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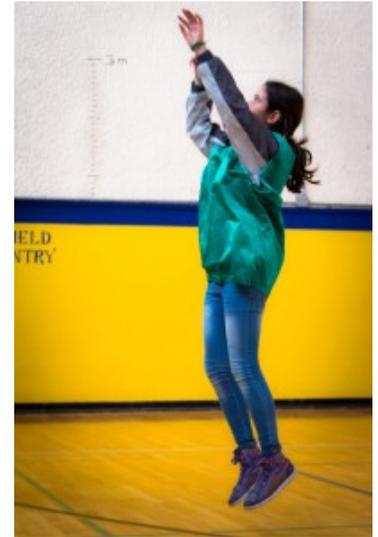
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Learning new skills through Basketball

Our pilot basketball program is now well under way, and 20 students from Bourj el Barajneh camp have come a long way since they started. Maya Hautefeuille, who has been photographing the sessions as part of our Play4Peace campaign, said about the project: “Each Sunday, the kids showed up at the courts with boundless energy and whether practicing on their own or playing in a match, they always showed a great deal of teamwork among themselves. Under the guidance of ACS coaches, the kids learned to dribble, shoot hoops and pass the ball, often to the sound of their local hip hop music playing on the stereo, and sometimes to the catchy beat of their own drum. After the warm-up, they got into teams and played matches against each other, shouting at the top of their voices when a point was made. Running around trying to catch everyone in action, both the girls and boys loved to interact with the camera and make sure I caught them in mid-jump for effect. Although no one was quite tall enough to make a slam-dunk, the way the balls kept flying through the hoops was amazing – there’s definitely lots of dedication and talent for basketball in that young group!”



We are very grateful to the American Community School (ACS) for allowing us access to their facilities, and to the ACS volunteers for sparing their time and skills! Here at ULYP, we really believe that all children have the right to safe, encouraging and nurturing recreational facilities and activities. In the future, we would love to run our ‘Play for Peace’ program on a much bigger scale. We are currently fundraising to build our own basketball court at our campus in Dibbeyeh, which could be used for basketball, martial arts as well as improving motor skills for young children. We would be incredibly grateful if you could take 5 minutes to visit our Just Giving page and help us on the way to this dream with however much or little you can give. Thank you.

Explore, Engage, Empower!

ULYP is pleased to announce that our new program, Skills4Life, has officially begun, as of March 6th 2014! Skills4Life will take place over 2 years, split into four semesters and with programs three times a week for different age groups at our campus in Dibbiyeh. The participants range in age from 8 to 18, and all take part in educational, recreational and career preparation activities based on their ages and needs. The program is being managed and carried out in partnership with Welfare Association and INJAZ-Lebanon.

All the children are Palestinian refugee students who have been invited to join because they are considered 'at risk' of dropping out of school; perhaps they have low grades, poor attendance or behavior, or problems at home. The program is designed to help with these issues, to get them back on track and to be as interactive, dynamic, fun, and motivational as possible!

The aim for the younger students is to explore and discover new talents, and increase their motivation and self-esteem. So far they have received financial literacy classes run by INJAZ, where they talked about their possible future jobs and did practice interviews. Although the youngest participants are only eight years old, they found it a very inspiring experience to stand up in front of their peers and talk about their hopes for the future. In art classes they have made gifts for their mothers to celebrate Mother's Day, and experimented with art taken from nature. By maintaining a positive, nurturing and encouraging classroom environment, we can already see their confidence and self-expression improving.

The oldest students, aged 15 and above, are focusing more on English, IT and getting ready for the world of work. They started the program by taking English tests, from which they were sorted into levels. In this way we can monitor their progress and see how much they have achieved by the end of the program. As well as music and drama they have received conflict resolution sessions where they



discussed solutions both to conflicts they had witnessed, and conflicts they thought they could experience in the future. They have also begun to work with INJAZ, focusing on success skills and work ethics.

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SAWA– art, music, and rugby!

Students between the ages of 12 and 14, from mixed Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian backgrounds, have just finished our SAWA program – Strengthening Amity With the Arts. At the core of the module, students learn new skills through a series of classes on arts and crafts, as well as classes in music and drama therapy. Alongside this, they have completed sessions on conflict resolution and gender equality.



This module, the students have also had the opportunity, all of them for the first time, to try rugby. Volunteers from the Lebanese Rugby Union Federation (LRUF) have generously given their time to teach these very enthusiastic girls and boys. The feedback for these sessions has been overwhelmingly positive, and so in the next few weeks, the students will practice more music, drama, and importantly, rugby!

As well as learning new arts, creativity and sports skills, SAWA teaches young people to work together and unite creatively, and to embrace acceptance, honesty, respect and human rights, and then to apply these skills in their day-to-day lives.

ULYP would like to thank the United Palestinian Appeal for their generosity in part-funding this module of SAWA, as well as the team from LRUF. Thank you all!

Run for ULYP!

ULYP is looking for men and women to run for us in the Beirut Marathon Association Women's Challenge on May 4th 2014! There will be a Women's 10k race, as well as a 5km solidarity race for both men and women.

If you would like to run for ULYP, and help us raise funds for our programs, then please e-mail us, at ulypoffice@unitelebanyouth.org. We hope to see you there!



155 Days in Beirut

I arrived in Beirut in late September 2013 to complete a year abroad studying Arabic, to contribute to my degree in the UK. Very soon, I began to feel uncomfortable about living in Lebanon without contributing anything to the lives of its many in need. I already knew about ULYP and its work through a friend who had volunteered with them, so I decided to apply to be a volunteer. I visited the office in Hamra to meet the team, and was immediately struck by its inclusive, welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. I began volunteering the next week!



I work as part of the office team alongside my studies, and my role has included everything from writing funding proposals and helping to organize programs, to compiling newsletters and tying ribbons! I have also worked with the Bridge scholarships program, which has shown me the difficulties faced by bright but underprivileged students when faced with their university and college applications, and also given me a new appreciation of the relative ease and freedom of my own education. The work is varied, and this has given me a great insight and first experience of the practical side of NGO work.

Thanks to ULYP, I have also learnt much about Lebanon, its history, people and society and now understand the problems and situations that we are helping to improve much more clearly. I had always retained a deep interest in this part of the world, but thanks to this experience, I am committed to continuing to work in the development sector and am sure that it is something I will pursue after I graduate. I firmly believe that the work ULYP undertakes has an immeasurably positive impact on the lives of the program participants, as well as on their families, friends and wider communities. I am sure that one day, ULYP will achieve its goal of a united Lebanon and I feel privileged and excited to have the chance to play a part in that journey.

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Getting closer and closer towards my dream

Firas Abdul Ghani is one of ULYP's top achieving scholarship students. He is now in his third year studying Electric and Electronics Engineering at Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey. His university fees are generously covered by the university itself. "It was a great chance when I was introduced to ULYP in 2010 as it gave me the opportunity to attend a good university to do my undergraduate study. You could say that I am the ambassador



of ULYP in my university as I help the students that come to my university through ULYP, in their university registration process, bank issues, resident permits and dorm issues.

For my first two years at Bilgi University, I was the student with the highest GPA in my faculty and this continues in my third year. Because of this my Electronics professor, Yiğit Dağhan Gökdel, asked me at the end of my second year to work on a scientific research project with him. I was really happy, it was as if my dream came true. It is a two year project which officially started in November 2013 and will finish in August 2015. The name of the project is "*Design and Fabrication of a Biopsy Catheter Capable of Doing In-Vivo Cell Imaging for Early Cancer Detection*" funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, TÜBİTAK. It is a new imaging/early diagnosis method of cancer cells that is cheaper, portable and doesn't involve radiation. I am responsible for designing an Optical micro electro mechanical system scanner. During the first two months, I read and researched about Micro technology, and now I am in the design and testing process. In addition to this, I will write a research paper with my professor, which we hope will be published in worldwide scientific journals. Publishing a scientific paper while being an undergraduate is a big challenge and not an easy task. People usually don't try to get published until they are doing their master's degree. We will also join two conferences this summer to show our work, one in Italy and the other in Istanbul. I feel really enthusiastic about my future. I plan to join two projects next year; one of them is another TÜBİTAK project, the other a Robotics competition between Laureate Universities in Europe. After graduating I will continue my Master studies in the Electronics and Biotechnology domain. My long term dream is to be the first Palestinian who enters the Nobel Prize winners list. Istanbul was the right place for me. I have had a good time and gained valuable experience, and I believe that Turkey will be my bridge towards Europe. I want to thank ULYP which was the main reason I came to Turkey and achieved all of this. I also want to thank Mrs. Melek and her group for their great effort, my family and friends for their support and my Professor who has supported me from the beginning."

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Playing 4 Peace

If you're a friend of ULYP on facebook or Twitter, you will have seen our posts about our new sports campaign, Play4Peace! After a series of successful meetings with Rama Chakaki, who has been advising ULYP on our social media and networking usage, we decided to launch our first online campaign to raise funds to build a basketball



court at our campus in Dibbeyeh. The court will host a new program, *Together in One Basket*, which will give over 1000 children access to new sports, skills and friendships every year. In addition to basketball, the court will be used for other sports such as volleyball, mixed martial arts, and as a space to develop motor skills for young children. We believe that all children have the right to play sport in safe and well-equipped recreational spaces, but for the majority of underprivileged youth in Lebanon this is not the case. We have the land, coaches, and enthusiastic teams ready, we just need the court, and can go!

We have seen the unifying power of sport through our *Football for Friendship* program, and we are already piloting a basketball program at the American Community School (ACS) in Beirut with the help of volunteers from the school.

The campaign has involved posting regularly on facebook, Twitter, and the ULYP blog, as well as sending publicity e-mails, and running a Just Giving campaign. We have been very successful, and to date have raised over \$8510 of our \$20,000 target (42%!), thanks to 33 generous donors.

We consider sports to be a unifying force for young people, and this is the drive behind our campaign. Every \$100 contributes 1sqm to our basketball court, and takes us one step closer to achieving our goal of a united Lebanon. So please join us, donate whatever you can, and share our message with your family and friends. Thank you

<http://www.justgiving.com/Volunteers-ULYP>

HAPPY at ULYP—with Pharell Williams

This week ULYP concluded another successful module of our HAPPY program. With HAPPY, ULYP aims to enhance the pre-academic, social and emotional skills of 5-year-old boys and girls, through a well-developed educational program that compliments the programs of their own pre-schools. ULYP would like to thank the *Welfare Association* who are generously funding HAPPY; we are very grateful for their continuing support of this program.

In this module, nearly 100 Palestinian preschoolers from Bourj el Barajneh camp have participated in music, nature exploration, arts and crafts, reading and play using iPads and other educational tools. Despite it being winter, the children were able take advantage of a number of sunny days to work and play together outside, learning about honesty, open-mindedness and respecting nature, and veloping their motor skills on our playground.

Both the children and their own teachers, who came with them every week, greatly enjoyed the stress-free vironment and many learning opportunities that our campus' open green spaces, trees, flowers, animals and playground provide. The visiting teachers participated in the program joyfully alongside their students and ULYP's teachers and volunteers. We are confident that they will take the positive impact of HAPPY back to their schools to sustain its effect.

The sensation of Pharell Williams' latest song, Happy, and all the videos that have been created, inspired ULYP to do our own version our children dancing to his Happy song. To see how just how HAPPY our children are, check out the video on YouTube!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hX90G2jbDAo>



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UNITE LEBANON YOUTH

GETTING PREPPED!

The 7th of March saw the beginning of another Bridge SAT Preparation course. This year it is taking place at AUB campus and sessions are mainly being taught by experienced master's students at AUB. Just being on a university campus and seeing a taste of how life is there is very inspirational to our aspiring students.

There are 150 students on the course which aims to introduce them to the SATs, as well as guiding them towards achieving good results once they take the official SAT exam, and inspiring them to aim for top universities around the world.

We asked two of this spring's students for their thoughts on the program:

"Both me and my friends find it really useful and our English has improved a lot. I really want to thank Ester, Melek and everyone ULYP." (Bilal Hindi, Nazareth School, North Lebanon)

"I like the course, and overall it is a great experience, the English is really helping. They are all doing a really good job." (Ahmad Abdulhalim, Jalil School, Beirut)

200 Palestinian 11th grade students from UNWRA schools all over the country were contenders to take part in the course. The students all excel in school and the final 150 were invited to attend the course based on grades and personal interviews conducted by ULYP's selection committee.

As some of the students come from the south and north of Lebanon, ULYP, with the help of UNWRA, encourages them to attend the program by providing free transportation. We are really impressed by the determination of our students, some of whom travel two hours every week to benefit from the ten session long course.

The current SAT course is level 1, and during the summer the same students will be invited to join levels 2 and 3. They will also receive university counseling sessions, which give the students a thorough introduction to possible majors, different university choices and the process of applying to university. Some students from the SAT Prep course and the College counseling sessions will later go on to receive university scholarships or stipends from ULYP.

There is no doubt the SAT Prep course is greatly beneficial for our future university students and we are extremely proud of their hard work and motivation. We are also eternally grateful to Welfare Association and UNRWA who are sponsoring the course this spring, and AUB who have allowed us to use their beautiful campus.



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