

IN THIS ISSUE

New program: **CIRCLE!** 1

Returning Program: **BRIDGE** 2

Opening Doors to a Better Life 2

ULYP's First Annual Report 3

ULYP's New Basketball court and Program 3

Continuing Programs 3

New Programs 4

Encouraged to Go as Far as They Can 5

"One of the Most Important Weeks of My Life" 5

IN OTHER NEWS

Beirut Marathon

RUN for ULYP in the 2014 Beirut Marathon and help us raise funds for our basketball program Together in One Basket. Email us for more information at ruth@ulyponline.com.

2014 Summer in Review

ULYP's summer was full of activities and smiles. We launched a new program, added a new basketball court and delivered university preparation courses within our BRIDGE program. We also published our first annual report and updated our website.

New Program: CIRCLE!

A circle has no beginning and no end and neither does our new program in partnership with UNICEF. CIRCLE is a multifaceted, integrated program that targets the psycho-social wellbeing of children, youth and women through activities designed to help the participants better understand and express themselves, as well as cooperate with each other. The program targets 500 beneficiaries and takes place over a period of 7 months ending in February 2015.

For Sports: Football Retreats

Three football retreats were held this summer. During each retreat, the 30 players and their coaches spent three nights and four days on our campus. They attended football training sessions, as well as learning new cooperation and team work skills and building new friendships through football skills-building activities, conflict resolution and health and hygiene workshops. After a fierce competition at the end of each retreat, the winning teams met for a final cup, which was won by Al Somoud from Nahr el Bared. Congratulations to all participants, especially the winners!



For the Arts: Artist and Actors

This program enables children to develop their social skills, gain self-confidence and learn about their rights—through the arts. Three mini camps of two nights and three days were held at the ULYP campus for children aged 8-14 who came from as far as Bekaa, Tripoli and Tyre to immerse themselves in music, drama, art and handicrafts. The children also benefited from conflict resolution workshops and learned to work and live together on our campus.

Returning Program: BRIDGE

The summer was busy for the BRIDGE program; in total, around 300 students engaged in different BRIDGE activities. Here is the breakdown:

- 150 10th graders took part in a university preparation course at AUST in Beirut.
- 90 11th graders attended levels 2 and 3 of the university preparation course at AUB.
- 30 10th graders participated in an SAT prep course on our campus delivered by the Duke Engage volunteers who were with us for the 3rd year in a row.
- 15 11th graders attended a similar program delivered locally at the American Language centers in Zahle, Tripoli and Saida.

ULYP is grateful to the Welfare Association for their generous funding of the BRIDGE program, to AUB and AUST for their generosity and cooperation and to the DukeEngage and ACS volunteers who ambitiously planned and carried out the program in Dibbiyeh.



Opening Doors to a Better Life

As part of the BRIDGE program, four volunteers from Duke University, USA, made the long trip to ULYP's Dibbiyeh campus where they organized a university preparation course for 29 students—a mixed group of Lebanese and Palestinians. Students were immersed in full-time study for one month, taking classes covering English, math, SAT exam techniques and conflict resolution. One of the four volunteers, Rachel Kiner, tells about their experience:

Our 2 months at the ULYP office proved to be much greater than the 2 month long assignment to teach SAT prep that we were expecting. Our small group of Duke students arrived with the intentions of improving SAT scores and promoting cultural tolerance to Palestinian and Lebanese high school students.

We found that not only were we able to assist a great deal in improving our students' scores (an average of 200-300 points), but also that the challenge of teaching an English based test to ESL students would have a greater presence in our work than expected. I aimed to turn this challenge into an advantage and began practicing my Arabic on the board during breaks. This simple gesture opened up doors like I never expected. By showing a little bit of interest in my students outside of the job I was there to do, our relationship in the classroom became much more collaborative.



In their eyes I was no longer just an older, more experienced foreigner sent there to help them. We were partners, and they enjoyed teaching me Arabic as much as they appreciated learning SAT test-taking strategies.

Although the other teachers and I were elated by the score improvement, those numbers meant so much more than simply 2 months of hard work at ULYP. To us, and to our students, it meant opening the door to a better life.

What Else Kept Us Busy this Summer

ULYP's First Annual Report

The ULYP team is proud to have presented their first annual report, which will hopefully be the first in a chain of many. The 2013 annual report details ULYP's achievements since inception in 2010 and summarizes the programs and activities that have taken place under the ULYP umbrella since the birth of the organization in 2010. As listed in the report, the main achievements during these years are:

- Providing programs for an average of 1500 children, youth and women per year.
- Expanding our palette of programs from three to ten.
- Supporting 400 students in their pursuit of higher education and enrolling 341 students in universities with partial or full scholarships.
- Refurbishing our campus in Dibbiyeh with three studios, a preschool, three conference areas, a football pitch, and more.



None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the support of our friends, donors and partner organizations. Neither would we have been able to take such steps forward without the dedication of our teachers, volunteers and interns, or without the energy, optimism and curiosity of the young participants. These children are convincing us that change is coming with this new generation.

ULYP's New Basketball Court and Program



With donations collected through our campaign online (JUST GIVING) and offline ULYP was able to start constructing its basketball court to serve hundreds of children every year. Contributions and support from many friends of ULYP are greatly appreciated. CCC managed the construction as well as providing a donation towards making this happen. UNICEF's CIRCLE program also partially funded this process. The next steps include covering the court and starting our basketball program this fall – part of CIRCLE's Team Sports Camp.

Looking Ahead—Fall 2014

Continuing Programs

Skills4Life

The second semester of Skills4Life has just begun. This semester, participants are coming from five UNRWA schools in the Beirut area to take part in a rich, non-formal education program to unlock their potential, increase their motivation and encourage them to stay in school.

Last semester, teachers who worked with the children and youth witnessed a new-found confidence, enthusiasm and dedication among their students, made evident in debates and presentations, and discussions outside of the classroom. Among the secondary school students, almost 90% reported that they learned new skills on the program that they were able to apply in real life while over two thirds said that their school grades had improved.

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

Strengthening Amity With the Arts (SAWA)

SAWA is back! Palestinian and Lebanese children aged 8-11 will come together to participate in art, music and drama and learn about gender equality, conflict resolution and children's rights. Along the way they will increase their creativity, self-expression and confidence, develop teamwork and communication skills, and learn to accept and respect each other. We are very grateful to the United Palestinian Appeal for part-funding SAWA for the third time.



New Programs

The palette of programs offered by ULYP keeps growing. This fall, two new activities of CIRCLE and two new programs are starting:



CIRCLE's Young Learners

Young Learners gives underprivileged four to five year olds a head start in life by offering a safe space for exploration, as a compliment to regular pre-school classes. The program is part of CIRCLE and is carried out in partnership with UNICEF.

CIRCLE's Mothers

In the third week of September, 30 women arrived on ULYP's campus to build on their knowledge through a second round of English classes, IT lessons and interactive workshops. The women will attend classes three mornings per week, from September to December. They are taking part in CIRCLE's Mothers, a program designed to offer women with non-formal learning opportunities.

CIRCLE's Mothers also has a broader aim. As the pillars of their families and the wider society, the program seeks to strengthen women's ability to be active agents of change –improving life for their children, for themselves and for their families. To this end, dynamic awareness sessions are offered on topics such as child protection and child and human rights, First Aid, health and hygiene, and conflict resolution.

Action for Children of Today (A.C.T.)

Action for Children of Today is a year-long program for the most marginalized youth—Syrians, and twice displaced Syrian Palestinians—in the ages 7-15. The aim of the program is to strengthen the participants' psycho-social well-being. To meet this goal, the program has three components: English and IT training, conflict resolution and arts and drama. Action for Children of Today is carried out in partnership with HSBC.



United by Environment



Whatever damage is brought to the environment today, the next generation will be the one to suffer. Put in another way, the environment surrounds and sustains us all, and unites us across political and social borders.

Funded by the US Embassy's Small Grants Program, United by Environment is a program directed towards youth in the ages 14-18, coming from underserved Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese communities. Through a series of workshops, the participants will learn about the environment while improving their public presentation, campaigning and conflict resolution skills.

Everyone who completes the program will be encouraged to act as an agent of change in his or her home community, spreading the values of respect for the 'other' and for our shared environment.

Student Spotlight

Encouraged to Go as Far as They Can



On August 30th, more than 250 children from different backgrounds – Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian—gathered at a centre in Al-Baddawi camp for a day to celebrate education. The children got to know each other, play together and speak about their dreams for the future. The entire day was organized by Fouad Fayeze Al Banna, a Palestinian refugee living in Tripoli who is actively involved in his community.

Fouad has been organizing many events in the Al-Baddawi camp. This time, he says: “The idea was in my mind to make something in the camp that involves the greatest number of children...Education and young people are the tool to change.”

Apart from organizing cultural and educational events in his community, Fouad studies Biology at the Lebanese American University (LAU), on an UNRWA scholarship. Through the scholarship, he has become involved with ULYP. He has volunteered as an English teacher, and was nominated by ULYP to take part in the Clinton International Summer School this year.

ULYP is my essential supporter and my second family. Here I met great people like Mrs. Melek and Mr. Salim Karroum. Here I built strong bonds with great friends. Here I was supported to believe in myself, in my potential and dreams. ULYP taught me that dreams will come true if we work for them.

ULYP has supported a number of projects and events that Fouad has organized. The Day of Education was financed and supported by Al Najdeh association, the Global Network of Rights and Development (GNRD), and by ULYP.



Fouad Fayeze Al Banna,
LAU student and community activist

“One of the Most Important Weeks of My Life”



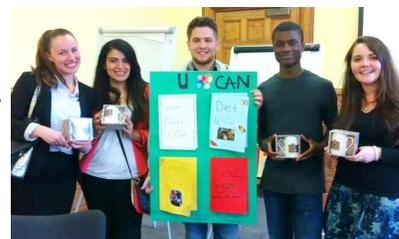
The Clinton International Summer School is held at the Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It brings together ambitious students from underserved communities in post-conflict societies from all over the world. The youth gather to learn about entrepreneurship and to be inspired to work for change in their communities.

This year, ULYP was asked to nominate two students.

Mona Hassan, now in her fourth year of studying Medicine at Beirut Arab University (BAU), was one of the lucky two. About her summer experience, she says:

It was one of the most important and productive weeks of my life and I would like to thank you a million times Mrs. Melek for this week, none of this would have ever happened without you and your faith in us.

The Clinton International Summer School offers classes in management, decision making, finance, social enterprise and marketing. Mona explains how the group engaged in discussions with more than 10 panels, which included “people with very high positions in the world of social enterprise and business, and people who reached the top although they started from nothing. It was really inspiring to see such stories”.



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