

IN THIS ISSUE

- Happiness Spreads 1
- Good Morning Mr Froggy 1-2
- A Stepping Stone to Higher Education 2
- An Engineering Adventure 2-3
- An Amazing Experience 3
- A ULYP Alum Speaks Out 4
- The Power of Hip Hop, Art and Muwashshahat 4-5
- A Celebration of Education 5

Happiness Spreads



Since the very first time I set foot in Lebanon, a few years ago, I knew that this amazing country was a place where I had to live. That was the reason why I looked to Lebanon when it was time for me to do an internship as a part of my studies in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies at Uppsala University in Sweden.

The first time I heard about ULYP was before I even travelled to Lebanon. A friend of mine told me about this organization and all its important work with children and youth. The second time I heard about it was one of my first nights in Lebanon when I met a girl who volunteered in one of ULYP's programs. After that, all of a sudden, it seemed that everywhere I turned people were talking about this rather small organization and their amazing work. I did not meet a single person with a bad thing to say about ULYP. It was impossible to not be interested in their work and I ended up applying for an internship there.

When I think back of my time at ULYP, there is one word that directly pops into my mind; happy. HAPPY was not only the name of the program I volunteered in, but it is also the perfect way to describe the children in the program, as well as the feeling I had during my whole stay in Lebanon interning at ULYP. I have worked a lot with children in the past, but the happiness these children showed me was something I had never seen before. From the very first day in the program the children managed to meet every activity with a genuine enthusiasm. It was clear to me that these children were deeply happy to attend the program and to be able to participate in activities on ULYP's campus. To be a part of giving these children that feeling of happiness is priceless. That also made me genuinely happy.

After meeting these children it did not take me long to understand why so many people were talking about ULYP. ULYP's work makes a difference for the children! And all of a sudden, I was one of those people talking enthusiastically about ULYP's work to people I met.

Good Morning Mr. Froggy!

On Young Learners, underprivileged preschool children have the opportunity to experience a quality education in a safe space that nurtures emotional awareness and understanding. Through pre-math, English, arts, play and exploration activities children are taught respect, cooperation, sharing and understanding. During the program, the children's teachers are also exposed to the importance of an interactive education and the "learning by doing" process. Through fun educational activities, Young Learners aims to inspire these children by encouraging their curiosity and bringing them to enjoy learning.



This summer, 125 children are benefitting from attending Young Learners two or three times a week. They come in groups of 25 students to the campus in Dibbiyeh, and attend classes led by two ULYP teachers experienced in working in preschool education. Activities are given in Arabic and English; exposing

children to a second language early on maximizes their learning potential. Throughout the program, the children absorb essential vocabulary and ideas, such as what is summer?, the five senses and health, by participating in fun arts and crafts activities and games. They learn about germs and viral transmission through glitter, the body parts are taught by singing “Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes” and they recognize how to describe their senses by explaining how paint feels on their hands. Basic awareness about WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene – is a new component for this semester of Young Learners.

Children are encouraged to make and voice their decisions, to listen to their friends and teachers and to solve problems for themselves. They learn to share and take turns playing outside on scooters, tricycles, swings and the climbing frame. They practice introducing themselves by saying good morning to Mr. Froggy, or Tuta the Turtle. Children not only learn independence and essential English vocabulary, but also that school can be a fun and inspiring place, not the rigid, textbook-taught environment they are often exposed to. Young Learners is part of CIRCLE II, in partnership with UNICEF.

A Stepping Stone to Higher Education



This summer, 152 students have been selected to participate in ULYP’s Bridge program and are benefiting from participating in the university preparation course (UPC) that began on the 27th of July.

The students, disadvantaged Lebanese and Palestinian 10th graders from public and UNRWA schools, come for four full days every week for three weeks to cover all the material necessary for the recently updated SAT, which will be taken for the first time in 2016. This summer these preparatory courses are located in three places across Lebanon, depending on where the students live: students in the Saida and Sour areas are studying at ULYP’s campus in

Debbiyeh; students from Beirut are participating in Hamra; while Beit Atfal Al Somoud have kindly offered their center in Bed-dawi camp for students from Tripoli.

The teachers are all enthusiastic volunteers who have spent weeks preparing to deliver a high quality program. Some of the volunteers are ULYP’s own scholarship students, who are well placed to teach this course given that they themselves participated in an SAT preparation course with ULYP, and understand the difficulties facing these students in obtaining higher education. Others are ULYP interns who have come from universities in America and the UK especially to give these preparation sessions. From 10 to 4, Monday through Thursday, the students focus intensely on the math and English components of the SAT. They also receive counselling sessions which help them decide what they want to study later on, expose them to the majors available at different universities and inform them about ULYP and the procedure behind our university scholarship program.

An Engineering Adventure

Hiba Shanaa, a ULYP student who recently graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB), was admitted to attend the 21st International Cultural and Academic Meeting of Engineering Students (ICAMES) in May, 2015. This annual, week-long event is held in the Bogazici University in Istanbul, Turkey and is organized by the Engineering Society, ENSO. Approximately 100 students from over 20 different countries attend this event and participate in project presentations and various social activities. While the Bogazici University Engineering Society covered the accommodation and meals, AUB paid for the ticket fees to Istanbul.

Hiba Shanaa and her team mates, Amal Chreiteh and Nour Absi Halabi, were encouraged by their final year project coordinator to apply to ICAMES and present their final year group project, the Mobile Visual Jockey. This consists of a centralized system which communicates wirelessly with a group of bracelets, worn by people in the crowd. The centralized system uses an algorithm to translate the music into visuals or patterns, and sends these as commands to the bracelets. Meanwhile, the bracelets send their positions





wirelessly to the central system, and then light up according to both the commands and their position in the crowd. Thus the crowd is transformed into a moving screen, producing visuals according to real time music characteristics without the need for a technician or DJ. This innovative idea gained Hiba's team third place in the ICAMES event.

As well as their hard work preparing and giving their project presentations, Hiba and the other students also had free time to enjoy the highlights of Istanbul. It was Hiba's first trip to Turkey and she had the opportunity to visit and experience the many touristic areas of Istanbul, such as the Dolmabahçe Palace and Aya Sofia. She was immersed in the local culture when she attended a Turkish Night organized by the University and was introduced to the food, music, dances and clothing specific to Turkey. Hiba and the other international students and reciprocated this cultural display during Cultural Night, where they each showcased particularities of their homeland.

Once they returned to Beirut, Hiba's group presented their project to their faculty members in AUB and won the Dean's Creative Achievement Award. They each received a certificate, a check for \$500, had their names inscribed in the Engineering Building at AUB and were awarded a Murex Excellence Award trophy by the Murex Company.

An Amazing Experience

Douaa Handam took part in the second semester of Skills4Life, funded by the European Union. We asked her to tell us about her experience:

Since day one, I felt the excitement I was going to have about meeting new teachers that come from different countries or cultures and being in an amazing place with a wonderful view. Skills4Life was an amazing experience for me: I was actually waiting every Friday to come so I can take a break from my daily routine. School used to be that boring place I went to just to pass exams and get my certificates. I didn't enjoy it at all... But the whole idea changed when my school marks started improving, especially in English, where I learned the important basics one should always remember, like verb tenses, prepositions, writing and reading skills.

By getting our school teachers motivated to come to the campus too, I started liking school even more because my relationship with them changed. And the Skills4Life teachers were more than amazing: they were all kind and friendly. They didn't make us feel that it was just any school and that we were forced to be here. Learning with them had become something fun. On top of that, I enjoyed the art, drama and music classes we used to have. I also learned a lot from INJAZ's sessions about personal economy and managing my future. I finally knew my future plan, who I was, who I wanted to be! The conflict resolution class my classmates and I took was also a life-changing experience. Personally, I had a few problems with my father, which caused me to fall into depression. However, I learned how to have the courage to stand on a bench and talk in front of students and teachers I didn't know about what I like and hate with a loud voice!



My classmates and I had to make a project for the benefit of our society and I got to prove myself by presenting it in front of three judges in a real competition. It was my first time presenting and it was fascinating and exciting. My team's project was "Solar House Mate", a company that sold solar panels which gave heat and warmed water for houses. We did this to win a real internship in a real company and that's what I am doing: I have an internship at ULYP. I go to the campus to help the teachers in art and drama classes, and help in the office. By going through the many tasks, even if they are hard or boring, I learned how to NOT nag and moan, to be patient and fit the business world, to not be afraid to ask for help, how to listen, give my opinion politely, respect time and thought. It also taught me how to use Microsoft Office, which was really important to me. Thanks to Skills4Life I finally know what major I want to get into at university. I am going to study political science and journalism, which will help me fight for what I believe in, for my homeland Palestine, not with a weapon but with a pen!

It was an amazing experience that I will never be able to forget. The programs, the teachers, the sessions... everything was literally perfect. So I want to thank the Skills4Life team for their great effort. And I wish that when I finish my internship, I will be able to come back to continue my journey with them...

A ULYP Alum Speaks Out

My name is Khaled El-Musleh, a Palestinian citizen living in Lebanon. I completed my secondary education in Lebanon, and my university education in Mechanical Engineering in Northern Cyprus at Near East University (NEU). I am now attending the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Sweden, where I am pursuing my master's degree in Engineering Design.

I have always striven for academic excellence and achieved outstanding results in both my higher secondary and secondary exams. I was granted a ULYP scholarship after receiving good results in the Lebanese Baccalaureate 2 official examinations, which made it possible for me to attend NEU. There, I studied 4 years of mechanical engineering and was ranked first in my department and second in my graduate class of 2014 with a CGPA of 3.6/4.0. To my great joy, I was even selected to give the graduation speech in front of hundreds of students.

After my success at NEU, I was granted merit scholarships to pursue my master's degree from schools all around the world. Although choosing between them was hard, I decided to attend KTH as it is one of the best in leading innovation in the world. Sweden is everything I expected it to be and I have never regretted my decision.

Recently, I was selected by my professor to compete in Shell Eco Marathon Europe under ECO CARS TEAM at KTH. This event brings together student teams from around the world to design, build and test energy-efficient vehicles. Our mission as students was to develop a car that runs on a hydrogen fuel cell for the international competition. After 5 months of hard work, we created a running car! While we didn't reach our initial goal due to some technical problems, my teammates and I were still extremely proud that we had made it into the race and finished 4 laps. At the same time, I got an opportunity to anchor a very big project with SKF China, a global technology provider, and collaborate with Jiao Tong University in China. The project was designing a new mechanical brake system for a linear actuator. While working on both projects simultaneously was a challenge, I greatly enjoyed it and working with so many people from different countries was undoubtedly an amazing experience.

I hope that all this knowledge that I am accumulating here in Sweden will give me the chance to help the industrial development of a machine industry in my country, build a successful career and be able to facilitate people's lives with new technology. I am thankful to ULYP for giving me this opportunity and I hope to one day be able to repay their kindness by helping other people in my situation.



The Power of Hip Hop, Art and Muwashshahat

Lamma Bada Yathanna.. aman aman aman..

This is what our ULYP children are learning together through Artists and Actors, part of CIRCLE II, in partnership with UNICEF. Please imagine for a moment, 30 young girls and boys from underprivileged communities getting together to learn this difficult form of singing and through it enhancing their Arabic, their ability to perform, making new friendships, increasing their confidence and most importantly their self esteem.

What are Muwashshahat? Muwashshahat is the plural of Muwashshah, a poetic style comprising music and vocalization. It is a sophisticated genre that originated in Muslim Spain during the tenth century. It has been said that muwashshah references the Wishah, a sash worn by women in Andalusia. The lyrics, which speak of love, joy and sorrow, directly express the poet's own ideas and emotions.

Now combine this art with that of Hip Hop. ULYP hosted Alexandra Chen, a child protection, psychosocial support and hip hop specialist, to bring a new dance form to our children. For over a decade, she has worked on education, peace building, child development and conflict management in the Middle East and has given many dance workshops for Syrian and Pales-





This summer ULYP has completed 3 three-day Artists and Actors retreats at our campus in Dibbiyeh. Each group of children takes part in workshops spanning from music, dance, art and sports to conflict resolution skills and health and hygiene awareness. The last component reflects a new focus on WASH activities for youth in Lebanon. Participating in recreational activities the children develop teamwork, confidence and communication skills, and have the opportunity to work together in a peaceful environment that offers an escape from their day to day lives.

Each weekend retreat ends with a final event where the group performs in their local communities and shares their newly acquired skills. In mid-July, 35 children aged between 8 and 11 from Nahr el Bared camp in Tripoli showcased the many things they had learned throughout the program. Family members, peers and representatives from other local NGO's attended the

final event where the children performed hip hop dances, sang muwashshahat and displayed the products of their arts and

A Celebration of Education - the Future Starts Now!

ULYP celebrated the achievement of 81 students who pursued higher education and succeeded in graduating with a Bachelor's degree from universities in Lebanon and abroad, all with the support of ULYP's scholarship program. **ULYP's class of 2015**, together with many friends, donors, supporters and partners, gathered on our campus in Dibbiyeh to celebrate education and remind everyone that education is the ultimate tool for social change.

The event included two inspiring speeches from two amazing guest speakers; Dr. Mohamad Zakaria and Dr. Yassine Daoud. Dr. Zakaria is one of the top 10 most educated men in the world, and Dr. Yassine Daoud is a world-renowned specialist in ophthalmology. Both men spent their formative years in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and attended UNRWA schools, but managed to achieve excellence through education, determination, and having people who believed in them. In their addresses, they both encouraged the graduates to continue their education, pursue their dreams and give back to their communities. The event also included a musical section presented by the children from our Artists and Actors program, who sang traditional Arabic songs- Muwashahat- to the audience. These 8-11 year-old children learned the songs on a weekend retreat through ULYP's CIRCLE project, in partnership with UNICEF. We hope they will one day become the future ULYP graduates. The whole event was broadcast live on ULYP's Facebook and Twitter accounts, and guests and students were encouraged to post photos and quotes using #ulypgrads.

As well as all receiving certificates of achievement, some students were recognized with additional awards in five categories during the event. These were:

- The Beirut Marathon Association Helping People RUN award.
- The Giving back to the Community Award
- The Following One's Passion Award
- The Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi Science and Technology Award
- The Abuhaydar Honor Society Award

Finally, two ULYP graduates addressed their peers and spoke about their university transition and the road that lies ahead. We felt very proud as the graduates marched onto stage wearing blue stoles to collect their certificates of achievement. Mabrouk to all, we look forward to following your progress as you embark on your futures!



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