In September 2019 I was honored to be appointed as Executive Director of Paper Airplanes. I was particularly eager to join the team because of my experience with the organization as director of a partner refugee education program at MIT. I knew first-hand the value of Paper Airplanes’ programs, the quality of its tutors and students and its capacity to connect with conflict-affected students across the Middle-East and support them in making a difference in their own lives.

In the spring of 2020, we will enroll our 2000th student. Our 6th year is lining-up to be pivotal. We too are feeling the strain of the past few months, coronavirus is impacting our students, volunteers, and staff. While health and safety are the priority, we recognise that the whole world is now concerned with how to continue education in isolation. The pandemic disrupted learning for over 92% of the world’s student population. The context changes, but our mission remains the same. Our robust programs, built for the instability that comes with displacement, allow our work to continue during this new crisis without pause. We have also been a resource for many others given our experience navigating remote learning. We are proud to be a featured solution in UNESCO’s COVID-19 Educational Response.

In the pages ahead, you'll learn about our successes and our new strategies to scale our reach and impact. We are determined to see Paper Airplanes serve many more students as an exciting learning portal, a safe online volunteer community, and a partner for all like-minded organizations.

Together, we do more.

With thanks,

R. Demetri Fadel
Executive Director
Ahmad al Hajj first joined Paper Airplanes as a student in the English program in the Spring of 2018 after being referred by our partner Talent Beyond Boundaries. In 2019, he joined our Curriculum Advisory Committee where he is helping develop recommendations to improve our English curriculum to make it more relevant to students’ educational and professional goals. In addition to volunteering on the CAC, Ahmad became our first Director of Student Advising in the fall where he is spearheading efforts to provide support to our students applying to university programs and scholarships. On top of all of this, Ahmad is pursuing his MBA with Nexford University where he secured a scholarship through Paper Airplanes partnership and he is preparing to be resettled to Canada through TBB’s program. Ahmad is a testament to the fact that Paper Airplanes is a community where volunteers, tutors, staff and partner organizations are constantly working together to provide opportunities and support. We’re so lucky to have him as a student and staff member!
In November 2019 we recognized two amazing tutors through our tutor of the month initiative in the English Program. We are so grateful for both Cindy and Dan, who inspire us by their dedication and thoughtfulness in the programs they're involved in through Paper Airplanes.

"Volunteering with PA has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've encountered. I'm grateful for the wonderful volunteers, staff, and students I've met through PA. I'm also grateful for the warm friendships I've built with my students" - Cindy

"I'm grateful to everyone who participates and supports Paper Airplanes. We get an opportunity to connect, to learn, and grow" - Dan

Thank you so much for your hard work, Cindy and Dan!
Living in a suburban town, I recognized that altering many of my peers’ misperception of the refugee crisis required first-hand experience. With this in mind, I co-founded a YEP chapter in the summer of 2017, just before my freshman year of high school. Since inception, I’ve been lucky to support nearly 30 student-tutor pairs in conducting English lessons and fostering cross-cultural understanding and dialogue. Beyond English language instruction, our chapter has sought to assist refugee youth locally and abroad by providing essential educational supplies. I’ve also assisted in facilitating a partnership between Paper Airplanes and the International Rescue Committee’s (IRC) Northern California branch, to provide remote assistance to IRC’s clients during the COVID-19 pandemic. My experiences with Paper Airplanes have been some of the most rewarding in my life and have made me a better teacher, leader, and listener.
Zahra and Bayan’s teamwork is the source of the vision and energy for the program.

Zahra’s involvement with Paper Airplanes began in the English Program, where she volunteered as a tutor. Her energy and passion for providing opportunities to young people led her to take on Women in Tech. Having worked in the tech industry, Zahra has a critical perspective on skill building that she translates into new and relevant courses. In 2020, WiT is launching Business Analytics.

Bayan’s experience managing coding boot camps complements Zahra’s. Bayan lives in Jordan and knows the context first-hand. She has a deep network to foster student success pathways and ideas for WiT growth.
More 2019 Highlights

Building Pathways
Through our new partnership with Nexford University 36 students secured full scholarships to study a BBA or MBA. 34 of them are our students, and 2 were referred by MIT ReACT.

English Tests
We partnered with the Duolingo English Test to provide vouchers to all of our English Program and YEP graduates so that they can receive an internationally recognized certificate for their English proficiency.

Curriculum Advisory Committee
This year the English Program Manager and Youth Exchange Program Manager established a Curriculum Advisory Committee to provide feedback and guidance on improving our English curriculum.

On December 28th, we hosted our first virtual graduation ceremony to recognize the 12 students who graduated from PA programs in 2019.

Staff & Interns
In 2019, we launched an Internship program and welcomed 10 interns who helped with grant writing, social media, and developing youth friendly curriculums among other things. Over the course of the year, we had 51 individuals working as members of staff.
Strongly agree or agree that studying with Paper Airplanes has put them in a better position to find a job.

Strongly agree or agree that studying with Paper Airplanes has put them in a better position to pursue higher education.
Building Pathways

Over half of the Women in Tech students in Fall 2019 started in the English Program (11 of 20)
Tutor Satisfaction

95.8% of respondents would recommend volunteering with Paper Airplanes to others

*From the 2019 Follow-up survey sent to all tutors who participated in PA programs in 2019
Gender Breakdown

- Male: 53%
- Female: 47%

Projected 2020 enrollment:

- New Students
- Returning Students

Retention & Growth
Of all of the students who have enrolled with PA, we have location data for 1643 (82.9% of total) of them. Students continue to be present in priority countries for PA.
Looking ahead to 2020

1. **LMS Platform**
   Piloting a new online learner platform to support growth

2. **Building Pathways**
   Welcoming new partnerships so students can soar into new careers.

3. **Professionalising Staff & Internship program**
   Invest in staff development and create more full-time roles to support students.
Financials 2019

Revenue*

- Restricted & Grants: $26,825
- Fundraising: $18,397
- Other: $3,972
- Total Revenue: $49,194

Expenses

- Program Services: 46%
- Management & General: 44%
- Fundraising: 10%

*In 2019 over 26,000 hours of volunteer effort was donated to Paper Airplanes
Thank You to Our Partners