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## Holey pipelines: The experience of MIT in developing capacity amongst refugees and host communities in the Middle East

**Location:** UNESCO Headquarters, ROOM 7

**Date and time:** Monday 26 March 2018, 14:30-16:00

**Presenters:** Genevieve Barrons, MIT Media Lab, United States

### About the workshop:

The MIT Refugee Learning Accelerator supports teams of computer scientists from the Middle East to create technologies for refugee learners. We provide training, mentorship and funding. The program is fundamentally about building capacity among people with technical skills from the region, to use those skills to address some of the Middle East's biggest challenges. We are currently entering the final phase (which includes funding for teams to undertake user testing) with our first cohort, which includes staff from two Lebanese NGOs, a UNHCR translator, university students, a math teacher, and people displaced from Syria.

Skills for a connected world: closing inequalities and gender divides:

We believe that it is necessary to strengthen the entire pipeline: not just teaching people "skills for a connected world" but providing them with opportunities to use those skills to benefit their own communities. RLA was designed as a response to the relatively limited support available in the Middle East for people who want to launch "social good" tech projects.

Moreover, the RLA teams are not only strengthening their own skills, but through their projects--which include apps to support early literacy, a peer-to-peer university textbook translation service, and a program to better connect vocational training and job opportunities for refugees--contributing to the larger tech ecosystem in the region, by providing opportunities for their users to improve their own "skills for a connected world."

### Meet the presenters:

Genevieve Barrons, MIT Media Lab, United States