



# UNITE LEBANON YOUTH PROJECT

## NEWSLETTER

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This was a busy period for ULYP with most of our programs either taking flight or wrapping up. On average for September through December, we were running programs for around 900 participants in the various programs. Read on for highlights!

### SUNNARA



We are excited to announce the launch of our SUNNARA program fundraiser. Our goal is to raise \$5,000 by January 31, 2016 for this new program that empowers underprivileged and refugee women with the skills and knowledge to knit or crochet. Participants will learn to create basic clothing and decorative items for their families and later become entrepreneurs, producing items that they can sell to others and generate income. The link for this fundraiser is <http://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/ulyp/sunnara>. We very much appreciate your support!

### CIRCLE: BIGGER RADIUS, BETTER RESULTS

*"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." – B.B. King*

CIRCLE is back. This is a program implemented in partnership with UNICEF. CIRCLE II, was launched in June 2015 and will continue until the end of May 2016. CIRCLE is a multifaceted program that targets the psychosocial well-being of children, youth, mothers, and teachers through offering activities and programs for participants to better understand and express themselves, as well as cooperate with each other. Whereas CIRCLE I targeted 525 beneficiaries, CIRCLE II reaches out to 1,050 beneficiaries. Double the number, double the fun!



During this period, the Young Learners went swimming in the crystal blue water of the ULYP pool, planted the seeds whose fruits will continue to grow at school, participated in active learning on iPads, created numerous art projects, and much more! Our Most Outstanding Mothers all developed new ideas for business plans, which they created on the computers and pitched to a wider group, inspiring ideas in each other as well as our guests. The MOMs were particularly successful in their English classes, where they saw a 30% improvement from the pre to post test. The Chorale group learned how to play percussion instruments and how to sing 5 different songs, which were performed for their parents and teachers in the closing event. All can agree that the children sang like angels. Last but not least, the young women of TLC learned the basics of coding and even saw the fruits of their labor when they created movement and programs that they could see on the screen.

## SKILLS 4 LIFE: YALLA BYE!

*"Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom." - Oprah Winfrey*

Skills 4 Life is funded by the European Union and targets Palestinian students who are at risk of dropping out of school. The program was launched in January 2014 and will conclude this December. As pleased as we are with the impact of this program, we are just as sad to see it end. This two-year program targeted 1,000 UNRWA students ages 8-18 for 4 semesters. We implemented this program with our partners, The Welfare Association and IN-JAZ- Lebanon, and truly enjoyed every day of it. The challenges were many yet we faced them and learned from them. The program also worked closely with the UNRWA teachers through participatory workshops and ongoing discussions in order to ensure that its impact is sustained.

In November, a closing conference to share the experience of Skills 4 Life was held. It was attended by representatives of the Palestinian embassy, the European Union, UNRWA administration and teachers as well as members of the NGO community and participating students. It provided an opportunity for everyone to renew their commitment to children and work harder to get them to success.

## TOGETHER LET'S CODE: TLC FOR GIRLS

*"A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than knowledge that is idle." – Khalil Gibran*

To code or not to code, is not a question to ask. The future is coding and the future starts 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, games and websites, a few of the elements of most of our daily lives today. Coding is quickly picking up speed and entering the vocabulary of children, teachers, businesses and most recently, funders. Why coding for girls? 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. TLC develops the understanding and skills of girls to code and create digital games. Through TLC, the participants also get a lot of Tender Loving Care that helps them regain their confidence and rebuild their self-esteem. This program, funded by Microsoft, comes to its conclusion in December after benefitting over 100 girls from underprivileged communities. This program will now become a ULYP core program that we hope to offer year round.



*Skills4Life students!*



*Coding session and proud graduates*

## ACT II: MORE ACTION FOR CHILDREN OF TODAY

*"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving the community and the world better than when you found it." – Marian Wright Edelman*

ACT is a holistic educational program aimed at improving the English language skills and exploring the arts to underprivileged children. ACT gives equal opportunity to the marginalized to develop creativity, expression and self-confidence to fulfill potential and practice healthy habits of friendships and resolving conflict. The different components of ACT allow the children to increase their capabilities in using English, IT and explore the Arts (Drama, music and art) as a means of problem solving and accepting responsibility. Human Rights and conflict resolution topics are addressed in a child friendly and didactic manner to enable the students to understand and practice these in a safe environment and make the paradigm shift to a place where they again value themselves and education.

This fall we graduated over 100 students from our ACT program. In addition to English language and the arts, students were also given sessions on information technology and improv comedy. They were even visited by the moving library, "Autobus," to explore learning through books (Sabil Association, funded by Welfare Association). ACT is supported by FutureFirst—HSBC.



ACT II students!



## HARMONY: NO TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, YES TO LIVING IN HARMONY

*"Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace." - Confucius*

HARMONY utilizes the power of peer-to-peer education to spread awareness on gender misconceptions and to deliver the message that gender based violence - GBV- is not acceptable. Through drama therapy, gender workshops and teambuilding, the program promotes the development of healthy relationships, exposes youth to the causes and effects of GBV and shows them that harmony between the genders is the only way to create a better future. HARMONY seeks to change the attitudes adolescents ages 16 - 21 and their 4 teachers and caregivers have towards gender roles and empower them with the skills and tools to spread awareness amongst their peers about gender and GBV. Harmony was launched in November with the 22 participants ages 16-18. They have worked hard on understanding the issues at hand and are in the final phase of developing their skits and messages to their peers. In January, we launch the same program with the older group, ages 18-21 and towards the end of February we will have our closing ceremony with both groups to share their movies and celebrate their achievements.

HARMONY is funded by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.



## BRIDGE: DREAMS COME TRUE

Bridge is an educational development program for underprivileged high school students living in Lebanon. It is divided in two units. One that focuses on English language instruction, college guidance, and college entrance training (SAT). Another is the scholarship-unit which helps Palestinian university students financially through scholarships and stipends. The activities of Bridge are held year round, and serve 500 students annually. Two of our 81 graduates tell us their story.

### RAMA: A STORY OF SUCCESS



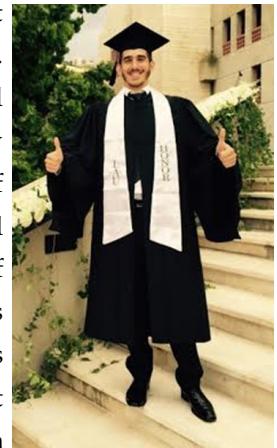
Rama at her graduation from AUB  
2015

"I don't believe in intelligence, I believe in practice. I practice anything I set my mind to. If I want to be first in my class, I practice by studying. If I want to excel in interviews, I practice by going to all the interviews I get. This strategy of practicing felt so right that I kept on doing it without really knowing what I would gain. I studied hard and that was how I got my scholarship at the top university in Lebanon, AUB. Thanks to ULYP, I had the best experience of my life at AUB. I got to study the major I chose for myself, Business Finance. At the same time, AUB offered me the ultimate collage life with all the different student clubs and events. I can honestly say that AUB's extracurricular activities which I joined shaped the person I am today. I learned time management, team work, project management, tolerance, communication and a lot more from those experiences. Before graduating from AUB, I had Dubai in mind. I

knew that Dubai is my next destination so I practiced. With good grades and skills from my three years at AUB, I got a scholarship from Blue Rose Compass to do my masters degree at Hult International Business School in Dubai. Today, I'm 10 months away from graduation and I'm starting to shape my future. Hult defines its masters program as a "practice year" to the theories we learn in business school. Hult offers a huge exposure to Dubai's businesses, CEOs, managers, HR recruiters, MNCs, and it is up to me to use what I learned and still learning to brand myself and get the job I want."

### JAD: WINNER OF THE MOHAMMAD ZUHDI NASHASHIBI SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AWARD

"When I was in high school, I dreamt of joining one of the big universities in Lebanon but that dream was hindered by the fact that my family's financial situation was not that good. But I finished my Baccalaureate II in Life Sciences with a very good average and I scored high on my SAT exam. I applied to LAU and AUB, and was accepted in both. I didn't know about ULYP until one of my friends told me about it. Fortunately, I was one of a group of students who were blessed by a generous scholarship to pursue my studies at LAU and this is when my journey began. While there, my teammates and I came up with an end of year project that was in fact an innovation in the world of waste sorting, which Lebanon is ironically sinking in. We designed an automated waste sorting machine that sorted various types of waste such as aluminum, iron, plastic, paper, and cardboard. This project caught the attention of many, such as Arcenciel who wanted to discuss possible future cooperation



in developing and manufacturing this machine, as well as Welfare Association who are now trying to help us in starting our own company.

I am now a mechanical engineer with big dreams for the future who will not give up on any of them and will strive for success anywhere he goes. As I took the first vow to myself not to make anyone regret giving me this scholarship, I will take the second vow to help my community and everyone in need to achieve their goals and pursue their dreams. That is what made me volunteer to help in teaching secondary school students SAT to get them prepared for their first university journey step. Wishing everyone the best of luck!"

## SECOND ANNUAL CARING COATS CAMPAIGN



A big thank you to everyone who donated clothing for our second annual Caring Coats Campaign. We were able to clothe over 1,500 people this year! This is triple the amount from last year and we are confident we can continue to grow. We would also like to recognize all of our partners who hosted collection boxes: FNB branches across Lebanon, Microsoft, the American Community School, Lebanese American University and the Palestinian Cultural Club, Ahlieh School, Sivananda Yoga, Beirut Yoga Center, CFC, Exhale Gym, and Hamsa Yoga. The award for most boxes collected goes to the FNB branch in Halba, who collected 32 large bags of clothing! Thank you to Rima Zantout, who coordinated from the home office, and to Joyce Mcheileh for her efforts in Halba. And a special thanks to our volunteers Taraneh Bastani and Raed Shami for organizing, to Aramex for donating all the boxes we needed for sorting and transportation, and to Virgin Radio for helping spread the word.

## MELEK: A WOMAN WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Amongst the many things that our founder does, is presiding over the IWF Lebanon chapter. Who is IWF? The International Women's Forum is the "singularly unique organization comprised of more than 6,000 dynamic women leaders in thirty-three countries and seventy-four forums around the world. IWF members span careers, cultures and continents, however they are wholly aligned in their commitment to building better global leadership." This international forum awards women who make a difference annually. In 2015, Melek and 10 other women from around the world received this award. We are proud.



## COCO: 2.5 YEARS GROWING WITH THE ULYP FAMILY



"A few months after graduating from university I moved to Lebanon so I could practice my Arabic and find a job or an internship, preferably in an NGO. I was invited for an interview at ULYP in May 2013 and started interning part time the next week. It slowly became full time.

ULYP grew and changed so much in the two and a half years while I was there, and it was so exciting to be a part of it. We moved from the crowded 3<sup>rd</sup> floor office, where Nicole, Zeinab and I, plus sometimes one or two more interns, shared one table, to the luxurious and spacious 6<sup>th</sup> floor office without having to pay rent! The office team doubled in size, and we had a constant stream of motivated volunteers and interns from all over the world. Having been an intern myself, I was immediately put to manage incoming interns. Dealing with interns from so many different backgrounds was an invaluable experience. One of the things I love most about ULYP is the passion of everyone working there and the family feeling – something which everyone picks up on, even if they only visit for a day.

It was such a supportive and friendly working environment, which motivates everyone to work hard and love what they do, and really makes the programs so successful. One of my happiest memories comes from Skills4Life, the first project I coordinated, and on which I also taught English in the first semester. On the last day when I asked one of my students what he had taken from Skills4Life he said 'this program changed my life.' I couldn't have had a better experience and it was with a heavy heart that I decided to leave. I agree with Fuad al Banna, one of ULYP's most committed scholarship students, who gave a plaque to ULYP at the graduation ceremony that read 'YOU ARE MY SECOND FAMILY AND ULYP IS MY SECOND HOME.' — Coco Burch

## Happy Holidays!



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