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HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES & PERSPECTIVES
FOR SYRIANS

HOPES IN THE MEDIA VOLUME IV

THIS PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED BY

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HOPES IN THE MEDIA

VOLUME IV

The following pages contain an overview on the echo received by the HOPES project during the fourth year of its implementation and specifically between May 2019 and October 2019.

The collected items range from more substantial considerations and articles to smaller announcements in online publications.

Not every time HOPES is the only subject; often the project is portrayed together with other similar initiatives.

The variety of languages – Arabic, English, French, German and Turkish – gives proof of the wide attention HOPES has gained in the region and in Europe as well.

This document has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the publishers and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the implementing partners of HOPES, the European Union and the EU's Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund'

HOPES Project: Lab Session at European Development Days 2019



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HOPES
HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES & PERSPECTIVES
FOR SYRIANS

**HOPES AGAINST
INEQUALITIES !**
PROJECT LAB ON
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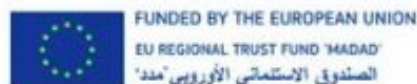
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TOUR & TAXIS, BRUSSELS
18 & 19 June 2019

edd European
Development
Days

Together with the British Council, Campus France and Nuffic, the DAAD organised a lab session on the HOPES project at the European Development Days (EDD) 2019.

It is estimated that less than 1% of refugees have access to tertiary education, compared to 36% of their peers elsewhere (UNHCR 2016). On the eve of the World Refugee Day, the session **"HOPES against inequalities! Project lab on providing refugees with access to tertiary education and further learning – needs, challenges and innovative practices"** gave a voice to refugee students, local education providers and policy makers. They all stressed the paramount importance of tertiary education, which gives young refugees the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that will allow them to contribute to society and that are essential for post-conflict recovery and rebuilding.



"After I had obtained my BA degree in Syria, HOPES gave me a great opportunity to continue my studies in Lebanon and to graduate with a diploma in pharmacy there. This year was a turning point for me because it opened many new doors for my personal and academic development."

Feras Oyouun

Master Student at Université Paris-Sud
Former HOPES scholarship holder



Official session organiser

IMPLEMENTED BY

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HOPES - Higher and Further Education Opportunities & Perspectives for Syrians

The HOPES project addresses the challenges faced by Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities in the countries neighbouring Syria. Through a symbiotic mix of education offers (academic counselling, language courses, scholarships, innovative projects, policy dialogue), HOPES has improved the prospects of refugee youth in the region. The project is funded by the [EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund'](#), and implemented by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the British Council, Campus France and Nuffic.

[To the project website](#)

The HOPES lab session was connected via teleconference to the high-level event "[The Other 1 Percent](#)", which took place on the same days (18/19 June 2019) at the German Foreign Office in Berlin. The event in Berlin was organised by DAAD and UNHCR and featured the German Foreign minister and the UNHCR High Commissioner along with refugee students and educational stakeholders.

More Information

- [EDD session page "HOPES against inequalities"](#)
- [Pictures of the session](#)
- [Download: HOPES Factsheet \(PDF, 2.00 MB\)](#)
- [Presentation of the session](#)



أدم الشامي
Adam Alshami
تالا الشامي
Talah Alshami
سلام شرف الدين
Salam Sharaf Aldeen

شيرين عبد العزيز
Sherin Abdulaziz

عفراء باطوس
Afraa Batous

عمر جمول
Omar Jammol

فارس خليف
Fares Khleif

مجد سليمان
Majd Suliman

وائل سالم
Wael Salem

AJYAL
أجيال

مبادرة دعم تعلّم الفنون
AJYAL: An Initiative to Support Art Education

الدورة الأولى
First Edition

نتائج منح أجيال: مبادرة دعم تعلّم الفنون

AJYAL Grant Results: An initiative to support Arts Education – 1st Edition

AJYAL: An Initiative to Support Arts Education is a scholarship programme that supports those who wish to study a bachelor's or master's degree in Syria or a master's degree in Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and all EU countries.

AJYAL Scholarships enable young Syrians to pursue their academic studies and access the education opportunities they need for their lives and careers in the arts. The scholarship programme supports those who wish to study a bachelor's or master's degree in Syria or a master's degree in Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and all EU countries. Scholarships cover the costs of studying at universities and intermediate artistic institutes by offering either full or partial funding.

AJYAL Scholarships range from \$1,200 to \$000,4 and vary according to country, tuition fees and the cost of living in the place of study.

Results of Grant Recipients in the First Edition:

Adam AlShami

Adam AlShami is a first-year drama student at the High Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus, studying in the Acting department. Adam began his education in theater studies at the school of dramatic arts where he participated in several student productions.

Description of studies

BA in Acting – High Institute of Dramatic Arts, Damascus, Syria

Afraa Batous

Afraa Batous graduated from the Department of Literature and Human Sciences at the university of Aleppo in 2009. Over the course of her studies, Afraa focused on theater; upon graduation she moved into the field of Cinema. She has since made several short and one feature-length documentary, entitled *Jeled*, released in 2015. *Jeled* has been screened at several festivals and won a number of awards.

Afraa also worked on the production of “300 Miles”, directed by “Orwa Mokdad”, which has been screened internationally and won numerous awards.

Description of studies

MFA in Documentary Directing - Babelsberg Film University, Potsdam, Germany.

Sherin Abdelaziz

Sherin Abdelaziz is a second-year student in the Theater Studies department at the High Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus. Sherin is interested in academic research of literature and theatre, as well as writing scenarios and dramaturgy. So far, Sherin has written two scenarios for two different films.

Description of studies

Diploma in Theatre Studies - High Institute of Dramatic Arts, Damascus, Syria

Fares Khleif

After finishing his studies and graduating with a diploma in Theater Design from the High Institute of Theatrical Arts in Damascus, Fares Khleif began pursuing a career as a scenographer and technical manager, doing so in parallel with his work as a Graphic Designer. He also works as a trainer in interactive youth theatre.

Description of studies

Two-year MA in Directing specializing in Scenography, Lebanese university of Fine Arts, Beirut, Lebanon

Majd Suliman

Majd Suliman graduated from the university of Fine Arts in Aleppo in 2013 – with a degree in Painting. He has since produced several artistic works and participated in workshops on digital sketching and sculpture. Majd is currently pursuing further studies in Free Art at the University of Düsseldorf, Germany.

Description of studies

Five-year diploma, (equivalent to master's degree), in Free Arts - Düsseldorf University, Germany.

Omar Jammol

A student of Classical Guitar performance, Omar Jammol has also majored in music composition and harmony. He has participated in several workshops led by international musicians, attending many events and contributing to numerous projects in Syria, Spain and Germany. He currently works as a guitar teacher and has led the Guitar Orchestra since 2005.

Description of studies

Master in Classical Guitar performance 2019-2020- Universidad de Alicante, Alicante, Spain.

Salam Charaf Aldeen

Salam Charaf Aldeen is a third-year student at the university of Fine Arts in Aleppo, specializing in Interior Architecture. She has worked as a private instructor, teaching wide variety of academic and artistic disciplines.

Salam is also interested in scenography and has participated in several design and architecture workshops.

Description of studies

BA in Interior Architecture - University of Fine Arts, Aleppo, Syria.

Tala AlShami

Tala AlShami graduated in Architecture from the University of Aleppo in 2017. She has participated in a number of architecture workshops, both independent and affiliated with her university, and contributed to an exhibition at the Visual Art Centre. In 2017 and 2018, Tala worked as an architect

and graphic designer for the Architecture firm NOAH. She is interested in educational research particularly work contributing to the improvement of architecture in Syria in the future. Tala is currently working on "Meter Sina'i Morabaa" an initiative which supports industrial heritage in Syria.

Description of studies

MA in Architecture and Urban Design - University of Kent in the UK, Canterbury, UK in collaboration with the Paris School of Arts and Culture, Paris, France.

Wael Salem

Wael Salem graduated from the High Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus with a degree in Theatre Studies. He is a writer, theatre director and cultural researcher who has written a number of scripts and led several training workshops in interactive theatre.

Description of studies

Master of Theater education specializing in Theatre training for non-specialists - Berlin University of Arts, Germany

And the names of selection committees are as follows:

Theater & Performing Arts: Eric Deniaud (France), Julia kassar (Lebanon), Mostafa Aboud (Syria)

Fine Arts & Architecture: Boutros Al-Maari (Syria), Mwafaq Katt (Syria), Rana Haddad (Lebanon)

Cinema: Abderrahmane Lahy (Mauritania), Hala Alabdalla (Syria), Mohamed Al-Daradji (Iraq)

Music: Andre Hajj (Lebanon), Athil Hamdan (Syria), Mustafa Said (Egypt)

The project AJYAL is implemented by Ettijahat in partnership with DOEN Foundation as part of the Grant scheme of the HOPES project funded by European Union's Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the "Madad Fund" and implemented by the German Academic Exchange (DAAD) together with the British Council, Campus France and Nuffic and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.



FAQs_2018_EN

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مبادرة دعم تعلّم الفنون
AJYAL: An Initiative to
Support Art Education

First Edition

AJYAL: An Initiative to Support Arts Education

First Edition

General Questions

THIS PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE GRANT SCHEME OF HOPES



Applying for Ajyal Scholarship

- **How do I apply for the Ajyal Scholarship?**

Applicants must fill out a form, which is available at www.ettijahat.org, and send it with the required attachments by email to ajyal@ettijahat.org.

- **When is the deadline for receiving applications?**

Applications will be received until 23:59 Beirut local time (GMT+2) on 31 January 2019. No applications submitted after this date and time will be considered.

- **How many applicants will be selected?**

8 scholarships will be awarded in the 2018/19 edition. A further three people will be selected as reserves and listed in order of preference.

- **Will I receive confirmation that my application has been submitted?**

Yes, your submission will be confirmed by an email notification. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please verify that the email address is correct or resubmit the application.

- **What does the Ajyal Scholarship cover?**

Ajyal Scholarships cover tuition fees, registration fees and other expenses which students incur as part of their programmes of study, including the purchase of learning materials. Scholarships also cover the expenses of travelling to study abroad, including transportation costs.

- **I do not have a Baccalaureate Certificate or evidence of my Equivalence Certificate from the Ministry of Education/Higher Education in my current country of residence. Can I**

apply for the scholarship without providing evidence that I have obtained this or an equivalent qualification?

Yes, you can apply for the scholarship without providing your Baccalaureate Certificate or Equivalence Certificate. However, in the event that your application is successful, you will have to complete this procedure within one month of the recipients' names being announced.

Eligibility

• Who is eligible to apply?

- Syrians and Syrian-Palestinians aged 18-26 years old who reside in Syria or its neighbouring countries and wish to pursue undergraduate studies or study at intermediate-level arts institutes in Syria
- Syrians and Syrian-Palestinians under the age of 35 years old who reside in Europe or countries neighbouring Syria and wish to study for a master's degree. Applicants must have already obtained a bachelor's degree from a recognised and formidable university
- Syrians and Syrian-Palestinians under the age of 35 years old who reside in Europe or countries neighbouring Syria and wish to participate in educational activities hosted by universities over a period of no less than one month
- Applicants who reside outside Syria must have a valid residence permit for their current country of residence

• I am already a beneficiary of one of the other programmes offered by Ettijahat – Independent Culture; can I apply to Ajyal?

Ettijahat – Independent Culture is working to broaden the scope of its beneficiaries. However, it is possible for beneficiaries of other programmes to apply to Ajyal provided that they have completed their work under the other programmes before they commence their activities under Ajyal. Ettijahat will not support two projects being carried out by the same beneficiary simultaneously.

Application

• Can the application be submitted in a language other than Arabic?

No, the application must be completed in Arabic only. Similarly, the curriculum vitae, motivation letter and educational certificates must all be in Arabic. Any remaining or extra files may be attached in any language.

• Can the same applicant submit more than one application?

No, the Selection Committee will only examine one application per applicant.

• What should I include in the motivation letter?

Your motivation letter should be clear and concise. A good motivation letter will intrigue the Selection Committee and prompt them to choose you personally. Your motivation letter should highlight your reasons for pursuing your studies and demonstrate your seriousness. Your motivation letter should not exceed one page and it should address the following questions and points:

- Why are you applying for an Ajyal Scholarship?
- How are your strengths reflected in the Ajyal programme?
- Why should the Selection Committee consider your application for an award?
- Why have you decided to pursue your studies? What value will your studies add in this

context?

- Avoid repeating the same information already stated in your resume.

- **How are applications selected?**

All applications which meet the stated requirements are considered. The application consists of a form, which is completed electronically, and a number of other file attachments. A Selection Committee will be formed to examine the applications. The committee will consist of a number of experts and academics.

- **What are the criteria for selection?**

The Selection Committee will choose programme participants on the basis of the following criteria:

- Motivation: the applicant must show a strong link between their background and their chosen field of specialisation and be motivated to enhance the contribution of the arts in the building of Syrian society
- Academic and personal achievement
- Financial need
- Commitment and a strong interest in continuing in your chosen field of artistic work
- You are currently enrolled in a programme at an intermediate-level or higher arts institute or you are undertaking a bachelor's or master's programme at a recognised university
- If you have not completed registration or you have not yet been granted admission at the time of your application, you may be awarded a scholarship on a conditional basis pending your registration/admission

- **What types of applications are not supported by Ajyal?**

- Special training workshops held by artistic institutions
- Short-term training workshops
- PhD funding
- High school funding

- **Does the Ajyal Scholarship programme provide doctoral funding?**

No, unfortunately the Ajyal Scholarship does not provide PhD funding.

Results

- **How will the results be announced?**

Only selected participants will be notified of their admission to the programme. The results will be published on [Ettijahat's official website](#) and [Ettijahat's Facebook page](#).

- **When will the results be announced?**

The selected applicants will be informed three to four weeks after the deadline for receiving applications.

- **What if I change my field of specialisation after I am awarded a scholarship?**

Unfortunately, you cannot change your field of specialisation after you have been awarded a scholarship. Scholarships are awarded on the basis of applicants' profiles at the time of submission, including their intended educational programmes.

- **Will the Ajyal Scholarship cover tuition fees for all years of university in the event of admission to and undergraduate programme?**

The Ajyal Scholarship will cover tuition fees for the academic year 2018-2019 only. However, funding for tuition fees in undergraduate courses may be renewable for additional years of study if a) Ettijahat has sufficient funds and b) the student completes the previous year of study with a grade of 60% or higher.

- **Under what circumstances can my scholarship be terminated?**

- The scholarship will terminate with the end of the contract between the student and Ettijahat – Independent Culture. Contracts usually last for one year.
- The scholarship may be terminated on the basis of low educational achievement in final examinations or submissions (whereby the student achieves a grade lower than 60%).
- The scholarship may be terminated in the event that the student violates of the rules and regulations of the higher education institutions in which they are studying.
- The scholarship may be terminated in the event that the student is repeatedly absent from classes without clear justification.

- **What is the Equivalence Certificate? How can I obtain it?**

The Equivalence Certificate is a document which confirms the state's recognition of the high school degree you obtained in Syria and endorses your degree in accordance with the attainment system used by your host country. The certificate can be obtained through the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Higher Education. If you are interested in applying for the Ajyal Scholarship programme, we advise you to contact the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Higher Education to learn more about the procedure of attaining a certificate.

- **Is proficiency in English or French a condition of acceptance to the scholarship?**

This depends on whether the programme of study will be taught in Arabic or English. Ettijahat – Independent Culture is interested in giving priority to educational programmes offered in Arabic. Proficiency in English or French may be a prerequisite for applications in which programmes are taught in those languages.

- **What if I have a question which has not been answered above or have had problems submitting my application?**

Please get in touch with Ettijahat – Independent Culture by email at ajyal@ettijahat.org.

Le projet européen HOPES, contre les inégalités d'accès des réfugiés syriens au sein de l'enseignement supérieur de la région.

Paris, le 17 juin 2019



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TOUR & TAXIS, BRUSSELS
18 & 19 June 2019

edd European Development Days

Le projet européen **HOPES** (*Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians*), financé par le **Fonds fiduciaire régional de l'Union européenne** en réponse à la crise syrienne, le 'Fonds Madad', sera représenté aux **Journées européennes du développement** (*European Development Days - EDD*), les 18 et 19 juin 2019 à Bruxelles, Belgique.

Ces journées, organisées par la Commission européenne, rassemblent chaque année les **acteurs dans le domaine du développement** pour partager des idées et des expériences afin d'**inspirer de nouveaux partenariats** et de **trouver des solutions innovantes** face aux défis mondiaux les plus urgents.

Le projet HOPES, coordonné par l'office allemand des échanges universitaires (DAAD) aux côtés des agences européennes de promotion et de mobilité étudiante française (Campus France), britannique (British Council) et néerlandaise (Nuffic), vise à **améliorer la situation des jeunes réfugiés de Syrie** ainsi que celle des **jeunes en situation de vulnérabilité** dans cinq pays d'accueil limitrophes de la Syrie (**Égypte, Irak, Jordanie, Liban et Turquie**) en facilitant leur **accès à l'enseignement supérieur**. Ainsi, HOPES présentera une session lors des journées européennes du développement, dédiée aux besoins, aux défis et aux pratiques novatrices pour l'accès des réfugiés à l'enseignement supérieur et à la formation continue.

Il est estimé que **moins de 1% des réfugiés ont accès à l'enseignement supérieur**, contre 36% de leurs pairs, dans le monde (*sources : HCR, 2016*). La situation est particulièrement grave dans le contexte de la crise syrienne, où seulement 5% des 18-24 ans qui ont fui le pays poursuivent des études supérieures, contre 20% en Syrie avant la guerre (*sources : Fonds Madad, 2015*).

Le projet HOPES s'intéresse aux problèmes auxquels sont confrontés les réfugiés syriens et les communautés d'accueil vulnérables dans les pays voisins de la Syrie. Via des offres éducatives variées (orientation académique, cours de langue, bourses d'études, financement de projets régionaux novateurs, renforcement du dialogue institutionnel et

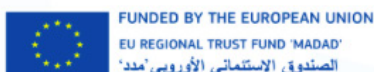
politique), HOPES a amélioré les perspectives des jeunes réfugiés dans la région. Depuis son lancement en 2016, le projet a attribué **620 bourses d'études** et **186 étudiants ont déjà obtenu leur diplôme**, près de **25 000 jeunes ont reçu des conseils en orientation**, **4 000 d'entre eux ont bénéficié de cours de langue anglaise** et **32 projets locaux ont été subventionnés**.

A la veille de la **Journée mondiale des réfugiés**, le 20 juin, la session HOPES lors des journées européennes du développement a pour ambition de donner la parole aux étudiants réfugiés, aux établissements locaux d'enseignement supérieur et aux décideurs politiques. Cette session examinera également les pratiques novatrices visant à réduire les inégalités auxquelles sont confrontés les réfugiés syriens en matière d'accès à l'éducation supérieure et à la formation continue.

Pour en savoir plus :

- Projet HOPES : www.hopes-madad.org
- Fonds Madad : https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/content/home_en
- European Development Days : <https://eudevdays.eu/about-edd>

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TOUR & TAXIS, BRUSSELS
18 & 19 June 2019



HOPES against inequalities!

Providing refugees with access to tertiary education and further learning – needs, challenges and innovative practices



It is estimated that fewer than 1 % of refugees have access to tertiary education, compared to 36 % of their peers elsewhere. Tertiary education gives young refugees the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that will allow them to

Project or report lab

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

15:15 to 16:30

Contact Session organiser

contribute to society and are essential for post-conflict recovery and rebuilding. The HOPES project addresses the challenges faced by Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities in Syria's neighbouring countries. Through a symbiotic mix of education that offers academic counselling, language courses, scholarships, innovative projects and policy dialogue, HOPES has improved the prospects of refugee youth in the region. On the eve of World Refugee Day, this session gives a voice to refugee students, local education providers and

policy makers.

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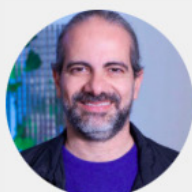
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Speakers



Isabelle Combes

Deputy Head of Unit - Trust Fund Manager ad interim
European Commission - DG for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations



Rabi Shibli

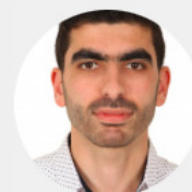
Director
American University of Beirut



MODERATOR

Nina Salden

Director DAAD Brussels
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)



Feras Ouyoun

Master student
Université Paris-Sud

Related links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6wylykQmxI>

https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/sites/tfsr/files/20160928-madad_ad_1st_board_he_ares.pdf

<https://www.unhcr.org/57d9d01d0>

Media wall

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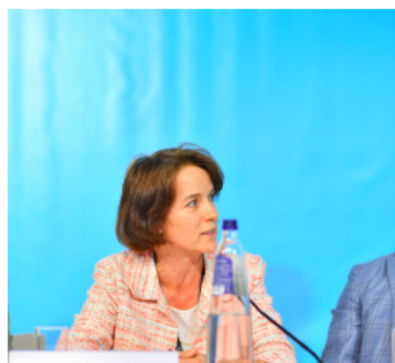
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“Blended Learning” Delivers Much-Needed Tools for Teachers

CLS and LAU empower educators with combined online and offline solutions for teaching children in emergency and underprivileged contexts.

By Raissa Batakji | August 9, 2019



The educators proudly hold up their certificates, among CLS members and trainers.

In Lebanon's current sociopolitical climate, teachers and students are facing severe challenges both in and outside the classroom, which is putting the traditional teaching approach to the test.

Lack of resources, electricity cuts, no internet or an expensive low-quality

connection, and high students drop-out rates – particularly in public schools with second shifts to accommodate refugees – compounded with issues of bullying, trauma and violence in the classroom are all taking their toll on teachers and compromising student learning.

To address the problem, the [Centre for Lebanese Studies \(CLS\)](#) at LAU in partnership with the [Department of Education](#) and the [Relief Centre at the University College London \(UCL\)](#) launched the Blended Learning Summer School for Teachers Working with Vulnerable Children. The program was implemented as part of the Grant scheme of the [HOPES \(Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians\)](#) project funded by the European Union's Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund.'

The idea took root a couple of years earlier “during a consultation workshop with a group of teachers and policymakers about the effectiveness of technology and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in professional application and development for teachers,” explained CLS Director Maha Shuayb.

This paved the way for “genuinely collaborative efforts” – as Dr. Shuayb referred to them – that culminated in this teacher-training initiative. To develop the MOOC, researchers and educators from LAU, the Lebanese University (LU), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as representatives from public and private schools and civil society activists all converged to define and populate MOOC's content.

During the 16 week-long course, 30 teachers and education practitioners from the public sector – public school and second shift teachers – students from the Lebanese university, UNRWA, UNHCR, and Syrian NGOs such as Jusoor and Multi-Aid Programs (MAPs) worked with trainers from LAU, CLS, UCL and the Lebanese University.

The course was divided into three institutes. Participants were first introduced to interactive presentation software, creating their own videos about challenges they faced in the classroom. In the second institute, discussions revolved around controversial societal issues that arose in the classroom – such as gender-based violence and civil marriage – concluding with workshops in the third on linking the whole school approach to transformative learning.



The structure ran in parallel with the MOOC, as the course was “designed to ensure that both the face-to-face component and the MOOC were complementary and worked in a coherent manner to maximize learning,” said Dr. Shuayb.

Driving home the need to adopt a combined digital and conventional approach to facilitate learning in marginalized communities, Chair of Learning with Digital Technology, Knowledge Lab at UCL Diana Laurillard noted that there were “millions of learners across the world who are working in challenging environments and are in need of transformative teachers.”

While there were 30 teachers attending the course with CLS, “there were over 15,500 teachers on the MOOC platform who had been actively studying along the way,” she added. Online learning, exceptionally, is both flexible and inclusive.

The blended learning summer school, remarked HOPES Country Manager Nayla Abi Nasr, was an innovative project that was made all the more significant by the fact that the teaching model was achieved “through collaboration, with the people for the people.”

“This not only strengthens teachers but helps reach students and children, thereby taking education to another level, and if implemented nationally and regionally, can lead to effective change,” she added.

LAU has long championed innovative learning, and has been propelling its own classrooms away from traditional teaching, in line with [its strategic plan](#) for pedagogical innovation and integrated delivery.

Through this program, said Provost George E. Nasr, "LAU's mission has reached far and wide, right to where it is needed the most, in marginalized communities."



"Blended Learning" Delivers Much-Needed Tools for Teachers

CLS and LAU empower educators with combined online and offline solutions for teaching children in emergency and underprivileged contexts.

By Raissa Batakji – August 9, 2019



Dr. Laurillard stressed the need for transformative teachers worldwide, due to challenging environments for learners.



Provost Nasr spoke about LAU's commitment to pedagogical innovation at the closing ceremony.



The educators proudly hold up their certificates, among CLS members and trainers.

Dr. Laurillard stressed the need for transformative teachers worldwide, due to challenging environments for learners.

In Lebanon's current sociopolitical climate, teachers and students are facing severe challenges both in and outside the classroom, which is putting the traditional teaching approach to the test.

Lack of resources, electricity cuts, no internet or an expensive low-quality connection, and high students drop-out rates – particularly in public schools with second shifts to accommodate refugees – compounded with issues of bullying, trauma and violence in the classroom are all taking their toll on teachers and compromising student learning.

To address the problem, the Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS) at LAU in partnership with the Department of Education and the Relief Centre at the University College London (UCL) launched the Blended Learning Summer School for Teachers Working with Vulnerable Children. The program was implemented as part of the Grant scheme

of the HOPES (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians) project funded by the European Union's Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund.'

The idea took root a couple of years earlier "during a consultation workshop with a group of teachers and policymakers about the effectiveness of technology and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in professional application and development for teachers," explained CLS Director Maha Shuayb.

This paved the way for "genuinely collaborative efforts" – as Dr. Shuayb referred to them – that culminated in this teacher-training initiative. To develop the MOOC, researchers and educators from LAU, the Lebanese University (LU), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as representatives from public and private schools and civil society activists all converged to define and populate MOOC's content.

During the 16 week-long course, 30 teachers and education practitioners from the public sector – public school and second shift teachers – students from the Lebanese university, UNRWA, UNHCR, and Syrian NGOs such as Jusoor and Multi-Aid Programs (MAPs) worked with trainers from LAU, CLS, UCL and the Lebanese University.

The course was divided into three institutes. Participants were first introduced to interactive presentation software, creating their own videos about challenges they faced in the classroom. In the second institute, discussions revolved around controversial societal issues that arose in the classroom – such as gender-based violence and civil marriage – concluding with workshops in the third on linking the whole school approach to transformative learning.

The structure ran in parallel with the MOOC, as the course was "designed to ensure that both the face-to-face component and the MOOC were complementary and worked in a coherent manner to maximize learning," said Dr. Shuayb.

Driving home the need to adopt a combined digital and conventional approach to facilitate learning in marginalized communities, Chair of Learning with Digital Technology, Knowledge Lab at UCL Diana Laurillard noted that there were "millions of learners across the world who are working in challenging environments and are in need of transformative teachers."

While there were 30 teachers attending the course with CLS, "there were over 15,500 teachers on the MOOC platform who had been actively studying along the way," she added. Online learning, exceptionally, is both flexible and inclusive.

The blended learning summer school, remarked HOPES Country Manager Nayla Abi Nasr, was an innovative project that was made all the more significant by the fact that the teaching model was achieved "through collaboration, with the people for the people."

"This not only strengthens teachers but helps reach students and children, thereby taking education to another level, and if implemented nationally and regionally, can lead to effective change," she added.


LAU has long championed innovative learning, and has been propelling its own classrooms away from traditional teaching, in line with its strategic plan for pedagogical innovation and integrated delivery.

Through this program, said Provost George E. Nasr, "LAU's mission has reached far and wide, right to where it is needed the most, in marginalized communities."

<https://news.lau.edu.lb/2019/blended-learning-delivers-much-needed-tools-for-teachers.php?fbclid=IwAR2y9JSkyeycuwqSgnfkWbD46KtV0nslUecrpOFa3V6TuwzpxH68mymxCf4>

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