

# **LAL ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2016**

### **The rooting year**

#### **LAL's 2016 motto**

#### **Taking roots to better rise**

Three years after its creation, LAL has finally started putting down some roots. In December 2013 LAL was created in the heart of Saint Joseph University where it was generously hosted for nearly three years. This gave the newly born NGO the chance to invest all its effort and resources in defining its mission, building its one of a kind e-learning platform “Tabshoura”, and partnering with several NGOs to build strong networks and implement effective educational projects for the most vulnerable communities. At the end of the year 2016, it was time for LAL to own its private work space. This was achieved in November 2016, when LAL rented and furnished an office in the heart of Beirut. LAL’s new office is located at Beyrouthi building, 1st Floor, Monot street, Ashrafieh.

Following are LAL’s 2016 activities and major achievements:

#### **I. Launching of Tabshoura-Kindergarten**

On May 31, 2016, Tabshoura-Kindergarten (or TK) was officially launched in the premises of the Human Sciences Campus of Saint Joseph University, under the high patronage and presence of the ambassador of Canada to Lebanon, and Rectors and Deans of the University.

TK was created by LAL in 2015-2016 as part of the No Lost Generation II project of World Vision and financed by Global Affairs Canada. It is a free e-learning platform for preschool children<sup>1</sup>. Following its use in 3 World Vision centers in the Bekaa with the help of DOT Teach up! Program and its assessment by LAL, TK was launched in the aim of introducing it to the public at large and eventually roll it out in various educational institutions across Lebanon.

The General Director of Education, the CERD (Center for Education, Research and Development) president and team, representatives from educational institutions, public and private schools, NGOs working in the educational fields were invited to attend the launching event.

Following the welcome word by the USJ Rector, Professor Salim Daccache s.j, and the Official word by the Canada Ambassador, Her Excellency Michèle Cameron, the CERD president, Dr Nada Oueijane explained the importance of the TK platform as it is perfectly in line with the Lebanese curriculum and was created under the supervision of the former head of the preschool department at CERD who escorted the creation of the platform and validated its content. Ms. Rein Decker from World Vision then explained the importance of ICT in Early Childhood Education and DOT presented their Teach up! program under which teachers of the centers were trained to the use of the platform. In their turn LAL's team explained how the platform works and invited the public to test it. An ad-hoc "computer lab" was installed in the entrance hall of the campus to allow participants to discover and test the platform.

Participants who were interested to install T-K on their own institution's server registered their names and a new database was starting to build up for a large deployment of the platform.



## II. SERVER-BASED SOLUTION FOR A LARGE DEPLOYMENT OF TABSHOURA

In the aim to roll-out the Tabshoura platform after its official launching, LAL has concentrated its efforts to finding ways to make the platform accessible to as many people as possible. Despite the fact that it is a free online platform, the technical team endeavored to make it also accessible offline. For institutions that do not have a server of their own, the team developed

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Tabshoura-Kindergarten e-learning platform, please refer to [LAL 2015](#) end of year report.

a server based solution (**Tabshoura in a Box**) which will allow beneficiaries, especially those living in remote areas with limited access to Internet, to use the platform offline. The idea is installing Tabshoura on a small box (10x7 cm) that plays the role of a server that has the capacity to hotspot up to 15 computers/tablets/phablets.

The Tabshoura in a box will hopefully accommodate a large deployment of the Tabshoura resources with an unlimited possibility of adaptation and replication.

The same solution is available, with bigger boxes, serving up to 30 or up to 50 computers/tablets/phablets.

### III. PARTNERSHIPS

#### WITH THE CERD (CENTER FOR EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT)



After the very close collaboration between LAL and CERD in the creation of the Tabshoura-Kindergarten platform, the partnership of both organizations was made official through the signature of a Partnership Agreement. On October 4, 2016, the Agreement was signed between LAL's President, Dr. Nayla Fahed, and CERD's President, Dr. Nada Oueijane. This will initiate a long-term collaboration by which the Tabshoura contents will be evaluated by CERD experts, certified in line with the Lebanese Curriculum, and officially endorsed.

#### WITH ROTARACT CLUB – METN



In April 2016, LAL partnered with Rotaract for the creation of new modules in Civic Education for the Tabshoura-school platform. An amount of \$10,000 was invested, and a Civic Education teacher, Yana Semrani, from the Grand Lycée, was hired for that purpose.

A total of 5 topics, with animations, game, interactive activities, movies, were created in the field of **Civic Education**, in Arabic language for **Grade 9** and digitized on the Tabshoura-School platform. The topics of the modules are established by the Lebanese Curriculum and they tackle the following: Civic and social norms; Civil society and its institutions; the link between citizens and the public administration; Population and quality of life; Education and profession, raising vocational awareness; Arab Identity and its components; The United Nations.

## **WITH TRIUMPHANT MERCY: A SERVER BASED SOLUTION**



In September 2016, LAL partnered with Triumphant Mercy School to carry out a pilot project on the server-based solution of Tabshoura. For that purpose, the platform was installed by LAL's technical team on the school's private server. The pedagogical team trained the school's ICT expert on the use of the platform. The platform will be used by students and will later be assessed to evaluate the efficiency of this solution.

## **IV. WIRASH PROJECTS**

### **The creation of a Bench made out of recycled materials**

At the end of last year's recycling project initiated by LAL in collaboration with Cedar Environmental "Dude, Where's My Candy Wrap?", an eco-friendly bench using Cedar Environmental patented technology was created using the plastic waste collected over a four months period by the Lycée Verdun's students. The bench proudly sits in the entry of LAL's new premises.



Thank you, Cedar Environmental!

Dude... stop looking for my candy wrap! It is in that beautiful bench.

## **V. Dr. Yasmine El Masri grant and Tabshoura platform**

The teaching languages of Math and Science in Lebanon are French and English. Science and Math are taught on the Tabshoura Platform on those two languages. This bilingualism drew the attention of Dr. Yasmine El Masri, a research fellow at OUCEA (Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment), whose doctoral research investigated the impact of translation on item difficulty in large-scale international assessments.

Dr. El Masri was awarded a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship during which she will be leading a project entitled: *“Using interactive tasks to reduce the language barrier: Widening access to science education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon”*. Dr. El Masri will draw on her PhD and more recent research to evaluate the design and translation of online science tasks. She will hence be working very closely with LAL “which provides alternative learning solutions to Syrian refugees in Lebanon who are disadvantaged in accessing quality education due to their low proficiency in French and English”. Her research will help LAL’s scale up its new project: Girls Can Count, enhancing STEM skills of teenage girls living in deprived communities through technology.