



Media Contact:

Ms. Amy Wesley, awesley@sabis.net; +1 952 918 1822

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**** Private Sector Mobilizes to Educate Refugee Children in Lebanon ****

UN General Assembly, NY (September 21, 2016) – The [Clooney Foundation for Justice](#) has launched a private sector initiative designed to educate all out-of-school children in Lebanon, including Syrian refugees. [Google.Org](#), [Virgin Unite](#), the [Radcliffe Foundation](#), and the **SABIS® Foundation** are among the founding partners who, along with the Clooney Foundation, are contributing funding and resources to the initiative.

The private sector initiative comes amid growing estimates of the number of out-of-school Syrian refugees in Lebanon. It comes in answer to an UNHCR call “for governments, donors, humanitarian agencies, and development partners as well as private-sector partners to strengthen their commitment to ensuring that every child receives a quality education.” Of the half-million Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, 200,000 of them are not enrolled in school, even with a significant increase in refugee enrollment thanks to initiatives undertaken by the Lebanese government.

George and Amal Clooney, both staunch supporters of human rights, made the official announcement of the project and showed a [video](#) in a UN General Assembly session calling the private sector to action. “We want to get every single out-of-school child in Lebanon an education,” remarked Amal Clooney. “Let’s not lose an entire generation of people because they happened to be born in the wrong place at the wrong time,” George added.

The [Clooney Foundation for Justice](#) will be working with [SABIS®](#), a global education management company, to roll out a phased plan to open schools starting in September 2017. In the first year of the plan, the schools will enroll between 5,000 and 10,000 refugee children as well as Lebanese children who are not enrolled in school. In subsequent years, additional schools will be added to increase capacity by up to 50,000 students per year.

The schools, which will be located in areas of Lebanon most heavily populated by Syrian refugees, will implement the **SABIS® Educational System™**, a proven educational program that is backed by 130 years of success in the region and currently used to provide over 70,000 students enrolled in SABIS® Network schools around the world with a high-quality education. As with all SABIS® Network schools, the schools serving the refugee children will leverage technology to drive and monitor the learning process, using digital resources that are highly interactive and capture valuable data on individual student progress to facilitate learning.

Education for a changing world.®

“The SABIS® Network is proud to be a part of this project,” said [SABIS®](#) president Carl Bistany. “SABIS® has worked over the past 130 years to build a reputation for excellence in education and to make a difference in the lives of the students in our schools. This project allows us to mobilize our experience and resources to give Syrian refugee children access to education so that they have a solid foundation they can continue to build on wherever they may find themselves in the future.”

Speaking on behalf of [Google.org](#), Jacquelline Fuller, the organization’s director said: “Access to learning and access to information is so much a core part of our values, and we’re supporting the [Clooney Foundation for Justice](#) with a \$1 million grant focused on education for refugee children in Lebanon through their work with [SABIS](#). This grant will support expanding their efforts to develop a new school model, using digital tools, for up to 10,000 out-of-school children in Lebanon. Through our employee volunteering program, we’ll also provide technical expertise to help with everything from connectivity to cloud storage by having Googlers helping both on the ground and remotely.

“If you saw what I saw, you too would want to help,” said [Radcliffe Foundation](#) Founder and President Frank Giustra after witnessing firsthand the plight of refugees in receptor countries. The Radcliffe Foundation has actively been responding to the refugee crisis by brokering the first private sector partnership with the Greek Ministry of Migration to create the Elpida, a residence in northern Greece with capacity for 800 of the most vulnerable refugees, 60% of them youth. It also funded the building of a receiving center with capacity for 1500 refugees arriving in the island of Lesbos. “In continuation of this important work,” Mr. Giustra said “the Radcliffe Foundation is proud to be part of this coalition to educate children in Lebanon as destabilization will come when you have a lost generation of children growing up in an environment where there is no education or social support. It is in our self-interest to address the humanitarian needs of displaced people. Our failure to do so can only fuel resentment, exacerbate conflict, and further destabilize the world.”

Sir Richard Branson, founder of [Virgin Unite](#), the non-profit foundation of Virgin Group that unites people and entrepreneurial ideas to create opportunities for a better world, also shared his remarks about the project: *“The global business community and citizens of the world must embrace refugees and migrants who have escaped the daily horrors of war in their countries with love, kindness, and access to basic rights. Access to a quality education will help vulnerable young people realize their goals and aspirations and instill in them the knowledge, skills, and hope to build a future of peace for us all.”*

Start-up funding totaling \$7 million USD is being provided by the project’s founding members. Additional funding is being sourced from the private sector on an ongoing basis. To learn more about how to join the coalition, contact info@cfj.org.

###