

SERVED

Served update, Field-based activities 2015¹

This report provides a description, achievements and lessons learned from Served's projects initiated and implemented during 2015. Two projects are described, a joint activity in Lebanon designed to establish a network and begin the creation of ApTo online, and ongoing educational support for a small Christian charitable project in a slum community in Brazil.

1. Lebanon Network Establishment and ApTo Online Development

Context

With upwards of 1 million Syrian refugees, of whom approximately 400,000 are school-aged children, the humanitarian needs in Lebanon are enormous. As of the end of 2014, according to the UN refugee agency, only 22.7% of those children were enrolled in formal schooling. While non-accredited schools are unable to provide students with Syrian or Lebanese certificates, they are an important means by which children can engage in productive activity, develop their basic literacy and numeracy, and avoid falling behind. Many churches in Lebanon have begun schools for Syrian refugee children, as well as refugee children from other countries such as Iraq, but most lack the resources and expertise to provide a comprehensive quality education. Most of these schools are committed to providing education services to the most vulnerable yet eager children in their midst, regardless of religious background. ApTo, the educational methodology used by Served, is being offered to Lebanese church-based schools working with refugees to help them provide a quality education to refugee children of diverse religious backgrounds.

Description of activities undertaken to date

A ten-day training event was hosted by Sat-7 in Mansouriyeh, Lebanon, during 14-25 September. All sessions were filmed. The event had two main objectives:

- ! To identify potential partners for ongoing engagement. These would most likely be church-based schools in Lebanon which are interested in ongoing support from Served
- ! To develop and record the content to be used for developing ApTo online

Topics included:

Learning to Lead	Objectives	Differentiation & Learning Styles
Structural Foundations	Systems	Character & Teacher Character Strengths
Expectations	Monitoring	Continued Professional Development (CPD)
Student-Centered Teaching	Behaviour	How? - Lesson Planning
Observation	Feedback	What? - Curriculum
	Marking	When? - Schemes of Work

Highlights

"We have one student at a time sit at the front of the class and the other students share compliments about this child. Sometimes the children cry because they don't realize how much the other students value or think well of them." -Lebanese School Director

¹ n.b. This update covers field-based activities and work directly with partners. Served has also seen significant achievements in networking, identification of potential partners in various locations, and organizational development

The training was well-received and began many interesting discussions which are likely to lead to future partnerships. The impact of the training is already being seen as participants take new insights back to their schools in the new term, and as some participants have already taken the initiative to train their teachers in new skills and philosophies of education. Some specific highlights noted are:

- ! At the end of each session, participants were asked to identify changes or innovations they planned on implementing as a result of the training. Participants had many good ideas and action points, and expressed a great deal of enthusiasm about implementing these changes in their schools.
- ! As the discussions continued over the course of two weeks, participants had the opportunity to grow in their reflective practice, giving useful feedback and commenting on how what they were learning applies to their respective work environments
- ! Seven individuals were identified to begin investing in by Served's Education Department, as potential future Served coaches and/or regional representatives.
- ! Approximately 50 hours of footage were recorded, which will provide the basis for the ApTo online course material.

Accomplishments in Numbers - Lebanon

#	Indicator ²
15	school directors and other strategic education actors trained by Served
20	teachers engaged through training event offered by Served trainees
13	schools indirectly engaged through training event
7	individuals identified for further training and engagement with Served
6	Lebanese church-based schools identified for further engagement
1200	Approximate number of refugee students attending in Served schools

Next Steps

Served has committed to regular follow-up with the seven individuals who have committed to an ongoing relationship. This follow-up includes bi-weekly follow-up by email or skype for six months, along with two face-to-face meetings, and ongoing liaising with a Served volunteer.

Additionally, Served will work with developers to edit the videos and arrange for next steps to develop the online platform for Served.

Those partners who choose to continue with Served beyond the initial six months will begin reflection and monitoring activities, as well as community assessments, for future planning, in order to document their successes and lessons-learned, and to build an evidence base that will help them attract future donor funding.

In addition, participants in the training identified the following possible next contributions from Served:

- ! Specific content, exercises and models to help busy teachers put the principles of ApTo into practice
- ! Assistance in learning how to use Excel and other relevant technology, as well as possible assistance in obtaining the necessary software
- ! Networking and sharing of experiences and lessons-learned through the creation of a community of practice.

"The teachers I train really struggle with [objectives] so I think I could try teaching it this way and see if it would go better." -Served Volunteer

"I love the system of rewarding... the behavior and learning, and mostly loved the 6 pillar card and rewards passed on achieving any or all of these pillars." -Training participant

"[I will] monitor behavior using a spreadsheet. Our first teachers' meeting will be on key areas about behavior regarding: expectations, school values,

² Ongoing indicators for monitoring and tracking progress will be developed during the pilot year, by mid-2016. Therefore, this list of indicators may change from one report to the next.

relationships." -Lebanese School Director

Challenges

Participants identified some challenges they anticipate facing as they learn to implement the Served-ApTo methodology.

- ! Cultural values in Lebanon, and other countries in the Middle East from which most of Lebanon's refugees come, are somewhat unique. Participants in the training mentioned that they will need to be creative to adapt ApTo principles such as planning and leadership to their context.
- ! Parent engagement is very weak in most of the schools represented at the meeting. Parents lack the skills to assist their children with their education, and many do not understand what their role can, and arguably, should be. Participants wish to seek new ways to engage parents.
- ! Teachers in the church-based schools represented at the training are extremely busy and may struggle to find the time to implement many of the new ideas introduced. In addition to classroom time, they visit refugee families in their homes and work one-on-one with children.
- ! Trauma affects many children and teachers alike, and if unaddressed can affect their ability to perform.

"We're not used to planning. We grow up not planning... Even for a family vacation. We just get up and go. So it is really hard for us to think about planning at all. They asked the teachers [but] the teachers wouldn't do it."
-Lebanese School Director

"The children come from really difficult homes. Once I had a teacher who was really complaining about a student. She was at the end of her patience [and] wanted me to do something more. She said I should call the parents... When I talked to the father and told him that his boy was misbehaving, he said something terrible: "Every day I beat them with an electric wire; every day, but they are still terrible. I don't know what else to do! I will just kill him and go to jail!" I felt so terrible." -Lebanese School Director

2. Casa Semente Local Association Partnership

Context

Jardim Gramacho is a favela, or slum community, on the outskirts of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Until recently the site of the city's main trash dump, it has some of the lowest development indicators of the city and surrounding areas. According to a recent survey conducted by NGO Teto, more than 90% of the favela's households live in wood shacks, and approximately 64% have dirt floors. Only 10% of Jardim Gramacho's residents have completed their primary education, and 2.4% completed secondary schooling. Jardim Gramacho is defined by drug-related activity including a prevalence of gangs and addiction. Both police and inter-gang violence are commonplace, and few of Jardim Gramacho's children have hope of a future lifestyle that does not involve drugs. Casa Semente was established 5 years ago as a social project designed to mitigate the negative fall-out of the drug culture in Jardim Gramacho. Until recently entirely operated by volunteers, it provides children with holistic social and educational support. At Casa Semente's request, AprenderTotal, Served's implementing partner in Brazil, began working in January 2015 with Casa Semente's volunteers to strengthen their informal education activities.

Description of activities undertaken to date

Four training events were organized between January and June 2015, with more training planned in the coming months. Volunteers from Casa Semente have participated in the training, which to date has covered topics related to lesson planning, learning styles, and behavior management. After each training, benefiting from ongoing support provided by Served and AprenderTotal, they have implemented a variety of changes to the project's activities.

In September 2015, Served's research team visited Casa Semente to introduce reflection activities for project monitoring through monthly storytelling meetings, and to train Casa Semente staff to conduct a community contextual assessment. Following this visit, volunteers immediately began the assessment process.

Highlights

"At lunchtime, we were seated at the table, plates filled with delicious-smelling food. We began to chat – because people who don't talk while eating are people who don't have friends... The children began to talk about what they want to do when they grow up. One said he wants to be a veterinarian; another, a doctor. Another wants to be a teacher. And so on and so forth. It was wonderful to hear about their dreams... it was not like this before! But one of these children in particular touched my heart at that Sunday luncheon. I remembered how she was when I first met her: a poor girl, fatherless, who just wandered the streets on her own in the sun all day long... As I was pondering everything that has happened in the years since I first met her, she said, 'Auntie, when I grow up I am going to be a veterinarian, and I am going to play the drums and I also want to help other children!' She was confident and happy in what she said. That was the best dessert I could ask for at that lunch." -Director of Casa Semente

Volunteers identified a number of beneficial changes that the partnership with Served has brought them. Among these:

- ! They are learning to see each child as an individual and tailor their lessons to unique learning styles and personalities.
- ! Most of Casa Semente's volunteers have no teacher training or previous experience as teachers. After the training, they feel more confident planning lessons and assisting the children in achieving basic literacy and numeracy.
- ! They are able to explain their expectations to children, and have established a structured schedule of activities that both children and volunteers understand and can follow, adding stability to the children's experience at the project.
- ! Volunteers are increasingly expressing creativity in the activities they are developing for children.

In addition, reflective activities have given volunteers a space to document their lessons learned and discuss their passions and frustrations with one another. Casa Semente has now been able to hire two full-time staff who will continue to implement the best practices introduced by Served with the team of volunteers.

Accomplishments in Numbers – Brazil

#	Indicator ³
1	school directors and other strategic education actors trained by Served
23	Teachers (volunteers) trained by Served
1	schools directly engaged through training event
50	Approximate number of refugee students attending in Served schools
208	Individual households engaged through community outreach survey
1000	Approximate number of people engaged in Served activities

Next Steps

Served will continue to support Casa Semente through continued training modules until all of the ApTo content has been introduced to Casa Semente's volunteers. In October 2015, one of the project's new staff members, an education coordinator, is attending an intensive orientation with AprenderTotal.

The contextual community assessment is ongoing. In early 2015, Served will assist the team to analyse the data, develop reports to help them attract further funding and write a strategic plan, and identify priorities for new activities with community members.

In addition, Casa Semente's volunteers identified some types of future support Served and AprenderTotal might offer:

- ! Materials and activities to target children's learning needs in an age- and level-appropriate manner. Volunteers' limited time is spent with the children and they have limited access to pedagogical materials.

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- ! Continual assistance in training or orienting new volunteers, considering the high turnover in Casa Semente's volunteer team.

"Two weeks ago, when there was a shoot-out on the street, we all had to get on the ground. We were praying with the children that God would protect their family members who were still out in the neighbourhood. I saw how the children worry about and care for their families." -Volunteer

"There was a day when the children did not want to obey or listen to me. I got so frustrated and desperate that I had to leave the classroom. I started to cry. The children came out and saw me crying and came up and asked me to forgive them." -Volunteer

Challenges

Casa Semente operates in a very challenging environment. Two key challenges were identified. The first is the culture of violence in Jardim Gramacho. Behavioral problems among the children are widespread and the children often do not even express a desire to change. Volunteers attribute this primarily to the unstructured and often violent environment in which they live. The second major challenge is Casa Semente's reliance on volunteers. The volunteers can only commit 1-2 days per week, in most cases, and may not be able to maintain a long-term commitment depending on other work priorities. Even though they feel limited in what they can do, their level of commitment is extremely high and they are providing support self-sacrificially.

"One day I did not want to come in to Casa Semente, because I felt the strong contrast between my reality, the comfortable life I live, and the reality of the children. It was hard for me, but I still came." -Volunteer

"One of the boys, who I had just met, came up to me, took my hand in his, and kissed it. I was so touched by this boy's generous heart and friendliness." -Casa Semente Staff