Remote capacity building for remote pedagogy

This is a short story about yet another project that was disturbed due to the pandemic. It initially consisted of distributing 100 "Tabshoura in a box" to schools in underserved areas of Lebanon thanks to the help of Saint-Gobain, all while offering on-the-ground tutorials and workshops to teachers. This short rapport will describe how LAL managed to achieve this while undergoing strict governmental restrictions due to the pandemic.

First, some context

LAL (Lebanese Alternative Learning) is an ed-tech NGO that strives to give access to free quality education to every child through online digital programs and office access solutions. Due to the lack of internet connection in Lebanon's remote areas and the country's unreliability of electricity, LAL created 'Tabshoura in a box' (Tabshoura stands for 'chalk' in Arabic), which is an e-learning pocket-size offline server aligned with the Lebanese curriculum and available in all of the country's spoken languages (i.e. French, Arabic, and English).

The birth of the project

LAL, supported by Saint-Gobain, engaged in distributing a 100 boxes to a 100 schools while conducting capacity building workshops on their usage.

Thankfully, the project started early enough for an in-person workshop to happen. Thus Muriel Albina, LAL's Content Manager, was able to meet with Jusoor's teachers for a workshop on how to create content on Tabshoura.

Muriel Albina giving her workshop to Jusoor's teachers

Team picture of the teachers

The turnover *of the project*:

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Lebanon in March 2020 and just like almost all the rest of the world, the government implemented restrictions and a strict lockdown pushing every sector to work remotely. Tabshoura boxes were no longer useful

as they are usually implemented in schools and children were forbidden to go to school anymore. LAL had to find a solution to deliver what was initially agreed upon; which is how this project was transformed into an online one.

The transformation

The first step was to support these schools (which already needed help prior to the pandemic) in keeping up with educating their students from a distance. LAL thus came up with the idea of providing remote capacity building and co-creation workshops to help those organizations become independent and allow them to create their own content, which they could then upload on the boxes. This transformation was co-funded by the Malala Fund, an NGO supporting LAL since 2016. Thus tutorials explaining how to use the Tabshoura platform were created. These had to be easily understandable from a distance and easy to access. One of LAL's Project Managers (Ahmad Shaiban) took ownership of this task. He recorded himself navigating Tabshoura's interface while interacting with every feature and explaining its purpose. It was a huge success!

Then what needed to be done is to create a user-guide explaining how to create content, since access to classrooms and gatherings were forbidden. It was Muriel Albina (who previously gave the in-person workshop) with the help of

Patrick Habib (Head of Products and Services at LAL) that took over this task. They created an extremely detailed PDF file filled with visuals and colors that replicates the whole process of creating content on Tabshoura, step by step. As you can imagine, it was also a huge success!

Cover of the Content Creation Guide

More virtual workshops were needed and thus put in place with the collaboration of other NGOs that all share one goal: improving Lebanon's underserved spaces and making sure all its residents have access to their basic human rights. These organizations were Malaak (focuses on educating Syrian refugees displaced in Lebanon), Tahaddi (overcomes the challenge of poverty while focusing on the Dom community, an ethnic minority present in Lebanon and surrounding countries), and The Social Support Society (provides quality programs and opportunities to refugee children and senior citizens). LAL thus created and installed another platform specific to these organizations' needs, all while remotely educating the teachers working at these various NGOs on how to navigate this newly-made platform. A coordinator was still able to go visit the kids to teach them how to use the at-home program (*see pictures below*)