.

Bridg to a better
future e



BRIDGE Student Success Story: Darin Yassine

On the 8th of August, our founder Melek Nimer and the ULYP Bridge team received a letter from one of their students, Darin Yassine.

"I am writing with so much respect, gratitude, and warmth in my heart. I am writing to wholeheartedly thank you for being such a great person and taking such a huge part in my short story of success."

After completing her Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy, Darin was determined to pursue the Doctor of Pharmacy degree but needed financial support for the tuition fees. Darin searched high and low for someone to fund her dream. Her drive and hard work led her to the president of LAU, Dr. Joseph Jabbara, who referred her to Mrs. Nimer and ULYP.

"I can say, genuinely, that my determination, thrive, and limitless hope were born at first when I met Mrs. Nimer."

Through Dr Jabbara, the ULYP family and other kind-hearted donors, Darin received enough money to attend the University course she had hoped for. Thanks to Darin's extraordinary commitment, and the support she received, she she was able to enrol on the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the Lebanese American University. In July 2018, Darin graduated from LAU with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree with distinction.

On top of all this, on March 2018, Darin was accepted for a 12-month international post-graduate Year-1 residency at Houston Methodist Hospital in Texas, among 30 other applicants. She is therefore able to practice as a clinical pharmacist while she continues her educational growth.

"As I am starting a new chapter in my life, I thank God from the bottom of my heart that each of those exceptional individuals crossed my path, and gifted me an eternal hope in tomorrow which I will hold in my heart forever. At this moment in time, I am counting my blessings. I am also feeling immense excitement for the next challenge."

This was such a wonderful letter to receive; a perfect example of the positive attitude, exceptional intellect, hard work and inspiring optimism shown by the youth in Lebanon; and a reminder of how important ULYP's work can be.



Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education



مؤسسة عبدالله الغرير للتعليم
Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education

We are excited to announce that ULYP has recently partnered with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, for a three-year program starting September 1st. This partnership builds on our experience with the CHANGE and BRIDGE programs and makes it possible for ULYP to scale up these programs and reach out to a larger number of beneficiaries. The project has two main components. The first will support Palestinian and Syrian refugee youth with remedial English classes and prepare them for enrolment in Tertiary Education. The students will also engage in soft skills workshops, career counselling and support with applying for university. This component will be implemented in three areas around Lebanon and will build on lessons learned and best practices extracted from ULYP's CHANGE program and our university preparatory courses.

The second component will provide scholarships and/or co-fund university education for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and certificates in Lebanon and the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus for 210 students. The project will also track our students and support them throughout their university studies.

Overall, this project is going to reach over 500 refugee youth in Lebanon and help transform their educational and economic opportunities.

LIFE returns to ULYP

ULYP is delighted to announce that the LIFE project is back! LIFE stands for Learn, Inspire, Focus, Engage, and is funded by Taawon/Lebanon. Between September 2018 and June 2019, LIFE will support the learning of 70 children and 35 parents from the Haifa School in Beirut, Lebanon. This program is aimed towards children at risk of dropping out, changing the way they think about education and encouraging them to stay in school. This will be achieved through English language and life skills lessons.

Building on the success of SKILLS FOR LIFE, the original LIFE program recently won the 'Ockenden International Prize for Refugee Projects'. This award was given as recognition of "innovative work that has promoted self-reliance among refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs)". It is so exciting to have the opportunity to impact the lives of more children and parents in this way. Taking what we have learnt from previous LIFE programs, and all our other educational experiences, this cycle of LIFE will be the biggest and best yet. The children involved in the program will therefore not only improve their English, but also improve their chances of completing secondary and tertiary education.



Running for ULYP

The Blom Bank Beirut Marathon will be held on the 11th of November this year and ULYP will be in partnership with them again! Every runner has the option to run in partnership with an organisation and a percentage of the proceeds is donated to the charitable work done by that organisation. This year, if you run for ULYP, part of your registration fee will go to the wonderful work we do with children and youth in Lebanon. Last year's donations helped to build our new pre-school, which has been teaching young children all year!

If you are planning to run in the marathon this year, please run for us. When registering on the marathon [website](#), all you have to do is click on 'ULYP', when asked what organisation you'd like to support (under the 'Run for a Cause' tab). These donations make a huge difference to the work we do here so please, get your running shoes on and run for ULYP.



Give a Coat, Warm a Heart

Winter is coming, and without the right clothing, many families will struggle to stay warm. We are therefore delighted to announce that our Caring Coats Campaign will be running for the fifth time. Between October 15th and November 15th, ULYP will be placing donation boxes all over Beirut, as well as at our office. Please donate any coats, scarves, blankets and other warm pieces of clothing if you can. Last year, over 3500 hearts were warmed by your kind donations. This year we are hoping for even more!

Thank you, your contributions can make a huge difference!



Zade Dirani in Concert

On 11th of October, Zade Dirani is playing at the Palais Des Congres, in Dbayeh. This event is hosted by one of our wonderful partners, Taawon Lebanon. Please join us at this concert to enjoy Zade Dirani's music and support our joint educational programs. Tickets are available on the ticketing box office [website](https://www.ticketingboxoffice.com/) (https://www.ticketingboxoffice.com/).

