Providing the Key to unlock their potential

Empowering refugee and disadvantaged children to learn and thrive through self-paced, motivational electronic tools.
11 million
Syrians displaced from their homes

50% are children

33% of the 480,000+ school-aged Syrian children in Lebanon are NOT in school
Our vision is to eliminate the inequity brought about by poverty, war and disasters and to foster a world in which we sustainably share our resources and help one another with compassion and benevolence.
Thaki in Arabic means “smart.”
Phonetically it’s pronounced “the key” – we want to help provide the key to children’s future to unlock their potential!
OUR BELIEFS

We believe that every child is entitled to a happy, safe childhood.
We believe that every child deserves an education.
We believe that learning can be fun and engaging.
We believe in applying technology to advance our learning.
We believe in sharing our resources.
We believe in eliminating waste.
We believe in helping one another to live peacefully and to be and achieve our best.
We empower refugee and disadvantaged children to learn and thrive through self-paced, motivational electronic tools.

We repurpose and distribute donated computers to NGOs and educational centers working with the children as well as university scholarship students.

Thaki is a registered foundation in the Dutch Chamber of Commerce: #65713834
Children who are out of school are otherwise in the streets, or idle, or working (illegally, informally – out of necessity for survival), or joining gangs, or being recruited to ill-intentioned and extremist groups...This vulnerability makes them a ticking time bomb that can have detrimental effects on society – globally – and not just on the children themselves.

Technology can efficiently and effectively deliver educational content – as supplementary, core, or blended learning.

The use of technology can improve the level of engagement and motivation for learning for children (as has been observed in the field).

Having technology skills is critical for modern workforce integration.

With internet connectivity, personalized and adaptive educational content can be accessed from anywhere through electronic devices, allowing refugee children on the move to continue their education.
These are the eyes that stole my heart in the Bekaa valley, Lebanon. Was I seeing hope or despair?

I am convinced that it is our job to deliver hope.

Rudayna Abdo, Thaki Founder
Thaki’s business model leverages viable computer resources no longer needed by their original users, repurposes them, and delivers them to a new user group, effectively providing these devices with an entirely new life.

In order to run the entire business model, from seeking donations, through refurbishment and software installation, transportation and distribution, and finally to providing support to end users, we collaborate and partner with key players in various fields that include education, technology, and logistics. We are lean, efficient and leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goodwill to serve our targeted beneficiaries in Lebanon (current focus) and Jordan.

While the Thaki computers, with their educational content and tools, leverage a certain dollar value (which will only grow over time as we source more content), the social and educational value of opening a world of e-learning to the children cannot be measured in such dollar terms – and has a much higher human value.
Sensing—
Co-creating Thaki with Users and key stakeholders

The initial concept for Thaki, which started in 2015, has developed and evolved during the various trips to the refugee communities in Lebanon and extensive meetings with experts and practitioners related to education, technology and development, in order to define better each user groups needs.

- Thaki founder Rudayna Abdo has led 9 trips to Lebanon in the last 2 years to gain deeper first hand knowledge of what is happening and test and prototype directly with the refugee communities on the ground.

- Contextual inquiry during the visits have included 3 refugee camps, 7 refugee schools, 2 orphanages, 1 start-up coding school for refugees, where live observation, in-person interviews were made with the people who are delivering education to the children or caring for their full wellbeing.

- There have been hundreds of hours of meetings and interviews to bring on board the technology and education content partner companies whose content is at the heart of our re-purposed, plug and play devices.

- Collaboration and feedback sessions with business partners who directly contributed their areas of expertise (such as logistics, web design, logo design, legal) to the Thaki cause.

- Corporations and institutional partners were approached for hardware donations.

- Ongoing feedback loop and discussions with international NGOs as well as local NGOs and institutions already set up in the territory.
Numerous partners are already supporting Thaki’s mission through the provision of content and expertise. They include:

- **Oxford University Press** - who have given Thaki a rich library of proprietary interactive English language e-learning and audio books. These e-books are now part of the image that goes on all the computers.

- **Big Bad Boo and the Education Diversity Foundation** – who have provided the animated series 1001 Nights, curriculum materials that focus on civic education and have the goal of resetting normative values.

- **Sayegh Publishers** – who have provided proprietary offline e-learning content of the Syrian curriculum as well as some interactive electronic story books.

- **Tabshoura** – content partners who are creating the Lebanese curriculum as a tri-lingual online learning platform.

- **Ashabona** – elementary educational games who have offered Thaki partners a 2-month free trial and a reduced subscription rate.
Other open source partners and content include:

- **Internet-In-A-Box** – an Open Source project partner that has developed essential internet resources without any Internet.

- **LibreOffice Suite** – providing the equivalent of the Office Suite (similar and compatible with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, light CAD, graphics tool) that are placed on all the computers. These are essential tools for any learner.

- **Offline educational games** including programs like Scratch (multiple languages), GCompris, Tux Typing – and many more.

- **Online links** to educational programs and resources such as Tabshoura, Khan Academy (Arabic and English), Code.org and many others.

Partnerships with education providers will continue to expand and grow.
Deploying hardware, loaded with software and educational content, is not always sufficient in getting children in distress to engage with e-learning, especially in the early stages as they’re getting used to using electronic devices.

To ensure the right delivery and maximum utilization of the educational resources on our devices, Thaki has forged partnerships to deliver education and digital literacy. These partners include:

- **Social Support Society** – an NGO in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, that cares for the educational needs of 3,000 Syrian refugee children.

- **Malaak School** – an NGO in Akaar, North Lebanon serving 700 Syrian refugee children that is dedicated to ending illiteracy in the camps through education and innovative programs designed to empower families to achieve self-sufficiency.

- **A World at School/TheirWorld** – a Sarah Brown foundation in Mtein, Lebanon serving Syrian refugee children.

- **Home of Hope** – an orphanage in Hazmieh, Lebanon.

- **RebootKamp (RBK)** – in Jordan serving young adults for intensive coding skills, 50% of whom are Syrian refugees and 50% low income Jordanians.
Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Lebanon – an NGO that supports youth to become innovators and leaders, and to create and apply digital solutions that have positive impact in their communities. DOT-Lebanon also provided digital literacy training for teachers.

Teach for Lebanon (TFL) - a Lebanese NGO and member of the 40-nation global network, Teach For All. TFL is dedicated to improving the quality of education in Lebanon by providing quality education for less privileged children.

Unite Lebanon Youth Project (ULYP) - giving equal access to quality educational programs to children, youth, and women in the marginalized communities.

Fondation Saradar – a mobile computer lab that provides e-literacy capacity building in remote and underserved areas in Lebanon.

FarikBeirut - working with refugees on developing community-lead trauma recovery, psycho-social support & training programs.
Educational Providers - Content Providers

Social Support Society
malaak Fills The Gap
TEACH FOR LEBANON
Theirworld

dot digital opportunity LEBANON
edutek

Fondation Saradar

UNITE LEBANON YOUTH PROJECT

RBK

LEO

FARUK BEIRUT
Technical support will always be required – whether for hardware or software issues. To that end:

- TeamViewer is placed on all the computers in the imaging process in order to allow for remote computer access for technical support (in cases of internet accessibility).
- THAKI currently has limited volunteer tech expertise on the ground in Lebanon; with scaling and increased capacity it is our intention to retain IT support in all field operations (business model options being evaluated).
Hardware Replacement and Recycling

- It is assumed that Thaki computers will have a productive life of about 3 years given their average age upon receipt.

- We are hoping - and have already seen in our young life - that donors become cyclical because they like the impact their devices are having on children’s lives. This reduces the pressure on marketing efforts for replacement devices once the Thaki computers are no longer serviceable.

- Once Thaki devices reach the end of life, it is our intention to partner with an electronic waste company to sustainably and properly dispose of the waste and ensure it does not end in land fill or employ improper labor practices. To date one company, Beeatoona, has been identified in Lebanon which can serve such a need.
Donated Devices vs New Tablets

- We don’t believe there is any one solution to tackle the challenge of educating displaced children. Thaki applies a circular model where viable technology no longer needed by one user group is leveraged for the benefit of another group through donation. We don’t purchase our devices.

- Tablets can serve certain groups very well (e.g. younger children) and can be very powerful. They also have their limitations.

- Laptops offer richer functionality – e.g. word processing, Excel, presentation programs. We currently load Thaki devices with the LibreOffice Suite (the open sourced equivalent of Office Suite, with compatibility to it), along with numerous other programs, which in turn provide useful skills, in addition to learning content, to the children and teachers alike.

- We have also received and deployed a small number of tablets to teach young children coding. It is our intention to expand into tablet and smart phone distribution as well, thus leveraging viable donated devices to serve end users in various ways.
Thaki currently receives support from Aramex, the Middle East’s largest shipping company, and is in discussions with another major global logistics partner. These companies minimize, or eliminate, shipping costs as well as clear all the customs processes, effectively delivering the devices from door to door.

An early lesson was that full computers are too onerous and costly to ship across borders, even difficult in-country. Laptops are manageable.

Ideally we will move to a model where shipping is not required but devices can circulate within their community from one user group to another. The current reality we have found in Lebanon is that it is very hard to source viable retired devices since users tend to use their devices for many years until they have reached the end of their functional life. We are, instead, targeting organizations that have a 3-year retirement policy on their devices. As we expand in other countries we will hopefully be able to forgo shipping and circulate within borders. However, right now we are focusing on communities critical need, starting with Lebanon.
Since founding Thaki, Rudayna Abdo has been involved in global discourses and forums that are tackling the challenge of educating displaced children. Leveraging technology to effectively deliver education is quickly emerging as a viable solution, especially in the provision of blended learning mechanisms.

Thaki does not assume to offer a complete solution, rather a hardware platform - with tools and content - to deliver (potentially core and) supplementary educational materials and curricula.

Some educational content can be cross cultural and universally accessible to any learner, while the majority should be linguistically and culturally context sensitive.

Thaki will continuously observe, evaluate and reiterate from our learnings from the field and beyond in order to apply the most effective and impactful learning environments to the displaced children. In a similar fashion, others are learning from us – leading to co-created policies that are based on practice and leveraging that circular collaborative model upon which we all thrive.
The concept for Thaki was born in 2015. We are already operating on the ground in the most strained refugee communities in Lebanon, a tiny country of 4.5 million people which has, in the last 6 years, seen an intake of 1 million registered Syrian refugees, with unofficial figures over 1.5 million.
Technical Considerations:

We needed to find a process to wipe donated computers clean of original content and load software and educational content on them – in a scalable fashion, not one by one. Thus an imaging process, based on the Linux platform, was created after months of trial. This allows the easy imaging - at scale - by non technical people. We are now at the “plug-and-play” stage.

Content Focus:

Initial efforts were heavily tilted towards successfully sourcing motivational, engaging e-learning content in Arabic through several partnerships (e.g., Sayegh Publishers for e-books of the Syrian curriculum). We are now finding out, however, that learning English language is a top priority for the children. Efforts have therefore shifted now to sourcing high quality English language learning content and we have succeeded in securing such partnerships (e.g. Oxford University Press e-books – all grade levels; other psychosocial content).
Internet Connectivity Concerns:

While the richest provision of content is available through online resources, there is an internet connectivity issue in Lebanon (internet is too expensive and too weak, especially in the areas where the vast majority of Syrian refugees have settled – in the Bekaa Valley and in the North). Therefore it’s important to continue efforts to source high quality supplementary offline learning content that can be added to the computer image.

Other Ways to Access Content:

Offline content can also be very heavy therefore not fit on the computers. We partnered with Internet-In-A-Box (offshoot of the One Laptop Per Child initiative) and built our first computer lab in one of the refugee schools. The lab has 20 Thaki laptops connected to a PC that has been repurposed into a local server with 650 GB of Arabic and English content including Khan Academy (KA Lite), Wikipedia, Wiki-Med, Tabshoura, TED Talks and other educational material. We will implement other such labs and servers and monitor their use.
Many children have had interrupted learning.

Schools are being used by Syrian refugees for second shifts (afternoons).
Akaar, North Lebanon

Photo courtesy of Malaak
- Computer donations are easier to secure than funding requests.
- Donors become regular and cyclical as they continue retiring old devices.
- Computer donations reduce capital costs, conserving funds for operating needs.
- E-learning innovation tools.
- Satisfies Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- E-recycling opportunity.
### Assumptions – Computer Usage Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of computers</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>hours/child/month</th>
<th>e-learning hours per month</th>
<th>e-learning hours per year</th>
<th>Total impact over 3 years (hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>5,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>3,840,000</td>
<td>11,520,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Start-up Year Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of electronic devices deployed to date</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for additional laptops</td>
<td>1,300 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate of end users reached thus far</td>
<td>3,000 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of NGOs served thus far or seeking Thaki partnership</td>
<td>25 +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
User Feedback - Quantitative

في أي صف دراسي أنت؟

أعمل مع زملائي عند استخدام أجهزة الحاسوب.

الصف
- الصف 1 (33.3%)
- الصف 2 (33.3%)
- الصف 3 (33.3%)

نعم (75%)
لا (25%)

1/2 ▼
Children are most excited at school when...

- “Recess”
- “on the bus”
- “During the recess when they play with their friends, or when they have extracurricular activities”
- “When they are playing with their friends all together”
- “Mostly when they are playing or doing activities together, mostly Outside the classroom, when they are playing together”

Children are most excited at school – in the classroom - when...

- “the lesson is interactive and student centered, and when there is demonstration (short movie, song, game, group work)”
- “When they have alternative activities, learning by playing or learning by using technology, or through creativity and art”
- “When they are synergizing together and doing activities, or hands on projects, any activity that they express their creativity and learn while playing”
Children most look forward to doing (at home or at school) ...

- “Playing video games and spending time on Social media platforms”
- “Eat first 😊 Play mainly, technology is an important part of their playing”
- “Food, crafts and technology”

How computers impact the children ...

- “Computers can have positive and negative impact on children. Positively, it can enrich them with information and provide them with easy tools for research and educational games. Negatively, if it is used without supervision from their parents or teachers, it will waste their time.”
- “Positively, when used in the right way. It enhances learning, and critical thinking. Negatively when it impacts communication, or when they spend time playing repetitive games”
- “It depends on how technology is introduced to them, how they are using it and for what purpose. How much they are monitored by their parents and how much awareness they have regarding it. If this was introduced in a healthy way with all the mentioned points, then for sure it will have a positive impact on the child from developing their learning skills, enhance their skills, creativity and exposure.”
What do we need to do to make learning with computers more effective?

- "Create student friendly websites and applications"
- "Make these resources accessible offline (many do not have internet connection)"
- "Provide a selection with the right digital resources. Add guidelines to help them choose the right activity"
- "Provide guidance for practitioners, parents, and students on the most effective ways on how to use computers and introduce them for students. Awareness, digital autonomy and citizenship is very important for these kids to know the safe usage of technology and protecting themselves. It's very important to provide them as well with a safe environment to do so, while still observing them. It also needs a policy for doing so."
What do you wish the computers could do for the children? What have they done?

- “It connected them to the world and gave them easy access to all information. It also enhanced critical thinking and helped in learning by providing interactive materials.”
- “Provide interactive learning, enhancing their creativity, giving them useful information’s, connecting them to the world”
- “They enhance the four C’s: collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Prepare them for the 21st century skills”
Impact

February 2017:
First computer lab with server set up for Social Support Society, Bekaa, Lebanon
Impact

July/August 2016:
80 Social Support Society teachers completed tech training
Impact

August, 2016:
ReBoot KAMP Graduates
First Batch Software Engineers
Impact

October 2016:
Refugee Code Week sponsored and conducted in Lebanon by SAP through Thaki introductions
“You can't imagine the amazing impact of the programs on my students' attitude in the classroom and towards education.”

Farah M. – Teach for Lebanon Fellow
“The children are thrilled, it's as if they are on a field trip, an escape!”

“...they are showing enthusiasm and integrity, something that war and harsh circumstances has taken away. It's amazing to see the students so excited!”

Fatima – Malaak School teacher – on the impact of computers
We believe in mutual collaboration and, as such, our model is to partner with those who are expert in their field. We are honored to be supported by the following entities.

Supporters who made pro bono contributions
Donors of Electronic Devices

+ various other corporations and individuals
Rudayna Abdo, founder of NGO Thaki, posing with a Syrian child at a Social Support Society school in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. Thaki seeks to provide laptops from donors to centres educating refugee and disadvantaged children in Lebanon and Jordan. Courtesy Rudayna Abdo

From refugee to benefactor, a mother in Abu Dhabi brings much-sought education to Syrian children

Josh Wood
July 19, 2016  Updated: July 20, 2016 12:12 PM

Schools like those run by Malaak and Mrs Bizri are also helped by other start-ups in the humanitarian world. These include Thaki, an NGO run by Abu Dhabi resident Rudayna Abdo that collects used laptops and loads them with educational materials before sending them to schools.
Thaki Recognition: TEDxAmsterdamED Award Winner

Congratulations @rudayna.abdo! We're so excited about the next chapter of Thaki! #thakiunlocks #thakiunlockspotential #thaki_unlocks #education #amsterdam #outsidein
Unlock their potential.