The Problem

Over 2.5 million Syrian children remain out of school, and over 200,000 Syrian college students are not attending higher universities. As the Syrian civil war enters its sixth year, the viability of providing education to the next generation remains a top concern for humanitarian workers, politicians, and residents of host countries. However, due to the large influx of refugees throughout the region and the global, educational resource reman- scence for Syrian students. Inside of Syria, violent outbreaks from the civil war have led to over 2.5 million Syrian refugees and their families being displaced. Targeting schools has been a weapon of war. Language remains an estran- ger barrier preventing many students from accessing universities, and in the TOEFL preparation courses or British Council English courses are too often expensive. Further, as refugees and displaced persons search for additional job opportunities in foreign countries, language and technical skills remain signifi- cant barriers. Victims of political violence remain trapped by circumstance, unable to access formal or informal education.

The Market

We are the only organization providing mass tutoring over Skype for free. Because our digital method - relating on Skype to provide one-on-one language tutoring - is unique, we have filled a niche otherwise unmet in the response to the educational crisis. Only one other organization in Canada followed suit, another effort is limited to one university. However, there are several organizations working on education for refugees through digital means: Khan, which is providing accredited online courses to successful English language learners; Angha, which is employing refugees to tutor Arabic learners; and Khan Academy, which is working with Google to provide Arabic educational apps to women and children.

Budget

Paper Airplanes, Inc. received its 501(c)(3) status confirmation from the IRS in December, 2016. The first official fundraiser is scheduled to begin in February, 2017, with the aim of raising $500,000. The majority of the money raised will be used to launch our first pilot program and support students accessing classes and tutoring by 2017. The remaining costs (approximately 10-15%) will be used to pay for administrative overhead costs, including rent, fees, email accounts, publicity, and our website subscription.

Your Solution

Paper Airplanes has helped over 1,000 Syrian students learn English, supported students through university application process and connected them to scholarship opportunities. The organization has grown to support over 400 students/marshals in its English program per semester. It has devised to launch a Turkish language program, a coding course for women, an in-person ESL tutoring program in Ann Arbor, an ESL 4.0 program in partnership with Talent Without Borders, and a night school programming in long Island, NY. We believe in the power of digital technology to reach refugees otherwise unreachable, and continue harnessing its potential to provide a variety of educational opportunities for those displaced by political violence. Ultimately, we’re finding education is the foundation for stable, flourishing societies, and believe everyone has a right to learn.

Your Metrics

As an nonprofit providing digital education, our goal is to reach a higher number of students and more effectively and facilitate meaningful relationships between students and tutors. This means better language and skill acquisition, higher retention rates, better student retention, and improved costs of education.

Your Timeline

Over the next six months, we hope to grow the diversity and breadth of our programs and the financial support we receive. February 6, 2017

Launch a digital fundraising campaign to raise at least $5,000 to cover administrative costs, website upkeep, and three part-time staff positions.

February 7

Develop a financial, data, and marketing portfolio to improve our branding, financial tracking, and internal data management. Apply for two more grants to increase our financial funding and improve sustainability.

April 2017

Form connections with smaller partner institutions on the ground, working with local schools in Jordan, Turkey and Syria to provide additional support for classroom needs. These include organizations like Syria Relief and Development, which is providing accredited college courses to successful Arabic language learners; and MercyCorps, which is working with a PhD candidate from the University of Minnesota to develop measures of cross-cultural tolerance, and developing a study with Andrew Lebner, a Harvard PhD candidate, to measure the long term effects on digital programs.

Is our growth plan includes establishing more partnerships at the schools in the region to facilitate network laid educational support of students. In the long term, we want to implement a better strategy of tracking students after they finish Paper Airplanes, so we can garner a sense of how they turned them in the long term.

Your Team

Bailey Ulbricht

Email: bbailey@paper-airplanes.org

Major: Political Science/International Relations

Class: Carleton College, 2015

After spending six months on the Syrian border, I became dedicated to the cause of Syrian students.

In response, I founded Paper Airplanes, offering online educational opportunities to victims of war through digital means. I am a 2015-2016 Marshall Scholar. I am a 2015-2016 Fulbright Teaching Assistant and am a 2017-2018 Talent Without Boundaries, and a high school matching program in Long Island, NY. We believe in the power of digital technology to reach refugees otherwise unreachable, and continue harnessing its potential to provide a variety of educational opportunities for those displaced by political violence.

The Problem

Paper Airplanes

Murali Carpenter

Email: mculhari@paper-airplanes.org

Major: French and Francophone Studies / former Arabic Studies, Middle Eastern Languages

Class: Swarthmore College, 2016

I have worked with refugees and immigrants in the United States and abroad for over three years, and have presented me with opportunities to do so. I want to work with refugees and immigrants to provide much-needed language access, and manage others to allow them to do the same. I am currently the Funding Director for this semester.

The Problem

Paper Airplanes

Cheryl Hagan

Email: cherylhagan@gmail.com

Major: Religion, Middle Eastern Studies, Arabic Studies

Class: Swarthmore College, 2017

I strongly believe in the rights of education for all minors, especially as a refugee program, this is working to provide access to language instruction for those displaced by political violence.