

The start of 2021 was trying for Lebanon. The country was severely affected by the spread of the coronavirus. Hospitals were at capacity, and daily numbers of new cases and deaths were on the rise. In the second week of January, the country went into “complete” lockdown. Most businesses shut their doors, and a 24 hour curfew kept all but a few essential workers (e.g. medical personnel) confined to their homes. Meanwhile, the relative value of the Lebanese lira to the US dollar kept falling, and the cost of living kept rising. The poverty rate, already extreme, increased even further, especially among Lebanon’s refugee population (nearly a third of the overall population). The lockdown, originally set to end in early February, was extended repeatedly. At this time, though certain restrictions have been lifted, Lebanon remains under a partial lockdown.

For over two months, our executive team has been working remotely, and our fellows have been teaching online. This complete shift to online work and e-learning has come with many challenges. Nevertheless, our fellows are rising to the task, and our team is determined to move forward.

### **Laptop Donation Campaign**

One of the most urgent challenges we are facing is the fact that

344 out of the 3681 students we are serving this year (or roughly 10%) do not own computers or tablets, and thus do not have access to online learning. Our executive team has begun to take action to address this issue. We have distributed 22 laptops donated to TFL by Price Water House Coopers (PWC) among students from three different schools, and we will soon be distributing an additional 25 laptops donated to TFL by Thaki. We still, however, need to acquire 297 laptops or tablets. In light of this need, we will soon be launching an online fundraising campaign aimed at raising the funds we need to purchase the remaining equipment and/or collecting in-kind laptop and tablet donations. Stay tuned for this: we hope you'll be willing to support us in our effort to make online education accessible to all of our student beneficiaries.

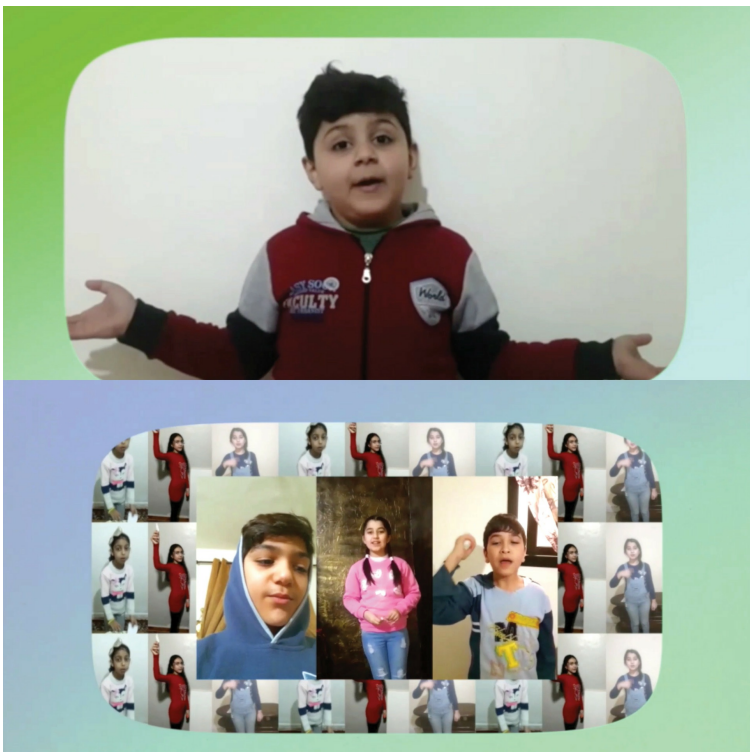
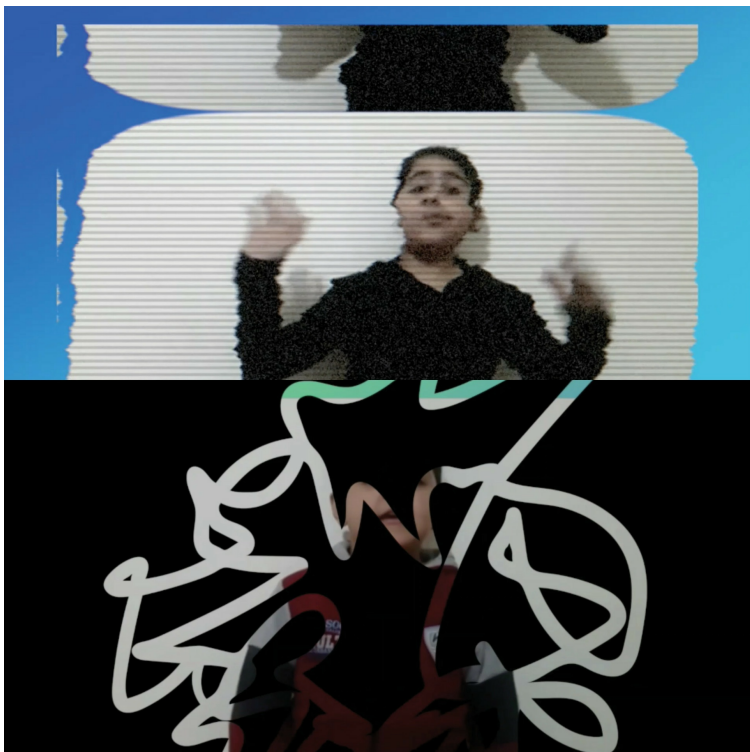


Students from Sahagian School after receiving the laptops donated by PwC

## Online Classrooms

The lockdown, while it did restrict the kinds of teaching work that the fellows were able to do (in person work was obviously out of the question), also allowed them to express creativity and innovation in their choices of teaching strategies. Our fellows prepared a variety of online activities designed to motivate their students to learn while having fun. Some of these included interactive worksheets, virtual lab sessions, discussions around exciting videos on themes and topics related to the lesson, drawing, acting, video-making, etc. In the context of an extracurricular activity on gender equality, students were asked to record themselves singing parts of a song of their choice addressing the issue. All of these videos will be compiled into a longer montage – so stay tuned for that. In the meantime, please enjoy the [sing-along video](#) prepared by fellows Ahmad Saleem Zein and Ruba Hemadeh and their students at the New Generation College in Mount Lebanon.





Snapshots from the sing-along video prepared by fellows Ahmad Saleem Zein and Ruba Hemadeh and their students at the New Generation College in Mount Lebanon.

## Collaboration within the TFA Network

### TFL x TFI

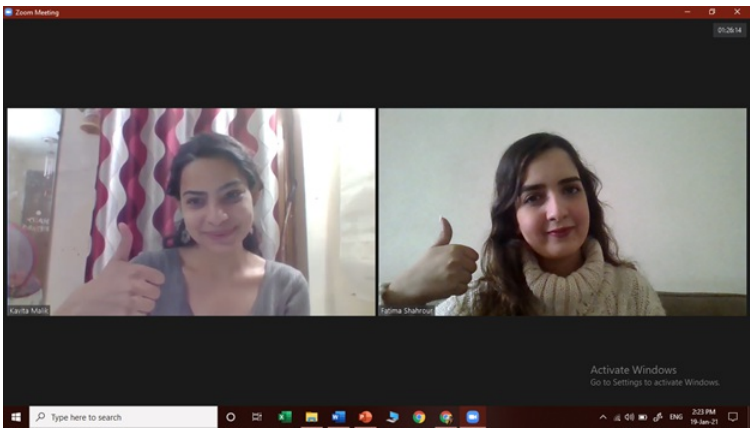
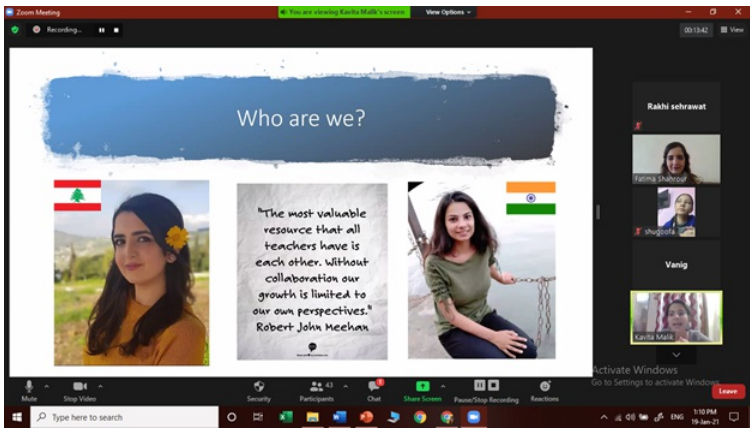
A fellow from Teach for India (TFI) and fellow from TFL are working together to allow for a cultural exchange between their students. Their current collaboration has taken the form of a food blog. Students have been taking pictures and videos of the food they eat, sharing these among one another, and even combining the footage.

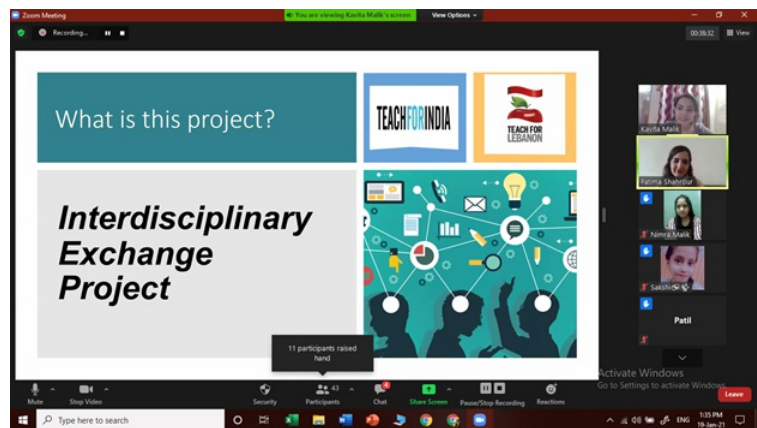
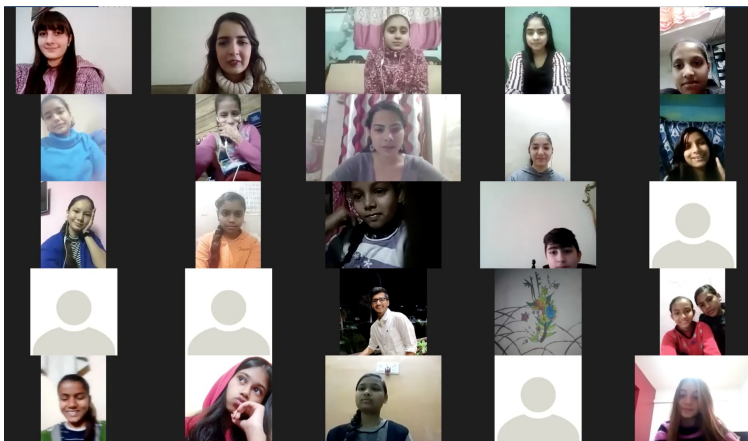
### TFL x TFR

There is also a collaboration brewing between TFL and Teach For Romania (TFR). Over the course of this project, seven fellows from each country will pair up and engage their students in a cultural exchange program. The Lebanese contingent will explore and discuss the culture and values of the Romanian contingent, and vice versa. The students will record their work and exchange it with participants from the other country.

### More to Come

Our fellows are intent on broadening their horizons and exchanging ideas and cultural experiences with other network partners, such as Teach For Ecuador and Teach First Deutschland. Stay tuned for more!





Screenshots from the zoom calls and exchanges between our fellow Fatima Shahrour and TFI's fellow Kavita

## TFL Alumni Make Us Proud

The two TFL alumni featured below, Farah Mouhanna and Fahd Jamaledine, may have graduated beyond the fellowship, but, in their own ways, they are continuing to further our mission of making excellent education accessible to all.



***Farah Mouhana is an alumna of TFL's sixth cohort of fellows (2014-15), currently based in the U.S.***

Farah has partnered with Polly Crowther, a teacher and pedagogical expert from the UK and active member in Teach for All global network program, to launch an initiative titled "Cross Borders Leadership." Their aim is to support teachers from the UK and Lebanon who work with students with challenging backgrounds. They will use technical, academic, and socio-emotional strategies to accomplish this goal.

[Here](#) is an article that Farah recently wrote about reforms needed in the Lebanese education system. If you are interested in joining her project, here is a link to the [interest form](#). Farah also currently works with Fahd Jamaledine on his "Learning Land" initiative.



***Fahd Jamaledinne is an alumnus of TFL's eight cohort of fellows (2016-18). Fahd's projects (as described below) are in Tripoli. He is now based in Beirut, from which he commutes to Tripoli as needed.***

Fahd is currently leading on two projects whose aim is to improve the Lebanese education system. He started the first, "[Inspiration Garden](#)," in 2014. The Inspiration Garden aims to shift the way after-school learning looks in Lebanon. Fahd



was inspired by his own experience of the multitude of ugly, poorly run, and inefficient after-school study centers in his hometown of Tripoli. He wanted to make after-school learning something students would actually enjoy and benefit from, so he created the beautiful Inspiration Garden. If you want to see it for yourself, check out this [video](#).

Fahd's second project is called "Learning Land," and is run in parallel with the Inspiration Garden. The aim of Learning Land is to bring together and support teachers from across Lebanon to create a self-reinforcing community of educators. Learning Land provides teachers with training, as well as with the opportunity to pool together their own experience and knowledge in order to deal with problems they have in common. Find out more in this [video](#).

### **Cohort 13 Fellowship Applications Open**

Applications to become a member of TFL's 13th cohort of fellows are now open! For more information on the application requirements and process, click [here](#). Click [here](#) for the application form.

# LEAVE YOUR MARK

## SET

## GO

Join our fellowship and help **erase educational inequity** in Lebanon.

[www.teachforlebanon.org](http://www.teachforlebanon.org)



## **Updates on Projects**

### **Girls and Boys against Gender-Based Violence**

The Girls and Boys against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) project, supported by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiative (CFLI), is the name of a project designed to tackle gender-based violence by educating and empowering youth. The project ran for almost two years, but, due to the pandemic and the ensuing school shutdowns, it had to be cut short before its set end date (February 2021) and final closure event. The remaining funds allocated to



this project were redirected to the Build Back Better (BBB) initiative, to purchase stationery and hygiene kits for students affected by the August 4th 2020 Beirut port explosion.



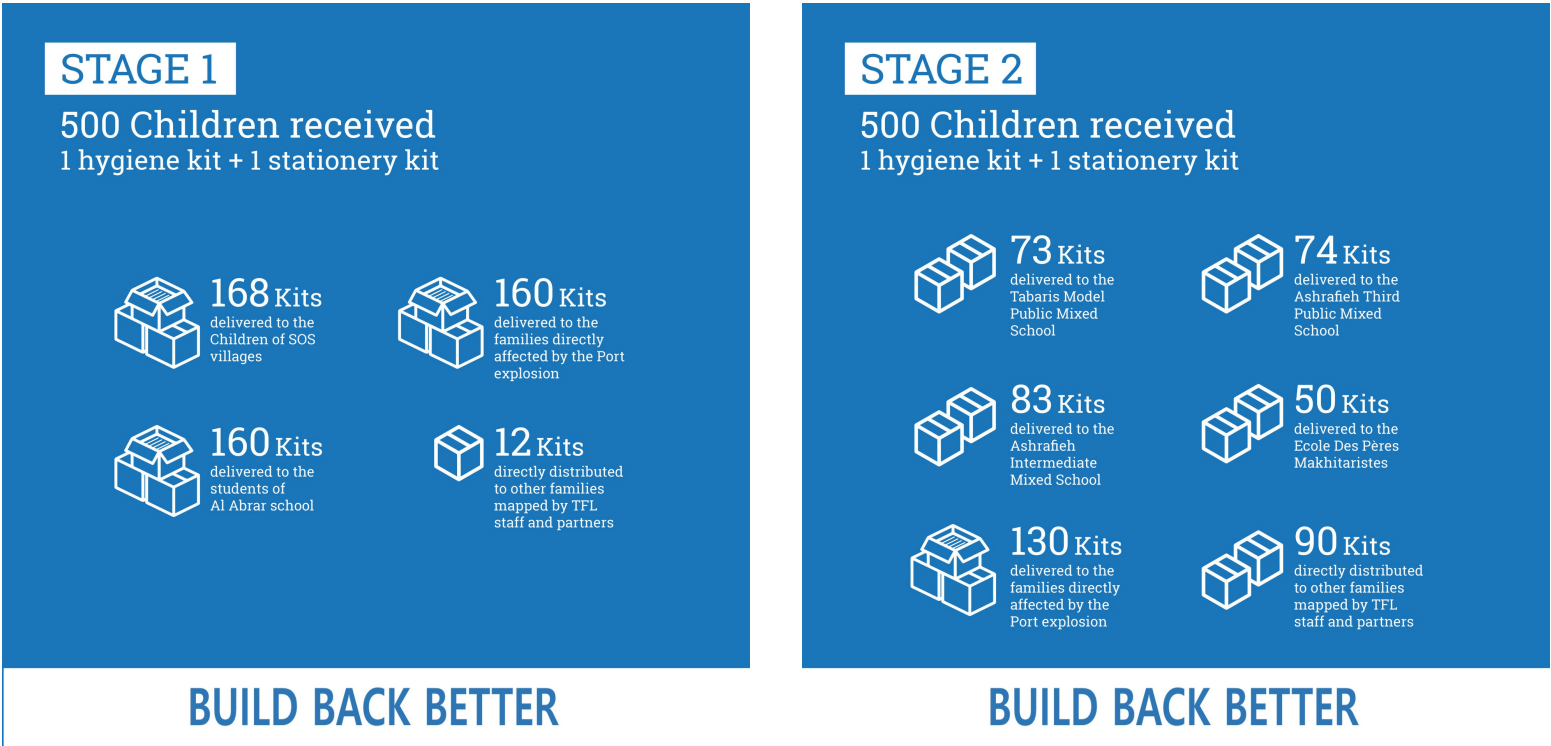
Students receiving hygiene and stationery kits

Despite its unforeseen halt, the GBV project was highly successful. Teach For Lebanon fellows raised awareness among their students of the various forms of gender-based violence, and many gender-equality advocates were empowered in school communities throughout Lebanon. We expect this project's impact to be significant and long lasting.

**Build Back Better**



Despite the new hardships Lebanon has faced since, the damage caused by the Beirut blast, both physical and mental, is far from completely healed, and we haven't forgotten about it. Our Build Back Better intervention (BBB) plan is still in motion. We are continuing to deliver hygiene and sanitary kits to families affected by the blast.



## STAGE 1

### Community Support Training Program



35

Hours of  
Training



33

Fellows



500

Public & Private  
School Teachers

## BUILD BACK BETTER



### Storyvoice x TFL

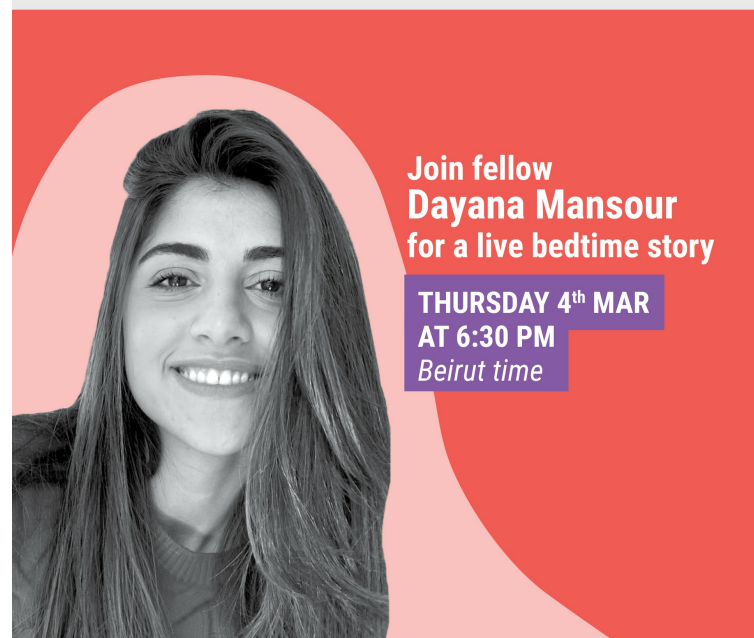
Storyvoice is a live storytelling educational app through which inspiring storytellers and children's book authors read and share bedtime stories. The app was designed in Lebanon and currently reaches over 5,000 children across 15 countries through its daily live reading sessions. TFL and Storyvoice are now working together to make bedtime stories equally accessible to every child in Lebanon, as well as across the MENA region.

Our Teach For Lebanon x Storyvoice project is ongoing. Every week, one of our fellows picks a story and reads live to an online audience including their students and anyone who has the Storyvoice app (which you can download [here](#)) and is logged on Thursdays at 6h30 pm Beirut time. Students can join in by taking turns reading sections of the evening's story. Participants and audiences alike have been delighted every time.

#### TFL STORYTELLERS February 2021



#### Teach For Lebanon x storyvoice



### English Access Microscholarship Program (Access)

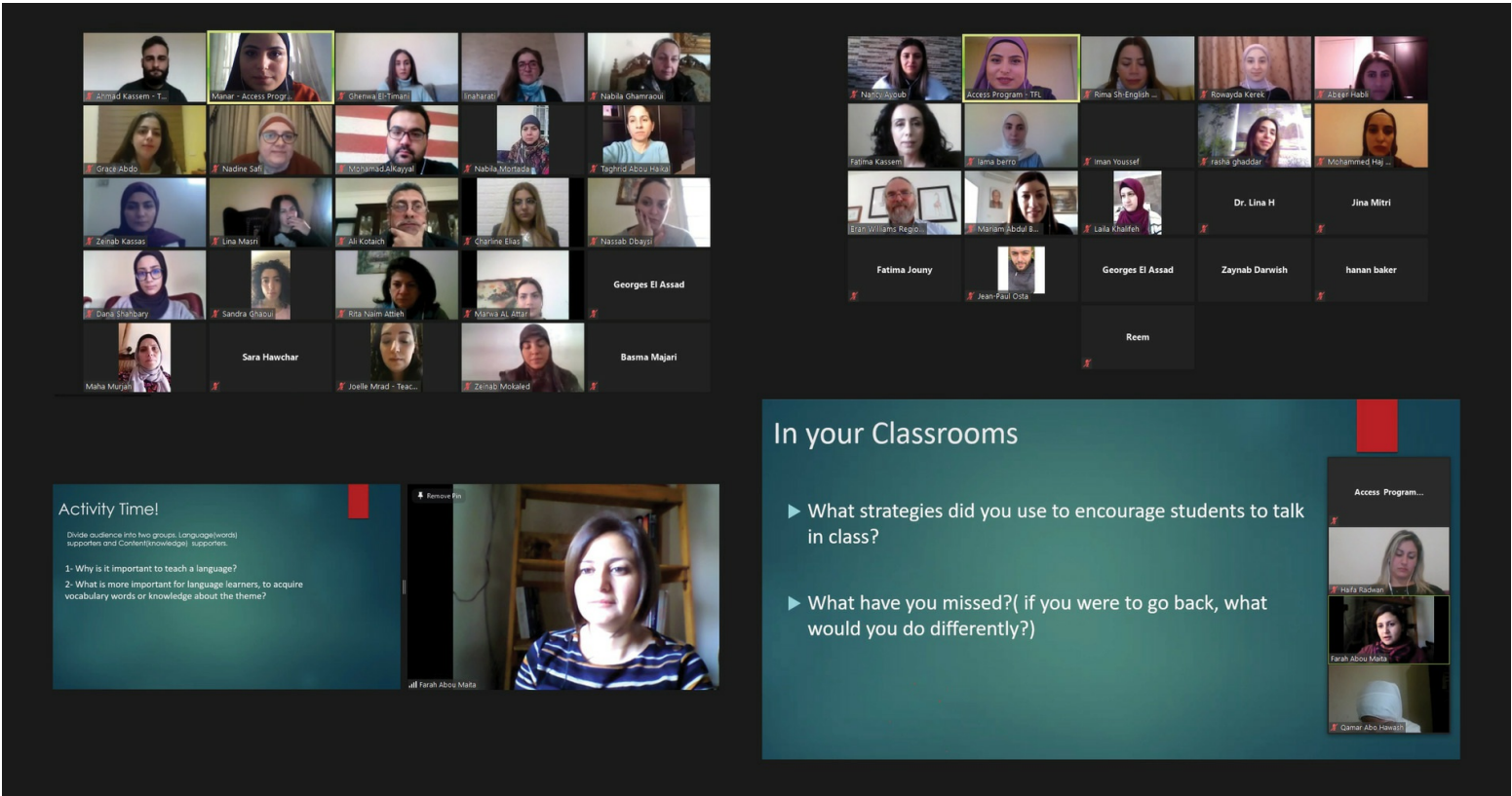
We are happy to announce that the Lebanese Ministry of Health and Education (MEHE) has approved the implementation of the Access program in 25 schools across Lebanon. To date we received



739 student applications, and we are finalizing the recruitment process for 25 Access teachers. Classes will begin at the end of March, and we will make sure that every student receives textbooks, a laptop, and a number of web bundles to facilitate online learning. The pandemic won't stop us!

The Access program also features a teacher training component. On February 26, 27, and 28, 75 teacher candidates attended training sessions. Eran Williams, regional english language officer (RELO) at the U.S. Department of State office in Amman, Jordan, sat in on the sessions on the 26th and 27th. Mr. Williams spoke words of introduction saluting the efforts participants are making in the virtual classroom and congratulating their commitment to attend these trainings despite electricity cuts and unstable internet connections. These training sessions – like the Access program more broadly – are funded by the U.S. Department of State, and we are grateful for their generosity in supporting the professional development of all 75 candidates despite the fact that only 25 of them will be selected as Access teachers. Additionally, a needs assessment survey was sent out to teachers all across Lebanon. Future training sessions will be designed based on the results of this survey.

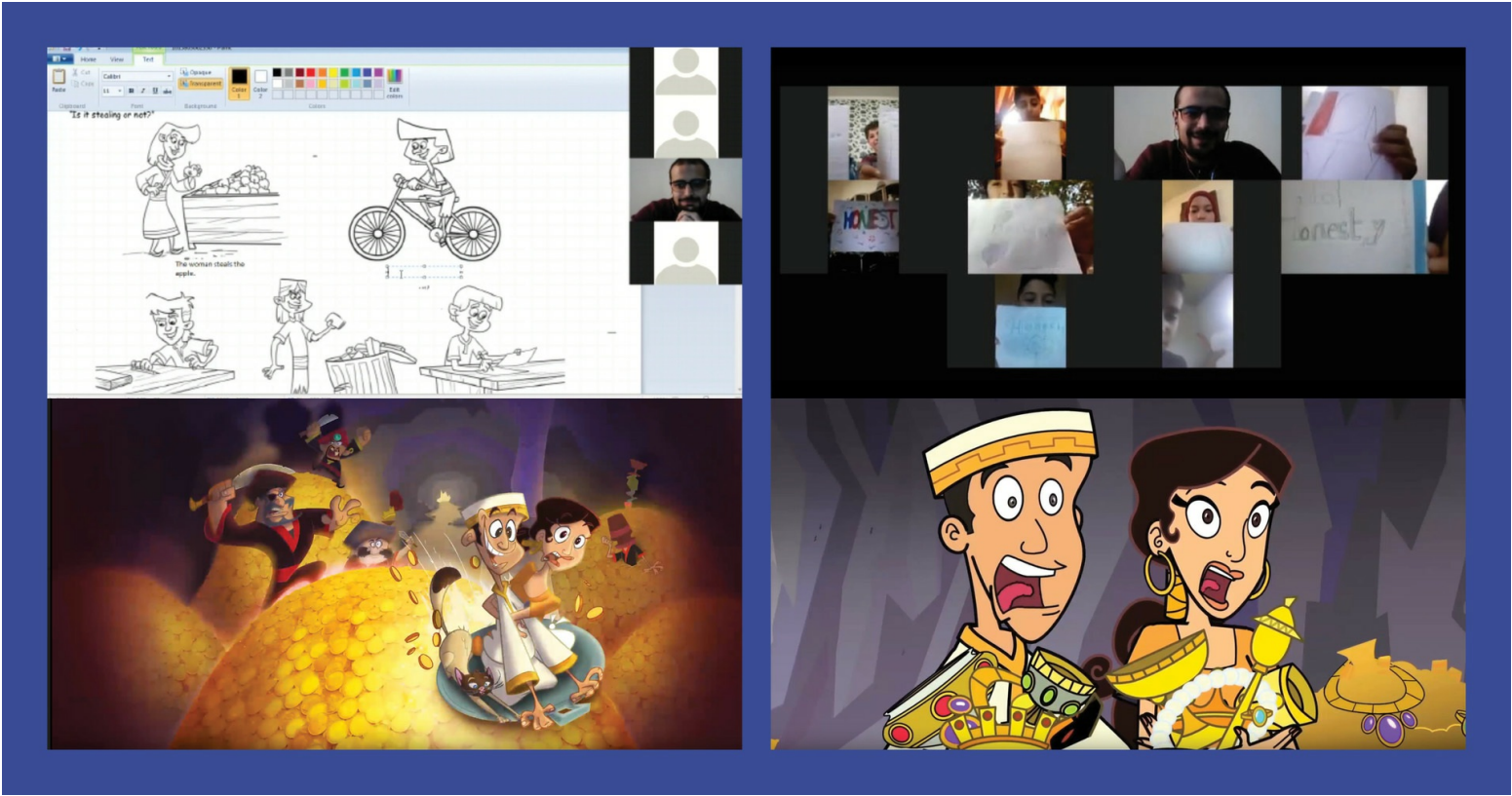
The final component of the Access program is providing continuing support to the Access alumni community. One way in which this is done is through a system of mini grants intended to help Access alumni in their endeavors beyond the program. Alumni may apply for the mini grants with project proposals; each year, a few of these are selected and given funding (\$9000 in total). This year (TFL's first year implementing the Access program) we have received 30 applications for community projects on themes such as women empowerment, youth empowerment, education, human rights, social justice, and equality. The Access program director will evaluate the projects with input from the RELO, and two to three will be selected and funded (the selection criteria is based on sustainability, innovation, impact, scale, feasibility, and engagement of the Access alumni community). The selected projects will be implemented between the end of March and the end of August.



The online Access teachers' training held in February 2021

## 1001 Nights Program

The 1001 Nights project consists in the implementation of the 1001 Nights Life Skills and Civic Education Program – a 36-lesson academic curriculum covering civics, conflict resolution, and general life skills – in 150 schools across Lebanon. Since the start of November 2020, TFL has been providing teachers with the training and tools necessary for a successful implementation of the program. 19 TFL fellows are responsible for training their teacher colleagues, while 14 fellows are responsible for supporting, observing, and assisting teachers as they administer the program. As of March 2021, we will be conducting pilot sessions in a number of TFL partner schools, with the aim of evaluating the preparedness of the tutors and the feasibility of implementing this program online. This marks an important milestone toward the full-scale launch of the 1001 Nights program.



A pilot session held virtually with fellow Hasan Ghaddar

## Welcoming Newcomers to the TFL Team!



Finally, we are very excited to welcome newcomers into the TFL team. Meet the new faces!



**Talal Achi**  
**Communications & Marketing Officer**



**TFL & TFL-US**

A new page dedicated to the Teach For Lebanon activities in the US is now active on Facebook! Follow us to learn more about our dedicated fundraising projects with our American supporters.



[www.teachforlebanon.org](http://www.teachforlebanon.org)

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 FORWARD TO A FRIEND