



# The BRIDGE Program

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## Introduction

The BRIDGE program is a non-profit program that aims to help underprivileged Palestinian (UNRWA) school students in their college and career endeavors. Created in 2010, the program provides comprehensive guidance and education scholarships through its extended network of donors, higher education institutions and scholarship funds. Given the need to help these refugee students, and the often-untapped availability of funds and scholarships, the BRIDGE program was created to fill the gap that typically exists between the students and the scholarship providers. Our ultimate goal is to connect many of the students to the right donors and the right higher education institutions, thereby significantly improving the level of education and increasing their chances for success in life.

## The program

We work with an extremely talented group of students, who are graduating with the Lebanese Baccalaureate diploma, a rigorous program that is very strong in math and science. We assist these students by providing logistical support throughout their application process, in addition to preparation programs for the TOEFL, SAT, and SATII examinations. Our team of college counselors and tutors is complemented by our equally committed philanthropy team, who actively seek out funding and scholarship opportunities from donors around the world.

## Achievements

Within the first 6 months of its foundation, the BRIDGE program has had many encouraging successes. What follows is a small list of its landmark achievements to date:

- An agreement with American University of Beirut (AUB) to provide 20 seats for our students with automatic 50% tuition scholarships.
- 10 scholarships generously donated by Mr. Jalal Laham for students to attend Lebanese American University (LAU).
- An additional 5 seats with automatic 50% tuition scholarships at LAU.
- Agreements with several private universities in the Northern Republic of Cyprus and Turkey to provide full or partial scholarships.
- An agreement with the American University of Rome to send 2 Palestinian refugee students each year with tuition covered by the university.

- An agreement with KOC University in Istanbul to provide two full scholarships for the 2012-2013 academic year.
- An agreement with the University of Balamand for a 30% tuition reduction for the first semester and up to 50% tuition reduction for the remainder of the students' undergraduate education.
- An agreement with the Lebanese International University to provide an immediate 30% tuition reduction to all Palestinian refugee applicants with the opportunity to increase this scholarship to 50% for select students.
- Placement of students at the Beirut Arab University (BAU) through the generous sponsorship of Mrs. Hourani, including scholarships to study medicine.
- Creation of a seven year pre-med and medical school scholarship through the generous support of Mr. Maher Abu Ghazali.
- Partnership with the Horizon Foundation in London to facilitate the selection of qualified Palestinian students for potential scholarships.
- Invitation from Qatar Foundation to sponsor 10 UNRWA students on a college tour of education city (6 American Universities). Several UNRWA students have since been accepted on full scholarships to Weill Cornell, Texas A and M, and Carnegie Mellon in Qatar.
- Through collaboration with the Hope Fund, and ULYP's ongoing mentorship around SAT preparation and college guidance, an UNRWA student has received a full scholarship to Bridgewater College in Virginia (USA). The scholarship totals \$150,000 over a four-year period.

Since then we have been able to further expand through funding from Hani Qaddumi Foundation and the Welfare Association, and partnerships with Duke University for the "Duke Engage" program which sends American students to help conduct our summer SAT program, and the American University of Science and Technology in Lebanon to provide English instruction to students in more remote areas who are not able to travel to Beirut. In 2013 a large number of our scholarship recipients have given back to ULYP through remedial English instruction with younger students and new students have received scholarships through the generous funding individuals such as Leila Strauss and donors such as the MasterCard Foundation. With that we are happy to announce 85 students accepted to AUB and others accepted to UCL, AUS, Smith College, Texas A&M- Qatar, and Yeditepe University.

## **Our Future**

Our vision of the future includes a growing list of scholarships and opportunities for the Palestinian students in Lebanon. We have a long list of universities and donors with whom we are actively working to obtain further opportunities. As ULYP grows, we hope to continue securing partnerships and scholarships and expanding our SAT preparation program to serve a larger number of students. As well, as our scholarship recipients grow and give back to their communities, we hope to empower the Palestinian youth of tomorrow to realize their dreams.