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Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)

Final evaluation report submitted by Ecorys Polska Sp. z o.o.

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This is a publication by the independent evaluation team of Ecorys Poland. The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of UNICEF.

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List of abbreviations

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
BLN	Basic Literacy and Numeracy
CERD	Center for Education Research and Development
CWD	Children With Disabilities
CWD	Children With Disabilities
DOPS	Department d'Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FE	Formal Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoL	Government of Lebanon
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IE	Inclusive Education
KfW	German Development Bank
LBP	Lebanese Pound
LCO	UNICEF Lebanon Country Office
LCO-EP	UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme
LD	learning difficulties
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MSCC	Multi-Service Community Center
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PITB	Pre-service and In-service Training Bureau
PMU	Project Management Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSN	Programme Strategy Notes
PSS	Psychological support
QITABI	Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement
RACE	Reaching All Children with Education
REM	Ripple Effects Mapping
S2R2	Support to Race II
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEND	special educational needs or disabilities
SIMS	School Information Management System
SMB	Strategic Management Board
TMS	Training Management System
TREF	Transition Resilience Education Fund
TTCM	Teacher Training Curriculum Model
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar
VASyR	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees

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Executive Summary

About the evaluated programme

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme consists of three pillars, equivalent to those of RACE II. It aims at supporting education services that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children and adolescents in Lebanon. It consists of three pillars: (I) Improve access to public education; (II) Improve quality of public education; (III) Improve the governance of public education. The pillars are articulated around specific outcomes, indicators and targets. These were to be achieved through a plethora of activities, such as subsidies for formal and non-formal education, transportation assistance, education supplies, textbooks, hygiene supplies, community outreach and engagement, and cash for well-being as well as school rehabilitation and construction (in the context of the Beirut blast).

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation followed a theory-driven design and a mixed-methods data collection and analysis approach. quantitative component, the evaluation relied on the identified statistical data already available.

For the qualitative component, desk research and primary qualitative data collection was conducted at the national and regional levels. The latter included individual interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) at the national level, as well as deep dives during local field visits in schools. These deep dives involved both IDIs and FGDs, as well as Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) sessions and observations.

At the national level 29 IDIs were conducted with 34 people representing UNICEF and other UN agencies, donors and the Lebanese government. Two focus groups were also carried out with representatives of NGOs, with 10 people overall. During local fieldwork, 8 schools were visited. These were selected based on criteria such as geographic distribution, refugee population in the area, participation in the Inclusive Schools Pilot or school rehabilitation/reconstruction activities, type of school (boys, girls, mixed). Overall, country experts conducted: 8 IDIs with school principals; 8 REM sessions with 44 teachers, including 41 women and 3 men; 8 FGDs with 50 parents, including 39 women and 11 men, 33 Lebanese and 17 non-Lebanese; Observations on school premises with a filled-out observation sheet; 6 IDIs with local authorities.

Findings

Relevance

UNICEF's education program in Lebanon (LCO-EP) is strongly aligned with global priorities. It adheres to international human rights standards, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The program's focus on gender parity corresponds with SDG 4's objective to provide inclusive and quality education for all. The program is also consistent with UNICEF's broader mandate, emphasizing core commitments to children and the Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, which promotes quality learning opportunities inclusive of modern skills like digital competency. Furthermore, the LCO-EP is in harmony with the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), emphasizing equitable access to basic services. On a grassroots level, Lebanese parents, regardless of origin, underscore the significance of education as a protective factor for their children, especially amidst the country's ongoing challenges.

The programme is crucially relevant to Lebanon's context, particularly in addressing the multifaceted challenges the country faces in its education sector. UNICEF has recognized access to education as

vital, given the increased migration of Syrian families and the compounded vulnerabilities that subsequent crises brought to both Syrian refugees and Lebanese communities. Although the subsidization of enrolment for Syrian children is relevant, there have been discussions about its effectiveness in retaining students, suggesting a focus on attendance might be more effective. UNICEF recognized the need to intensify non-formal education (NFE) initiatives, especially to aid Syrian children who might be entering the education system for the first time. However, transitioning from NFE to formal education (FE) has proven to be a challenge, partly due to external factors such as political priorities. Though some stakeholders are uncertain about UNICEF's exact role in improving education quality, its primary focus appears to be on ensuring equality, inclusion, and child protection, as opposed to solely academic outcomes, which is in line with UNICEF's mandate and local needs.

LCO-EP aligns closely with the country's official education priorities, as articulated in the 5-Year General Education Plan 2021-2025 and previously in RACE I and II. However, there seems to be an ambiguity in differentiating LCO-EP from RACE I and II among respondents, indicating a potential communication gap within the organization. While policy alignment exists in theory, practical alignment diverges, especially concerning the integration of refugees. Political reluctance is rooted in concerns about demographics and power dynamics in the country. The strong anti-refugee sentiment in society and the government's reluctance to adopt relevant reforms present challenges for UNICEF. Interviewees believed that UNICEF should exert more pressure on the MEHE, leveraging its long-standing relationship and in-depth knowledge of Lebanon's education system to advocate for systemic reforms, ensuring sustainability and self-sufficiency in education.

In addressing inherent equity gaps in Lebanon, UNICEF has actively sought to support the most vulnerable groups, including Syrian refugees and children with special educational needs and disabilities. Notably, UNICEF launched the Inclusive Education Pilot Project in 2018, targeting learners with disabilities, particularly those with learning difficulties. UNICEF's financial support in Lebanon's education sector, including covering operational costs, subsidizing enrolment, and providing cash assistance to vulnerable children, has been largely praised for increasing enrolment rates, especially during crises like the Beirut Blast and the COVID-19 pandemic. In comparison, UNICEF's efforts to improve education quality, such as organizing teacher training sessions, have faced scrutiny due to challenges in measuring their impact. Concerns were also raised about the proportion of results achieved relative to the funding provided.

In response to the changing Lebanese context, marked by political instability, the Beirut Blast, COVID-19, and economic downturns, UNICEF has exhibited significant flexibility in tailoring its activities. Key initiatives included covering the majority of operational school costs to ensure educational continuity during the economic crisis and devising a Learning Continuity Plan as a safeguard against potential teacher strikes. After the Beirut Blast, UNICEF immediately supported the rehabilitation of schools, replaced damaged infrastructure, and facilitated both financial and psychological assistance to affected children and families. In relation to mental health, there were noted inconsistencies in the presence and effectiveness of PSS (Psychosocial Support) counsellors across schools, revealing a pressing need for comprehensive psychological support for students in both shifts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF provided non-formal education tools, hygiene materials, and collaborated with MEHE to devise a remote learning strategy, ensuring continued access to education. Some stakeholders, however, expressed concerns that UNICEF's emergency-centric approach detracted from their focus on core educational interventions, suggesting a need for a more sustainable long-term approach to emergencies.

Effectiveness

LCO-EP operated in a highly volatile political and social climate, impacting the achievement of initial goals and necessitating modifications. Constant adaptation to current circumstances was required, with a

focus on addressing emerging issues instead of sticking to the original objectives. Significant challenges were encountered in collecting data to monitor progress toward established targets. Reliance on government data with questionable credibility posed a challenge. Inadequate monitoring tools in certain intervention areas impacted alternative data collection. Indicators chosen for tracking progress were not always optimal.

UNICEF support was critical for guaranteeing access to education for many vulnerable children in Lebanon. UNICEF's involvement led to a significant decrease in out-of-school non-Lebanese children, especially Syrian refugees, dropping from 49% in 2015 to 31% in 2019. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and Beirut's subsequent financial crises reversed this trend and saw an increase in out-of-school Syrian children, reaching 47% in 2021. While UNICEF exceeded its support targets for Lebanese children, subsidizing the education of 272,515 in 2021 compared to the projected 149,831, it finally fell short of its goal for non-Lebanese children, assisting 191,398 against a target of 251,474. Transportation subsidies were slightly underachieved due to potential prolonged school closures and declining demand amid crises. Distributing free textbooks was a significant achievement, benefiting over 506,000 students in 2021. However, in 2022, this type of support was notably reduced, which was a major concern voiced by school communities during their fieldwork. On infrastructure, UNICEF has initiated rehabilitation works for several schools and plans to construct new ones, although some challenges have caused delays. Field reports praise UNICEF's renovation efforts but also highlight concerns about the quality of some works undertaken and certain maintenance problems.

The effectiveness of UNICEF activities in improving the quality of education remains ambiguous due to a lack of reliable data. Progress has been observed in certain intervention areas; however, there is still no visible improvement in students' learning outcomes. UNICEF's involvement in improving education quality primarily focused on teacher training, including through the Teacher Training Curriculum Model (TTCM), with positive feedback from participants and positive changes in teachers' attitudes observed during fieldwork. Behavioral changes seem to be stronger in the case of teachers' attitudes towards Lebanese students than towards Syrian students. UNICEF, in collaboration with the MEHE, implemented the Child Protection policy and internal and external referral pathways were developed. However, there is a lack of data regarding the number of reported cases and their effective management on the ground. Findings from the fieldwork indicate that school staff is unaware of the existence of referral systems, and reported cases are being addressed at the school level.

UNICEF's actions in system strengthening have yet to bear fruit. Limited successes over the evaluated period were also related to the high turnover of MEHE staff. Amid a financial crisis that saw a surge of students from private to public sectors, UNICEF shifted its primary attention to ensuring access to education, sidelining other initiatives such as capacity-building. This pivot was further influenced by frequent staff changes and challenges within MEHE. While the partnership between UNICEF and MEHE produced essential policy frameworks for a better educational environment, its practical implementation rests mainly with MEHE. The introduction of TREF has been a positive step, focusing on crucial education priorities, and recognizing key capacity-building needs of MEHE, especially in transitioning to institutionalized structures such as an IT department.

UNICEF's support of the education programme in Lebanon had some unintended consequences, including the reinforcement of a two-shift school system and improvement in quality, but also limited access to some NFE activities. While the two-shift system accommodated the influx of refugee students, it inadvertently reinforced segregation, as most Syrian students were channelled into these second shifts. These schools operate for fewer hours and have teachers on temporary contracts, with a slightly modified curriculum that excludes extracurricular activities. Consequently, students receive what some considered a "second-rate" education. This separation further entrenched prejudiced notions, making integration for Syrian students more challenging. Stakeholders had mixed feelings: some viewed this as a necessary compromise, while others

saw it in a more negative light. The work on NFE together with MEHE also brought about some unintended effects. While it led to standardized NFE programs and potential quality improvements, it also imposed stricter entry criteria, effectively sidelining various NGOs and barring numerous children from these educational opportunities. The rigid structure of the NFE system and additional requirements, such as the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) certificate, further impeded many children from accessing formal education.

LCO-EP have seen notable success in the realm of inclusive education for children with disabilities (CWD). Two significant milestones in this area include the creation of the Inclusive Education Policy draft and the National Action Plan on Inclusion, both of which have focused on ensuring equal education opportunities for CWD. The launching of the Inclusive Schools Pilot in 2018 has been particularly influential, nevertheless mainstream schools still remain largely unadopted for children with special educational needs. Though gender disparities are not pronounced in Lebanese education, some challenges still persist. Disparities emerge in the later stages of education, with a slightly higher enrolment of girls in upper grades and a tendency for boys, especially from impoverished backgrounds, to drop out earlier.

Efficiency

From 2018 to 2022 the LCO-EP funding amounted to \$787.3 Mn. Most of the funds were allocated to pillar I – \$728.9 Mn (92.6%), with pillar II receiving \$39.8 Mn (5.1%) and pillar III – \$18.6 Mn (2.4%). Having gained attention from donors, LCO-EP grew until 2019-2020. Since then teachers' strikes, closed schools, crashing economy have contributed to donor fatigue. Most notable changes in allocations are visible when comparing 2021 and 2022. Pillar III funding decreased from 2018 to 2021, then increased by 576% (\$7.9 Mn). Pillar II funding increased by 138% (\$6.4 Mn), while pillar I – 14%.

Support to education of Syrian refugees was managed by the PMU, while support to education of Lebanese children by the MEHE Directorate General (DG). This set up was not working optimally for all stakeholders because of issues linked to duplication of structures and centralization of functions. In addition, high turnover in positions in both MEHE and UNICEF hindered efficient delivery of LCO-EP. Issues with the transparency and accountability mechanisms in place during the period of the RACE II modality have been identified. Solutions adopted in TREF are viewed as better suited for timely monitoring of results and financial transfers, as well as overall accountability. Interviewees expect that once all mechanisms are implemented, it will be easier for UNICEF to monitor progress and communicate results to donors.

There has been challenges with data collection and analysis regarding the programme performance. MEHE has been unable to develop a national data management and analysis framework that would have predictably reported on the health of the public education system (teachers, students). UNICEF has served an interim/supporting role, but data issues have negatively impacted the programme's monitoring and relevant payments. Integration of databases and development of a uniform, clear and error-free information system should have been a key prerequisite for efficient implementation of LCO-EP. VASyR and the online Inter-agency education sector dashboard evidence that social- and gender-disaggregated data are collected.

TREF presents a shift in resource management and model of fund distribution aimed at increasing efficiency. Its implementation goes along the restructuring of UNICEF education section and stabilization of human resources. The finances are managed directly by UNICEF and are delivered to recipients, which is viewed as more flexible and adequate in the economic crisis. Stakeholders have a better understanding of where the funding goes, but this also creates an additional administrative burden on UNICEF. At the same time, scarce resources of MEHE limit possible capacity building and transferring tasks (payment distribution, data management).

Coherence

The LCO-EP demonstrates an ability to align with varying priorities among donors and stakeholders, encompassing different educational pillars, sectors, and target groups. Its broad scope acts as a beneficial factor, allowing LCO-EP to serve as a hub for coordinating educational investments and activities. However, coherence is somewhat diminished when it comes to NFE. Multiple interventions are conducted nationwide by different entities, leading to fragmented resources and increased coordination needs. Additionally, there is ambiguity for donors regarding how TREF's window II aligns with their priorities, as its conceptual framework remains undefined.

UNICEF's initiatives under the LCO-EP synchronize effectively with external partners in the educational domain. A noteworthy synergy exists between UNICEF and UNHCR, with the latter focusing on community-level actions and the former having a more centralized approach. UNHCR enhances the implementation and impact of UNICEF's work in the access domain. Collaborations with the QITABI program and UNESCO further highlight the focus on education quality and system strengthening, although a call for better coordination is evident to maximize synergy. In future initiatives, UNICEF's association with the World Bank could be pivotal, especially in advocacy and strategic reforms. While UNICEF is recognized for its leadership in access to education, it could redefine its quality focus towards themes like equality, diversity, and inclusion, considering the presence of other influential players, such as QITABI and UNESCO, in the educational outcomes domain.

Impact

The LCO-EP's impact on educational quality is debated. The education system has grown more inclusive and equitable, with many non-Lebanese children receiving formal education for the first time. However, the tumultuous political and economic climate in Lebanon posed challenges to effecting structural changes in the education system. The partnership between MEHE and UNICEF has emphasized inclusivity, especially for CWD. However, the program faced challenges in system strengthening, largely managing the LCO-EP independently due to high staff turnovers at MEHE. This resulted in a parallel management structure that may not be sustainable long-term. Some data suggest a decline in educational outcomes between 2016 and 2019, while others highlight the promise of the TTCM introduced by UNICEF and CERD.

UNICEF's most pronounced strength is its capacity to offer educational access to vulnerable populations, particularly Syrian refugees. UNICEF's multidimensional approach, which involved partnering with the government to craft suitable educational pathways for non-Lebanese children and directly addressing barriers refugees face, e.g. high enrolment fees and transportation challenges, was effective. If not for the persistent crises, it is probable that Syrian children's enrolment in Lebanese schools would have continuously risen. Stakeholders also commend UNICEF's initiatives regarding child protection policy and programme development, recommending their expansion nationwide. Several innovative initiatives were also introduced by LCO-EP in 2022, such as remote learning hotlines and summer schools. Preliminary results from these efforts are promising, but continued observation is crucial to gauge their scalability.

Sustainability

The sustainability of UNICEF's education programming in Lebanon faces significant challenges, both external and internal. Externally, the country's unstable political and socio-economic environment, characterized by frequent changes in ministerial positions, political instability, mismanagement, corruption, and multiple crises, has impeded systematic efforts to ensure sustainability. Internally, the Lebanese education system itself suffers from structural issues, such as resource-intensiveness due to a high teacher-student ratio, the presence of "ghost" teachers, and a brain drain. Furthermore, the crises have strained resources, leading

to schools struggling to function and accommodate refugee children, which UNICEF has tried to alleviate. The humanitarian nature of the crises has blurred the distinction between emergency response and developmental interventions. Although UNICEF has been instrumental in shaping the education sector's strategy and coordination with donors, its potential influence on systemic reform was limited, especially during the RACE II implementation. However, despite these challenges, some systemic changes have been initiated. To enhance sustainability, future program directions should prioritize focusing on core educational needs, forming strategic partnerships for reform, and adopting a more regional approach. UNICEF's lack of an exit strategy underscores the need for future planning.

Conclusions

The LCO-EP program has aligned well with the current educational needs of Lebanon and has shown clear relevance. Its flexible approach has allowed it to address many immediate challenges effectively. However, this adaptability has potentially overlooked some long-term systemic issues. A notable challenge has been finding the right balance between humanitarian aid and developmental projects within the program. Achieving this balance is important for long-term success in Lebanon's education sector.

LCO-EP's achievements across its multifaceted pillars are varied. Its most pronounced success is in ensuring access to education, an effort deemed indispensable for sustaining the Lebanese public education system. Though strides have been made in enhancing teacher competencies, the tangible impact on student outcomes remains elusive. Significant accomplishments in child protection and inclusion indicate a promising direction for future activities. System-strengthening, a critical component of the programme, witnessed limited earlier success but has gained momentum with the introduction of TREF. The latter not only emphasizes timely monitoring and financial accountability but also presents a potential lever for instigating much-needed educational reforms in collaboration with the Lebanese government.

Stakeholder perspectives on LCO-EP are marked by a blend of recognition and uncertainty. While UNICEF's substantial contributions to the education sector in Lebanon are acknowledged, there's a discernible communication gap. Both donors and schools express a lack of clarity regarding the organization's initiatives, emphasizing the necessity for improved and transparent communication strategies.

System-level recommendations

UNICEF should strongly engage in advocacy for and implementation of broader education system reforms. This recommendation is supported by analysis under all evaluation criteria and with respect to all pillars. UNICEF is seen as particularly well-placed for this role due to: (i) the scale of its interventions, (ii) donor trust, (iii) depth of its relationship with MEHE and (iv) system-level know-how.

Based on the findings from the national- and local-level research, following up on this recommendation would include:

1. a stronger push for policy and legislative reforms (accompanied by efforts to change related practices) to:
 - a. remove barriers to refugee participation in education, e.g. by ensuring smooth pathways from NFE to FE for all children;
 - b. find a systemic solution to ensure timely access to education for children of Lebanese mothers who do not have the Lebanese nationality;
 - c. reduce systemic inefficiencies in the education sector, e.g. by:

- i. reforming the teacher employment and contracting arrangements to simplify the system, and
 - ii. decreasing the high teacher-to-student ratio in Lebanese schools and the number of schools;
 - iii. removing ghost teachers from pay-roll;
 - d. increase the quality of education, e.g. through pushing for:
 - i. changes in curricula to modernize teaching and set ambitious learning targets, especially for Cycle 3 which is perceived as neglected by parents and teachers;
 - ii. consistent and robust teacher recruitment policy, and
 - iii. strengthened teacher competence framework and professional development pathway, linked to performance assessment and incentives;
 - e. promote the public school system and to ensure that MEHE's financial commitments to this system systematically increase over time, including through increases in and paying teacher salaries. Specifically, UNICEF could encourage MEHE to develop fundraising activities towards that aim, e.g. among the Lebanese diaspora.
2. continuation of current system-strengthening efforts to increase MEHE's capacity regarding education data collection and analysis, including supporting MEHE in producing an Information Management Strategy. MEHE committed itself to producing an Information Management Strategy 2019-2021 as an effort for a clear way forward on quality data collection and analysis, but this commitment has not been fulfilled as of the submission of this report;
 3. pushing for stronger coordination within MEHE to benefit further work on the quality of education, especially between MEHE's DG, CERD and DOPS to ensure clarity in and complementarity of mandates and effective communication between these units. Communication between MEHE units could be strengthened by consistent inclusion of relevant MEHE staff (beyond DG which is a core member) in the work of the SMB;
 4. encouraging MEHE to improve communication with schools. Currently, school directors and teachers feel unsupported, as they have low awareness of MEHE's plans and priorities, or the roles of key education bodies, such as CERD and DOPS. Improving communication channels and disseminating relevant information could help boost collaboration and cooperation within the education system;
 5. attracting men to the teaching profession to broaden the talent pool. Currently, the profession is heavily feminized, with some visited schools having no male teachers;
 6. aiming for a sustainable approach to achieving inclusion and relevance of education services for refugees.

Many of those reforms will be a mid- to long-term effort, but **the initiation of this work is urgent in view of decreasing donor patience and funds.**

UNICEF needs to strongly coordinate and cooperate with donors, the World Bank and other UN agencies on the advocacy and implementation of the reform agenda. It should build on the exiting previous plans to avoid reinventing the wheel. Such plans have been put forward before, e.g. by the World Bank.¹ Given the magnitude of their respective interventions, **UNICEF and the World Bank need to join forces and speak in one voice on systemic reforms.**

¹ World Bank (2021), Foundations for building forward better. An education reform path for Lebanon, available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/627001624033308257/pdf/Foundations-for-Building-Forward-Better-An-Education-Reform-Path-for-Lebanon.pdf>

There needs to be more assertiveness vis-à-vis MEHE among the international community to ensure that the push for reforms is effective. Introduction of conditionality related to specific reforms should be considered.

Program-level recommendations

The table below presents the main recommendations related specifically to LCO-EP. These are directed at UNICEF, although the involvement of different actors may be necessary.

Priority: *H – high, M – medium, L – low*

Criterion	Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Relevance Effectiveness	Continue the provision of stationery and textbooks to schools. The lack of relevant supplies was identified as a fundamental issue hindering effective educational practices by all stakeholders in the visited locations.	H	Short-term
Relevance Effectiveness	Invest in a school transportation system for students and teachers. Consider replacing the current transportation subsidy system, which has sparked controversy among parents, with direct funding for a safe transportation system. Interviews revealed that transportation unavailability or danger remains a primary barrier to school attendance for students and school staff.	H	Mid-term
Relevance	Address other types of in-kind support expected by school communities, including further renovation works, solar panels, heating systems, alternative electricity production systems, food packages, drinking water and computers. However, regarding computers, it is essential to note that fieldwork revealed some locations where digital equipment is underutilized due to the lack of necessary skills among school staff and electricity access limitations.	M	Short-, mid- to long-term
Relevance	Introduce outdoor activities and recreational activities for children. These activities not only provide an opportunity for physical exercise but also contribute to children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and reduce stress and anxiety levels. During the interviews, parents particularly emphasized the importance of including outdoor and art activities in the school curriculum, hoping that this would improve the well-being of their children.	H	Mid-term
Relevance	Implement PSS programs during the first shift and increase school staff awareness of the role of PSS counsellors. PSS is essential for addressing the emotional and mental health needs of students. In the face of crises affecting the Lebanese population as well, limiting the provision of PSS to the second shift does not seem justified.	M	Mid-term

	Moreover, such a distinction may create a sense of unfair privilege for non-Lebanese students and exacerbate hostilities between different nationality groups.		
Relevance	Improve communication regarding the program , e.g. by developing stories about the program's aspirations, specific work and how it benefits different stakeholders. Improved communication should target a wide range of stakeholders, including donors, the Lebanese public, and stakeholders at school level (principals, teachers and parents):	H	Short- to mid-term
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clearer communication to donors on what the program does under the quality pillar. 	H	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the communication plan with school principals, especially during onboarding, after a change in school leadership. The communication plan should include clear information about UNICEF's and the international community's efforts to support the Lebanese community and the education sector in general. It should also provide transparency regarding the calculation of school funding to address any existing ambiguities that might lead to resentment in this area. 	H	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an analogous communication plan with the Lebanese population, showcasing the support that UNICEF provides to the first shift in schools and the education sector as a whole. 	H	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advance notice about UNICEF's planned activities, such as summer schools. Currently, some participating schools still have not received detailed information on this matter. Ensuring timely communication and sharing upcoming initiatives would help schools prepare and participate effectively in UNICEF's programs. 	M	
Relevance	Develop a clear vision of TREF window II and specific proposals for donors to facilitate funding decisions and fund allocation. Donors see the need to increase engagement on NFE, but they expect clear communication and initiative from UNICEF.	H	Short-term
Relevance	Develop further interventions which address the needs of teachers and principles to increase/maintain their motivation and engagement, as well as address well-being.	H	Short- to mid-term

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop methods to recognize and appreciate the efforts of individual principals and teachers through positive acknowledgement. Currently, they feel underappreciated by MEHE, and many schools continue to function solely due to their heroic efforts. Recognizing their hard work and dedication can foster a sense of value and motivation among the education professionals. 	H	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider involving school principals in training sessions targeted at teachers. This approach can foster better collaboration between school staff at different levels, align the understanding of educational goals, and ensure consistent implementation of the acquired knowledge throughout the school. 	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rethink the timing of training sessions. Avoid conducting training on public holidays and better align the training calendar with the school year to enable teachers to start the new academic year equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. 	M	
Relevance	<p>Continue efforts to improve teachers' approach towards students, addressing aggressive and offensive behaviors. Additionally, sensitize teachers to the issue of access to toilets for children during class time, which was identified as a problem in several visited schools. By promoting a positive and respectful teacher-student relationship, students are more likely to feel safe, supported, and motivated to learn. Ensuring easy access to toilets for children during class time is essential for their comfort, health, and dignity.</p>	H	Short- to mid-term
Relevance	<p>Continue supporting inclusive education by strengthening the offer for children with learning difficulties, including specifically speech difficulties, and increasing accessibility of school infrastructure.</p> <p>Consider strengthening the intersectional perspective within the program. It is crucial to identify and address the specific groups at risk of exclusion from education, such as Syrian Kurds and refugees with disabilities, among others. Analysis may include five key factors suggested by UNDP (discrimination, geography, governance, socio-economic status, and shocks and fragility).</p>	M	Short- to mid-term
Relevance	<p>Develop interventions that support community cohesion between the Lebanese and the Syrian populations.</p>	H	Short- to mid-term

	These could take the form of outdoor activities with parents and children from both communities or parents' gatherings at schools.		
Effectiveness Efficiency	<p>Develop a better monitoring and results framework for the program, especially by reviewing indicators.</p> <p>The indicators should fit the results pursued and a dynamically changing context (e.g. percentage vs. numeric) and, at least some, should be independent from governmental statistics.</p> <p>Considering employing a participatory approach to developing indicators by involving key stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and local communities. This way UNICEF could ensure that the LCO-EP reflects their goals and values related to education.</p>	M	Short-term
Efficiency	Continue to improve the data collection capacity at MEHE to generate reliable data about the education system.	H	Short- to mid-term
Coherence Sustainability	Increase coordination and cooperation on education interventions with the World Bank and UN agencies, leveraging international interventions and investments to effect systemic changes, but also to allow for prioritization within the program itself.	M	Mid- to long-term
Sustainability	Consider introducing conditionality to tie fund disbursement within the program with progress in systemic reforms.	M	Mid-term

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Syrian war

Started in March 2011, the Syrian civil war has devastated communities across the country causing the displacement of nearly 5.7 million Syrians and remaining the largest displacement crisis globally.² Due to this conflict, Lebanon has received more international refugees per capita per kilometer than any other country in the world. Out of 6 million inhabitants, around 1.5 million are Syrian refugees and around 14,000 are refugees of other nationalities.³ According to the latest data from UNHCR, the refugee population accounts for nearly a quarter of Lebanon's total population with children representing 54.3% of the refugees.⁴

The high number of Syrian child refugees in Lebanon further increased the structural deficiencies of the already weak education system. With weak infrastructure, an economic crisis worsening every year, and the lack of political stability, this massive influx of refugees has posed significant challenges to Lebanon and made the entire Syrian population severely vulnerable. The results of the 2020 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) show that close to 90% live below the poverty line. Due to extreme poverty, education-related expenses are often seen as secondary and not prioritized within Syrian households, with basic necessities taking precedence over education.

Precarious living conditions of refugee families affect access to and quality of education. The lack of financial resources correlates with low school attendance and school dropout. The high dropout levels for Syrian children might have serious impacts on the long-term development path of the Syrian economy after the crisis. The uneducated children will not have the qualifications needed to partake in the reconstruction of Syria. By aggravating the situation in Lebanon and putting an additional strain on the country's weak education system, the Syrian war also increased the vulnerability of Lebanese students.

1.1.2 Economic downturn

The World Bank depicted the Lebanese economic depression as *"likely to rank in the top 10, possibly top 3, most severe crisis episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century"*.⁵ The economic and political situation in Lebanon was almost always characterized by instability and disturbance, but matters came to a head in October 2019, when the Government of Lebanon (GoL) planned on imposing taxes on WhatsApp calls, gasoline and tobacco.⁶ Despite the fact that the GoL reversed its decision, nationwide protests, driven by a disenchanted population demanding change, erupted against the political and economic elite.

The crisis became fully apparent in 2019, but Lebanon's financial hardships commenced well before and are rooted in decades of political and financial mismanagement, with COVID-19 pandemic and Port of Beirut explosion as aggravators of these difficulties. For the last 30 years, the Lebanese Pound (LBP) has been pegged to the US dollar. The spectacular fall of the currency has been ongoing for almost three years. The

² Information available at: www.unicef.org/media/112436/file/2022-HAC-Syrian-refugees.pdf

³ Information available at: www.unhcr.org/lb/at-glance#:~:text=Lebanon%20remains%20the%20country%20hosting,13%2C715%20refugees%20of%20other%20nationalities.

⁴ Information available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>

⁵ Information available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/394741622469174252/pdf/Lebanon-Economic-Monitor-Lebanon-Sinking-to-the-Top-3.pdf>

⁶ Information available at: www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50293636

national currency has lost 95% of its value in three years of the financial crisis and continues to depreciate. This devaluation drives surging inflation, in triple digits since July 2020 and reaching an average of 162% for 2022.⁷ Inflation disproportionately affects the purchasing power of the poor and vulnerable inhabitants who can no longer afford basic goods, as food inflation hit 332% (year-on-year) in June 2022.⁸ Such inflation also renders access to basic services, such as education or healthcare, very difficult.

Apart from affecting the economic sector, the Lebanese financial crisis also negatively impacts the education sector which already struggles with underinvestment, resulting in poorly equipped and overcrowded schools. Indeed, the GoL's expenditure on education is feeble and represents 2.6% of the GDP, being one of the lowest rates amongst Arab countries.⁹

This economically complicated situation of the country is not without consequences for many Lebanese as well as non-Lebanese households which do not have the financial means to pay tuition cost, as well as school supply and commuting costs. In a recent survey by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) with a sample size of 1,209 households, more than a half of the families declared being unable to pay for education tuitions and school materials, while 43% stated being unable to pay for transport to school or work.¹⁰

In parallel, teachers and educational staff experience difficulties to commute to their workplace because of the lack of gasoline and high commute cost, with hardly any other public transportation alternative available. Teachers struggle with poor remuneration which, in many cases, does not cover the transportation cost to their workplaces. With no concrete and structural governmental plans to modify their salaries, teachers have been on strike since the beginning of 2022, and many left the country looking for better opportunities. This, in turn, has contracted the Lebanese fragile economy, and teachers who are still in Lebanon are enduring additional responsibilities brought on by the shortage in qualified teachers.

The economic crisis is happening within the context of deep and structural gender inequalities. In fact, the latest World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report 2023, indicated that Lebanon has one of the highest overall gender gaps in the world since it ranked 132th out of 146 countries.¹¹ While Lebanon performs well on gender parity in the education sector, and in 2023 it scored at 98% gender parity in education according to the Gender Gap Report,¹² gender parity has been affected by the crisis. This means increases in GBV, gender digital divide and different barriers for girls and boys in accessing education. When boys drop out to work, girls resign from school for care work, due to period poverty (66% of girls cannot afford sanitary pads),¹³ for safety reasons and/or gender discriminatory norms.

1.1.3 Beirut blast

The explosion in the Port of Beirut in August 2020 severely impacted the education sector damaging or destroying 163 schools and affecting more than 85,000 children and the work of 7,600 teachers.¹⁴ In addition, 20 technical and vocational education and training institutions were damaged, affecting approximately 7,300

⁷ Information available at: www.visualcapitalist.com/mapped-which-countries-have-the-highest-inflation/

⁸ Information available at: www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/11/23/lebanon-time-for-an-equitable-banking-resolution

⁹ Information available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=LB&name_desc=false

¹⁰ Information available at: www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/12/lebanon-rising-poverty-hunger-amid-economic-crisis

¹¹ Information available at: www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf

¹² At the same time, qualitative and quantitative research showed significant gender bias in textbooks in the past. See, e.g. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Lebanon, 3 November 2015:

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fLBN%2fCO%2f4-5&Lang=en

¹³ Information available at: <https://plan-international.org/lebanon/publications/period-poverty-in-lebanon/>

¹⁴ Information available at: www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200827-unesco-beirut-blast-damaged-160-schools-85000-students-unable-to-attend-classes/

students.¹⁵ According to the initial assessments by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), about 80% of schools in the country's capital suffered light to moderate damage and 20% major damage.¹⁶

With many homes and schools destroyed, and families forced to relocate, access to educational facilities, materials and connectivity was compromised. The most vulnerable children lacked learning materials and connectivity to begin with and are at even greater risk of experiencing prolonged delays in accessing learning and possibly even dropping out of school. Families who have lost their homes and livelihoods also face financial barriers to enrolling and supporting their children's education.

In addition to physical and financial losses, the explosions have also had an impact on the psychological well-being of the youngest. UNICEF estimates that 600,000 children living within a 20-kilometer radius of the blast site may suffer short and long-term negative psychological impacts.¹⁷

1.1.4 COVID-19

Like the rest of the world, Lebanon has been strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 2, in an effort to contain the outbreak, the Lebanese Government decided to close all schools and education institutions in the country. Parallely, non-formal education (NFE) service providers were recommended to close their centers as well for safety and health concerns. Consequently, over 1.2 million school-aged children saw their traditional classroom track disrupted and had to shift towards remote learning options for an approximate period of two years.¹⁸

However, with poor telecommunications and internet infrastructure, as well as a limited access to technological devices, especially in rural areas, Lebanese education facilities had troubles to organize proper distance learning. Teachers reported a mountain of technical problems, such as unstable electricity, internet connectivity issues, and the late or non-delivery of electronic learning devices.¹⁹ Frequent power-cuts, fuel shortages and generator breakdowns are extra elements that hindered the smooth running of online courses. According to a survey conducted by UNHCR in 2020, out of a sample of 10,000 families in need, almost none had tablets or computers but only smartphones at home.²⁰ Moreover, 95% of the children did not possess their personal device and needed to share the household device given the limited number of electronic devices available at home. Out of the 95%, there were only 100 smartphones available for every 212 children, which would require at least two children to share a device during distance learning – making the learning process tedious.²¹

In this way, the pandemic has exacerbated Lebanon's educational shortcomings, but also inequalities as refugees and vulnerable children are less likely to access remote learning options. Furthermore, the pandemic is connected with harmful side effects, such as economic shocks to households and social distancing that further decrease the well-being and development of children.

¹⁵ Information available at : www.unicef.org/press-releases/increased-support-vital-help-children-affected-beirut-explosions-back-school-one

¹⁶ Information available at: <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2020/09/1076512>

¹⁷ Information available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/everything-around-me-ruins-impact-august-4-explosions-children-and-families-beirut>

¹⁸ Information available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/76675.pdf/>

¹⁹ Information available at: www.apc.org/en/news/smex-remote-learning-and-digital-divide-lebanon

²⁰ Information available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/76131>

²¹ Ibid.

1.1.5 Characteristics of the Lebanese education system

The Lebanese education system has gradually deteriorated beginning with the outbreak of the 1975 civil war. Between 1975 and 1990, the Lebanese government's investment in education dropped, creating opportunities for the private sector to engage with educational services.²² Currently, approximately two-thirds of Lebanese children attend costly private education, while public schools have become the last resort for families without means.²³

The divide into private and public education is characterized by a difference in quality, with private schools offering higher standards of curriculum. Public schools also struggle with physical capacity limitations, lack of proper infrastructure, technological materials and science laboratories. They attract less qualified personnel, as the remuneration offered is substantially lower than in private schools.²⁴ This leads to a widening gap between economically disadvantaged students and their wealthier peers who can afford to choose private education. The needs of public-school teachers are also mostly unmet, which triggers regular street protests to demand a pay rise, proper allocation of resources and an improvement of school infrastructure.²⁵

The language barrier is yet another challenge faced by Syrian refugee students in Lebanon,²⁶ even though Arabic is the national language of both Syria and Lebanon. Firstly, the official language of instruction in Lebanese schools is Arabic, but it can differ from the dialect of Arabic spoken in Syria. This linguistic difference can create comprehension difficulties for Syrian students. Secondly, while French and English are introduced as languages of instruction for certain subjects, such as math, physics, and chemistry, from primary school in Lebanon, many Syrian students may not have had sufficient exposure to these languages in their previous education in Syria. This creates difficulties when it comes to enrollment and retention.²⁷ Even if all UNHCR status refugees are eligible for enrollment in corresponding grades, those lacking documentation must take a placement test based on the Lebanese curriculum, which has a language component. As a result, Syrian students can enroll, but are placed several grades lower in relation to their academic achievements and age.²⁸

In 2010, MEHE introduced a reform of the educational system based on a five-year development plan.²⁹ The new system emphasized many issues essential for the achievement of equal access to and quality of education. It highlighted the gap in success rates in official exams between the public and private sectors and emphasized the importance of counselling and guidance. A budget was then designed and allocated based on Lebanese educational sector priorities. A US\$2.424 million was raised to develop the education system.³⁰ However, with the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in 2011, budget allocations shifted. The Lebanese MEHE had to respond to an increase in Syrian students, who now outnumbered the Lebanese students.

In 2014, MEHE launched the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) policy, an official framework to address Syrian refugee crisis. Initially, RACE targeted 400,000 Syrian refugee children who were out of school,

²² Baroudi, S. (2019). Designing the Lebanese public education budget: A policy document analysis. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, Vol. 18(3), p.30 <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/IEJ>.

²³ U.S. Agency for International Development. (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/lebanon/education>

²⁴ Ghamrawi, N. (2010). No teacher left behind: Subject leadership that promotes teacher leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(3), 304–320. doi:10.1177/1741143209359713

²⁵ Mattar, D. M. (2012). Factors affecting the performance of public schools in Lebanon. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32(2), 252–263. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2011.04.001

²⁶ REACH & UNHCR. (2014). Barriers to education for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon: Out-of-school children profiling report. Retrieved from http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lbn_report_syriacrisis_outofschoolchildrenprofiling_nov2014.pdf

²⁷ See Footnote 23.

²⁸ Shuayb, M., Makkouk, N., & Tuttunji, S. (2014). Widening access to quality education for Syrian refugees: The role of private and GO sectors in Lebanon. Retrieved from <http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Reports/LEa22445Shuayb2014.pdf>

²⁹ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2010). *Quality education for growth: National education strategy framework*. (Education sector development plan(general education): 2010-2015).Beirut: MEHE.

³⁰ See Footnote 20.

aiming to enroll 200,000 in formal schooling and the other half with foreign language, basic literacy and numeracy and accelerated learning programs. The mission of RACE was the expansion of the existing school system capacity, rather than creation of a separate school system for Syrians. Thus, by 2016-17, MEHE created second shifts in 314 schools,³¹ which were designed only for Syrian refugees.³² Children were allowed to enroll in Lebanese public schools without providing a proof of legal residency. Even if the afternoon shifts were two hours shorter than a regular school day, they have strained the education budget and overburdened the educators, since most teachers and principals covered both shifts.³³

Prior to RACE, civil society actors provided NFE (homework support, catch-up classes or language support) or even ran schools in contexts where second shift schools were either far away or full. Whereas in public schools, teachers in both shifts must be Lebanese nationals, in the NGO run NFE teachers can be Syrian if they have permission to work in the country, and they may or may not have official teaching certificates.³⁴ In 2014, however, MEHE instructed the NGOs to cease their work until new guidelines are set. In 2016, MEHE developed an NFE framework, establishing that MEHE shall be the regulating body in full control over of NFE programs. Any NGOs operating outside of the official framework were to be shut down.

In 2016, RACE was modified and a RACE II strategy for 2017-2021 was developed. The new 5-year programme consisted of three pillars: (1) Improved access to education to deal with capacity limitations; (2) Improved quality of education by shifting towards learner-centered pedagogy and creating supportive learning environment, which is inclusive, safe, healthy and protective; (3) Improved structural capacity by implementing national education data management system, updated curricula, teacher assessment framework and violence monitoring mechanisms.³⁵

1.2 Description of the intervention

1.2.1 Rationale behind the Education Programme implementation

The Syrian refugee crisis, the economic downturn, and the Beirut blast, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic have had and will have serious repercussions on the future of Lebanese and refugee children, adolescents and youth. In fact, they compromise access to education, health care, nutritional needs and other basic services while threatening children's psychological well-being and further straining inter-community coexistence. The unfortunate and immediate consequence of all these accumulated stressors is a direct increase in child vulnerability and poverty, a growing number of highly vulnerable at-risk children in need of education services. The soaring poverty is reflected in the school dropout and school attendance rates.

In fact, during the 2020-2022 school year, school attendance remained low, especially among the youngest children. Within the Syrian population, only 11% of children in the 3-5 age group attended pre-school with a relatively more positive situation for children between 6-14 years old since half of them attended an educational facility during 2020-2022. Concerning Syrian youth aged between 15-17 years old, 27% of them attended school in the previous scholastic year.³⁶ In addition to low school attendance, Lebanon counts a percentage

³¹ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) „Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education”, electronic communication to Partners, 15 February.

³² Buckner, E., Spencer, D., & Cha, J. (2018). Between Policy and Practice: The Education of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 31(4), 444–465. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fex027>

³³ Mahfouz, J., El-Mehtar, N., Osman, E., & Kotok, S. (2020). Challenges and agency: principals responding to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanese public schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 23(1), 24–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1613570>

³⁴ See Footnote 20.

³⁵ See Footnote 29.

³⁶ Information available at: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/88960>

of its population that has never attended an educational facility – 30% of children in school age (ages 6-17) have never been to school, and 46% of 40-60 years old (adult population) have never been to school neither.³⁷

Several factors are responsible for this low school attendance with the most impactful being the cost of educational materials, cost of transportation to attend an educational facility, the necessity to work (particularly for young men), marriage (particularly for young women), and the fear of COVID-19, at the time. Additionally, elements such as period poverty, safety and gendered social norms can be perceived as barriers for low school attendance amongst young women.³⁸ Rising poverty levels put a significant pressure on children to drop out of school so that they can work. In Lebanon, children that are working are often the main and/or only breadwinners in their families, with 10.8% of the households surveyed by World Vision reported having at least one child aged 3 to 18 years old engaged in child labor.³⁹ Children as young as six have been working in the streets, in agricultural fields and garages or on construction sites, where they are exposed to risks of exploitation, violence and abuse.⁴⁰

In an attempt to address school dropout, the difficulties in accessing education as well as to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, the Lebanese Government, jointly with international partners, has implemented various national, regional and local frameworks and programs (see also Section 1.1.5 above) such as RACE and RACE II, with the latter being aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Education. Both RACE I and RACE II are rooted in the premise of a shared long-term vision and partnership with MEHE and the donor community, including UN agencies (such as UNICEF), and other education stakeholders committed to strengthening the Lebanese education system.

1.2.2 UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (LCO-EP) aimed to support the national education system to be more inclusive and equitable in its delivery of quality education services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regardless of their nationality, gender, physical/intellectual abilities, or socio-economic status. The programme involved strengthening the MEHE towards building the resilience of the public sector to manage the Syrian and economic crises, while sustaining the longer-term functioning of the education system.

The programme consists of three pillars, equivalent to those of RACE II, with the overall aim of supporting education services that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children and adolescents in Lebanon:

Pillar (I) Improve access to public education by increasing demand and reducing financial barriers for enrolment into formal and non-formal education and early development opportunities for children between 3 to 18 years of age.

Pillar (II) Improve quality of public education by contributing to increase capacity of the education sector (formal and non-formal) to deliver quality and inclusive education services, teaching, and learning environments.

Pillar (III) Improve the governance of public education by contributing to enhance governance and managerial capacity of the MEHE and institutions to coordinate, implement, and monitor public education formal and non-formal education sector.

Achievement of these three pillars will enhance MEHE governance and managerial capacity to effectively plan, finance, execute, and monitor public education sector plans in Lebanon and to ensure that all children are adequately prepared and supported to enroll in, and complete formal education within the Lebanese education

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Information available at: <https://plan-international.org/lebanon/publications/period-poverty-in-lebanon/>

³⁹ Information available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/caregiver-perceptions-and-their-influence-child-education-and-labour-across-different>

⁴⁰ Information available at: www.unicef.org/lebanon/reports/lebanon-childrens-future-line#:~:text=A%20growing%20number%20of%20parents,debt%20they%20can't%20afford.

system. The above-mentioned pillars are articulated around specific outcomes, indicators and targets which are outlined below:

Outcomes⁴¹ within Pillar I

- Outcome 1.1.: Children, youth, and their caregivers are provided with necessary support to increase their demand for formal or regulated non-formal education
- Outcome 1.2.: Children and youth have improved access to appropriately equipped public schools, especially in under-served areas

These outcomes were to be achieved through a plethora of activities, such as community outreach and engagement, subsidies for formal and non-formal education, transportation assistance, education supplies, textbooks, hygiene supplies, and cash for well-being as well as school rehabilitation and construction (in the context of the Beirut blast).

Outcomes within Pillar II

- Outcome 2.1.: Teachers, education personnel, and educators have enhanced capacities to provide learner-centered pedagogy in public schools and learning facilities
- Outcome 2.2.: Teachers and education personnel at the school-level and educators in learning spaces are capacitated to contribute to inclusive, safe, healthy, and protective environments

In practice, this meant implementation of activities, such as training of public-school teachers and NFE educators, inclusion of children with special needs into public schools, dedicated psychological support (PSS) and health staff in second shift schools; dedicated monitoring of teacher performance in second shift schools and operationalizing a child protection policy in public schools.

Outcomes within Pillar III

- Outcome 3.1.: Center for Education Research and Development (CERD) is capacitated to administer an effective education data management system
- Outcome 3.2.: Revised curricula for school and learning spaces are developed and endorsed to improve quality learning, life skills, and employability for children and youth
- Outcome 3.3.: Appropriate policy frameworks are endorsed and implemented to regulate education programs and services, strengthen school management, and professionalize teaching services
- Outcome 3.4.: The Project Management Unit (PMU), in collaboration with Center for Education Research and Development (CERD) and the Department d'Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire (DOPS), is capacitated to lead RACE II with MEHE departments and relevant education stakeholders

As for Pillar III, concrete interventions consisted of improvements towards child-centered pedagogy, knowledge and evidence generation to support policies for inclusive education and teaching framework, protective school environment and coordination of the education sector and education donors.

⁴¹ It is important to note that all of the listed outcomes (from outcome 1.1 to 3.4) are derived from the RACE II programme. In fact, RACE II and UNICEF Lebanon Programme outcomes are identical. However, in UNICEF Annual Workplans documents, some outcomes are formulated in a different manner but without any substantive differences in the idea and meaning of these.

LCO-EP was structured and implemented in cohesion with already existing frameworks, strategies and programs related to education in Lebanon. Its main external counterparts were the key Lebanese education stakeholders, such as the MEHE, CERD, and DOPS. UNICEF was also supported by international organizations committed to ameliorating the education sector in Lebanon, including UN Agencies (UNESCO, UNHCR), the World Bank, and legally recognized international and national NGO partners, within the Education Sector Working Group. To achieve its ultimate purpose, i.e. the right to education for all vulnerable children in Lebanon, UNICEF's interventions were designed in a way to sustainably include parents and communities in education and development of their children, to partner with MEHE and other important education stakeholders, as well as to advocate with local and international donors and partners.

1.2.3 Evolution of the Education Programme over the years

In the first three years following the start of the LCO-EP (2016-2019), its overarching objective was to ensure that access to education for most vulnerable children in Lebanon is realized. Prior to the 2016 programming and Syrian refugee arrivals, education was not an area of focus for UNICEF in Lebanon.⁴² The programme and interventions were conceived to support the efforts of GoL and other institutions to improve the educational situation of children in Lebanon and respond to the Syrian refugee crisis. UNICEF's actions were based on the three pillars, as well as the outcomes and activities within the RACE programme that were mentioned above.

In 2020, in addition to the ongoing severe economic crisis, Lebanon was hit by two new crises, i.e., the Beirut blast and COVID-19. Consequently, new challenges and needs emerged. So, in 2020 an output '*Emergency response in case of extreme evictions, influx of refugees, natural disaster, outbreak or any other emergency situation*' was added. UNICEF and partners responded to the crises in a multi-sectoral way, relying on three pillars: (1) Keeping children safe and healthy, and ensuring their families access to social assistance services; (2) Rehabilitating essential services, including water and sanitation, education and health infrastructure; (3) High youth engagement in cleaning and rehabilitation activities.

Table 1 UNICEF's interventions in response to the Beirut blast and COVID-19

Sector/Area	Activities
Health & Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saved more than 1.7 million doses of vaccines and distributed them to dispensaries and vaccination sites. • Rehabilitation of the Karantina hospital's children and maternity wards, and the Central Supply and Drugs Warehouse and its cold chain. • Rehabilitation and help in three PHCC's, provided training, held counselling sessions related to maternal and newborn health, and distributed essential nutrition supplies to partners and PHCCs. • Provided essential nutrition supplements to 45,700 children under 5.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported MEHE in drafting of the Remote IT Plan. • Ensured internet connectivity and electronic devices for 14,000 primary school students for remote learning. • Provided Microsoft License for the Ministry to initiate online learning. • Purchased school supplies for 50,000 students affected by the blast.

⁴² See e.g. UNICEF (2009), Country programme document 2010-2014, available at: https://sites.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Lebanon_final_approved_CPD_15_Sept_2009.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported the refurbishment, replacement of damaged furniture and laboratory equipment for 90 public schools. Rehabilitated 9 private and public schools.
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided access to safe sanitation for more than 197,000 people. Reconnected buildings to the public water system, reaching more than 23,000 people. Distributed around 16,500 hygiene kits and 790 baby kits.
Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reached 35,000 girls, boys, women and caregivers with child protection and gender-based violence interventions. Reached more than 2 million people with short videos to support caregivers in helping children to cope with the situation (i.e., Beirut blast) and encouraging them to access specialized services within their communities. Developed psychological support for children and families affected by the blast.
Adolescents & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged more than 1,900 youth in a community-based response with half of them as part of cash-for-work programs, including 188 who had been trained in rehabilitation and construction as part of UNICEF's TVET.
Social Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched the Emergency Cash Grant programme for up to 80,000 families affected by the explosions.
Communications for Development (C4D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness-raising activities on healthy and protective behaviors to adopt, including COVID-19 preventive measures.
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of remote NFE programs at national level: CB ECE, BLN, ABLN and Retention Support. Shared key messages on health and wellbeing in the context of COVID-19 through community awareness and engagement sessions, reaching 55,000 people. Provided 6,000 (PSS) kits for children between 3 and 14 years old to vulnerable families and 500 kits in COVID isolation centers. Provided ECEC and School-in-a-box kits to NFE partners to ensure access to educational programs for marginalized children with limited or no access to digital devices.

1.2.4. Transition Resilience Education Fund (TREF)

In June 2022, MEHE launched the Transition Resilience Education Fund (TREF), in partnership with UNICEF and two main donors – the European Union and Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW).⁴³ TREF is a new aid modality developed based on previous experiences in response to the education crisis which stems from three other major crises – financial, governance and trust crises in Lebanon. TREF aims to strengthen governance, transparency, efficiency and learning outcomes for children in the education sector, including in formal public education and through alternative learning pathways designed to improve access to

⁴³ [The Ministry of Education launches the Transition Resilience Education Fund, to support Lebanon's Education Sector \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/stories/the-ministry-of-education-launches-the-transition-resilience-education-fund-to-support-lebanon-s-education-sector)

inclusive and quality education for children who are out of school and not learning.⁴⁴ TREF is based on two funding windows:

- Window I – support and upgrade to public education system; and
- Window II – Multiple Flexible Pathways through non-public institutions.

Within Window II, UNICEF implemented NFE programs for children outside school system, enrolling 28,000 children in early childhood education, basic literacy and numeracy, or adapted basic literacy and numeracy. The pilot phase of “DIRASA”, an innovative education programme launched in 2022 enrolled 5,074 out-of-school children (including 555 children with disabilities) in 19 private schools across all 8 governorates in Lebanon. UNICEF covered DIRASA students’ enrolment fees as well as provided school supplies, hygiene kits, access to digital learning platforms, and other services at the school-level to all children enrolled in the targeted schools, reaching 13,500 children (including 5,000 DIRASA students). UNICEF also financed running costs for schools. The programme built the capacity of 320 teachers in quality of education. The pilot phase is currently under revision based on the lessons learnt.⁴⁵

Another initiative pertaining to Window II is the MAKANI programme, based on the lessons learnt from the past decade of NFE and child protection, e.g., in Jordan. The Multi-Service Community Center (MSCC) ‘Makani’ approach is to be launched in 2023 and will support out-of-school marginalized children’, their families’ and communities’ access to multiple services, including education, child protection, adolescent and youth engagement, social assistance, and health and nutrition services with referrals to additional specialized services, as needed. Both DIRASA and MAKANI pathways aim at ensuring that children continue to learn and at contributing to greater social cohesion, while providing a protective environment for all children.⁴⁶ They also integrate gender and ensure targeted programming for girls.⁴⁷

TREF is foreseen to develop in two phases. The first phase focuses mainly on enrolment fee subsidies, such as HR costs and funds to schools for vulnerable children in primary education (e.g. the above-mentioned DIRASA project pilot) and support to MEHE in developing a policy programme to address the deep education crisis. Phase 2 will ensure funding coverage to all pillars and priority programs of the 5-year plan⁴⁸ – a new policy framework following RACE and RACE II. TREF aims at enhancing the implementation of the 5-year plan with additional funding to be mobilized.

The programme has been designed as a tool to help MEHE manage the deep economic crisis through good governance, quality data reporting, predictable payments to school staff and strengthened programmatic decision making. In short, TREF enables MEHE to be more transparent and accountable toward international donors than in the past years.

The estimate of the annual funding envelope for TREF amounts to about 150 million USD/year, with a third of this amount (up to 50 million USD per year) making for payments to 12-14,000 special contract teachers as well as School Fund (23.5 million USD per year) and Parent Council Fund (20 million USD per year) accounts to about 1,200 schools.

TREF is an attempt to shift focus in several domains. It aims to move away from uncoordinated individual projects towards a more systemic, sector-wide approach, in order to increase the level of trust and accountability. Bilateral negotiations and lack of coordination among partners are to be replaced by external

⁴⁴ ToR Third Party Risk Management Firm Transition and Resilience Education Fund-TREF

⁴⁵ UNICEF (2022). *Country Office Annual Report 2022*. [RAM3 COAR.rdl \(unicef.org\)](#)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Information from a UNICEF representative, obtained on 10 August 2023.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2021). *Lebanon five-year General Education Plan 2021 -2025*. [5YP MEHE-GE_amend1_Feb 2022.pdf](#)

partner coordination; parallel implementation agreements by a unified management and a stand-alone technical assistance by long-term system reforms and linked-up capacity building.

Priority outputs and programs under TREF are embedded in the 5-year plan. Supporting access of first and second shift students to schools is part of Pillar 1 (Equitable Access to and Participation in Education) of the 5-year plan. The strong focus on capacity building is part of Pillar 3 on System Strengthening and Governance.⁴⁹

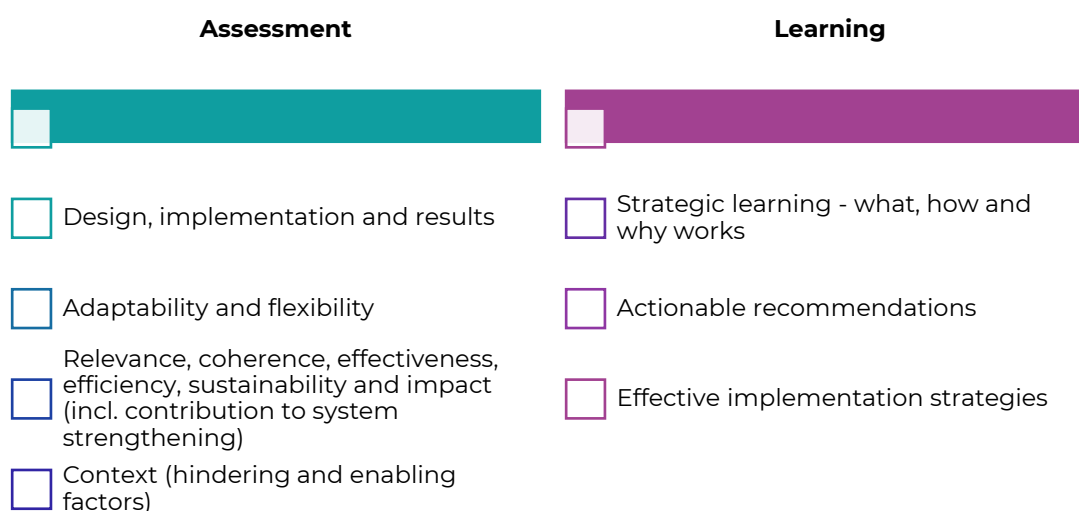
⁴⁹ Prauhart, Andreas Sami (2023.03.21). *Transition & Resilience Education Fund (TREF)* [Power Point Slides]

1.3 Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts) achieved by UNICEF's Education Programme between 2016 and 2022. The evaluation has a strong learning orientation. The below dimensions will be important for data collection and analysis.

Figure 1 Dimensions for data collection and analysis



1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the evaluation, as identified in the ToR, have been to:

- reconstruct the ToC and recommend enhancements of programme focus and ToC;
- examine the relevance, efficiency and agility of UNICEF support to the education sector in view of the context;
- examine the contribution of the programme outputs towards expected results;
- identify good practices and gaps in interventions;
- recommend improvements or strategic shifts.

1.3.3 Equality and inclusion lens

Throughout the assessment and while identifying and documenting specific learnings and insights, the evaluation has maintained a focus on inclusion and equity, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable children, including out-of-school children, children with disabilities (CWD) and Syrian refugees, including girls and married girls. Both data collection, as well as analysis and reporting used a gender lens to make sure that the specific situations and experiences of boys and girls are captured.

1.3.4 Phases, tasks and core deliverables

The above purpose and objectives have been translated into a **series of tasks spread across three main evaluation stages**:

1. inception;
2. data collection (with quantitative and qualitative components);
3. analysis, triangulation, and report writing (with quantitative and qualitative components).

As per the ToR, the core deliverables included:

- Draft and final inception report,
- PPT presentation of the main preliminary findings and conclusions,
- Draft and final evaluation report.

1.3.5 Temporal and geographical scope

The evaluation is designed to assess UNICEF's support to the education program and focuses on entire Lebanon, with visits to selected sites, schools, and municipalities. The evaluation thus has a national and local dimension. However, in the selection of schools for fieldwork, some schools initially selected (in the North of Lebanon) were replaced with others due to safety and security concerns.⁵⁰ The two perspectives – national and local – feature in the analysis, as well as the presentation of findings and recommendations. Timewise, the evaluation covers the period from 2016 to 2022.

1.3.6 Evaluation users

UNICEF will use the findings to support its education work in Lebanon. Other users will include national authorities (MEHE), but also donors and international organizations, including UN agencies, as well as international and national non-governmental actors (NGOs and CSOs). Since the final report will be translated into Arabic it will also be available for local stakeholders without English-language capacity.

⁵⁰ The replacement procedure was based on a random selection of a further two schools sharing the same characteristics as the school not available to the researchers, i.e. operating in two shifts and subject to renovation work conducted by UNICEF.

2.0 Methodology and approach

2.1 Overview of the methodology

The evaluation used a theory-driven approach which helps to determine not only whether the project worked, but also how and why. Specifically, the theory of change (ToC) approach has been integrated into the evaluation design. Apart from the ToC, we also borrowed from the realist evaluation approach by putting a magnifying glass on the various identified 'moments of change'⁵¹ and pinpointing the factors that were at play, either facilitating and hindering achievement of change (e.g. transfers from NFE to FE, limited enrolment in specific groups, etc.).

Following the ToR, we applied a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis. In terms of the quantitative component, the evaluation relied on the identified statistical data already available.

For the qualitative component, primary qualitative data collection was conducted at the national and regional levels. It included:

- desk research,
- individual interviews (IDIs),
- focus group discussions (FGDs),
- deep dives during field visits in schools, involving both IDIs and FGDs, Ripple Effects Mapping sessions, and observations.

At the national level 29 IDIs were conducted with 34 people representing UNICEF and other UN agencies, donors and the Lebanese government. Two focus groups were also carried out with representatives of NGOs, with 10 people overall.

During local fieldwork, 8 schools were visited. These were selected based on a number of criteria, including: geographic distribution, refugee population in the area, participation in the Inclusive Schools Pilot or school rehabilitation/reconstruction activities, type of school (boys, girls, mixed). Some initial choices of schools situated in the North of Lebanon were removed from the sample due to security concerns and replaced. The replacement procedure was based on a random selection of a further two schools sharing the same characteristics as the school not available to the researchers, i.e. operating in two shifts and subject to renovation work conducted by UNICEF.

Overall, Ecorys' national experts conducted:

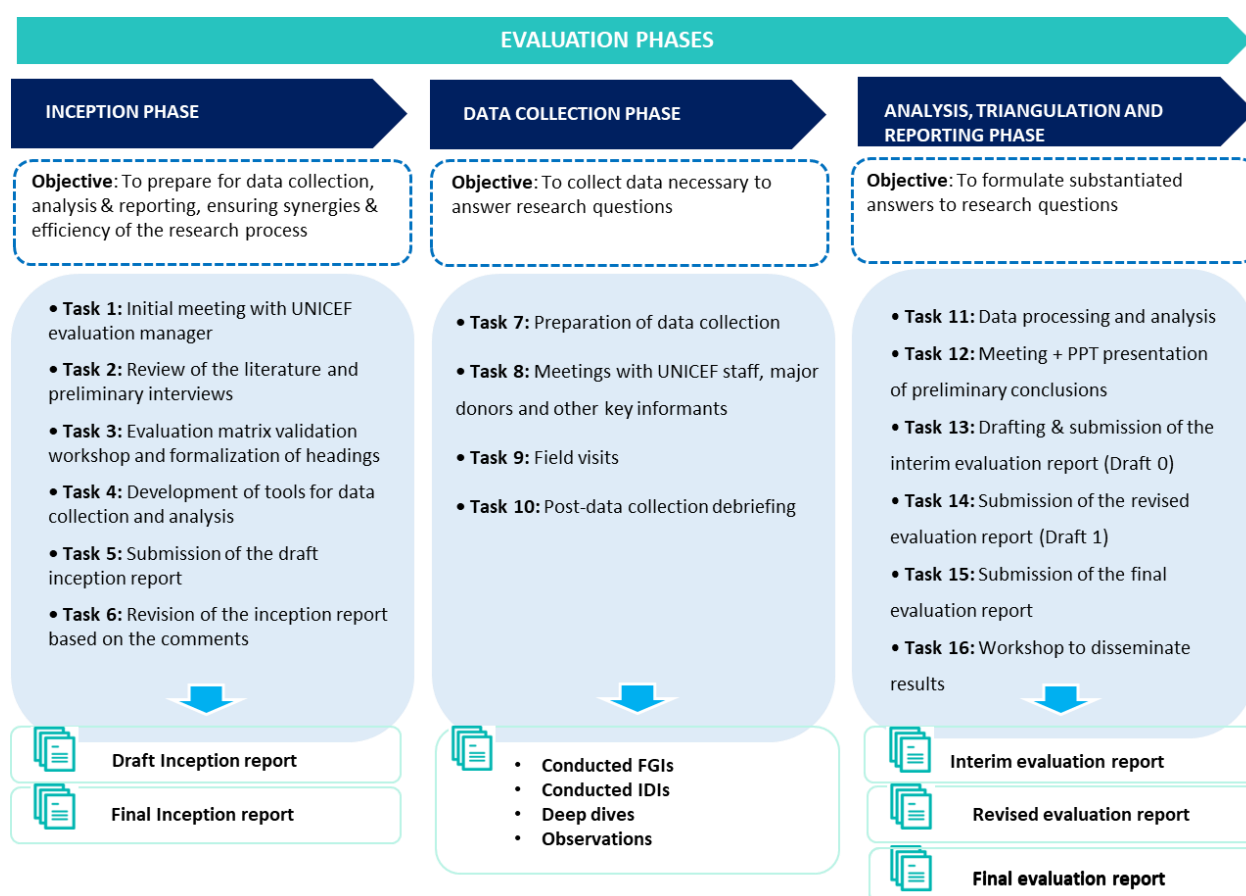
- 8 IDIs with school principles;
- 8 Ripple Effects Mapping sessions with 44 teachers, including 41 women and 3 men;
- 8 FGDs with 50 parents, including 39 women and 11 men, 33 Lebanese and 17 non-Lebanese;
- Observations on 8 school premises with a filled out observation sheet;
- 7 IDIs with local authorities.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Besides data collection, the analysis was carried out from the qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Triangulation was used as the main approach.

The evaluation applied the human-rights based approach, as well as the equity and inclusion lens throughout data collection, analysis and reporting. This means, among others, seeing children as rights holders and authorities as duty bearers. It also means sensitivity to gender, race, nationality, disability and other similar status as important factors affecting lived experiences of children and their parents. When implementing the evaluation we have been mindful of vulnerabilities and intersectionality. The figure below presents the overall implementation approach to the evaluation.

Figure 2 Overall evaluation implementation approach



2.2 Limitations

Prior to conducting research, we identified a number of issues that have informed our approach to the evaluation design. Other issues emerged during the implementation of research, and while the overall framework allowed for adaptations of methodology, the following limitations should be noted:

The need to cover only formal education interventions during local fieldwork: Desk research and consultations with UNICEF revealed that, apart from supporting formal education, the LCO-EP provided considerable support for different types of NFE interventions in hundreds of NFE centers throughout the country. While the NFE constitutes a significant component of the programme, it has recently undergone a separate assessment and was not analyzed in-depth in the present evaluation. The assessment report's findings served as the primary source of information for the present evaluation as far as the NFE activities are concerned.

Scope of the LCO-EP and the need for prioritization: The inception phase revealed the massive scope of and abundant complexities within LCO-EP. When this complexity was juxtaposed with the limited resources, including

time, for this evaluation, the need for prioritization became apparent. Following a conceptualization workshop with UNICEF, the evaluation team proposed modifications to the evaluation matrix and research tools to address the identified priorities. Importantly, the scope initially outlined in the Terms of Reference has been extended to include 2022, thus also covering the TREF modality. This addition allowed to strengthen the 'lessons learned' dimension of research and analysis. With reference to the wide temporal scope of this evaluation, it should be noted that recounting the early years of programme implementation was challenging, because of low institutional memory or lack of access to previous programme personnel.

Accounting for multiple crises context: Lebanon has faced multiple crises in recent years. It has had to deal with political instability, the implications of the Syrian war, the Covid-19 pandemic, the Beirut blast, as well as all the related economic consequences. These factors have inevitably affected the implementation (evidenced e.g. in Section 1.2 above). The evaluation strived to understand the way these challenges impacted the programme, its relevance and effectiveness, among others.

Identifying and understanding the needs of heterogeneous populations, in particular the most vulnerable children: Just as the program aimed to address the needs of the most marginalized groups, the evaluation tried to determine how these populations had been reached and to what extent they had benefited from support. However, accessing the most marginalized communities is notoriously difficult. The evaluation was, however, able to directly engage non-Lebanese parents. Success in this respect required, in particular, engagement of national experts and collaboration with UNICEF. This provided proxy access to vulnerable individuals by facilitating provision of information about the evaluation and positively affected the beneficiaries' and other local stakeholders' willingness to participate. Beyond outreach and recruitment, concerns about participation of marginalized groups in research informed evaluation design. We strived to account for specific needs of different groups by ensuring flexibility in the selection of research techniques, simplifying research tools, adapting research logistics and organization accordingly.

Ensuring national and local perspectives: The evaluation aimed to include the perspectives represented both by national and local actors. A significant organizational, coordination and logistical effort has been made to reach outside of Beirut, and conduct research with populations from various regions by Arabic-speaking experts.

Limitations on determining impact: In the case of this program and its ambitions, the complexity of the system and multiplicity of the forces at play have to be acknowledged. Apart from UNICEF working with its partners towards the goal of the right to education for all vulnerable children in Lebanon being realized, there have also been other actors working on the ground in areas that might directly or indirectly affect achievement of this goal (e.g. international donor community, UNHCR, UNESCO, WFP and other UN agencies, etc.). Therefore, identifying straightforward causality links between the program interventions and the dynamics of access to education was not possible in the evaluation such as this. We aimed to determine the program's contribution towards the expected impact. In this context, the evaluation encountered challenges in assessing effectiveness and efficiency, which are described in detail in the respective sections of the report.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Relevance

3.1.1 How aligned is UNICEF's education programme with global priorities?

The overarching objective of LCO-EP is to ensure respect for the right to education for all vulnerable children in Lebanon by improving access to public education, its quality and governance. This objective is well-aligned with international human rights standards, UNICEF's mandate and the global priorities of UN agencies more broadly.

UNICEF Lebanon's education programme is guided by international human rights standards, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which recognizes and protects the specific rights of children, including the right to education.⁵² The programme also aligns with the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which ensures women's equal access to and equal opportunities in political and public life, including education, health, and employment.⁵³ The programme seeks to achieve gender parity in all its interventions by guaranteeing that both boys and girls have access to quality education without any distinction based on gender. It is thus strongly aligned with SDG 4, which focuses on education and aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."*⁵⁴

The evaluated intervention is also in line with the broader UNICEF mandate and priorities. The education programme is closely linked with UNICEF's core commitments to children, with the education sectoral commitment strategic result assuring that *"[c]hildren and adolescents have access to inclusive, quality education and learning in safe and protective environments"*.⁵⁵ Guided by the core commitments, the UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 in Goal Area 2 states that every child has the right to an education and should be able to access quality learning opportunities.⁵⁶ This includes chances to develop digital, transferrable, and vocational skills for specific jobs to make sure that children and adolescents possess skills and competencies adapted to the modern world. In the same vein, UNICEF's education programme has supported the development of such skills by promoting the usage of digital devices for educational purposes and the development of technological competencies of children, *inter alia*, during the pandemic. In implementing the LCO-EP, UNICEF Lebanon is committed to UNICEF's Gender Action Plan, ensuring that gender is mainstreamed across the strategic plan goals and that there is targeted programming for adolescent girls. LCO-EP is committed to the identification and tackling of accessibility barriers faced by girls for equitable programming.

Last but not least, UNICEF's education programme falls under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) whose core purpose is to assist crisis-affected Lebanese population with its third impact being to ensure that vulnerable populations have equitable access to basic services through national systems. Education sector outcomes contributing to impact include: (1) increased equitable access to, participation in, and retention in education for all learners in Lebanon, with a focus on the most vulnerable; (2) improved learning outcomes for children and youth through enhanced quality of education services adapted to multi-crisis situations; (3) enhanced governance and

⁵² UNCRC, Article 28, available at: www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child

⁵³ CEDAW, Article 10, available at: www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women

⁵⁴ Available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

⁵⁵ UNICEF (2020), Core commitments for children in humanitarian action, available at: [www.unicef.org/media/87611/file/Core%20Commitments%20for%20Children%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/87611/file/Core%20Commitments%20for%20Children%20(English).pdf)

⁵⁶ UNICEF (2022), UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025. Renewed ambition towards 2030, available at: www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UNICEF-strategic-plan-2022-2025-publication-EN.pdf

managerial capacities of the education system to plan effectively and manage efficiently, so that resources are transformed into high-level results. These outcomes are complementary to those of LCO-EP.



From the Field: Value of education

All parents interviewed unanimously agreed on the paramount importance of educating their children, a view that has grown stronger amidst the recent deterioration in the Lebanese economy and other sectors. Parents expressed their desire for their children to receive education as a means of securing a better future, even if opportunities within the country are scarce. The respondents share the belief that education is essential, especially given the challenges posed by the financial crisis and rapid technological advancements in the job market. The closure of schools during the last strike further reinforced the significance of education in their minds. Notably, parents of Syrian origin emphasized education as the only hope for their children's future, willing to make significant sacrifices to ensure their education. Education is perceived as a protective factor, fostering personal and social development, making it a fundamental aspect regardless of the prevailing circumstances.

“Education is important in all the cases. If our children did not find a job, they can at least use this knowledge to educate their children.” (parent)

“As a Syrian, I have lost everything. I don’t want to lose my children. This is why education is the only hope for them. I am ready to sell my kidney to make sure that all my children complete their education.” (parent)

“Education is very important to our children and our country; this is why we need the international support to focus more on Lebanese children.” (parent)

“What distinguished the Lebanese state is education, and what will save the Lebanese state is education.” (representative of a local authority)

3.1.2 How relevant is the UNICEF education programme and its interventions to the country context?

The UNICEF education programme and its interventions are highly relevant to the country context, as they address the identified serious issues. The Lebanese education sector has been battling a range of problems, both pre-existing and related to the Syrian refugee influx (see Section 1.1. and 1.2.1.). These have been further exacerbated by consecutive crises, whether caused by governmental financial mismanagement, the Beirut blast or the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both desk review and stakeholder testimonies confirm that the UNICEF’s education programme rightly identified access to education as a key intervention area, demanding substantial financial investment. The need for supporting access became apparent when Syrian families with children started massively migrating to Lebanon following the outbreak of the Syrian war. It has remained so, and strengthened, when the consecutive crises raised the levels of poverty and vulnerability among the Syrian refugees, but also increasingly the Lebanese host communities. The activation of negative coping mechanisms has translated into low attendance rates and high drop-outs among children, in addition to other consequences.

UNICEF’s subsidization of Syrian children’s enrolment should thus be seen as very relevant to the country context. Yet enrolment as a basis for subsidies has been contested by some respondents, including among UNICEF (e.g. due to the possible multiple enrolments and subsequent drop outs), who believe that tying subsidies to attendance was a better option. Indeed, as it appears, **subsidization of attendance could have been more relevant vis-à-vis the pursued objectives of not only enrolling children but also retaining them in education** (see more Section 3.2.1.1).

UNICEF's engagement in the provision of NFE as part of its access pillar is also highly relevant to the Lebanese context and could be increased in view of stakeholder feedback. Many Syrian refugee children did not have prior schooling, had a significant break in education or were out-of-school for various reasons, which created a need for pathways enabling their introduction or reintroduction to any education in Lebanon, and eventually bridging to FE. **While agreeing that formal education deserved prioritization, some interviewees indicated that the focus on the NFE could have been stronger within the LCO-EP.** In this context, **TREF goes in the right direction, since it aims to bring dispersed NFE initiatives under its second window. However, in contrast to window one, window two was at the time of writing this report still considered as underdeveloped** by donor stakeholders who were keen to support NFE.⁵⁷ It was not clear to respondents what specific interventions it would entail, and therefore where funding could specifically be committed, as its final shape was still being decided.

Although many children benefited from access to public education and NFE thanks to UNICEF's LCO-EP (see Section 3.2.1.1.), **there is still a significant population of out-of-school children, which raises questions not only around effectiveness but also relevance.** The roots of the problem could entail targeting which focuses on children who are easier to reach and/or outreach methods that do not resonate with or reach the targeted populations. In relation specifically to NFE, the previous evaluation noted a prohibitive character of some formal requirements, rendering part of the offer irrelevant to specific groups of children.⁵⁸



**From the Field:
Out-of-school education and ECEC**

Parental awareness regarding access to informal education, other out-of-school learning activities, and ECEC services in Lebanon is limited, as evidenced by the responses. Parents reported that they have never received any direct messages about learning opportunities for their children, although they have come across announcements on social media platforms regarding vocational training opportunities and scholarships. While private kindergartens exist, parents expressed doubt whether there are any free alternatives for pre-primary education. The costs associated with private kindergartens were considered prohibitive. However, there were encouraging examples of individuals taking personal initiatives to bridge the gap, such as one participant running a small care center in her house, providing free education to children, emphasizing the vital significance of education.

Similarly, while some children have been able to cross the path from NFE to FE, **the programme's success in bridging this gap has been lower than expected.** Stakeholder testimonies and desk review point to reasons such as governmental political priorities, which hinder integration, and discontinuation of the ALP in 2019,⁵⁹ which are beyond UNICEF's power. However, **NFE-FE bridging being a key step in ensuring access should have perhaps benefited from stronger advocacy and emphasis in UNICEF's cooperation with MEHE.** The current research indicates that the work is on-going on finding a solution to this bottleneck.

Interventions such as learning recovery or catch up classes, summer schools and similar also have high relevance in view of the context. Both Syrian and Lebanese children have experienced a break in education with the physical closures of public schools (or work in a hybrid mode) for roughly two years, starting even before the COVID-19 pandemic. The continued need for engagement on NFE was highlighted throughout interviews with stakeholders.

⁵⁷ IDs 02, 06.

⁵⁸ PROMAN (2021), Non-formal education assessment in Lebanon. Final report, p. 21.

⁵⁹ E.g. *ibid.*

The introduction of interventions aimed at public school teachers under TREF, such as the productivity allowance, also responds to a significant need, with the government being unable to bear the financial responsibility for remunerating its educational professional workforce. The concurring crises affected public school teachers by simultaneously demanding their mobilization to respond to the challenges of nationally diverse classes (e.g. language barriers) and online education, while also reducing the value of their already low salaries, including in comparison to the private sector.⁶⁰ Consequently, teacher strikes leading to school closures have been an additional barrier to children accessing education. At the same time, teachers' motivation and engagement is key not only for keeping schools open, but also for student learning variation.⁶¹

The fieldwork at school-level shows a need for developing interventions which can help to maintain teachers' motivation and engagement, and improve their work. Appropriate remuneration can positively influence motivation and engagement, and is thus a factor in the success of future reforms, especially around education quality. UNICEF could respond to this need through shaping its future work so as to go beyond subsidizing teacher remuneration, in such formats as the ad hoc MEHE-requested productivity allowance, towards supporting MEHE in finding a more durable and adequate solution for fair teacher salaries.

When addressing the needs of teachers, **the interventions should also include principals** who, as evidenced by the interviews, feel undervalued, despite their efforts. With the taxing demands stemming from various crises, the fieldwork points to the need for interventions allowing principles and teachers to engage in **self-care**.



From the Field:

Teacher recruitment, retention and approach towards students

The forefront issue in all visited schools is the massive shortage of qualified teachers. Those teachers who remain in the public education system are poorly paid and feel undervalued. Teachers' approach to students in the school varies, with both extremely positive and negative opinions voiced by parents, with the former predominating. According to data provided by school principals, there has been no government recruitment of teachers for years, resulting in a drastic shortage. Due to the economic crisis, some teachers are no longer receiving their salaries, leading to a decrease in motivation among school staff, although many teachers continue to fulfil their duties due to their sense of responsibility towards school communities. Parents generally reported that teachers' attitudes towards their children have improved significantly in recent years. They praised the teachers for their support and encouragement, with some teachers going above and beyond to help students with their lessons, provide additional resources, and establish effective communication with parents. Despite this, there were still some complaints about certain teachers' lack of effort in teaching and occasional impolite behavior towards students, with teachers' habit of scrolling their personal mobile phones during lessons being frequently mentioned by parents. Not allowing students to use the toilets during lessons is also a common problem. The interviewed principals often mentioned that while the training and educational materials provided to schools have improved the quality of education, they have also imposed an additional workload on teachers, which not everyone is able to manage effectively.

"My daughter failed the exam and when I tried to know why, I realized that teachers during the session watch movies and use their mobiles all the time." (parent)

"Teachers treat our children like they were their own children although they are not being fairly paid." (parent)

"My daughter started her educational journey in this school and graduated from it. I have noticed that each year, teachers were becoming more supportive than the year before." (parent)

⁶⁰ Ghamrawi, N. (2010). No teacher left behind: Subject leadership that promotes teacher leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(3), 304–320. doi:10.1177/1741143209359713.

⁶¹ El-Ghalil, H.A., Maddah, M. (2021), Situational analysis of public school teachers in Lebanon, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut, p. 7.

"I always do meetings with school principals. One of them told me that his salary is less than 100\$. How do you expect that I would care about other's children when I am not able to take care of my own children?" (parent)

"Schools are in a complete mess since 2019 until today. It is impossible to come back 100% to normal unless the MEHE reconsider the salaries."⁶²

"Good teachers left, politically affiliated teachers will stay, and you have the fixed term teachers – it is impossible to fire them or to hold them accountable, most of them are old-school, not aware of modern pedagogies, it is affecting the education system."⁶³

Apart from access, **UNICEF Lebanon's education programme aimed to support the quality of education, a valid objective considering the context**, as confirmed both in available literature and stakeholder testimonies. The nexus of problems in this area include: children's low educational outcomes, evidenced e.g. in low PISA 2018 performance (see more Section 3.2.1.2); flawed practices in recruitment of teachers; missing national qualification framework for teachers; actual low qualifications of public school teachers; as well as the low quality and outdated curricula.⁶⁴

UNICEF has supported MEHE and CERD in the development of curricula and teacher training with some successes (see Section 3.2.1.2), although **the Agency's contribution in the quality pillar has been much lower financially than on the access pillar (see Section 3.3.1) and was focused on cross-cutting themes, such as inclusion and equality**. The latter was visible both in curricula development and the implementation of the dedicated Inclusive Education Pilot Project (see also Section 3.1.5).⁶⁵ While representing a specific aspect of quality education, this is highly pertinent given poor infrastructure and lacking reasonable accommodations; a gap in resources and awareness, as well as attitudinal barriers that still affect the education sector in Lebanon and make education an inaccessible or simply a worse experience for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). While one donor respondent claimed that this was a less urgent matter compared to enabling access, even if a systemically valid issue,⁶⁶ these types of interventions are not only relevant, but also required in light of international human rights obligations, as expressed e.g. in the UNCRC and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).⁶⁷

Outside inclusion and equality, the work in the quality pillar (which crosses to pillar three on system-strengthening) also concerned child protection, an issue of key importance given that violence is a systemic problem. Children experience violence at home (which affects their right to education), but also directly at school. Bullying is considered a key push-out factor driving vulnerable students towards school drop-out.⁶⁸ The World Bank's Research for Results 2021 report indicates that 26% boys and 14% girls experience bullying on a weekly basis.⁶⁹ This is significantly higher than the international average, where 8% of students report experiencing weekly bullying. UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministries of Justice, Education, Interior, and Social Affairs, launched a child protection policy and the MEHE endorsed the policy and initiated its roll-out in 600 public schools.⁷⁰

Regarding quality, **it was not clear for some respondents what UNICEF does in this area, although stakeholders acknowledged the increasing need to work on this pillar.**⁷¹ The broad framing of UNICEF's

⁶² IDI 29.

⁶³ IDI 29.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ UNICEF (2018). [The Ministry of Education and UNICEF promote inclusive education](#)

⁶⁶ IDI 09.

⁶⁷ [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | OHCHR](#)

⁶⁸ R4R 2021.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Internal document, DFID UNICEF Quarterly Meeting, PPT Presentation, Audit_30Sept19.

⁷¹ IDIs 02, 06, 07.

work on quality – at least at a theoretical level – can be misleading. It can create expectations that the end product will e.g. be a new and better curriculum for math, Arabic or science, quickly translating into improved student outcomes. But, as the evaluators see it, UNICEF's focus in the work on quality is, in fact, horizontally focused on equality, inclusion and child protection. And while it should also eventually lead to improved student learning outcomes, such a result is more remote. Stakeholders may feel a sense of frustration because they hold expectations that are not warranted by UNICEF's actual plans. If this focus on equality, inclusion and child protection is maintained, without expansion into other areas (which are also occupied by actors more directly linked to quality education – see Section 3.4), then **UNICEF's work would benefit from better external communication and framing, perhaps around equality, inclusion and safety in education, rather than quality of education.** These are also aspects closely linked to sectors where UNICEF has a strong mandate, expertise and portfolios.



From the Field: Play and recreation

Although the evaluation did not focus on recreational activities available for children at schools, this topic arose spontaneously during conversations with the respondents, which demonstrates how significant this area is for parents and children. The school communities emphasized that for many children, especially Syrian children, school is the only place where they can find relief, do sport and play. Parents consistently appealed for the inclusion of recreational, art and outdoor activities into the school schedule. Teachers highlighted the need for renovation and equipping playgrounds. The request to allocate funds for playgrounds and green spaces was also voiced by the municipal authorities. Research acknowledges the importance of social activities, including music, dance, and free play, in helping children and adults cope with trauma, which confirms the need for relevant interventions.

“Our children are not even allowed to play in front of their house. Neighbors will go crazy if they saw them playing.” (parent)

“All my husband's family died in an air strike in Syria. He cries all the time, and my children were negatively affected. This is why I am happy that they can come to school and play with their friends to forget.” (parent)

“There is no place for students to sit in the playground. The playground does not accommodate the big numbers of students in the afternoon shift.” (principal)

“The village needs to have more public spaces, like playgrounds, so that students can play during their recess, as part of improving their wellbeing.” (local authority representative)

“As a Syrian, I am not allowed to walk on street after 8 pm. We feel that we are in jail.” (parent)

Both desk research and stakeholder testimonies reveal **multiple systemic issues within the education sector and an overwhelming need for reforms. While LCO-EP foresaw work on system-strengthening, until 2021 the scope of this work was rather limited.** The work on this pillar received new impetus with the development of TREF. At this point, however, it appears largely concentrated on establishing a system for collecting robust and reliable data about the education system and its participants. **Lack of accurate data about the education system poses a serious challenge which, if solved, could open the way to tackling other systemic problems.** So, UNICEF's efforts to support MEHE in this respect respond to existing needs.

“Our data could be incredibly inaccurate. There are no points of reference to estimate the margin of error.” (IDI 16)

Yet there are also other pressing systemic problems independent of data which could be tackled in UNICEF's advocacy for specific policies and legal developments, e.g. related to the surplus of schools and

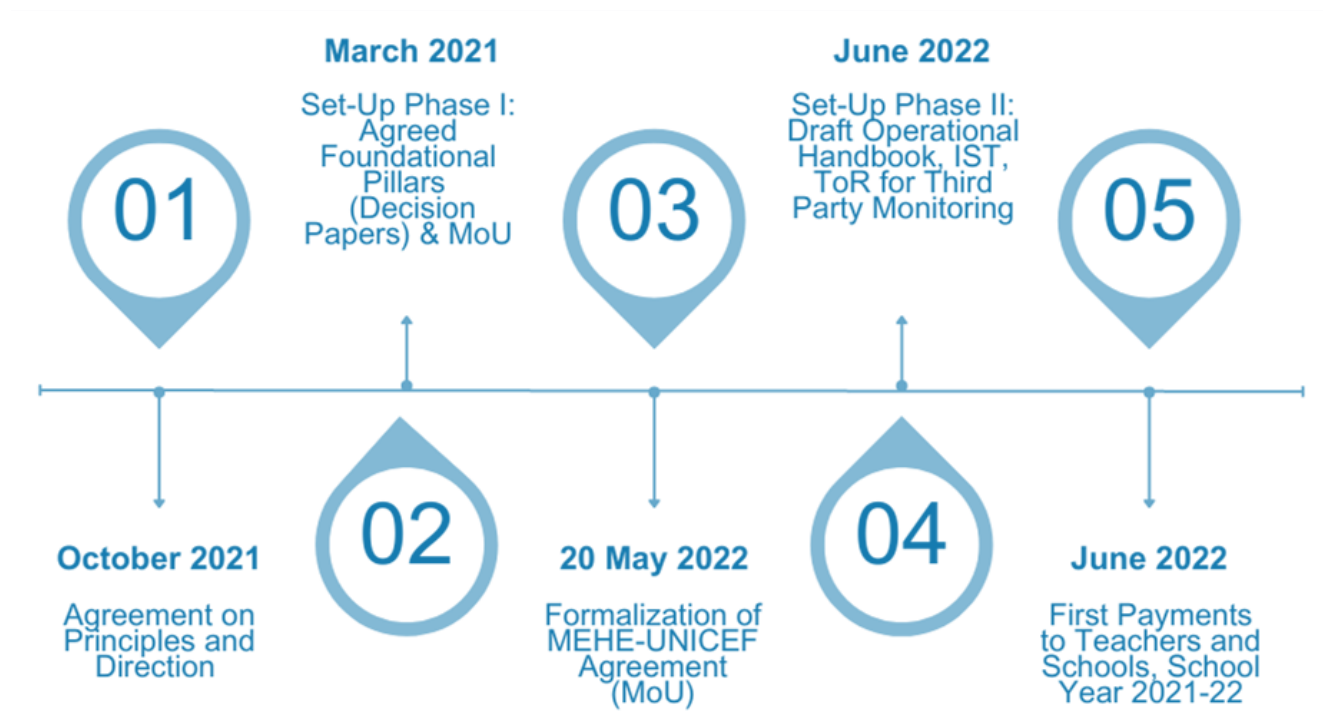
teachers, teacher qualifications and recruitment, solutions for fair teacher remuneration, etc. As observed by respondents, the humanitarian aspect of LCO-EP has seemed to dominate thus far (with financial transfers forming the bulk of the intervention), but there is currently a strong push for development work and reform, with stakeholders expecting results at system level. With continuing focus on humanitarian interventions, the LCO-EP will be able to treat the symptoms, but with less influence over the underlying problems.

The context of the LCO-EP was dynamically changing while the programme was being implemented. The evaluation shows that UNICEF's work on education remained relevant, if not more pressing throughout these turbulent times, which saw also the Lebanese communities becoming increasingly vulnerable and poor. These context changes created challenges for LCO-EP, for example as many Lebanese children started moving from private education to public education due to the crisis. As one interviewee noted:

"I wouldn't say that something is missing, but I would say that the context has changed. Today more Lebanese than before moved to the public system from the private because they can't afford it anymore. So I think the former system may not be fit for the current context." (IDI 07)

These fluctuations have required UNICEF to adapt its actions. In this respect, TREF shifts the perspective of support from nationality to vulnerability,⁷² signifying that the support is also open to vulnerable Lebanese communities. **The results of our fieldwork at school level underscore the importance of delivering support to Lebanese children in AM shifts, but also the vulnerable Lebanese communities.** This work can help relieve tensions between the Syrian and Lebanese communities that have been revealed during school visits. As to the work already conducted, the fieldwork suggests a need for better communication so that stakeholders, including in particular the beneficiaries, are aware what support they already receive.

Figure 3 TREF timeline



⁷² Internal document, Transition & Resilience Education Fund (TREF). UNICEF's new aid modality in support of Children's Education in Lebanon, PPT, 2 March 2023.

3.1.3 How relevant is the UNICEF education programme to government priorities?

The UNICEF's education programme is highly relevant to government priorities, at least as they are officially framed in programming documents. For education, the latter are currently expressed in the 5-Year General Education Plan 2021-2025. Its main objectives are reflected in three pillars, focusing on equitable access to education, learning (quality) and governance (system strengthening). These priorities were earlier expressed in RACE I and II. **The LCO-EP was full aligned also with RACE I and RACE II, so much so that it has been sometimes difficult for respondents in this evaluation to practically separate their reflections about these programs.** The understanding of the relations between the programs was not uniform among the consulted UNICEF staff, which may signal a need for clearer internal communication.

However, what is aligned at the theoretical policy level may not be equally aligned when it comes to practice. For example, **the pro-refugee policy narratives reflected in programme priorities do not fully correspond to decisions being made at the government level and the lack of political will to support integration.** There is a preference to perceive refugees as short-term guests, rather than future citizens. This is the case even when some of the Syrian refugees have already been in Lebanon for years. Prospects of naturalization are limited, because nationality is being transferred by parental descent only.⁷³ Moreover, many gaps in the protection of refugees stem from the *de facto* transfer of responsibility for managing the refugee policy from sovereign states to UN agencies.⁷⁴

The interviews for this evaluation suggest that the Lebanese government does not prioritize integration of refugees.⁷⁵ In this sense, the UNICEF education programme is not, and should not be, aligned with government priorities.

"They have no intent to integrate the refugees. The government of Lebanon is very much against the integration of Syrians. They are closing every possible door." (IDI 13)

Interviewees reflected that the unwillingness to integrate refugee children into the Lebanese society is a political priority connected to demographics, power sharing and sectarianism.⁷⁶ The change of context in Lebanon has made support for refugees even more difficult than in the past. The presence of a strong anti-refugee rhetoric and the resistance of the government to integrate refugees impacted UNICEF's work.

Interviewees pointed to a need for systemic reforms, which are currently not an element of government priorities as decisions are not being made in this respect,⁷⁷ e.g. regarding the number of teachers to be reduced or schools to be shut down.

"There were decisions that needed to be made, that nobody took." (IDI 16)

"The main challenges, in my view, is a lack of ownership from the government side to many initiatives and activities which are being implemented. Lacking long term vision for the reforms in all sectors. [...] I would love us to do more at the reforms front, but you cannot do the reforms [in] the country, if the government is not there, is not in the driving seat." (IDI 25)

⁷³ G.P. Parolin (2009) *Citizenship in the Arab World: Kin, Religion and Nation State* (Amsterdam University Press)

⁷⁴ Kagan, M. (2011). 'We Live in a Country of UNHCR': The UN Surrogate State and Refugee Policy in the Middle East The UN Refugee Agency: Policy Development & Evaluation Service Research Paper No. 201, UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law Legal Studies Research Paper Series, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1957371>

⁷⁵ IDIs 07, 13.

⁷⁶ IDIs 07, 13.

⁷⁷ IDIs 01, 18, 16.

The non-agency on the part of the government when it comes to structural reforms created many issues, but can be viewed as an area for UNICEF's stronger work in the future, with its financial contributions into the system working as a leverage.

3.1.4 Were the mechanisms and approaches applied in the programme relevant for achievements of the objectives? What other mechanisms and approaches could UNICEF have used to achieve its programme objectives, i.e., working differently and working on different things?

On several occasions, interviewees have praised UNICEF's financial support to schools, students, and vulnerable populations.

"UNICEF keeps the Lebanese education sector alive by funding operational costs that are necessary to school functioning." (IDI 03)

Since the start of the LCO-EP, UNICEF has subsidized enrolment, supported schools by covering their operational costs and launched various cash assistance interventions to aid the most vulnerable groups, e.g. in covering transportation costs. Since 2015, UNICEF has distributed fuel for winterization for more than 750 schools and has supported (on an annual basis) up to 88,000 eligible vulnerable children with cash assistance programs to cover school-related expenses and, thus, facilitating children's access to education. This financial aid directly translates into an increase in enrolment rates, which several interviewees have greeted, while also acknowledging the corresponding sustainability challenges. **Aside from sustainability concerns related to financial transfers, the interviewees questioned the approach of basing subsidies on enrolment rather than attendance.** However, with this lesson having been learnt, TREF already proposes a solution by using a percentage increase in attendance as one of the indicators and placing emphasis on this aspect in monitoring (see Sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.1.1).

UNICEF's flexibility in the unstable Lebanese context (COVID-19, Beirut Blast) has also allowed children and families affected by adversities to respond quickly to these crises and prevent further disruption in their education. For instance, during the pandemic, School-in-a-box kits were provided for NFE partners to ensure learning continuity of the most marginalized children with no or little access to technological devices. In this sense, **UNICEF's financial support to schools, learners, and families has definitely played a key role in augmenting the enrolment rates.** However, after the end of the programme, the school attendance rates remain very uncertain due to the unsustainability of this scheme.

LCO-EP applied approaches to achieve a good quality education remain more questionable. Admittedly, jointly with the CERD, UNICEF has organized multiple teachers' training sessions and has supported the operational costs of these, but **several respondents noted the difficulty in measuring the real impact and relevance of these training** since they are hardly quantifiable and not mandatory, *"such an indicator as 4000 teachers trained, for me, it means nothing."*⁷⁸ Moreover, a donor representative stated that the quality of education component was not assessed, and no reports or data have been submitted to the international community/donor on this point.

As for the system strengthening pillar, interviewees mentioned a level of indulgence from UNICEF towards the MEHE. In fact, there is a sense of fatigue and hopelessness from the international community/donors that a huge amount of funds is disbursed and still more than 700,000 children in Lebanon are out of school. While important results have been achieved, to some respondents, these are not proportionate to the funding received.

⁷⁸ IDI 02.

“If you look at the amount of funding that has gone into a sector and the state that is it in, I think it’s difficult to say that we have been successful. Well, to be a bit more clear, I think we have not been successful.”
(IDI 07)

Interviewees have called for more pressure, possibly conditionality, toward the MEHE whilst stating that **UNICEF is the adequate stakeholder to exercise this pressure**. Indeed, over the years of the programme’s existence, UNICEF has developed a deep relationship with the MEHE and a sophisticated knowledge of the Lebanese education system. The analysis under this question thus reiterates a point already made above that UNICEF should capitalize on these assets and carefully push the MEHE and the GoL for systemic reforms to make the education system more sustainable and self-sufficient. In this regard, TREF is going in the right direction because it insists more on the conditionality for receiving funds.

The nuanced results of approaches applied to enhance the quality of education and system strengthening could be explained by the fact that these pillars are not entirely under UNICEF’s management but are strongly shared with the MEHE. In fact, several interviewees⁷⁹ have pointed out that UNICEF has more say and influence in the first pillar, i.e., access to education than in quality and system strengthening pillars which heavily depend on the MEHE.

“UNICEF has not had a major role in reviewing the curriculum and ensuring the quality of education.” (IDI 19)

In this light, with the support of donors, UNICEF could try to better leverage its contributions to access in advocating for systemic changes.

3.1.5 How relevant is UNICEF’s programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into consideration any disparities?

Lebanon is a country marked by a socio-culturally heterogeneous population and considerable disparities between the said. In terms of addressing these equity gaps, in its interventions and initiatives, **UNICEF has taken into account or at least attempted to consider/address the needs of the most vulnerable groups**, *inter alia*, Syrian refugees and children with SEND. In fact, several interventions were specifically designed to reduce inequities.

One of the most successful initiatives in this regard was the Inclusive Education (IE) Pilot Project launched in 2018 in 30 Lebanese Public Schools with the aim of promoting and raising awareness about the rights to an inclusive education as well as increasing the enrollment of children with disabilities in public schools. Within the Pilot programme – which included 30 schools – in the 2018-2019 school year, 1147 learners with different types

Fieldwork at school level confirmed the need to **focus on children with learning difficulties, especially speech difficulties** in all schools, even if the schools are not inclusive.

of disabilities were targeted. The largest percentage consisted of children with learning difficulties (LD) – a term encompassing such disabilities as dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or dyspraxia – and which translates into reading, writing, or mathematics disabilities in the educational context. In fact, children with LD made up for

around 77% of learners with difficulties served in the IE Pilot in the 2018-2019 school year. In the 2019-2020 school year, 1547 learners were reached through the IE Project. Since then, the Program has expanded and currently counts 60 schools.⁸⁰ Besides offering an educational opportunity for children with special needs, the IE Project also contributes to the development of long-term inclusive practices, such as assisting teachers in lesson planning, applying adaptations to exams, providing teaching resources, and offering guidance on how to use visuals in order to reach learners with LD in the classroom. To support teachers, each school benefited from

⁷⁹ IDIs 19, 08, 26.

⁸⁰ Haigazian University, (2021) Case study on the Inclusive Education Pilot Project in Lebanese Public Schools.

special educators, and five mobile teams of psychologists, psychomotor therapists, and speech therapists were deployed to provide services to children with special needs.⁸¹ Despite the success and further expansion of the initiative, Children with Disabilities (CWDs) remain among the most marginalized group in Lebanon.

Several interviewees⁸² mentioned the lack of a comprehensive nationwide educational database, including the lack of enrollment data and disability statistics. This data gap renders it difficult to promote policy change and initiatives for the benefit of inclusive education in the country. Moreover, as one UNICEF interviewee explained the notion of disability remains medicalized, and there is still an important mentality shift to occur, which requires time.⁸³ However, the same respondent stated that the GoL is *“going in the right direction and using the right language of inclusion and not exclusion” (IDI 25).*

In the context of inclusions, one interviewed donor representative voiced concerns about the funds spending and prioritization of interventions by UNICEF.⁸⁴ The respondent has pointed out that whilst the integration of CWDs in educational settings is essential, the primary focus of UNICEF should be to get all children into schools, since more than 700,000 are still out of the education system. This was, however, a singular opinion and other donors expressed support for inclusion policies.

In parallel to the IE Project, **UNICEF developed an Inclusive Education Policy, and currently, schools have an obligation to enroll a minimum of 3% of CWDs in their establishment.** In 2019, MEHE and UNICEF launched a **Child Protection Policy** in schools to ensure a safe learning environment for all learners. The document is a guide for teachers on how to prevent and address cases of bullying and violence in schools. An interviewee specified that **the policy is mainly targeting female students as they are less empowered to deal with cases of violence.** The respondent also highlighted that *“gender stereotypes in education are multiplied by teachers” (IDI 25).* This is why jointly with the CERD, UNICEF developed a set of training materials for modules on inclusion, gender, and gender-based violence (GBV) for teacher training programme in Lebanon (see also Section 3.2.12). However, since *“there is no mandatory training programme for teachers in Lebanon,”* modules on inclusiveness and gender-related themes are not mandatory either, which poses a problem as to their relevance, effectiveness and impact.

Syrian children refugees are a vulnerable group affected by severe disparities. They are also the main beneficiary group for the whole LCO-EP, as well as governmental programs. The programs allowed 200,000 Syrian refugee children to access any form of education but Syrian refugees still face immense challenges. In 2022, 90% of them were in need of humanitarian assistance to survive.⁸⁵ There is an information gap on accessibility barriers for girls to education, although research is currently being conducted on this issue.⁸⁶

Finally, the LCO-EP also addressed the needs of populations living in extreme poverty through various cash transfer programs one of them being the 2017 Back-To-School campaign whose goal was to guarantee access to FE and NFE for children aged between 3 and 18.⁸⁷ The campaign offered financial, operational, and logistical support to reach children and families in the most vulnerable Lebanese districts. The evaluation confirms the increasing need to support poor and vulnerable Lebanese children to facilitate their access to education, but also help them deal with the psychological and social toll of consecutive crisis.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² IDIs 10, 16, 17.

⁸³ IDI 25.

⁸⁴ IDI 09.

⁸⁵ VASyR 2022.

⁸⁶ Information provided by a UNICEF representative in writing on 10 August 2023.

⁸⁷ More information about the Campaign is available on the [UNICEF's website](#).

3.1.6 To what extent has UNICEF been able to adapt its programme to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context, Covid-19, and socio economic and financial crisis?

The changing and unstable Lebanese context has been a recurring theme during evaluation interviews and across the consulted sources.⁸⁸ To face these changes and emergencies, **UNICEF has shown considerable flexibility in adjusting its activities in the country.** This flexibility and adaptability to the context may be explained by the fact that *“unlike other organizations, UNICEF does not have a political agenda, and their fundamental concern is to respond to existing needs” (IDI 21).* In fact, UNICEF undertook specific activities to respond to Lebanon’s burning needs, especially with the Beirut Blast, COVID-19, and the socioeconomic and financial crisis.

Considering the harsh socio-economic situation of the Lebanese population, which has deteriorated notably from 2019 onwards, **UNICEF covered a vast majority of schools’ operational costs**, including school rent, transportation fees for pupils and teachers, teachers’ salaries, and teachers’ training. Several interviewees pinpointed the importance of this operational cost support by UNICEF, stating that this cost coverage has allowed schools and the educational system to survive. In some instances, **UNICEF also acts proactively e.g., by developing the Learning Continuity Plan – a contingency plan in case of further teacher strikes.**⁸⁹ This will ensure school continuity with courses taking place at least once or twice a week, so students are not subject to further loss of education.

The education programme rapidly accommodated the needs of children and families following the Beirut Blast. Indeed, UNICEF rehabilitated nine private and public schools, supported the refurbishment and replacement of damaged furniture and laboratory equipment for 90 public schools, and purchased school supplies for 50,000 students affected by the blast. Children and families affected by the blast were also supported financially via the emergency cash transfer programme designed to assist households in priority areas that had at least one member from a vulnerable group, i.e., children, persons with disability, female-headed households, pregnant women and persons above the age of 70. Apart from the financial aid *per se*, children were provided with psychological assistance through PSS and well-being activities.



From the Field: PSS counsellors

The presence and effectiveness of PSS counsellors varied across the schools evaluated, with a clear need for extending this support to all shifts to ensure students' mental well-being and emotional development. In some schools, PSS counsellors were present, referring children to specialized services and playing a crucial role in improving students' mental well-being and self-esteem. Students felt safe and supported, making it easier for teachers to engage with them effectively. However, in many schools, either there were no specialized PSS counsellors or PSS services, or the school staff (especially directors) lacked awareness of their existence. In general, no counselling was available in the morning shift, in line with the programme design. The absence of PSS counsellors in the morning shift raised concerns about the lack of psychological support for students, especially Lebanese children, who face challenging living environments. Many participants recommended the need for PSS counsellors in both shifts.

When the COVID-19 pandemic appeared, UNICEF once again demonstrated the flexibility of its programme with the provision of school-in-a-box kits to NFE partners to ensure access to educational programs for marginalized children with limited or no access to digital devices. Hygiene materials such as masks, hand sanitizers, and bleach were also provided to all schools to ensure a safe learning environment. Moreover, jointly

⁸⁸ E.g. UNICEF (2022) *Lebanon Highlights* ; Acaps (2022) *Lebanon: Humanitarian Impact of crisis on children* ; UNICEF (2021) *Lebanon: Children's future on the line*.

⁸⁹ IDI 26.

with MEHE, UNICEF developed a remote learning strategy to adapt the educational system and students to online learning.

Various stakeholders mentioned that in reacting to emergencies UNICEF focused too much on the humanitarian interventions. By concentrating on humanitarian aid, UNICEF has limited time and resources to devote to education-related interventions *per se*. The comments appear to indicate that emergency aid must be rethought to become sustainable over the long term (see more section 3.6).

3.2 Effectiveness

3.2.1 To what extent was UNICEF support effective in achieving its intended results, on the following levels: the overall expected outcome of UNICEF Education programme; the contribution to the broader education goals; results at national and regional levels, in all areas of focus?

The programme's effectiveness is evaluated below separately for the three pillars that the LCO-EP aimed at: enhanced access to education opportunities, improved quality of education services, and better education systems. However, there are two overarching observations that are relevant across these areas.

Firstly, the programme operated in a highly volatile political and social climate. Numerous crises (see Sections 1.1 and 1.2) hindered the achievement of several initial goals and necessitated the modification of others. The programme had to adapt to the current circumstances by relinquishing certain goals and approaches and redirecting efforts toward addressing emerging issues. This was frequently done under considerable time and financial constraints, which affected the programme's ability to attain its intended outcomes.

Secondly, during the assessment period, UNICEF encountered significant challenges in collecting data to precisely monitor and evaluate progress toward the established targets. There are two dimensions of this difficulty. On the one hand, many targets set by UNICEF relied on government data, the credibility of which was not obvious.⁹⁰

"In fact, I can say it over and over again, lack of data, lack of reporting, that was the biggest problem. It must also have been very difficult for UNICEF to work in such circumstances." (IDI 10, Donor)

On the other hand, UNICEF itself did not design adequate monitoring tools in some areas of interventions (e.g. with regard to the quality of teaching). The indicators chosen to track specific progress were not always optimal. For example, even long-term targets regarding school enrolment, retention, and completion rates of non-Lebanese students relied on numerical values (with no alternative percentage specifications), without considering that the influx or outflow of refugees could render those numbers irrelevant (for more see also Section 3.3 on efficiency). The analysis prepared by UNICEF in 2020 (see box below) remains relevant as of 2023.

Persistent challenges of data collection

"The MEHE does not yet have the capacity to produce cogent data trends or analysis on standard education indicators. Currently, there are three main disparate data systems – CERD database, the School Information Management System (SIMS) and the Compiler – that produce independent datasets of varying credibility. The MEHE – through the S2R2 programme⁹¹ – has committed to producing an Information Management Strategy 2019-2021 as an effort for a clear way forward on quality data collection and analysis to inform evidence-based

⁹⁰ IDI 02.

⁹¹ www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/09/27/us224-million-more-to-support-the-lebanese-education-system

programming and policies⁹². However, the MEHE is unable yet to structure or enforce a national data management and analysis framework that predictably reports on the health of the public education system, its teaching corps, or its students. This gap disallows meaningful or incisive investments into the public education system, because there is no clear evidence-based diagnosis of the root issues that need to be sustainably addressed. For example, basic datasets on the gender disaggregation of children enrolled in the public education system is not readily available; the same stands for trends on retention, drop-out, or learning outcomes. Similarly, the MEHE has not yet produced a historic accounting of the build of its teaching corps (their qualifications, training needs, teaching profiles), or the overall condition of their public-school premises, to name a few”.

Source: Data management analysis, UNICEF internal document

Despite these challenges, based on data collected by the research team, including interviews with key stakeholders, it is possible to provide an initial evaluation of the effectiveness of UNICEF's interventions on broad educational goals in key areas of focus.



TREF: Comprehensive and reliable data

Since 2021, UNICEF has gradually strengthened its position vis-à-vis MEHE, devoting more efforts to verifying official data and operationalizing national data management systems.⁹³ However, many of these efforts have not yet yielded the expected results due to the growing problems with access to electricity in the country and the lack of functioning servers and internet networks.

TREF places a remarkable emphasis on effective data collection, recognizing information management for evidence-based policy formulation and decision-making as one of the programme priorities,⁹⁴ which is definitely a step in the right direction.

3.2.1.1 Access to education

The analyzed data and IDIs clearly show that MEHE-UNICEF partnership has been instrumental in guaranteeing access to education for many vulnerable children in Lebanon. In the period under the evaluation, a growing proportion of the Lebanese and influx populations become vulnerable, which has significantly increased the demand for support from UNICEF and its partners, during the programme period.

“UNICEF played an important role in ensuring that we do provide formal education [...] They are the best placed actor to work with the government. Whereas civil society can do more service delivery on the non-formal education side.” (IDI 07, Donor)

The programme's outcomes on access to education for Syrian refugees are particularly worth acknowledging. Quantitative data and interviews with respondents suggest that UNICEF's intervention can be linked to a reduction in the number of non-Lebanese children who remain out of school. In 2015, as many as 49% of non-Lebanese children (of whom 90% were refugees from Syria⁹⁵) aged 6-14 were not enrolled in schools.⁹⁶ Only four years later, in 2019, the proportion of Syrian refugee children outside the education system was at a historic low at 31%.⁹⁷ However, while the COVID-19 pandemic caused a slight increase in the number of non-Lebanese children out of school (up to 33% of Syrian children), the Beirut blast and the subsequent financial crisis

⁹² The relevant strategy has not been developed by the date of completion of this report.

⁹³ IDI 2, IDI 27.

⁹⁴ Linkages with the TREF Urgent Result Framework and the 5-year Plan Programs.

⁹⁵ MEHE Education programme 2021-2025.

⁹⁶ UNICEF HH Survey 2015.

⁹⁷ VASyR 2021.

have almost completely cancelled the progress in this field, with 47% of Syrian children again out of school in 2021.⁹⁸

*"In terms of numbers, 200,000 Syrian children in schools is no doubt a success. If it wasn't for the UNICEF programme, we wouldn't have that for sure, because the Lebanese government feels no responsibility even to school Lebanese children. [...] And I have to say frankly that things are getting worse and worse in this respect [regarding government]. There is more and more anti-immigrant rhetoric. And in terms of what is not a success is that there is still a huge and growing number of refugee children out of school."*⁹⁹ (IDI 02, Donor)

*"Syrian refugee students enrolment in public schools was the UNICEF's main achievement."*¹⁰⁰ (IDI 03, Donor)

The table below presents enrolment rates for non-Lebanese children in 2021 compared to the final RACE II targets. The data shows that in the initial years of the programme, the number of enrolled children grew rapidly (children who started their education in 2016-2019 are currently in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3, with each cycle comprising three grades or three years of schooling). However, this trend was disrupted in the 2019/2020 school year due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent socio-economic crises. As a result, the number of non-Lebanese children in Cycle 1 is significantly lower than the (very ambitious) projections. The target for pre-primary education was also not achieved.

Table 2 Number of non-Lebanese students (aged 03-18) enrolled in formal education (Gross Enrolment Rate)¹⁰¹
Green indicates target achieved and red – target not achieved.

Non-Lebanese children in public schools	RACE II Target 2021	Achieved 2021
Pre-Primary	31,802	29 277
Cycle 1	143,955	78 792
Cycle 2	54,006	60 886
Cycle 3	18,472	22 443

Since its inception, the LCO has also had a strong focus on Lebanese children. In the face of increasing challenges in providing education for children by Lebanese citizens, support for this group has steadily increased. An additional motivation for UNICEF's increased assistance to Lebanese children was the desire to mitigate tensions between the majority and minority communities that could arise if support for the latter was perceived to be disproportionately high.¹⁰² However, success in this regard was limited (see more in the box 'From the field: National tensions'). Increased focus on Lebanese children coupled with a significant influx of Lebanese students from private to public schools resulted in exceeding the key targets for this population for 2021, as set out in RACE II.

⁹⁸ VASyR 2021.

⁹⁹ IDI 02.

¹⁰⁰ IDI 03.

¹⁰¹ UNICEF (2022) Supporting Access to Formal Education for Lebanese and non-Lebanese girls and boys in Lebanon's Public Primary Schools Progress Report.

¹⁰² IDI 18.

Table 3 Number of Lebanese students (aged 03-18) enrolled in formal education (Gross Enrolment Rate)¹⁰³

Lebanese children in public schools	RACE II Target 2021	Achieved 2021
Pre-Primary	40,166	59,922
Cycle 1	46,547	66,596
Cycle 2	57,227	70,528
Cycle 3	63,118	75,469

Table 4 below presents the annual programme effectiveness regarding access to education, as per the targets set in the annual MEHE-UNICEF work plans. Unlike the rigid objective of RACE II, these targets could be adjusted to best respond to developments in the current socio-economic situation in the country. Particular attention should be paid to the increase in the number of Lebanese children enrolled in public schools, which was caused by Lebanese families losing the ability to finance their children's private education. The table also indicates a sharp decline in the enrolment of non-Lebanese children due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent financial crisis.

Table 4 Trends in enrolment in MEHE public schools 2016-2021¹⁰⁴

Scholastic Year	Target Source	Targets (Lebanese)	Results (Lebanese)	Targets (Non-Lebanese)	Results (Non-Lebanese)
2016/17	RACE II Year 1 Target	199,000	204,617	172,000	191,338
2017/18	Feb 2017 REC	210,000	209,409	217,000	213,358
2018/19	MEHE/UNICEF AWP 2019	220,000	219,438	230,000	206,061
2019/20	MEHE/UNICEF AWP 2020	233,000	230,500	212,500	196,759
2020/2021	MEHE/UNICEF AWP 2021	270,000	272,515	190,000	191,398 ¹⁰⁵
2021/2022	MEHE/UNICEF AWP 2022	235,000	231,610	184,000	184,251 ¹⁰⁶

Although overall increasing children's enrolment (or maintaining it at a steady level during crisis situations) in Lebanon represents an undisputable success for UNICEF, there are concerns as to whether this is the most effective indicator of children's participation in the education system.¹⁰⁷ These concerns were around enrolment of

¹⁰³ UNICEF (2022) Supporting Access to Formal Education for Lebanese and non-Lebanese girls and boys in Lebanon's Public Primary Schools Progress Report.

¹⁰⁴ UNICEF internal analysis ('EU PROPOSAL 2020'), RAM 2021.

¹⁰⁵ RAM 2021.

¹⁰⁶ RAM 2023.

¹⁰⁷ IDI 10.

children in multiple schools and the fact that enrolment does not equal attendance and does not account for drop-out. This is on top of lacking reliable governmental data on enrolment. UNICEF, responsive to donors' requests, has recently started exploring other indicators such as the rate of participation during the school year, which should be considered commendable.

“UNICEF had an ongoing problem with extracting data from the government. MEHE supposedly had some kind of an information management system that they used to track student attendance. But how that system was used was very inconsistent. Overall, there was a very strong focus on enrolment rates. And much less on the actual attendance of children in schools. We were concerned that these numbers could be inflated. But I don't think it was UNICEF's fault, they tried to do as much as possible to get additional data, over the years.” (IDI 11)



TREF: Focus on attendance

TREF includes a percentage **increase in the attendance rate in public schools** for both Lebanese and non-Lebanese students as one of the **outcome indicators** of the program. This represents a significant development compared to the RACE II log frame, which primarily focused on enrolment rates. Within TREF, **attendance will be monitored** using SIMS Quarterly Attendance Reports and TP Monitoring.

Access to education was facilitated mainly through the **partial or full subsidization of registration fees** for public formal education and education-related costs. Available data shows that UNICEF partially achieved its targets in this area. In particular, the programme aimed to provide partial or full subsidization of registration fees for Lebanese children, with a RACE II target of 149,831 beneficiaries. The actual number of individuals supported exceeded this number with 272,515 children receiving assistance. For non-Lebanese children, the target was 251,474 beneficiaries. However, the actual number of individuals supported was significantly lower, with only 191,398 children being assisted. The differences in the number of beneficiaries may be attributed to the expansion of UNICEF's support to a larger number of Lebanese children (without a significant increase in its aid budget) and many non-Lebanese children dropping out of education due to the financial crisis starting in 2021.

During the given period, the primary means of subsidizing education-related costs was through the coverage of transportation expenses, with the aim of supporting half of all students. However, this form of assistance fell significantly short of its target, only reaching 27,000 students in 2021, against the planned 88,600 students.¹⁰⁸ Available data does not indicate the causes of this underachievement. It can be assumed that this is due, on the one hand, to the long period of school closures and the lack of necessity/possibility to commute to schools, and on the other hand, to the decreased demand for education during the crisis among the most vulnerable populations who relied on transportation subsidies.



From the Field: Transportation

Serious safety concerns and high costs regarding school transportation were one of the most hotly discussed issues during conversations with school communities in all eight visited locations. Transportation fees pose a significant barrier to education for many students, both Lebanese and non-Lebanese. Some children have to walk long distances, even in unfavorable weather conditions, to reach school, while others resort to risky means like tuk-tuks. Although there is a provision of transportation fees for selected families, many parents still struggle to afford these expenses, leading to concerns about their children's safety. Some children are registered for buses, but overcrowding is a serious issue. The lack of safe and affordable transportation options forces some

¹⁰⁸ MEHE-UNICEF Annual Workplan 2021.

parents to make difficult decisions, such as not sending their child to school every day. Addressing this challenge is crucial to ensure equitable access to education and improve the overall well-being of students and their families.

“The bus driver put my children on the roof of the bus because the bus was too small to capacitate all the children.” (parent)

“During winter, we feel afraid when our children come back alone.” (parent)

“Some of my students come on tuk-tuk and this is extremely dangerous.” (principal)

The distribution of free textbooks should be considered a considerable success, with paperback copies delivered to 506,398 students in 2021, including 150,620 in the second shift. However, in the last year, educational materials have ceased to be provided, as noted in all locations visited by fieldwork. UNICEF also supported the delivery of fuel to winterize more than 700 public schools (slightly less than the 880 targeted).¹⁰⁹



From the Field: Books and stationery

The provision of books and stationery by UNICEF was one of the most appreciated forms of aid by all beneficiaries interviewed. This in-kind support significantly alleviated financial burdens on schools and families and may have significantly contributed to educational outcomes. However, over the last year, the provision of necessary materials was lacking, resulting in significant challenges for visited schools and their students. The absence of books forced schools to print materials independently, incurring significant expenses for ink, paper, and maintenance of printing machines. Poor quality or complete lack of educational aids significantly lowered students' learning experiences. During discussions at all eight visited schools, the topic of books and stationery was consistently raised by various groups of respondents (directors, teachers, and parents), highlighting the importance of this kind of aid in education. Ongoing support in this domain is crucial to address beneficiaries' needs and ensure that students have access to necessary learning materials, enabling schools to fulfil their educational responsibilities effectively.

“I ask UNICEF to pay money for books. Next year, there will be no books at all.” (teacher)

In 2022, UNICEF initiated the design phase for the rehabilitation of 120 public schools. Among these, rehabilitation work has already begun in 27 schools. Furthermore, there are plans to construct four new schools, with contracts already signed for three of them and the fourth currently being evaluated through a tender process. The construction of these schools is projected to be completed by mid-2024, and the final handover is expected to take place in mid-2025.¹¹⁰ The delayed start of intervention in this area partly stems from the long waiting time to receive the list of schools in need of renovation from MEHE.¹¹¹ Construction works, in turn, were delayed by challenges related to obtaining multi-stage building permits. Among the respondents, there were suspicions that granting permission for the construction of schools depended on providing local authorities with financial benefits, which contradicted UNICEF's operating procedures.

“In comparison, the problem was building schools. It was not possible to acquire public land. Renovations went ok, but only designs were prepared for construction. There was a lot of corruption.” (IDI 18)

¹⁰⁹ RAM 2021.

¹¹⁰ RAM 2022.

¹¹¹ RAM 2021.



From the Field: Renovation works

Almost all school communities visited highly appreciated the renovation work commissioned by UNICEF, especially the improvements made to the bathrooms and the overall enhancement of WASH standards. UNICEF's efforts have been seen as instrumental in upgrading the school's facilities and providing essential resources. Teachers and students (as reported by the participating adult respondents) expressed relief and satisfaction, as the cleaner and upgraded learning environment contributed positively to their overall well-being and learning experience. Despite the overall positive impact of UNICEF's renovation projects, there have been some concerns raised regarding the quality of past renovations and certain ongoing maintenance issues. Reports of poisoning incidents related to the burning of old paint from walls by one of the contractors are particularly alarming. In other instances, work was carried out using poor-quality materials, leading to rapid leakages. These issues highlight the importance of addressing any shortcomings to ensure that future renovation initiatives maintain high-quality standards and result in sustainable improvements for the school community.

"I once visited a school that was renovated by UNICEF in Tripoli, and I could easily see the happiness in the school." (local authority representative)

The Covid-19 response

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the educational opportunities of children in Lebanon. The restrictions imposed by the government to contain the spread of the virus have disrupted the normal functioning of schools. These extended closures have disrupted the learning process and created difficulties for students, parents, and educators alike. The lack of access to in-person education has necessitated the implementation of alternative learning methods, such as distance learning, which has presented its own set of obstacles.

UNICEF's swift and effective action in distributing hygiene and protective materials to all public schools has likely saved many lives in the country. These materials aimed to promote hygiene measures, including regular handwashing, the use of protective respiratory equipment, and adequate cleaning of school premises. Distribution occurred in phases between January and February 2022, supporting a total of 588,517 children and 53,500 school personnel over a six-month period across all public schools. Both direct observations in schools and data from fieldwork have shown that schools have access to hygienic supplies provided by UNICEF, and this support is highly appreciated across school communities.

The interventions aimed at facilitating remote learning for children in Lebanon encountered more challenges. According to the MEHE Distance Learning Initiative interim report, approximately 51% of second-shift schools implemented distance learning, although there were regional variations, ranging from 30% to around 80%.¹¹² The data also indicated that as the grade level increased, the usage of distance learning among second-shift students tended to rise, varying from 45% at the KG level to approximately 85% at Grade 9. Fieldwork data indicates that school staff did not feel sufficient support in the transition to remote learning and believe that the period of school closure was time lost for most children.

The effectiveness of remote learning was hindered by various obstacles. Firstly, **electricity cuts** in many areas across Lebanon disrupted the continuity of online teaching. Moreover, the **lack of a reliable internet network and limited access to technology** posed significant challenges in facilitating e-learning for students. Additionally, **untrained parents and caregivers** were required to assume the role of teachers, often supporting multiple children during the concurrent economic crisis. This shift in responsibilities placed an additional burden on families.

¹¹² MEHE Distance Learning Initiative interim report.

At the same time, the government-imposed movement restrictions which aimed at containing the spread of the disease created obstacles for schools utilizing **non-ICT modalities**. Delivering remote education proved to be particularly challenging for children with concentration difficulties, autism, and intellectual disabilities.¹¹³

UNICEF implemented numerous innovative solutions to prevent the disruption of learning within the framework of NFE. A rapid Learning Readiness Assessment (LeaRA) was conducted in partnership with UNHCR to evaluate 9,996 households' ability to participate in distance learning. Building upon the findings of the assessment, UNICEF's NFE response encompassed targeted messaging and activities for children and caregivers, with a focus on promoting health awareness, providing psychosocial support, ensuring well-being, and fostering active engagement in learning.¹¹⁴ Overall, the NFE community demonstrated commendable flexibility and adaptability during the COVID-19 emergency, enabling many children to continue their education when formal schools had to shut down.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the problems around access to ICT infrastructure described above have limited the effectiveness of interventions in this area as well.



From the Field: Education during Covid-19

The effectiveness of the COVID-19 response in schools varied based on the level of support received and the availability of resources but overall remained low. Some visited schools attempted to conduct remote learning through online lessons, but the lack of support in providing necessary tools and technologies hindered the success of this approach. As a result, students' academic performance was negatively affected. On the other hand, there were schools that received direct support from UNICEF for remote learning, but the experience still faced challenges due to the insufficient availability of electronic devices in families. Consequently, they eventually reverted to traditional in-person learning. The overall impact of the pandemic and subsequent changes in the education system has been substantial, with many teachers and parents expressing dissatisfaction with the education system's response to Covid-19. The pandemic's effects are likely to have long-term consequences on students' educational attainment, making it crucial for further support and improvement.

3.2.1.2 Quality of education

Assessing the effectiveness of LCOs in the area of quality education is a major challenge due to serious data gaps. The scarcity of information mainly stems from MEHE's measures taken in reaction to consecutive crises that occurred within the education sector. With schools closed for much of the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 school years, MEHE has suspended mandatory end-of-year examinations and allowed all students through to the next grades. As a result, the publications of the official exam results, which were supposed to be a source of verification for the achievement of the educational quality targets, are not available. For its part, **UNICEF has not developed indicators to gather evidence in the absence or low quality of government data.**

"As far as quality education is concerned, we have never received an assessment of such interventions. In general, it is practically impossible to assess this, given the lack of data on school outcomes shared by MEHE." (IDI 10, Donor)

¹¹³ UNICEF (2022) Supporting Access to Formal Education for Lebanese and non-Lebanese girls and boys in Lebanon's Public Primary Schools Progress Report.

¹¹⁴ <https://data.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/76131>

¹¹⁵ NFE Evaluation.

The main data on which an assessment of the quality of teaching under LCO may be based come from the TIMSS educational study.¹¹⁶ **The data indicates a decline in academic achievement among Lebanese children between 2015 and 2019, with a decrease in average scores in both mathematics and science.** Specifically, the average score in mathematics dropped from 442 points in 2015 to 429 points in 2019, and the average score in science decreased from 398 points in 2015 to 377 points in 2019.¹¹⁷ The variations in students' performance are evident in particular subject areas and cognitive domains. Lebanese students perform more poorly compared to their peers from other countries, particularly in the subdomains of data and probability as well as algebra in mathematics. Concerning math cognitive domains, Lebanese students achieved lower results in each category compared to the international average and other MENA countries, except for the category of knowledge. The most significant disparities were observed in the domains of reasoning and applying. When it comes to science content, Lebanese students obtained the lowest scores in Earth Science and Biology in comparison to the international average. The smallest disparities are observed in Chemistry and Physics. Similar to mathematics, students face challenges in the science domain, particularly in Applying and Reasoning. Additionally, they encounter difficulties in the Knowing subdomain.¹¹⁸

Similarly, the PISA tests,¹¹⁹ which also include reading, do not indicate any progress of Lebanese students compared to 2015.¹²⁰ **The PISA 2018 report indicates that Lebanese students also performed considerably poorly in reading,** scoring 58 points below the MENA average and 134 points below the OECD average. In particular, in Lebanon, only 32% of students achieved a proficiency level of at least Level 2 in reading, whereas the OECD average stands at 77%. At the very least, these students can grasp the main idea in a moderately lengthy text, locate information based on explicit, though sometimes complex, criteria, and can contemplate the purpose and structure of texts when specifically instructed to do so. Approximately 40% of students in Lebanon achieved a proficiency Level 2 or higher in mathematics, while the OECD average is 76%. These students can independently interpret and recognize how a simple situation can be represented mathematically. For instance, they can compare the total distance between two alternative routes or convert prices into a different currency without requiring direct instructions. Approximately 38% of Lebanese students reached a proficiency Level 2 or above in science, compared to the OECD average of 78%. At a minimum, these students are capable of providing potential explanations in familiar contexts or making conclusions based on straightforward investigations.¹²¹

On the one hand, it should be noted that these alarming results were recorded prior to the prolonged closures of schools, which began in 2019. On the other hand, the sector-specific interventions conducted by MEHE-UNICEF, which prioritize sustainable solutions, such as teacher training (see below), may not produce immediately visible outcomes.

¹¹⁶ TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. It is a large-scale international assessment of student achievement in mathematics and science that has been conducted every four years since 1995. TIMSS assesses the knowledge and skills of fourth and eighth-grade students in participating countries around the world. The study provides valuable data on educational outcomes, allowing countries to compare their educational systems with those of other nations and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in their educational systems. The data from TIMSS is widely used by policymakers, educators, and researchers to make informed decisions about education policies and practices. See: <https://timss.bc.edu/>.

¹¹⁷ <https://timss2015.org/timss-2015-report-volume-i/> and https://www.crdp.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/REPORT_Lebanon%20national%20report_TIMSS%202019.pdf

¹¹⁸ https://www.crdp.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/REPORT_Lebanon%20national%20report_TIMSS%202019.pdf

¹¹⁹ PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment. It is a worldwide study conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) every three years that evaluates educational systems by assessing 15-year-old students' knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics, and science. The PISA test is designed to measure how well students are prepared for real-life situations and future challenges. The assessment also includes surveys of students, teachers, and school principals to gather information on the students' backgrounds, schools, and learning environments.

¹²⁰ www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/pisa-2018-results.htm

¹²¹ Results from PISA 2018, Country Note Lebanon: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_LBN.pdf.

RACE II also includes completion and retention rates by cycle as indicators to assess the quality of education. **Currently available information, covering the period up to the year 2020, indicates a continuous decline in completion rates, especially in the later stages of education.**¹²²

According to UNICEF's work plans and key stakeholder interviews, the primary method of UNICEF's involvement in improving the quality of education was through teacher training. This approach was coherent with MEHE's RACE II strategy. In particular, in 2017-2021 UNICEF supported CERD in creating the Teacher Training Curriculum Model (TTCM). The five training modules available within TTCM were: (1) Teaching With Technology, (2) Literacy Across Content, (3) Child Protection, (4) Inclusive Education and (5) Gender Mainstreaming. The 2022 independent evaluation of TTCM confirmed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the adopted approach. Overall, 20,316 persons attended teacher training sessions and 1,386 persons attended training sessions. The beneficiaries were mainly public school teachers (93%).¹²³

Teacher Training Curriculum Model (TTCM)

"The TTCM was meant to provide a national theoretical backbone and a common framework for the planning of training modules in all training centres under the Pre-service and In-service Training Bureau (PITB) in Lebanon. The design process allowed to clearly link each module, face-to-face or online and self-paced, to a teacher competency or competency component of the 2017 framework. A Training Management System (TMS) was also developed for data-sharing among relevant education stakeholders (inspectors, coaches, administrators) that supports efforts to build a coherent and uniform teachers' professional development structure at the national level.

In its preface, the TTCM Teacher Training Handbook, describes the objectives of the TTCM project as follows: i) to improve the quality of the training design to target the competency framework for teachers and transfer to classroom practices, to respond to the specific needs of teachers and address attitude towards cross-cutting themes in education; ii) to improve the capacity of the PITB to track and disseminate attainment of competency building per teacher and attitude change towards cross cutting educational themes; iii) to improve the quality of teacher training to address the specific needs of new teachers in the public schools system; iv) to improve the competencies of trainers; and v) to improve the quality of training within the training centres."

Source: UNICEF. 2022. "Evaluation of the TTCM project (2017-2021) and its impact on the quality of teacher learning and practice in public schools". UNICEF Lebanon Country Office, Lebanon

Due to the issues with access to electricity and resulting internet disruptions, it was not possible to train teachers in all of the planned areas. In addition, electricity outages have hindered the development and operation of the TMS, which may have significant long-term consequences for the effectiveness of the intervention. Indeed, the participants of the trainings emphasized that re-training and regular follow-ups from the trainers are necessary for them to maintain the acquired skills.¹²⁴

The achieved outputs deserve recognition, considering the adverse external circumstances in which the TTCM was developed and implemented. However, as pointed out by one respondent, the numerical data on the number of trained teachers may not be an optimal indicator of improved teaching quality. In order to determine how the acquired knowledge affects teaching practices and ultimately student knowledge, a more comprehensive monitoring framework would be necessary, including regular school observations. However, this remains a challenge. As highlighted in a conversation with a UNICEF respondent, the current mandate of CERD, which was

¹²² MEHE Education programme 2021-2025.

¹²³ Evaluation of the Teacher Training Curriculum Model (TTCM) project (2017-2021) and its impact on the quality of teacher learning and practice in public schools.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

responsible for training, does not allow its staff to conduct monitoring of the effectiveness of training and teaching performance in schools.

“We have trained many teachers. But the problem is that there are no feedback loops. The system in Lebanon is extremely centralized. Everything happens at a central level in Beirut. So the training was delivered by CERD in MEHE. But people in CERD don't have access to the classrooms, so it wasn't clear how the teachers were putting the skills into practice. So, it is impossible to say whether we were successful [in improving the quality of education].” (IDI 26)

Given the generally low qualifications of teachers in the country,¹²⁵ focusing on teacher training to improve the quality of education is generally considered a good choice. Nevertheless, it remains an open question whether it is possible to substantially improve the quality of education without comprehensive changes in the curriculum and teacher recruitment and retention procedures. In addition, interviews revealed that some stakeholders expected a more evidence-based approach to the selection of interventions with regard to teachers training.¹²⁶

“In general, there is also a problem in defining what quality education was supposed to be. So far we have no scientific evidence, no data, which interventions lead to an improvement in the quality of education. There was teacher training, student training, there were catch-up materials distributed. And we don't know what of it actually worked. And perhaps there are some low-hanging fruit. And I think many donors feel that this is a black box. And Covid has added to it. For me, such an indicator as 4000 teachers overtrained, for me it means nothing. (...) In my opinion, the main effect of teacher training is that they get paid for it and it is some source of income for them. And that is ok, but you would have to be clear about that. And not to claim that this has a big impact on learning improvements.” (IDI 02, Donor)

An additional issue to consider is the standardization of qualifications between tenured and contractual teachers. According to the data, there are statistically significant disparities in the presence of educational teaching diplomas between tenured and contractual teachers. Specifically, 25.5% of tenured teachers had the required diplomas, while only 21.1% of contractual teachers met the same criteria.¹²⁷ At the same time, tenured teachers, who are statistically older, are perceived by some stakeholders as less receptive to modern pedagogical approaches, which limits the effectiveness of their teaching.

“Good teachers left, politically affiliated teachers will stay, and you have the fixed term teachers – it is impossible to fire them or to hold them accountable, most of them are old-schools, not aware of modern pedagogies, it is affecting the education system” (IDI 29).



From the Field: Teachers training*

The assessment of the training provided for teachers, as reported by principals and teachers themselves, yielded rather positive results, although responses in this area may have been influenced by social desirability bias more than in other research areas.¹²⁸ Most principals have seen the training's effectiveness as dependent on the teacher's willingness to implement the new approaches in the classroom. The majority of teachers expressed positive feedback, mentioning that the training helped them become more skilled and competent in handling their classes and interacting with students. However, there were also concerns raised

¹²⁵ R4R 2021.

¹²⁶ IDI 02.

¹²⁷ El-Ghali Hana A., Maddah Maya 'Situational Analysis of public school teachers in Lebanon', April 2021.

¹²⁸ Since teachers often receive allowances and other incentives related to their participation in training, it can be suspected that they have an interest in describing the pieces of training as extremely useful and emphasize the need for their continuation.

about the effectiveness of some training, with a few teachers refusing to attend, while others felt that the training was not valuable enough or lacked practical hands-on elements. Particularly criticized were the organization of some trainings on days off from work and the timing of the trainings not aligning with the school year schedule.

“UNICEF program was by itself a motivation for teachers to improve and upgrade their performance.” (principal)

With bullying being a key push-out factor driving vulnerable students towards school drop-out¹²⁹ (see also Sections 1.2.1 and 3.1.), **it is particularly significant that the Child Protection training module was developed as the first component of TTCM and was completed by the largest number of participating teachers (4,591 teachers).**¹³⁰ Furthermore, classroom observations and KIs conducted as part of the TTCM evaluation indicated that teachers were applying the knowledge gained from the module in their interactions with students.¹³¹



From the Field: Peer violence

The issue of violence in Lebanese schools is a matter of concern, as highlighted by various parental, teacher and local authorities' accounts. While some parents believe the school to be a safe place for their children, instances of bullying and violence have been reported. The level of violence in the second shift is particularly alarming, as reported by school staff, with frequent fights resulting in even severe health damage. Children with learning difficulties are believed to be more vulnerable to violent behaviors than their peers. The presence of PSS counsellors and teacher support has contributed to some positive changes, but incidents of violence and theft continue to occur during classes. Additionally, external factors such as safety concerns in the community, restrict children's activities beyond school hours, especially in border regions. One respondent suggested that a lack of playing spaces and recreational activities increases the level of aggression in children. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach, involving teachers, parents, and the wider community to create a safe learning environment.

“My daughter is constantly bullied by her peers because she has speech problems. Although her teachers support her, but this is not enough.” (parent)

“The psychological effects of moving a student from a private school to a public school should not be underestimated, since those children are being bullied by their peers.” (local authority representative)

“In the second shift, students bring daggers with them to the classroom because they fight with each other after the school. Every year, we collect a box with daggers and knives. There is violence in the second shift.” (principal)

In May 2018, MEHE and UNICEF jointly launched the Policy for the Protection of Students in the School Environment, building on a successful pilot programme that was implemented in 20 public schools. In the following years, UNICEF provided ongoing support to MEHE in implementing the Action Plan for the roll-out of the Child Protection Policy (however, work on the document has been suspended and deprioritized by MEHE) and guidelines for mainstreaming GBV in public schools.¹³² The aim was to expand the coverage of the Child Protection Policy to 600 schools. As a result of political instability and school closures resulting from COVID-19, interventions were implemented in a total of 435 schools throughout the country by the end of 2020, as opposed to the planned 735 schools in RACE II.¹³³ Other notable achievements include the development of internal and external referral pathways, the establishment of a special unit dedicated to addressing child protection violations identified in

¹²⁹ R4R 2021.

¹³⁰ TTCM report.

¹³¹ TTCM report.

¹³² Donor report 2022.

¹³³ Ibid.

schools, and the release of Guidelines for School Counsellors on Basic Skills for Psycho-Social Support. However, data is missing on the percentage of cases of violence involving students in need of case management who have been safely referred to the appropriate services – one of key UNICEF targets in the domain of child protection.



From the Field: Child protection

The evaluation of child protection awareness in the schools revealed significant gaps in knowledge and implementation. In most schools, respondents appeared completely unaware of the concept and only had a vague understanding of it after it was explained to them. The schools, in general, lack a structured child protection mechanism, and staff members expressed uncertainty about the appropriate channels to address child protection issues. Only in one school, was the principal aware of a teacher who attended child protection training and knew about the hotline for reporting relevant cases. Particularly concerning was the lack of awareness demonstrated by school principals regarding child protection mechanisms, underscoring the critical need for comprehensive training and guidance in this essential area.

“We don’t even know with whom we should talk in case there was a child protection issue.” (principal)

“There is a referral in place – it is an email to the MEHE to refer the violent cases. It’s like a Bermuda triangle. Nobody will ever receive the feedback.”¹³⁴

3.2.1.3 System strengthening

The UNICEF’s focus on access to education, combined with the significant increase in demand for support in this area due to the deepening financial crisis and the mass flow of students from the private to the public sector, led to the reduction of activities in other intervention areas, including capacity-building. The decision was also influenced by transient challenges in cooperation with MEHE and the very high turnover of ministry staff, including frequent changes in the position of the Minister of Education.

“In terms of institutional development, a lot of the benefits may have been lost as people left [MEHE] massively.” (IDI 10)

The lack of progress in strengthening the system is consistently mentioned by both UNICEF and MEHE staff. The latter specifically emphasized the absence of even basic skills among ministry personnel, including digital skills.¹³⁵

“We didn’t do anything in the system setting. I mean the things kept coming in our annual working plan and kept being written, but nothing was done. From our side, we didn’t achieve much.” (IDI 27)

Having said this, it needs to be pointed out that UNICEF has provided MEHE with valuable insights regarding crucial areas in the education sector to enhance evidence-based decision-making. The partnership between UNICEF and MEHE has resulted in the development of critical policy frameworks and actionable plans aimed at creating inclusive, effective, and safe educational environments for all children. It is now largely up to MEHE to breathe life into the formulated policies and take action accordingly.

Although UNICEF’s actions in the area of system strengthening did not yield expected results, it is important to consider the factors that contributed to the lack of relevant outcomes. The Lebanese government has long

¹³⁴ IDI 29.

¹³⁵ IDI 20.

struggled with irregularities in the allocation of resources and ineffective governance.¹³⁶ Creating a parallel system consisting of external staff (PMU) who would efficiently manage the crisis response may have seemed a rational choice for an intervention that initially had a mainly humanitarian and short-term character. However, as the crisis progressed, this approach should have been re-evaluated in favor of handing over the management duties to MEHE, with UNICEF experts working as shadows rather than main programme managers.

Based on the information provided, there is a widespread agreement among the respondents regarding the effectiveness of TREF in accurately defining the challenges encountered and suggesting suitable solutions to address them. **There is a strong belief that TREF holds significant potential for enhancing the overall education system and fostering improved collaboration between MEHE and UNICEF.** The research team appreciates UNICEF's proactive approach in this regard, as a vast number of recommendations voiced by various stakeholders during the evaluation interviews have already been anticipated and incorporated into TREF.



TREF: Clear priorities

TREF represents a step forward in acknowledging that limited resources and the growing needs of the local population and refugees in Lebanon prevent effective intervention in all desired areas. Consequently, TREF incorporates a **well-considered task prioritization** and communicates it effectively.

Out of the six priority areas outlined in the 5-year plan, TREF will primarily focus on two priority areas during the periods of 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. These priority areas include improving enrollment and retention of vulnerable groups and supporting programs towards a positive and safe educational ecosystem. These priority areas involve enhancing enrollment and retention of vulnerable groups, as well as supporting programs aimed at establishing a positive and secure educational ecosystem, which broadly corresponds to the areas of **access** and **system strengthening** within the RACE II framework. Simultaneously, actions in the field of quality education are deprioritized.

The interviews conducted indicate that TREF has accurately diagnosed the most important capacity-building needs of MEHE. For example, one of the specific deliverables of TREF is the Transition Plan from a project-based IT function to a fully institutionalized IT department, which is one of the needs identified by the research team through discussions with ministry staff.

3.2.2 Was the UNICEF programme implemented as originally planned in the Programme Strategy Notes (PSN)? To what extent the initial assumptions were followed?

During the evaluation period, **UNICEF undertook a significant part of the planned activities as per the Programme Strategy Notes.** While a detailed description of outputs and outcomes of particular initiatives was provided under the previous question, the table below presents an overview of the key anticipated interventions with an indication of their implementation status.

Table 5 Assessment of programme implementation against the Programme Strategy Note

Intervention	Implementation Status	Comment
DEMAND		

¹³⁶ It should be acknowledged that in recent years, there has been a willingness on the part of the Lebanese government to confront the issue, as evidenced by The National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020-2025, which is available at: www.omsar.gov.lb/Assets/docs/NACS_English_-Everson.pdf

Back to School Campaign	Implemented	The initiative was implemented in partnership with the MEHE, other UN agencies, and donors, and an increase in the enrolment rate one year after its completion was visible. ¹³⁷
Social contracts with parents, caregivers and community leaders	Not implemented	Findings from the fieldwork indicate that parents have never been encouraged to enter into social contracts regarding their children's NFE does not mention this practice.
Subsidization of tuition, school-related costs and school materials	Implemented	Available data and statements from stakeholders indicate a broad and effective action to finance children's participation in education, in all forms planned by UNICEF. ¹³⁸
DELIVERY		
Renovation and equipping of primary schools	Implemented	The fieldwork indicated that renovation works were carried out in the selected schools, which contributed to raising the standards, especially in the area of WASH infrastructure. However, in some schools, the manner in which the renovations were conducted posed risks to the safety and health of the school communities.
School construction	Partially implemented	By 2022, the construction of schools has not yet been completed. The challenge lied mainly in obtaining the right to the land on which the schools were to be built. ¹³⁹
Improved teacher training	Partially implemented	The TTCM programme was implemented and generally evaluated positively. At the same time, on-going teacher strikes limited the number of participating teachers. ¹⁴⁰
Incentive-based teacher-performance monitoring system	Partially implemented	TMS was developed, but did not become fully operational and accessible due to power outages ¹⁴¹ . An effective system of incentives was also not introduced.

¹³⁷ CERD statistical bulletin 2017-2018.

¹³⁸ See: Section 3.2.1.

¹³⁹ RAM 2021.

¹⁴⁰ TTCM evaluation.

¹⁴¹ TTCM evaluation.

Upgraded requirements for teacher recruitment	Not implemented	Significant reforms in the teacher recruitment system have not been introduced.
Support for culturally-accepted disciplinary action in schools	Not fully clear	Child protection training has been incorporated into teacher training. During the study the research team was not able to fully determine whether those have contributed to the implementation of positive discipline in schools.
School-based management plans	Not implemented	The fieldwork did not indicate the implementation of any innovative school-based management plans in any of the visited schools.
PSS counsellor in schools	Implemented	The visited second shift schools deployed PSS counsellors, although the awareness of their roles and access to their support varied from school to school. At the same time, the fieldwork revealed a lack of understanding within the school community as to why PSS counsellors are not equally available in the first shift.
Central CP unit	Implemented	CP Unit introduced as a part of the Child Protection Policy.
CP referral systems in FE and NFE	Partially implemented	UNICEF, in collaboration with MEHE, implemented the Child Protection policy and internal and external referral pathways were developed. However, there is a lack of data regarding the number of reported cases and their effective management on the ground. Findings from the fieldwork indicate that school staff is unaware of the existence of referral systems, and reported cases are being addressed at the school level.
Certified NFE opportunities in place	Implemented	A diverse system of educational support for out-of-school children has been introduced across all age groups and it is continuously being improved. ¹⁴² Despite this, the non-formal education (NFE) structure still has gaps (see e.g. Section 3.2.3).

¹⁴² RACE II Narrative, Education Cannot Wait programming document.

Children with disabilities learn in at least 30 adapted public schools	Implemented	The Inclusive Schools programme was piloted and subsequently upscaled, reaching nearly 90 schools in Lebanon. ¹⁴³ The evaluation of inclusive schools has demonstrated that the adopted model is effective in practice and enhances educational opportunities for children with disabilities.
Teachers trained on inclusion of CWD	Implemented	Inclusive education modules were developed within TTCM. ¹⁴⁴ The stakeholders' statements indicate an increased awareness of CWD inclusion among teachers. ¹⁴⁵
Retention support	Implemented	Retention Support programme was launched and implemented mainly through community learning spaces. ¹⁴⁶
SYSTEM		
Improved FE and NFE policies and frameworks	Partially implemented	A number of planned policies and frameworks have been put in place (a detailed list is in progress), but there is a lack of significant progress on the FE curriculum. A challenge also remains in the limited effectiveness of bridging NFE and FE.
EMIS/SIMS systems operational and deployed at school level	Partially implemented	Under TREF a significant amount of data has migrated to SIMS, but the system is still not fully operational and does not contain all the planned information. It is evident from TREF that the EMIS has not been designed yet. TREF includes a Transition Plan from the SIMS into an EMIS as one of the programme's main deliverables. In August 2023, the EU and GIZ published a call seeking expressions of interest from consultants to support MEHE in transitioning from SIMS to EMIS. ¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ List of inclusive schools provided by UNICEF (internal)

¹⁴⁴ TTCM evaluation.

¹⁴⁵ FGD NGOs.

¹⁴⁶ NFE Evaluation.

¹⁴⁷ Information available at: <https://daleel-madani.org/civil-society-directory/deutsche-gesellschaft-fur-internationale-zusammenarbeit-giz/calls/expression-interest-nke-support-mehe-track-81-data-supply-management-transitioning-sims-emis-ta-mehe>. As noted in the terms of reference for the consultancy, the main goal of this technical assistance is "to evaluate the existing state of the systems utilized at MEHE, including SIMS, MEHENSL, Official Exams, LMS, and other systems across different MEHE directorates and entities. The consultant is expected to gather input from various stakeholders and assess the quality of the collected data, proposing improvements to the current system. Based on this assessment, the consultant is expected to develop a detailed TOR (Terms of Reference) entailing all the aspects of the development and implementation of a robust and comprehensive EMIS system."

Improved programming and financial management capacities of MEHE	Not implemented	Activities related to system strengthening in MEHE were limited and did not yield sustainable results. ¹⁴⁸
Fundraising and financial operations regarding RACE II handed over to MEHE	Not implemented	Under TREF, UNICEF has an increasing responsibility for financial operations related to LCO-EP.
Technical assistance to MEHE regarding RACE II implementation	Partially implemented	UNICEF has been providing advisory support to MEHE. However, due to challenges in collaboration, UNICEF staff and PMU eventually assumed a significant portion of management and strategic tasks, leading to the creation of a parallel system within MEHE.
Exit strategy and long-term orientation of education response	Not implemented	In recent years, there has been a greater focus on systemic changes and the need for reform in LCO-EP. However, specific actions have not yet been implemented on a larger scale. There is also a lack of any exit strategy for UNICEF.
Robust evidence of key child-right issues ¹⁴⁹	<i>Under investigation</i>	
MONITORING & EVALUATION		
RACE II evaluation	Partially implemented	The independent final evaluation of RACE II has been discontinued. However, the evaluation of LCO-EP largely covers the scope of RACE II.
2017 Baseline assessment on ECD indicators	Not implemented	-
2016-2017 KAP survey	Implemented	Report available. ¹⁵⁰
2020 KAP Survey	Not implemented	-
2018 MICS	Not implemented by UNICEF	-
2019 MICS	Not implemented by UNICEF	-
STRATEGIC SHIFTS		

¹⁴⁸ IDIs 20, 27.

¹⁴⁹ This should include evaluations and studies on gender barriers to access and retention, evaluation of inclusive school models, DRR assessments of public schools, evaluation of the humanitarian response, assessment of violence in schools, and the Out of School study.

¹⁵⁰ www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/706/file/Lebanon-report-2-2.pdf

Effective fundraising in private sector	Not implemented	The available data does not indicate the acquisition of funds by UNICEF from private sector in Lebanon.
Re-positioning UNICEF as a technical resource to MEHE	Partially implemented	TREF places significantly greater emphasis on system strengthening within MEHE. ¹⁵¹ However, TREF's payment modalities remove the responsibility for program fund management from the Ministry, which, while justified, limits the self-reliance of MEHE.
Re-positioning UNICEF as a leader for innovation in EiE	Implemented	In the face of escalating crises, UNICEF has been able to propose a range of innovative solutions, such as summer schools, teaching hotlines, effective TTCM teacher training, and others.

3.2.3 What unintended consequences or effects did UNICEF support to the education programme have, both positive and negative?

In order to ensure access to as many Lebanese residents as possible, UNICEF had to make many difficult strategic decisions. One of those was determining the scope of cooperation with the Lebanese government. UNICEF chose to collaborate closely with the Lebanese MEHE in order to avoid creating a parallel and unsustainable education sector. The decision, however, involved certain trade-offs. This section will discuss two unintended consequences of implementing the LCO-EP according to the conditions set by the government in the country. This includes, first, the reinforcement of segregation due to directing the majority of Syrian students to second shift classes and second the exclusion of many out-of-school children from the NFE system due to strict admission criteria.

The second shift schools in Lebanese public schools were established by MEHE in 2013 in response to the growing number of Syrian refugees who had fled to Lebanon due to the Syrian civil war and limited capacity of the education system to absorb new students. These second shift schools are regular schools that offer classes to Syrian refugees in the afternoon or evening, after the regular classes for Lebanese students are finished.

Three key differences between the first and second shift schools are as follows:

- While in first shift schools the teaching day averages 6 hours, it is a maximum of 4 hours in second shift schools.
- The majority of teachers in first shift schools have permanent contracts whereas in the second shift schools they are hired on a contractual/temporary basis.
- Slight curriculum adaptations were made in second shift schools, including removal of some extra-curricular activities, such as sports and music.¹⁵²

Second-rate education?

¹⁵¹ In particular, TREF's planned outcome 6.1 is : Key Functions led by MEHE selected civil servants; advisory role for IST key staff after 2-3 years AND fiduciary functions transitioned from Third Party to External Fund Management Unit.

¹⁵² EU PROPOSAL 2020, internal document provided to Ecorys by UNICEF.

“The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education separated Syrian students from their Lebanese peers in school by introducing the evening education system, which played a major role in reinforcing racist ideas and imposing greater difficulties on Syrian students trying to integrate into countries of asylum.

This system also deprived many students of education, as most Syrians prefer to enroll their children in the morning shift, considering the teachers in the evening shift as “contractors,” that is, they do not possess educational skills.

The evening teaching shift extends for four hours, from two in the afternoon until six in the evening, without rest times for students, which weakens the quality of education and the ability of students to receive information”.

Source: Jana al-Issa, Hassan Ibrahim, Lujain Mourad, Syrian children subject to “discriminatory” education in Lebanon, 21 December 2022, Enab Balabi (one of the most prominent Syrian nonprofit media organization)

The interviewed stakeholders expressed mixed opinions about the inclusion of Syrian refugees in the second shift schools, with the majority acknowledging it as a necessary trade-off to provide them with access to education. It has also been noted that teaching in the second shift schools may still be a positive development compared to the in-camp education provided to Palestinian refugees.¹⁵³

“We did secure an agreement from the Government of Lebanon for Syrian children to receive education in public education facilities, even if it is the second shift. Of course, this is a bit sectarian. But it still got the job done.” (IDI 10)

Several interviewees noted the presence of strong (and growing) anti-refugee rhetoric and the resistance of the government to integrate refugees. In this light they considered the existence of the second shift schools a success.¹⁵⁴ Still, UNICEF should pay special attention to further investigating the social consequences of this segregation of the sector.

“They have no intention to integrate the refugees. The government of Lebanon is very much against the integration of Syrians. They are closing every possible door. So what we have in education is actually a huge success; that we still have children in the first shift; that they are going to the second shift; that they are taught by the Lebanese; that, you know, they go through a curriculum that is recognized. [...] So that’s a huge success if you look at the general policy.” (IDI 13)

The percentage of immigrants, including displaced and refugee populations, in the PISA sample was relatively small, accounting for only 6%. These immigrant students scored 51 points lower than non-immigrant students in reading, indicating a significant difference in their academic performance. It is worth noting that first-shift students consistently outperformed second-shift students across all grades and subjects, except for math in English, suggesting that the learning environment for non-Lebanese students is far from optimal.¹⁵⁵

Nevertheless, as one of the respondents highlighted, excessive pressure on the government regarding the inclusion of Syrian children in mainstream education could potentially lead to an adverse outcome, such as increasing hostility from the government and the Lebanese population towards refugees.

“The political question is prevalent - how much you can push for integration in Lebanon – public education is an example of how we achieved local integration in a way, but pushing things further would be risky. We need to be practical and realistic about what we can push for and what we can achieve.” (IDI 11)

¹⁵³ IDI 13.

¹⁵⁴ IDIs 10, 13.

¹⁵⁵ PISA 2018, MEHE Education Programme 2021-2025.



From the Field: National tensions

The issue of national tensions is evident in the community, with numerous respondents at various levels expressing frustration and resentment towards UNICEF's support for the school, which they believe is primarily directed towards Syrian students. There are concerns about unequal treatment and discriminatory practices, as some parents and teachers feel that Syrian students receive more support and resources compared to their Lebanese counterparts. The sense of discrimination against the Lebanese population is also widespread among local authorities. This perception has led to high level of animosity among community members who question the reasons behind the preferential treatment. On the other hand, one principal interviewed highlighted that UNICEF's support has been crucial in ensuring the smooth functioning of both shifts and providing necessary resources for the students. Another respondent admitted that she was facing challenges in the initial behaviour of Syrian students, but now she can see examples of successful integration and acceptance among students from different backgrounds. However, the issue of national tensions remains sensitive and requires careful attention to promote inclusivity and equality in the school community.

"UNICEF provided 20 \$ for the Lebanese students in the first grade only, however, they supported all the grades for the Syrian students. Why this discrimination! Syrians live on our lands. Why they are being treated better. We are the hosts!" (principal)

"UNICEF will never consider supporting a Lebanese school if it has no Syrians learning in it." (local civil society)

"You are stupid people. You don't think. This is what my son hears from the teachers." (parent)

"Syrian children were receiving all the support during the strike and the school closures, Save the children, URDA, LOST... We're providing Syrian children with lessons and excluding the Lebanese children." (parent)

"The perception of the teachers had changed. They became more aware that not all Syrians are illiterate and live in a tent." (parent)

"We are demanding now from NGOs to target 50% Lebanese and 50% Syrians in any of their project to avoid conflicts and reinforce peaceful coexistence." (local authority representative)

A visit to one school points to possible mistreatment of Syrian students by second-shift teachers, which the evaluation team communicated to UNICEF.

Despite the efforts to facilitate access to FE for all children in Lebanon, the number of out-of-school children remains high. For UNICEF, supporting this group was of utmost importance and the agency has devoted a lot of attention and resources to supporting NFE interventions in the country. In this area as well, UNICEF and MEHE established cooperation. As a consequence, it was necessary to adjust some of the NFE programme rules to meet the Ministry's demands. On the one hand, this resulted in the standardization of NFE programs and, in some cases, an increase in their quality. On the other hand, the reviewed approach limited the grassroots activities of NGOs in this area, depriving many children of access to new interventions that were subject to stricter entry requirements and, in some cases, further impeded access to FE for non-Lebanese students.¹⁵⁶ In particular, one interviewee pointed out that if NFE were not "formalized," more children could participate in relevant activities, even if they were conducted under challenging conditions (in tents, overcrowded spaces, etc.).¹⁵⁷

"The access [to NFE] was more successful than the impact but not successful 100% because it left a lot of children behind. The number of children that were accepted in this programme was very little because of the rigidity. So maybe if this programme was not there, more children would have been in a safe environment". (IDI 27)

¹⁵⁶ IDI 27.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

In addition, it should be noted that NFE programs are exclusively available to children who are not Lebanese nationals. Although there is the increasing number of Lebanese children who are experiencing challenges in obtaining education, they are not eligible for relevant opportunities, despite being theoretically covered by the NFE National Strategy.¹⁵⁸

Tough route to NFE

“The [NFE] policy was launched to sustain increased and equitable access to quality education for all children aged 3 to 18 in Lebanon. Unfortunately, there are many children who are not able to access these programmes as there are very rigid entry requirements and children have to fit a tightly defined profile. Vulnerable Lebanese children who are out of school do not have access to NFE programmes. Children need to have been out of learning for two years before entering the NFE system. Since 2019 when the last ALP was offered, there has been no way to access NFE if a child is aged between 7.5 – 10 years with no prior learning. Additionally, although this is not part of the RACE strategy, a child cannot enter FE after successfully completing a BLN level unless they have also completed a round of the government’s defined ALP.”

Source: “Alawi, R., Gebara, J., Wallace, C., Abillama, F. (2021) Non-Formal Education Assessment in Lebanon: Final Report, PROMAN, 13 October 2021.

A regularly cited example of such problematic development was the introduction of the ALP by the PMU as a school-based, informal program that BLN graduates had to complete as an additional requirement before accessing formal education. However, since there were not enough places available in the ALP, a significant number of children who could have enrolled in schools after completing BLN were ultimately deprived of this opportunity due to not obtaining the ALP certificate. It is possible that political factors and the government’s reluctance to facilitate Syrian children’s access to and integration into educational opportunities in the country may have also played a role in such a structured NFE system.¹⁵⁹ This observation is also confirmed by the NFE assessment.¹⁶⁰

3.2.4 In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation during the implementation?

UNICEF LCO-EP was established with the aim of increasing learning opportunities for all children in Lebanon, with a special focus on populations at risk of social and economic exclusion. This group includes in particular non-Lebanese children, of whom approximately 90% are Syrian.¹⁶¹ The programme was designed to be well-aligned with the LCRP,¹⁶² whose aim was to provide a coordinated and effective response to the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, particularly in relation to the influx of Syrian refugees and the impact of the Syrian conflict on the Lebanese population.

Due to subsequent crises that increasingly affected Lebanese citizens, the programme’s scope expanded to cover the growing number of Lebanese children who were facing serious challenges in continuing their education. In addition to the obvious benefit of facilitating access to learning opportunities for more children, this widening focus may also have had a positive result in terms of reducing tension between the Lebanese population and refugees

¹⁵⁸ NFE evaluation.

¹⁵⁹ IDIs 27, 13.

¹⁶⁰ NFE Evaluation, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ MEHE Education programme 2021-2025.

¹⁶² IDI 27.

who were perceived as unfairly privileged in receiving international support.¹⁶³ It should be acknowledged that UNICEF's flexibility in this case made the programme more equitable.

Another group that was given particular attention in LCO-EP was children with disabilities (CWD). Before 2016, Lebanon did not have effective inclusive education policies and infrastructure that could support the needs and ensure equal access to education of these children. Moreover, there was a lack of awareness and understanding of the needs of CWD in the broader community, which led to systemic discrimination.¹⁶⁴ To ensure that CWD have full access to learning opportunities, UNICEF developed and supported the implementation of the Inclusive School Pilot in partnership with MEHE. The student body in Inclusive Schools was to include 10% of children with disabilities. In addition, students with special needs were also to be equipped with assistive devices and learning supplies that would enable them to learn and take exams. Besides, UNICEF aimed to support MEHE in the development of disability-inclusive policies, in close cooperation with selected Lebanese municipalities.¹⁶⁵

Overall, the programme approach recognized that different groups of children may have different needs, capacities, and barriers to accessing learning opportunities, and sought to ensure that every child has an equal chance to develop and reach their full potential. Within the programme, the needs and rights of marginalized or socially disadvantaged groups were given priority, and efforts were made to reduce or eliminate existing disparities.

3.2.5 Does the UNICEF education programming actively contribute to the promotion of the right to education, especially for the most vulnerable?

Successes and challenges regarding the inclusion of non-Lebanese children in education were discussed in previous sections (see especially Section 3.2.1). The answer to this research question will thus focus primarily on promoting the right to education for children with disabilities.

The inclusion of children with disabilities (CWD) in public education and the transformation of teachers' attitudes towards CWD are among the most notable achievements of UNICEF's work in Lebanon. Although access to education for CWD in Lebanon remains a challenge, many improvements have been made over the period under evaluation. Stakeholders interviewed noted that the right to education for CWD has been successfully mainstreamed in the MEHE agenda.¹⁶⁶ In particular, the Inclusive Education Policy draft and the National Action Plan on Inclusion were developed. Additionally, the training programs, including the TTCM, took into account developing teachers' capacities to become qualified to work with CWD.

A key step towards promoting the right to education for CWD was the design and launch of the Inclusive Schools Pilot in 2018. The pilot programme focuses on enhancing the capacity of teachers, school staff, and education professionals to provide quality education to CWD in regular classrooms. It also aims to raise awareness and change attitudes towards disability and inclusion in society. As of scholastic year 2022/2023, the programme is operational in 88 schools, which is almost in line with the earlier targets (90 schools).

In 2021, UNICEF commissioned an evaluation of the Inclusive Schools Pilot. The following findings deserve special attention:

- **Students** with disabilities are well-received in schools, and the prevailing atmosphere is conducive to their development. Despite initial concerns, school communities acknowledged benefits of the inclusion of CWD in

¹⁶³ IDI 18.

¹⁶⁴ PSNs.

¹⁶⁵ AWP 2021.

¹⁶⁶ IDI 18.

educational settings. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the schools and the interviewed children felt safe and accepted by peers and teachers.

- ▶ **Teachers** received extensive training; however, supporting students with disabilities remained a challenge for many. In particular, there was a widespread belief among teachers that CWD were not making significant progress in their learning. It seems that much more effort is needed to adequately prepare school staff to accompany CWD. Special attention should also be paid to developing a shared understanding of inclusive education and its goals.
- ▶ **Management:** There is no uniform practice in schools regarding the coordination of efforts aimed at supporting students with disabilities and evaluating teachers. The level of awareness and engagement of school principals in implementing the inclusive education agenda also varies.
- ▶ **Recommendations** for improvement include increasing the number of special educators, reducing class sizes, making curricular and examination adaptations, increasing arts and sports sessions, and providing psychological orientation and group counseling.

“As a positive practice, we form a class with both children with learning difficulties and children without learning difficulties because those with difficulties have the right to live through the same learning experience and get integrated in a class.” (IDI 11)

Due to limited data, it is more challenging to assess the effectiveness of inclusive policies in mainstream schools, however the fieldwork suggests that achievements in this area are more limited, yet still appreciated by school communities.

“In general, there is now more talk about including children with disabilities in schools. Our funds are constantly being used to remove barriers, but as schools are closed most of the time, it is difficult to talk about results.” (IDI 10)



From the Field: Inclusive education for children with disabilities

The launch of the Inclusive Schools programme with UNICEF support has resulted in an increase in the number of students with special needs attending public schools, and the interventions designed to support them have been highly praised by school staff and parents. Teachers reported being trained to implement individualized plans and adapt exams to cater to different learning challenges. According to testimonies from parents, children with special needs are treated equally by teachers and receive better attention and support compared to before the programme was introduced. Overall, the inclusive approach of the schools has led to improvements in students' academic performance and emotional well-being, fostering a supportive and encouraging learning environment.

In schools that were not part of the program, positive changes have also been observed in teachers' attitudes towards students with educational difficulties. However, in terms of physical infrastructure, these schools remain largely inaccessible to students with disabilities.

“The presence of the remedial therapist was extremely important as she designs individual plans with students. Also, she trained teachers on how to implement activities that allow students to better obtain a skill.” (principal)

“I had a student who was not able to vocalize a complete word, now he is the best performer in the class. Teachers and the psychologist provided him with self-confidence.” (principal)

“My son was bullied in his previous private school because he misspells the words. He hated the school. Here, and since it is an inclusive school, his situation improved. He received support and encouragement from all his teachers.” (parent)

3.2.6 In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programme been gender responsive or transformative?

In Lebanon, girls and boys have essentially equal access to educational opportunities. Available data and stakeholders' observations indicate that a similar number of girls and boys attend the first grades. The enrolment rates in NFE are also at a similar level for both genders.¹⁶⁷ Minor differences in access to education emerge at later stages of education and are to the detriment of boys, who are often compelled to work to contribute to their family's livelihood.¹⁶⁸

Data suggests that boys tend to drop out of school earlier than girls, particularly boys from the most impoverished families, who may start seeking employment as early as the age of 13.¹⁶⁹ In kindergarten and primary education up until grade 6, there is a slightly higher enrolment of boys compared to girls, regardless of the students' nationality. However, starting from grade 7, there is a shift with more girls enrolled than boys. Overall, there is a slightly higher enrolment of girls than boys, with girls making up 51.2% of the total enrolment from kindergarten to grade 12 in the 2020/21 academic year. At the upper secondary level, girls constitute 60.4% of the student body.

This disparity is also pronounced among Syrian children. In the age group of 6 to 14 years, 49% of Syrian boys and 56% of Syrian girls were attending school.¹⁷⁰ Among the reasons cited by caregivers of Syrian children for not attending school, the predominant factors were the high costs of education in case of girls and the need for a child to work in case of boys.¹⁷¹ In 2021, the share of Syrian girls attending primary school was higher than for Syrian boys, while in the previous two years, it was closer to parity. For lower secondary, and particularly for upper secondary, Syrian girls attended in larger shares than Syrian boys. For upper secondary, the share of Syrian girls attending compared to Syrian boys (1.31 Gender Parity Index - GPI¹⁷²) was higher than in 2020 and 2019 at 1.2 GPI and 0.95 GPI respectively.¹⁷³

UNICEF has dedicated special attention to interventions aimed at reducing the costs of children's education, contributing to the equalization of educational opportunities for girls and boys. These interventions include subsidizing enrolment fees, providing cash transfers for transportation, and the provision of free educational materials, including textbooks. This response seems to address the difficulties experienced by both Lebanese and non-Lebanese families in ensuring education for their children of both genders. At the same time, respondent statements suggest that due to the perceived lack of pronounced gender discrimination in access to education, the gender aspect of the access-focused interventions was not particularly emphasized.¹⁷⁴ As highlighted, however, by a UNICEF representative one systemic issue which is still unsolved and requires attention is hindered access to school for children of Lebanese mothers who do not have the Lebanese nationality. This is due to a discriminatory nationality law which requires that the ministry each year issues a decision for this group to be enrolled in schools. UNICEF advocated with the ministry to issue this decision, but there is a need for a more systemic solution which would not require annual decision-making.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁷ Final Evaluation Report CPE, IDI 26.

¹⁶⁸ MEHE Education Programme 2021-2025.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ VASyR 2021.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² GPI is the ratio of girls' attendance to boys' attendance. A GPI index below 0.97 indicates a disparity in favour of boys and an index above 1.03 indicates a disparity in favour of girls. (see: VASyR 2021)

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ IDI 27.

¹⁷⁵ Information obtained from a UNICEF representative in writing on 10 August 2023.



From the Field: Gender equality

All parents interviewed unanimously agreed that in Lebanon, their daughters have equal access to educational opportunities as their sons. However, one interview revealed only that girls are afraid to attend second shift schools because of the late time to go home and the related darkness.¹⁷⁶ It is important to continue monitoring and addressing any potential disparities to foster an environment where all children can thrive and reach their full potential through quality education.

In comparison, significant attention has been given to gender-related aspects in the context of child protection, particularly in combating violence against women and girls. In particular, UNICEF provided ongoing support to MEHE in implementing the Action Plan for the rollout of the Child Protection Policy in public schools. This support included the development and implementation of guidelines for mainstreaming GBV prevention and response. In addition, a separate module in TTCM was developed on gender mainstreaming in 2019,¹⁷⁷ which covered mitigation of GBV risks.

3.3 Efficiency

3.3.1 To what extent were UNICEF activities delivered in a timely manner, within the planned monetary resources allocated?

The implementation of the Education programme was significantly impacted by the multiple crises in Lebanon, which limited possible progress in the sector, impacted implementation timeliness and strained the available resources.

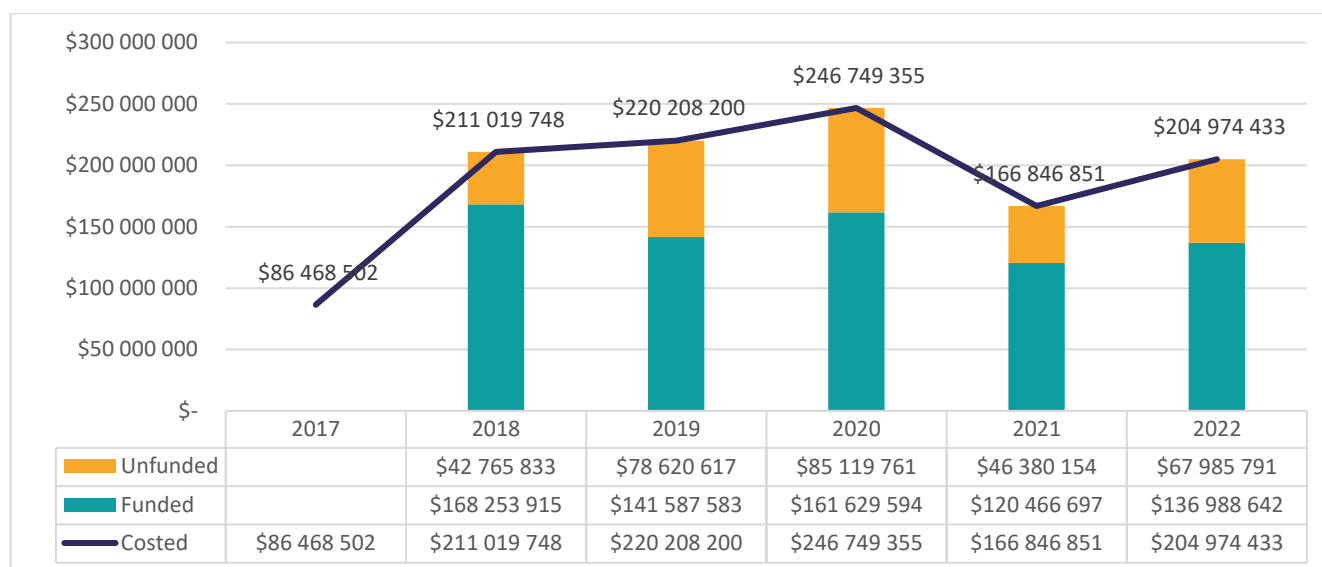
Nevertheless, the monetary resources allocated to the education programme were substantial, with the bulk of funding disbursed in cooperation with MEHE. **From 2018 to 2022 the funding amounted to 787.3 Mn USD**, with most of the funds allocated to Pillar I: Improved access to education opportunities – 728.9 Mn USD in total.¹⁷⁸ The figures below present monetary resources allocated to each pillar yearly.

¹⁷⁶ IDI 29.

¹⁷⁷ TTCM evaluation.

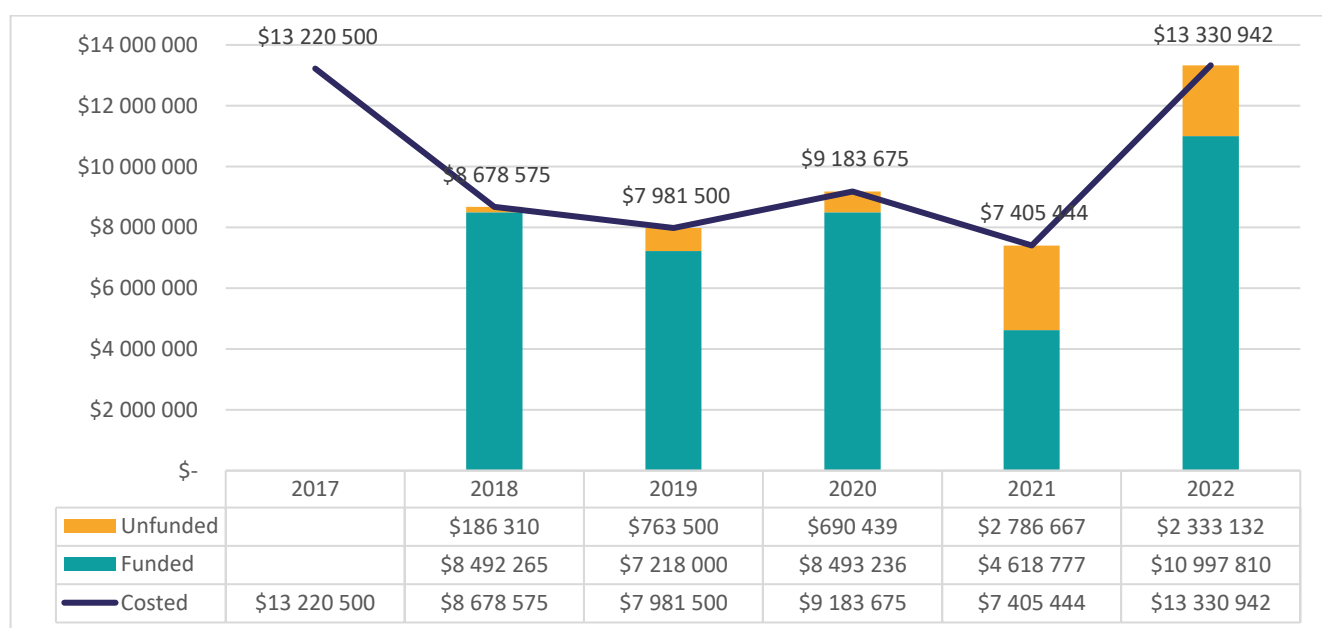
¹⁷⁸ Annual Work Plans from 2018 to 2022. The 2017 Annual Work Plan does not present the funded and unfunded values, only the target amount. The total target (costed) amount from 2018 to 2022 was 1.12 Bn USD, and 1.22 Bn from 2017 to 2022.

Figure 4 Pillar I: Improved access to education opportunities funding from 2018 to 2022, USD



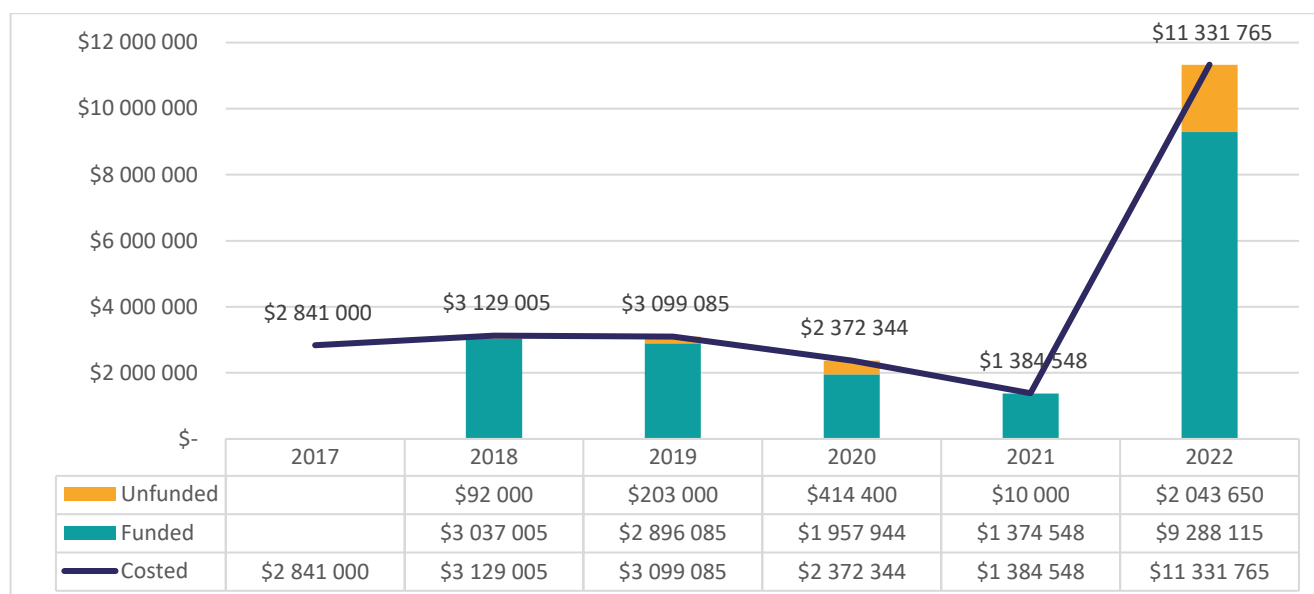
Source: UNICEF - MEHE Annual Work Plans

Figure 5 Pillar II: Improved quality of education services funding from 2018 to 2022, USD



Source: UNICEF-MEHE Annual Work Plans

Figure 6 Pillar III: Improved education systems funding from 2018 to 2022, USD



Source: UNICEF-MEHE Annual Work Plans

Looking at the relative year-on-year differences in the funded amount for the three pillars, a few changes are visible. Comparing 2019 to 2018, the funded amount decreased in each area: in Pillar I (Improved access to education opportunities) by 16% (-26.7 Mn USD), in Pillar II (Improved quality of education services) by 15% (-1.3 Mn USD) and 5% in Pillar III (Improved education systems) (-0.14 Mn USD). 2020 brought increased allocations for Pillar I (Improved access to education opportunities) – by 14% (+20 Mn USD) and Pillar II (Improved quality of education services) – 18% (+1.3 Mn USD). That year the allocation for Pillar III (Improved education systems) further decreased by 32% (-0.94 Mn USD). Allocations for each pillar decreased again in 2021: in Pillar I (Improved access to education opportunities) by 25% (-41.2 Mn USD), in Pillar II (Improved quality of education services) by 46% (-3.9 Mn USD) and in Pillar III (Improved education systems) by 30% (-0.58 Mn USD) as compared to 2020.

Perhaps the most notable changes in allocations are visible when comparing 2022 and 2021. In the case of Pillar III (Improved education systems) funding, which was consistently dropping from 2018 to 2021, the allocation increased by 576%. This 7.9 Mn USD increase is still small when compared to the nominal amount allocated to Pillar I (Improved access to education opportunities), but **marks the reframing of priorities in TREF.** To a lesser – but still notable – extent, **funding allocated to Pillar II (Improved quality of education services) also increased in 2022 as compared to 2021 by 138% (+6.4 Mn USD).** In the same timeframe, **the allocation for Pillar I (Improved access to education opportunities) increased by 14% (+16.5 Mn USD).**

Table 6 Change in funding from 2018 to 2022, funded amount, % year-on-year

Year	Pillar I: Improved access to education opportunities	Pillar II: Improved quality of education services	Pillar III: Improved education systems
2019	-16%	-15%	-5%
2020	14%	18%	-32%
2021	-25%	-46%	-30%
2022	14%	138%	576%

Source: UNICEF-MEHE Annual Work Plans

Giving qualitative context to the data presented above, interviewee statements suggested that the education programme progressed well until 2019 and in fact grew considerably, having gained attention from donors. This

allowed more and more children to be reached and the number of out of school children decreased.¹⁷⁹ However, since 2019 there have been considerable disruptions in schooling, with teachers going on strike and schools being closed. The crashing economy caused teachers to be unable to afford fuel necessary to physically get to the schools, which negatively affected the programme activities, despite the available funding.¹⁸⁰

This evaluation identified **stakeholder concerns about the funding model used until 2021, which was based on unit cost and relied on data that could not be verified**. The difficulty in assessing the baseline values for indicators and unit cost became particularly problematic as the economic crisis began and became more severe. Interviewees highlighted that the model lacked in transparency, control and accountability, leading to doubts about the efficiency of support and perceived mismatch between the size of funding and effects. In the words of one interviewee:

“You had 707,000 children, mostly Syrians, who are out of school and not learning. So either they dropped out or never had seen inside the classroom. So really on that basis alone, the programme isn’t fit for purpose because you have quite a large number proportionate to the population who are out of school and in particular like having 400 and some thousand Syrian children out of school and not learning when the international community had invested hundreds of millions in the system. That is the biggest indicator of something not being right.” (IDI 17)

However, it should be noted that the **TREF modality includes development of a new costing methodology, and interviewees have voiced optimism with regard to its transparency and reliability**.

3.3.2 Did UNICEF have appropriate structures, and adequate resources (technical and financial) to deliver its education programme? If there were any lack/problem in resources/capacity, how was this addressed?

Support to education of Syrian refugees under RACE II was managed by the Programme Management Unit (PMU), which functioned within MEHE. The interventions related to the Lebanese children were, in turn, managed by the MEHE’s Directorate General. While the adoption of this model was agreed with the Donors, this evaluation found that it was not working optimally for all stakeholders because of issues linked to duplication of structures and centralization of functions.

“It’s not only a responsibility of UNICEF but also partners, we’ve been having a system from 2013 to 2021 which has been very biased and weak in terms of controls, accountability. The (education) system in place until 2021 had several deficiencies and weaknesses in terms of governance, monitoring, data collection, financial monitoring, transparency, cost efficiency.” (IDI 01)

In terms of UNICEF’s human resources, interviewees noted that a **high turnover in positions** hindered efficient delivery of the education programme.¹⁸¹ In fact, this issue proved a limitation to this evaluation, hindering access to information about the early years of LCO-EP implementation.

In response to challenges, in 2020 UNICEF, MEHE and Donors created the Assurance Working Group as a platform that would conceptualize an improved modality supporting education. The resulting **TREF was formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2022**. Aside from changes in the programmatic structure, **the modality represents a shift in UNICEF’s resource management and the model of fund distribution aimed at increasing efficiency**.

¹⁷⁹ IDI 18.

¹⁸⁰ IDI 26.

¹⁸¹ IDIs 01, 24.

Within the LCO, the response involved **restructuring the section responsible for education, and a stabilization of human resources**. In the current setup, the education section is headed by the Chief of Education, with 22 full-time employees as well as consultants based in Beirut and eight field offices.¹⁸² Under TREF, UNICEF aims to work more directly with MEHE, strengthening the latter's capacity to manage and implement education interventions. This approach was positively evaluated by interviewees, however, there are several challenges related to such "hands-on" cooperation.

In the current framework, finances are managed directly by UNICEF and **delivered directly to recipients – the schools and teachers**. While such management diverges from the model that UNICEF usually adopts, i.e. transferring funds to responsible governmental institutions, it has been viewed as more flexible and adequate in face of the economic crisis in Lebanon.¹⁸³ By design, **this model allows stakeholders to have a clear understanding of where the funding goes**. However, it creates additional administrative burden on UNICEF in programme implementation.

Interviewees have also noted challenges related to the quality of data, which serves as basis for financing, and delays in implementing a unified database system (SIMS) (see Section 3.5.5. below). **The limited resources of MEHE, primarily in staff size, constrain the extent to which relevant capacity can be built, and in turn, tasks transferred**. As a result, the practical data management requires significant engagement of the LCO's staff to solve problems with data errors and inconsistencies.

3.3.3 To what extent was UNICEF able to effectively collaborate and coordinate externally with key stakeholders, and leverage existing partnerships?

UNICEF coordinated its activities within the Education programme with external partners. Some of that coordination was done through the UN Education Sector Working Group in which UNICEF serves as Sector Coordinator. The TREF Strategic Management Board (SMB) meetings were also assessed as useful platforms for collaboration and coordination.

Overall, the evidence collected in the evaluation suggests that UNICEF has effectively collaborated with key stakeholders to implement the education programme. In fact, UNICEF's initial presence in Lebanon was facilitated by a working-level cooperation with the UNHCR, which acted as a coordinator of the international sector's support in the early stages of the Syrian war crisis. UNHCR remained an important partner throughout the years of LCO-EP implementation, cooperating with UNICEF in selecting the second-shift schools, assessing access and out-of-school children issues, as well as in implementing initiatives such as back-to-school campaigns.

At the strategic level, UNICEF cooperates with a number of international institutions, such as UNHCR, UNESCO, and the World Bank (see Section 3.4 as well). In practice, this cooperation takes place informally, on a daily basis, as well as in technical settings in the context of policy discussions or coordinating the support provided to the Lebanese government.

UNICEF has maintained regular communication with MEHE, through the Director General's Office, which has been a key partner during the implementation of the Education programme. The ministry played a crucial role in supporting the education of refugee children, also assuming responsibility for the NFE, despite it being outside its original mandate. The relationship with MEHE has been complex, with difficulties under RACE II linked to resource monitoring and data correctness. To a large degree, the qualitative data collected depicts the PMU as a "black box", functioning with limited transparency, which raised questions about accountability. However, under TREF, the model of fund management has changed so as to streamline resource allocation and monitoring. In

¹⁸² IDI 17.

¹⁸³ IDI 16.

interviews, several donor representatives expressed satisfaction with the close partnership between the EU, Germany, UNICEF and MEHE under TREF. The resulting approach to the education programming meets requirements in terms of data collection, reporting and financial accountability. The first gains from cooperation have already been observed, notably in reforms at the school level, coordination with stakeholders, and improved data system.¹⁸⁴ UNICEF's other national partners with an important role in implementing the Education programme are the Guidance and Counseling Directorate and the Center of Educational Research and Development.

UNICEF has been the lead agency with regard to the NFE and formed a group of national and international NGOs working to address sector challenges and advocate for common goals.¹⁸⁵ To standardize the efforts, NGOs were required to apply for an expression of interest and join the sector group to participate in the NFE. This standardized curriculum and operating procedures attracted more partners to collaborate with MEHE, leading to increased coordination and alignment. Many new partners joined the table, working together under the same curriculum and standards of operation, while some partners continued their own independent initiatives in non-certified centers or their own premises.

3.3.4 Were there any inefficiencies because UNICEF did not work with certain partners (or if UNICEF only worked with the same set of partners)?

Research conducted for this evaluation did not indicate that significant inefficiencies occurred due to UNICEF's lack of work with certain partners. In fact, as described above, the scope of collaborations was conducive to the extent that the planned results have been achieved.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that closer collaboration in the field of education between UNICEF and the World Bank under the TREF framework connects efforts that have previously been separate, and so synergy and efficiency can be expected to improve as TREF progresses.

Additionally, interviews conducted at the local and field levels highlight the importance of building local-level partnerships to improve the effectiveness of UNICEF's support to education and the effects it has in schools and children's experiences (be it in interpersonal relations, teaching materials, teaching quality, or infrastructure quality). Such partnerships also contribute to the visibility of UNICEF's support and inform the communities' perceptions of who benefits from the support and why. While the LCO's work at the systemic (national) level remains a key vehicle for change in the education sector, work at the local level should not be omitted. This is particularly important in the face of contemporary challenges that the Lebanese society (including migrant groups) experience, given the significance of community-level resilience to overcoming such challenges.

3.3.5 Were appropriate monitoring and financial accountability mechanisms in place?

As noted above, **data collected in this evaluation suggests issues with the transparency and accountability mechanisms in place during the period of support to the RACE II modality.** The independence of the PMU in Lebanon was described as more significant than that of the similar units in other countries, with the PMU having a separate information system, field operators and significant decision-making power, in effect functioning in parallel to the DGE.¹⁸⁶ The lack of transparency around the use of resources and the lack of access to the fund

¹⁸⁴ IDI 01.

¹⁸⁵ According to LCO annual reporting, partnerships with NGOs included inter alia: Humanity and Inclusion, Mouvement Social, Youth Association of the Blind, Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI), Al Fayhaa, LOST, War Child Holland, World Vision International, as well as local Education Community Liaison volunteers.

¹⁸⁶ IDI 16.

distribution system limited UNICEF's and donors' ability to monitor transfers and to 'see what happens with the funding'.

In contrast, **interviewees viewed the solutions adopted in TREF as better suited for timely monitoring of results and financial transfers, as well as overall accountability.**

"Now, as far as TREF is concerned, the commitment is completely different than it was under RACE. Before, it was a black box. There were no formal agreements between UNICEF and MEHE. No sanctions. The situation between donors and UNICEF was clear – if you don't deliver, you don't pay. But this did not translate to the level of UNICEF and MEHE. It seems to me that all of these have now been dealt with very well under TREF." (IDI 02)

The overall assessment of TREF's improved accountability was voiced despite respondents noting that not all issues with data quality have been resolved yet. It is expected that, once all mechanisms are implemented, it will be easier for the LCO to monitor progress and communicate results to donors.

Currently, efforts are made to develop one information system that would integrate the multiple databases relevant to the education programme – the CERD database, the SIMS and the Compiler, which produce independent datasets of varying credibility. The efforts are aimed at resolving data-related challenges that appear to be twofold. First, there is a lack of data at the structural level. Throughout the RACE II implementation period, this lack particularly manifested in insufficient and/or untimely information on indicators, such as attendance of students and teachers, or completion rates. The second challenge is related to the parallel functioning of the AM and PM shifts, with specific solutions for teacher contracting and different funding sources. This results in multiple problems in data such as duplicated entries, spelling or translation errors, etc., which *"means a lot of manual, artisanal work, to split different information"* (IDI 16).

The integration of databases and development of a uniform, clear and (to the extent possible) error-free information system should be highlighted as a key prerequisite for efficient implementation of the LCO-EP, as envisaged in TREF.

Despite commitments outlined in the S2R2 programme, MEHE has not yet been able to develop an Information Management Strategy that would address these challenges. It has been unable to structure or enforce a national data management and analysis framework that predictably reports on the health of the public education system, its teaching corps, or its students.¹⁸⁷ Insufficient data on efficiency, quality and achievement is a constraint for evidence-based policy as well as programme implementation. UNICEF documents note that these issues have in fact negatively impacted the pace and capacity of payments, and stress the need to increase MEHE's ability to produce informative analyses on education indicators that rely on a unified data source.¹⁸⁸

UNICEF supports data collection and works directly with the MEHE's IT team to ensure good-quality data. Nevertheless, the issues do not seem to be solely related to IT systems and competencies – as one of the interviewees stated: *"It is just a symptom. It's all about the way people usually operate and how it changes"* (IDI 16).

3.3.6 To what extent are social and gender disaggregated data collected and monitored during the programming? How efficiently did UNICEF respond to equity-based challenges?

A number of **challenges related to data collection and monitoring have occurred during the implementation of the Education programme**, as described above in section 3.3.5 and 3.2. As highlighted when discussing

¹⁸⁷ EU PROPOSAL 2020, internal document provided to Ecorys by UNICEF.

¹⁸⁸ LCO Annual Report 2022.

effectiveness, the programme's result framework relied primarily on government-sourced data, which were not considered unequivocally reliable. The result framework shows that, in the absence or low quality of government data, alternative indicators to gather evidence have not been conceptualized, while some of the monitoring tools designed by UNICEF were not sufficiently accurate.

On the other hand, **UNICEF, together with UNHCR and WFP, issues the annual Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) analysis, and contributes to the online Inter-agency education sector dashboard.**¹⁸⁹ Both of these information sources provide evidence that social- and gender-disaggregated data are collected, with themes such as gender, age, disability and conflict-sensitivity/social stability considered as dimensions or topics of analyses.¹⁹⁰

3.4 Coherence

3.4.1 How does UNICEF's work fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programs/interventions)?

Desk research and interviews show that UNICEF's work fits well with the priorities of external partners. Within the education sector, the priorities have been expressed in the major policy frameworks, such as RACE or the MEHE 5-year plan (for more on these see Sections 1.1.5 and 1.2.1). As the interviews consistently confirmed, external partners have been working within this common broader policy framework, encompassing three pillars of access, quality and system strengthening, with an initial emphasis on Syrian refugees shifting somewhat post-2019 to accommodate the growing needs of Lebanese children and their parents.

Some differences in the main priorities between external partners have been identified during the evaluation, yet they still fit well within the overall LCO-EP. These differences are largely along the lines of beneficiary nationality or specific vulnerabilities, the supported pillar or type of education (the FE or the NFE, all education or only public education). Some donors have consistently prioritized support to Syrian refugees, while also acknowledging the changing context and increasing vulnerabilities of Lebanese children.¹⁹¹ There are also preferences among donors towards supporting either the FE or the NFE. For instance, through its QITABI programme the USAID has exclusively focused on formal education. Conversely, some donors choose to focus on the NFE, including due to the mistrust towards the formal education sector, while others are focused on specific aspects of education such as inclusion.¹⁹²

The wide scope of UNICEF LCO-EP enabled both UNICEF and its external partners to find areas of alignment. Donors, in particular, were able to pick those components which they wanted to support, although some also chose not to earmark their support for specific interventions.¹⁹³ In this manner, LCO-EP has functioned as a platform integrating different donors and their priorities around education and as a vehicle for channeling resources into the education system.

However, regarding more recent developments, some interviews with donors show that it is not yet clear for them how TREF's window II would or could align with their priorities because the conceptualization of

¹⁸⁹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/working-group/17?sv=4&geo=71>

¹⁹⁰ VASyR 2022; Strategic Review of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021.

¹⁹¹ E.g. IDIs 07, 06, etc.

¹⁹² IDI 10.

¹⁹³ E.g. IDI 09.

this component is still lacking. The interviewees expressed a desire to learn more about the details in order to be able to support this aspect of LCO-EP.¹⁹⁴

During programme implementation, **UNICEF involved some external actors in its activities.** Many INGOs and NGOs working with children in Lebanon were involved in the programme's NFE activities as implementing partners. They are thus not strictly external. UNICEF was able to tap into the non-governmental sector's potential, stemming e.g. from specialist knowledge (work with children with SEND) or stronger embeddedness in local communities.

However, **some of those INGOs and/or NGOs also implemented NFE activities independently of LCO-EP, but with the support from the same donors.** One interviewed donor argued that such a scheme helps them as a donor to reduce middle-man costs that UNICEF would generate. While this is a valid argument and donors are free to choose their grantees, the practice has its downsides. It fragments resources, decreasing the coherence of NFE activities across the country; increases the need for coordination, diverting resources from implementation; creates a risk of double-financing and increases the reporting burden. The interviewee themselves noticed the downsides of this arrangement in practice:

„Sometimes those partners are also supported by UNICEF, which creates some issues. There are different guidelines, requests, implementation principles. We would like to have some control, or alignment, or homogenized approach between UNICEF and us. There are improvements to be done, when you have partners implementing activities funded by different donors.” (IDI 01)

Beyond alignment on priorities, UNICEF's work under LCO-EP complemented and synergized with the work of external partners in the field.

In particular, UNICEF and UNHCR appear to have found complementarities and synergies in their work. Given the organization's mandate, the UNHCR's work on education falls under the umbrella of international protection. The UNHCR has collaborated with UNICEF since the beginning of the refugee crisis based on a global agreement that allowed the two agencies to divide their respective niches. In the first days of the refugee crisis, the agencies collaborated on ensuring enrolment of refugee children. The UNHCR would pay tuitions, while UNICEF would do capacity building. In 2013/14, the two agencies together with MEHE adopted the second shift approach and gradually developed the network of schools with PM classes for refugee children. With the development of RACE I and RACE II, the collaboration between the agencies continued through capacity building, rehabilitation, school boxes, training of teachers with strong coordination nationally and locally to avoid duplication. Around 2015, the agencies started deploying experts to MEHE, using harmonized salary scales and coherent terms of reference.

Over time, with the reduction of some overlaps, the work of both agencies seems to have become even more complementary. The UNHCR discontinued institutional support to MEHE, relying on UNICEF to deliver system strengthening activities. The UNHCR does not work on the quality pillar due to the lack of expertise in curriculum development, but e.g. uses the BLN curriculum developed by UNICEF, multiplying the effects and impact of UNICEF's work. The UNHCR focuses on access to education for Syrian refugees, which is also the main focus of the UNICEF's Education programme. But, while UNICEF's approach has been largely centralized and focused on subsidizing and supporting enrolment in public education, the UNHCR concentrates on NFE community-based initiatives, using its links to the refugee population. It also does awareness raising on the importance of education. These activities also feed into LCO-EP. The evaluation thus shows that the **UNHCR is an important ally that can facilitate implementation of UNICEF's work and increase its impact in the access pillar.** It also provides evidence of how both agencies have been able to use their mandates, expertise and specific

¹⁹⁴ IDIs 06, 02.

projects to further the same overarching objectives. Table 7 below describes examples of cooperation and interventions which directly or indirectly supported or could support UNICEF's work in the Education programme.

Table 7 Example of UNHCR interventions

The UNHCR created a network of **Education Community Liaisons (ECLs)**. In 2021, it supported 347 ECLs in 320 schools.¹⁹⁵ ECLs are UNHCR volunteers at community and school level who received capacity building and operate in second shift schools. The ECLs are Syrians with a certain academic level. Their tasks include e.g.:

- following up on absenteeism,
- mediating between students and education personnel, as well as between parents and education personnel, and
- identifying violence, bullying, and pupils with learning difficulties.¹⁹⁶

This network has been used to support LCO-EP. In the past three years, UNICEF developed the Cash for Education intervention to support school attendance. The ECLs were able to facilitate that work by identifying absenteeism.¹⁹⁷

The UNHCR also works with UNICEF on the **Blueprint Joint Action for Refugee Children**. UNHCR aims at enhancing access for refugee children and youth to essential services in the key areas of education.¹⁹⁸

The complementarities can also be mentioned with the Quality Instruction Towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI) programme implemented by World Learning and funded by the USAID.¹⁹⁹

QITABI focuses on substantive work on the quality of education in public schools, developing curricula and conducting teacher training. Due to USAID financing rules, QITABI cannot finance certain costs. As noted by an interviewee, UNICEF was able to support QITABI work within its Learning Recovery Plan by covering those costs (e.g. compensation for teacher trainers, operational costs), enabling delivery of training to many teachers.

Table 8 Basic information about QITABI

There have so far been three rounds of QITABI. QITABI 1 was completed in 2019 (\$45M); QITABI 2 started in 2019 and will last until 2023 (\$90M), while QITABI 3 will be implemented from 2023 to 2028 (\$97M). The overarching objective of QITABI is to improve learning outcomes for grades 1 to 6 in terms of literacy, numeracy and social and emotion skills. QITABI works with 883 primary public schools within the system. It designs curricula and training for teachers. The training is implemented as a cascade (training of trainers). QITABI has trained over 20,000 teachers within the 2022-2023 academic year. It developed classroom observation tools and trained DOPS on how to use these to capture how many teachers implement the content/lessons of the QITABI training.

UNESCO is another actors working on education in Lebanon in a manner potentially complementary and synergetic to UNICEF, although our evidence suggests a need for stronger coordination to achieve this.

¹⁹⁵ Information available at: www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/02/UNHCR-Lebanon-Education-Fact-sheet_December-2021.pdf

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ E.g. LCO_OUTPUT (2.1 and 2.2 and 2.3)_NARRATIVES_Edu28122022_Final, internal UNICEF document shared with Ecorys.

¹⁹⁸ Information available at: www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/02/UNHCR-Lebanon-Education-Fact-sheet_December-2021.pdf

¹⁹⁹ Information available at: www.worldlearning.org/program/quality-instruction-towards-access-and-basic-education-improvement/

Unlike UNICEF for which access has been the leading area of engagement, UNESCO does not work much on this pillar. It focuses on various aspects of quality and system strengthening. This includes directly supporting MEHE education programs, e.g. on the subjects such as gender, higher education, and VET. It involves work on policy issues and instruments, sectoral strategies, as well as monitoring and evaluation of these strategies. In this respect, there is potential for overlap and work duplication between the two agencies. While there are platforms for coordination (e.g. the UN Education Working Group) and bilateral meetings with efforts to avoid duplication, the two institutions have separate plans and agendas, and some interviewees indicated a need for more joint work between UNICEF and UNESCO. While UNICEF's added value was seen particularly in the strategic work and system change, UNESCO's strengths were perceived in particular in the area of quality.

Under the LCO-EP, UNICEF worked on quality. However, its contribution in this respect experienced some limitations (see Section 3.2.1.2 on effectiveness) warranting a critical assessment of its involvement in this respect. For one, the volume of this work as compared to the access-focused interventions (and system strengthening under TREF) is much smaller²⁰⁰ and less visible for stakeholders, e.g. donors;²⁰¹ UNICEF's contribution has strongly focused on providing financial resources, while the major substantive responsibilities lied with MEHE and CERD, which both shape the content of the interventions, such as teacher training. Some interviewees expressed doubts regarding UNICEF's capacity to work on the quality pillar in a more substantive manner.²⁰² Finally, there are other strong actors working systemically on the quality pillar, such as QITABI, UNESCO or the World Bank. Yet these considerations should not be seen as criticism; in an intervention as extensive as LCO-EP, trade-offs are inevitable and spreading resources thin is a risk. The evaluators do not see this necessarily as a call for UNICEF to get more substantively engaged in the quality pillar (e.g. development / renewal of the country's curricula), although stakeholders do perceive quality as an area demanding stronger focus in the future.²⁰³ This should, however, be taken as an opportunity for UNICEF to join forces with specialized actors working on quality, such as QITABI and UNESCO. This was also suggested by one of the interviewed donors.

„As a partner, I am not against having other agencies being part of TREF to implement some activities that UNICEF cannot implement. I would not oppose that.” (IDI 01)

These actors could lead on curricula development and content of teacher training. UNICEF, in turn, could continue operational support, but would also be able to focus stronger on quality education issues such as child protection and inclusion where it noted considerable achievements and which are part of its mandate. The agency could shift the remaining resources to areas of its comparative advantage, i.e. access to education and system strengthening, including pushing for broader education system reforms. This is where it could leverage its leading role in the education sector, the relations with donors and MEHE. Stakeholders see UNICEF's potential in this respect. **The evaluation found that UNICEF is able to coordinate and implement advocacy activities with and on behalf of external stakeholders.** This includes voicing concerns of the refugees, advocating for reducing barriers to access and participation. UNICEF's relationship with MEHE is noticed and perceived as a powerful resource.²⁰⁴

“We count on [UNICEF] [...] For example, if [our organization] is not around the table of discussion, we coordinate with UNICEF to voice refugees' concerns. We cannot be also on all discussion tables.” (IDI 13)

Looking into the future, in its strategic and reform-focused work, UNICEF should cooperate strongly with the World Bank. Since 2016, the World Bank has operated one of the biggest interventions aside from the LCO-EP, namely the Support to Race II (S2R2).²⁰⁵ Its aim has been to “continue to help expand access to schools for

²⁰⁰ IDI 17.

²⁰¹ IDI 07.

²⁰² IDIs 01, 04.

²⁰³ IDIs 01, 02. See also, World Bank (2021), Foundations for building forward better. An education reform path for Lebanon, available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/627001624033308257/pdf/Foundations-for-Building-Forward-Better-An-Education-Reform-Path-for-Lebanon.pdf>

²⁰⁴ E.g. IDIs 04, 07.

²⁰⁵ Information available at: www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/09/27/us224-million-more-to-support-the-lebanese-education-system

all children in Lebanon, with an increased focus on improving the quality and inclusiveness of the teaching and learning environment, and on strengthening the national education system, its policies, planning and monitoring capacities.”²⁰⁶ Mirroring the structure of RACE, S2R2 deals with the three pillars, thus also overlapping with LCO-EP. Despite this overlap, stakeholders noted that the coordination between UNICEF and the World Bank had been difficult to establish until recently.²⁰⁷ TREF has brought some change, with UNICEF and the World Bank currently working together on the productivity allowance.²⁰⁸ Beyond that, the World Bank has developed a path for an education reform for Lebanon,²⁰⁹ which could become a stronger part of the work implemented under TREF.

3.4.2 How does UNICEF Education programme align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF?

The LCO-EP is an integral part of the Agency’s broader programming, as captured by the UNICEF country programme documents. The latter spell out multi-sectoral and multi-faceted visions for UNICEF’s responses to the country’s increasingly complex political, economic and social situation.²¹⁰ In the 2017-2020 Country Programme Document (CPD), education falls within the Child Development component, the remaining four being Child Survival, Child Protection, Social Inclusion and Youth Development.²¹¹ The mid-term review of the 2017-2020 CPD led to a shift towards “an integrated, inter-sectoral approach to address multiple drivers of child vulnerability [...] accompanied by joint advocacy for national policies on gender-based violence, child protection in schools, inclusive education in schools, and strategies on child marriage.”²¹² Given the interconnections and interdependencies between interventions in different sectors, the approach has to be viewed positively. As the situation in Lebanon increasingly shows, the fulfilment of the child’s right to education depends on the family’s economic situation, and its capacity to avoid negative coping mechanisms, e.g. child labor. The family’s economic situation can be positively affected by appropriate social protection interventions. The interventions in the education sector can, in turn, influence other dimensions of children’s lives, e.g. by increasing child safety or health.

Indeed, as noted in previous sections, the LCO-EP supported intersectoral interventions, especially those at the cross-section of education and child protection and social inclusion. This has been done, for example, through the development and rollout in schools of the Child Protection Policy as part of the Education Programme, and support to the government’s Inclusive Schools Pilot project, as explained in previous sections.

On the other hand, UNICEF’s interventions in other sectors have the potential to contribute to the LCO-EP’s results, as they are well-aligned with identified population needs and address some key problems affecting enrolment and retention. Given the deteriorating economic situation bringing about negative coping mechanisms, this includes interventions in the social protection sector which respond to the increasing population poverty and vulnerability. For example, to reach households living in extreme poverty, in June 2021 UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs introduced the **Haddi programme**.²¹³ The programme is a national social assistance intervention that provides a child grant in the form of a cash transfer paid through a money transfer agency. Families with one child identified receive US \$40 per month, US \$60 for two and US \$80 for three or more children identified.²¹⁴ The programme also links beneficiaries to complementary services, as part of its

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ IDIs 01, 15.

²⁰⁸ IDI 14.

²⁰⁹ World Bank (2021), Foundations for building forward better. An education reform path for Lebanon, available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/627001624033308257/pdf/Foundations-for-Building-Forward-Better-An-Education-Reform-Path-for-Lebanon.pdf>

²¹⁰ See e.g. Universalis (2021), Country Programme Evaluation UNICEF – Lebanon (2017-2021). Report.

²¹¹ UNICEF (2016), Country Programme Document. Lebanon, E/ICEF/2016/P/L.30, 5 August 2016.

²¹² Universalis (2021), Country Programme Evaluation UNICEF – Lebanon (2017-2021). Report, p. 24.

²¹³ Information available at: www.unicef.org/lebanon/reports/haddi-programme

²¹⁴ UNICEF (2021), Paving the way for a National Child Grant in Lebanon. The ‘Haddi’ programme, available at: www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/7301/file/Haddi%20Child%20Grant%20Oct%202021%20EN.pdf

integrated approach. As of July 2022, Haddi benefited 85,000 Lebanese and non-Lebanese families, with 130,000 vulnerable people registered in the programme.²¹⁵ The vulnerable individuals reached by Haddi are identified by UNICEF partners and include children involved in child labor, at risk of child marriage, excluded from school, CWD, or poorly nourished.²¹⁶

Further still, UNICEF Lebanon and the Mental Health Programme of the Ministry of Public Health are currently starting a social media initiative called “Unmute Mental Health,”²¹⁷ aimed at tackling the mental health issues linked to the ongoing crisis and its effects on youth. Whereas the programme does not constitute a part of UNICEF LCO-EP, it addresses issues that are directly relevant to education of children and young people. UNICEF is thus increasing its efforts at responding to the challenges of the country context both within and outside of the evaluated programme.

Aside from its own Education programme, UNICEF Lebanon is also one of the three grantees, alongside Save the Children and UNESCO, under the **Education Cannot Wait (ECW) programme**.²¹⁸ While Save the Children focuses on service delivery and UNESCO on teacher training, UNICEF's emphasis is on the system-level aspects. The ECW concentrates on the NFE.²¹⁹ It is not clear to the evaluation team what specific interventions are implemented by UNICEF under ECW and therefore how they align with LCO-EP. However, the overall aspirations, such as creating frameworks for multiple flexible pathways, establishing a certification process, and implementing school improvement plans,²²⁰ appear in line with the Education programme. Similarly, discussions with MEHE around the ECW seem to revolve around the same issues of relevance to the Lebanese education sector.



From the Field: Awareness of UNICEF's activities

The school communities' awareness of UNICEF activities, both in the school and the education sector in general, appears to be limited based on the responses. Some respondents mentioned that they were aware of UNICEF activities implemented in their school, with QITABI project being mentioned most frequently (sic!), but had no knowledge of any other educational initiatives or collaborations with MEHE or other stakeholders. The lack of clarity on whether certain projects are UNICEF-funded or not was also noted. Nevertheless, teachers who attended training sessions expressed appreciation for the incentives provided, acknowledging that UNICEF's support demonstrated a higher level of care and concern compared to the government's. The discussions with the Lebanese population revealed a particular lack of awareness regarding UNICEF's contributions to the school and public education system. Among parents, the level of awareness is generally higher among Syrian parents than Lebanese parents. These findings underscore the importance of improving communication channels and promoting a better understanding of UNICEF's initiatives to ensure maximum impact and effective collaboration within the education sector.

“Despite being the head of the educational committee, I do not have a full knowledge on the project, and this is something to be considered by relevant stakeholders.” (local authority representative)

3.4.3 How does UNICEF Education programme support coordination at MEHE to ensure complementarity and reduce duplication?

Beyond what has already been reported under previous sections, the collected evidence shows that UNICEF provides substantial support to MEHE, e.g. in policy-making, programming, human resources, coordination with

²¹⁵ Information available at : www.unicef.org/lebanon/stories/lending-helping-hand

²¹⁶ See: www.unicef.org/lebanon/stories/here-i-am-aged-31-asking-aid-first-time-my-life

²¹⁷ [UNMUTE Mental Health | UNICEF Lebanon](https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/stories/unmute-mental-health)

²¹⁸ For more information on this global program, see: www.educationcannotwait.org/

²¹⁹ IDI 27.

²²⁰ IDI 27.

other actors, infrastructure, etc. While it is not clear to what extent this is directly aimed at ensuring complementarity and reducing duplication, it is likely that UNICEF's support contributes to these goals, especially given UNICEF's deep familiarity and engagement in the education sector. At the same time, some overlaps have been identified in between the work of various actors, suggesting that there may be room for improvement.

3.5 Impact

3.5.1 What has been so far the impact of the UNICEF Education to the overall education sector in Lebanon? Has UNICEF been able to leverage its impact e.g., by attracting other partners (private, public, or other donors)?

The intended impact of LCO-EP was to support the structuring of an inclusive and equitable public education system in Lebanon by 2020 that promotes effective teaching environments, relevant learning outcomes, and opportunities for lifelong learning for all children between 3-18 years of age.²²¹ The evidence suggests that LCO-EP has contributed to progress in this respect.

On the one hand, thanks to UNICEF's efforts, the system has indeed become more inclusive and equitable. During the evaluation period, a significant number of non-Lebanese children were included for the first time in the FE in the country or engaged in adapted NFE activities. The MEHE-UNICEF sector partnership has also managed to lay the foundations for an inclusive education system for CWD and mainstream this issue onto the Ministry's agenda. Although the retention rate among the most vulnerable students remains far from satisfactory, it should be acknowledged that any time spent by a child in safe and stimulating environment is likely to have a positive impact on their well-being and future prospects.

On the other hand, implementing structural changes in the education system was highly challenging due to the exceptionally unstable political and economic situation in the country and the transient hardships in collaboration with MEHE. Consequently, the overall structure of the education system did not undergo significant changes.

The impact of the LCO-EP on the quality of education remains open to discussion. From one perspective, existing data indicates a deterioration in educational outcomes for children in Lebanon between 2016 and 2019, and more recent data is not available. From another perspective, UNICEF in collaboration with CERD implemented the TTCM, an innovative teacher training system whose impact may only become visible in the future. As noted by one interviewee, the effects of this collaboration are likely to continue because the joint activities have focused on reforms in applied approaches.²²² However, the trained teachers indicate that without continuous retraining, their skills are likely to diminish over time. Among key stakeholders, there is also the opinion that without a comprehensive reform of teacher recruitment and retention systems, significant improvement in the quality of education in the country is not possible.

From the analysis conducted, it appears that the programme achieved the most limited impact in the area of system strengthening. Due to the high turnover of staff at MEHE and frequent changes in the position of the Minister itself, UNICEF largely managed LCO-EP independently, without strengthening the internal capacities of MEHE. Given the difficulties in financial management on the government side, financial operations were also taken over by UNICEF. On the one hand, this allowed for improved control over fund expenditure, but on the other hand, led to the reinforcement of a parallel management structure, not conducive to sustaining the effects of the programme in the long-term.

²²¹ PSNs.

²²² IDI 21.

3.5.2 What approaches have the potential for further upscaling through work of UNICEF and its partners?

Available data and respondents' statements indicate that the greatest strength of LCO-EP is its ability to provide access to education for the most vulnerable populations, including Syrian refugees. It seems that a multidimensional approach to this objective has proven successful. On the one hand, UNICEF worked with the government to develop appropriate pathways to education for non-Lebanese children. On the other hand, it persistently reached out to refugee families to properly identify barriers hindering their participation in schooling (such as high enrolments fees, transportation, and educational materials) and made effective efforts to address them. It can be presumed that, had it not been for successive crises, these efforts would have resulted in a sustained increase in the enrolment of Syrian children in schools in Lebanon. Respondents also positively assessed UNICEF's efforts in the development of child protection policies and programs, suggesting that they should be upscaled to all schools in the country.

The research team has carefully observed the latest innovative developments of the LCO-EP, including administrative measure implemented in TREF and several initiatives piloted in 2022, such as remote learning hotlines and summer schools. The initial outcomes of those activities are encouraging, but further monitoring is necessary to assess their potential for upscaling.

3.6 Sustainability

3.6.1 What are the key barriers and bottlenecks towards achieving sustainability of UNICEF education programming? What are contributing factors and constraints that require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of results?

Overall, the sustainability of the programme – understood as the plausibility of continued activities and results in the future without UNICEF's further involvement – cannot be assessed positively. As highlighted multiple times above, the programme operates in a very difficult and changing country context. Many barriers to achieving sustainability are external to the programme itself. However, the preliminary findings suggest that some parts of the programme could be tailored or modified to increase sustainability.

The education programme operates in an extremely difficult country context. Multiple crises affect and impoverish large parts of the country population. This is interlinked with high political instability. Several interviewees highlighted that with political changes occurring at a very high pace, any system strengthening effort is very difficult.²²³ In the course of programme implementation, there have been several changes of the ministers of education, undermining continuity of the efforts.²²⁴ The findings also point towards the challenges in the government system itself, with reports of mismanagement and corruption scandals, undermining the reform potential at the central level.²²⁵

There are also structural issues in the Lebanese education sector that render it difficult to reform. The sector itself is resource-intensive, e.g., due to the high teacher to student ratio. The latter is, in turn, caused by the very high number of teachers in the system. With the list of teachers not accurately updated, stakeholders report that salaries may be paid to “ghost” teachers – people that no longer work in the system because they passed away or for other reasons.²²⁶ However, there are families and communities that likely depend on this income.

²²³ IDIs 06, 16, 18.

²²⁴ IDI 18.

²²⁵ IDIs 03, 08.

²²⁶ E.g. IDI 27.

Attempts at reform would entail massive layoffs, creating tensions and discontent in the country. At the same time, the system is facing a “brain drain”, with many qualified teachers and other professionals having left the country, further limiting the system’s capacity.²²⁷

In fact, the problems run even deeper. The crises left the national education system without sufficient resources to ensure the functioning of schools, e.g. to pay salaries to teachers and school staff. The capacity of schools to accommodate refugees (in terms of facilities as well as staff availability) was limited at the onset, and the inflow of refugee children has put additional pressure. The public education system is “on and off”, with months-long school closures due to teachers’ strikes. UNICEF has largely filled in those gaps, providing additional capacity to the government to support the crisis response in the education sector. In the evaluated period, the scale of the crises was such that several respondents indicated the crucial role of UNICEF in sustaining the education sector in Lebanon. They assessed that **without the LCO-EP intervention, the system would likely have collapsed**.²²⁸ This puts the sustainability assessment further into perspective.

In the crisis context, **the distinction between the humanitarian and development aspects of international interventions became blurred**. This is also true for LCO-EP whose activities have largely effectively fallen under the humanitarian umbrella. In the words of one interviewee, *“we are in a state of emergency where we can no longer draw a line between emergency and development”*. Such concerns were expressed by multiple respondents. The programme in large part was directed towards helping the refugee children access education, including support to the strained Lebanese education system to accommodate the refugee influx.²²⁹ Without humanitarian assistance, any access to school would indeed be impossible for these children. With the lack of resources for covering even the basic needs, for many families education of their children was unaffordable. This became increasingly true also for the many Lebanese families impoverished by the subsequent crises. The versatility and comprehensive approach of UNICEF encompassing humanitarian elements (cash assistance, transport fees, etc.) was instrumental in enabling some form of education participation to children, as was UNICEF’s flexibility in addressing subsequent crises and adjusting the programme interventions to respond to emerging problems.²³⁰ On the flip side, however, the more long-term oriented interventions at a systemic level were not pursued to a sufficient extent.²³¹ Two aspects are further related to that – the insufficient focus on systemic issues and limited leverage regarding country-level reform.

Regarding the **insufficient system-orientation of the LCO-EP implementation**, the picture is quite complex as well. According to several respondents, UNICEF’s comparative advantage lies in systemic work, such as designing or informing national strategies and policies, data collection and analysis, as well as reporting. As one interviewee put it, *“UNICEF is not about people, it’s about the system”*.²³² UNICEF plays such a role in Lebanon as well, setting the strategy for the education sector, including coordination with donors and other actors.²³³ Moreover, the Education programme is implemented in partnership with MEHE, both RACE II and TREF being interventions under the government auspices.²³⁴ This is part of a broader approach whereby interventions are government-led and the international partners rely on national strategies and policies in programme implementation.²³⁵ This approach does, in fact, carry a promise of sustainability. Nevertheless, the opportunities for UNICEF to participate or contribute to system reform were very limited, especially in the RACE II implementation period. The most often referred reason for this situation is the internal organization and politics within MEHE at the time, with little

²²⁷ IDI 14.

²²⁸ IDIs 01, 08.

²²⁹ IDIs 04, 08.

²³⁰ IDI 08.

²³¹ IDI 04.

²³² IDIs 04, 15.

²³³ IDIs 08, 11.

²³⁴ The role of this partnership for the effectiveness of the programme, as well as the differences between RACE II and TREF, have been discussed in Section 3 above.

²³⁵ IDI 15.

transparency and limited access for UNICEF (and other partners) into its work. One interviewee described it as the coordination structure within MEHE “having its own life”.²³⁶ Related to it is the unsuccessful capacity building within MEHE – the goals related to building financial and management competencies within MEHE, or handing over some parts of RACE programme operations to MEHE, were not achieved. The technical assistance provided by UNICEF was often going beyond support and into providing the services.²³⁷ This does not improve the sustainability prospects either.

Nevertheless, **despite the government’s reluctance to introduce broader reforms, some changes at the systemic level have been achieved.** Examples include embedding the right to education for CWD in national policies (see section 3.6.2 below). Significant organizational changes have been introduced with TREF, also with the intention of “strengthen[ing] policymaking and implementation”.²³⁸ It is too early to assess whether those result in shifts at the systemic level. The preoccupation remains strong among stakeholders. At the same time, they underline the need to continue work with the central level government while shifting the approach to more reform-oriented.²³⁹

This is, in turn, related to the **limited opportunities to tie funding to reforms at the country level.** There have been discussions around attaching a conditionality to funding, including for LCO-EP, as the donors have been growing reluctant to finance the sector without seeing expected results. Even though the funding responds to vital needs, multiple respondents worry that without any obligations attached, the government will not be sufficiently determined to reform the system. In words of one interviewee *„[the education sector is] reaching a level of dependency from international donors, which is unsustainable, that’s why you need to put stricter guidelines because of the tendency to rely too much on the international community support.”*²⁴⁰ Another interviewee expressed the related dilemma – without the continued support from donors, the education sector in the country will not be able to provide education: *“we are doomed if we do [provide funding] and we are doomed if we don’t”*.²⁴¹ Indeed, **multiple donor representatives are in favor of introducing some sort of conditionality**, tying the future funding to systemic reforms at the national level, or achievement of performance objectives.²⁴² However, one needs to delineate between the humanitarian and development elements of the nexus.

Humanitarian support is still very much needed in the country, and should not be subject to any conditionality rules. The acute challenge in the Lebanese education system – approx. 700,000 out-of-school children – persists, and the national system lacks the capacity to address it. Therefore, in the short and medium term, the humanitarian leg is vital from the perspective of ensuring access to education: addressing the most basic material needs at the family level preconditions children’s participation in education.²⁴³ However, from the sustainability perspective, the changes at the systemic level are crucial in order to build this capacity. The remaining question is how to delineate these activities under LCO-EP and *“find that balance between humanitarian assistance and sustainable responsibility or accountability from the government side”*.²⁴⁴

In terms of enhancing the sustainability of the programme, future changes should entail two elements: **a greater focus of LCO-EP on the development aspect of the programme**, and a form of **conditionality and/or strategic leverage to ensure systemic reforms**. Based on the input from respondents, the possible approach may include several elements:

²³⁶ IDI 15.

²³⁷ IDI 24.

²³⁸ Comment by Edouard Beigbender at the launch of TREF, UNICEF Representative in Lebanon, [The Ministry of Education launches the Transition Resilience Education Fund, to support Lebanon’s Education Sector \(unicef.org\)](#), accessed 17 May 2023.

²³⁹ IDIs 11, 15.

²⁴⁰ IDI 01.

²⁴¹ IDI 08.

²⁴² IDIs 04, 11.

²⁴³ IDI 08.

²⁴⁴ IDI 11.

- **Focus on priorities:** Narrowing down the scope of the programme around priorities in the Lebanese education sector, as well as based on UNICEF's competence and comparative advantage. An interviewee indicated outreach and provision of minimum education to as many children as possible as such a priority, as well as the focus on the most vulnerable children.²⁴⁵
- **Strategic partnerships to increase pressure for reform:** Another interviewee highlighted that *"it [a push for reform] is beyond what UNICEF alone can achieve... the overall reform agenda should be promoted"*.²⁴⁶ A more coordinated donor approach could be a way to incentivize systemic changes, with the World Bank and the IMF mentioned among potential partners. The World Bank conditionality mechanism – where money transfers were delivered only after the achievement of indicators – was highlighted as a potential example to be followed by UNICEF.²⁴⁷ Another interviewee underlined that joint programs with other UN agencies could be an approach to accommodate humanitarian and development aspects in a more comprehensive way.²⁴⁸
- **More regional approach:** Some interviewees highlighted that shifting focus to the regional level – both by empowering the regional offices in terms of financial management and data collection, as well as investments and activities in the regions and at a school level – could bring about more sustainable results.²⁴⁹

Moreover, while the emphasis on long-term planning is more pronounced under TREF, no actions were implemented to date. UNICEF does not have an exit strategy either.

3.6.2 To what extent have UNICEF support programs been embedded in government programs? What are the interventions which were costed and advocated with the government?

The LCO-EP has been embedded in government programs insofar as it has formed part of RACE I, RACE II and the 5YP, which are all governmental programs. While the evaluation established that the overlap between RACE or the 5YP and LCO-EP is significant but not full, stakeholders tend to perceive them as largely the same interventions. Throughout the evaluation itself, it has been challenging to distinguish their scopes and pinpoint the exact differences. While this may be easier on paper, the overlap is overwhelming when looking at the practice. It does not surprise, considering the involvement of UNICEF in developing these governmental interventions.

Because of this relationship between governmental programs and the LCO-EP, it is challenging to pin down how the former changed as a result of implementing the latter. Even in the absence of a specific contract between UNICEF and MEHE under RACE, the relationship has been close and based on negotiating subsequent steps. At this point, evidence shows that it is LCO-EP that was shaped in response to the governmental priorities and country needs identified by MEHE, as discussed in previous sections.

Looking beyond crisis response programming, **the UNICEF LCO-EP was able to affect governmental programming related to child protection and inclusive education, creating potential for greater sustainability of activities in these domains in the future.** Regarding child protection, in 2018 UNICEF and MEHE launched the Policy for the Protection of Students in the School Environment as part of the work under LCO-EP. This was followed by UNICEF providing support to MEHE in implementing the Action Plan for the roll-out of the Child Protection Policy and other guidelines.²⁵⁰ But the work on child protection within the programme

²⁴⁵ IDI 08.

²⁴⁶ IDI 11.

²⁴⁷ IDI 14.

²⁴⁸ IDI 08.

²⁴⁹ IDIs 01, 08.

²⁵⁰ Donor report 2022.

did not stop at the policy level. It was rolled out across hundreds of schools in Lebanon; included development of practical mechanisms, such as referral pathways, establishing institutional support and providing training and guidance materials to educational staff (see more details in Section 3.2). However, it is not yet clear how all these elements will work together to bring systemic changes. Foundations appear to have been created for sustainable development in this respect, but as one of the interviewees highlighted, the policies need to be implemented, noting shortcomings referring to follow-up on complaints and feedback.²⁵¹

Regarding inclusive education, UNICEF implemented the Inclusive Education Pilot project reaching 88 schools (see more details in Section 3.2). As in the case of child protection, the pilot project was accompanied by the creation of a policy foundation, namely the Inclusive Education Policy draft and the National Action Plan on Inclusion. Inclusive education has also been part of the training programs, including the TTCM, implemented by UNICEF under LCO-EP.

The intervention mix implemented by UNICEF under LCO-EP in relation to child protection and inclusive education can be seen as a good practice from the perspective of sustainability. While resources will need to be found in the government's budget to continue the work, a foundation exists in terms of policies, institutions, procedures and substantive know-how to roll them out, and these have already been tested in practice under LCO-EP.

²⁵¹ IDI 29.

4.0 Lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Lessons learned

Based on the findings, including in particular stakeholder consultations, some initial lessons can be drawn for future interventions.

Regardless of the emergency situation, when granting substantial funds such as in LCO-EP, a degree of skepticism appears necessary when the political contexts is difficult and the counterpart government has a dubious track record in financial management. As a donor representative observed, the information that MEHE provided for RACE, e.g. on the costs of enrolment per student (i.e. 600 USD), was taken for granted at the time.²⁵² For years, the Lebanese education system has not been able to generate reliable data which could support this cost calculation. As a result, a massive intervention was rolled out without cost verification, potentially resulting in high inefficiencies.

The externalization of fund management may be a better option in the context where the confidence in government's data and institutional capacity are lacking, and significant funds are at stake. While this is a solution that may be de-empowering for the national government, this trade-off may be necessary to protect the resources, but also to protect the actual results, since disbursement of funds can be tied to achievements.

Whichever mechanism is selected for the management of resources and interventions, it should be reassessed at a clearly established points in time and revised/remodeled following assessment, if needed. In the case of the mechanism selected for LCO-EP, the mechanism existed for a long time, it has lacked transparency and accountability and bred frustrations. Most importantly, it caused donor frustration and skepticism, leading to shrinking resources.

Finally, **for education interventions, especially of such magnitude and importance, robust and advance planning is necessary.** In fact, a planning *routine* is desirable. Within the education sector, the planning needs to start sufficiently early before the start of the school year. It may require some flexibility on the part of donors.

4.2 Conclusions

4.2.1 Overarching conclusions

The evaluation showed that LCO-EP was well-aligned with international human rights standards, UNICEF's mandate, the global priorities of UN agencies more broadly and the government priorities as expressed in the main policy documents. LCO-EP was so well-aligned with such programs as RACE I and RACE II that it has sometimes been difficult for interviewees to practically separate their judgements about these programs. The understanding of the relations between the programs was not uniform among the consulted UNICEF staff either. **This signals a need for better external and internal communication around UNICEF's education programming.**

The programme was highly relevant to the country context, addressing serious challenges around access to education, education quality and system-strengthening. The country context has been repeatedly highlighted by the interviewed stakeholders as crucial for understanding the program's mixed effects and different

²⁵² IDI 02.

aspects of its implementation covered under all evaluation criteria. LCO-EP 2016-2021 was shaped by the dynamics of emergency, initially related to the refugee influx but sustained by the multiple subsequent crises. **The consecutive emergencies enfolded against a complex political background in which historical compromises have affected the government's willingness and ability to execute structural reforms.** As a result, the crises put additional pressure on the already strained state systems, including the education system with its neglected public schools that cater to the most vulnerable populations. The consecutive emergencies demanded continuous adaptations, consuming a lot of operational capacity. **The evaluation shows that UNICEF's approach, marked by flexibility and adaptability, allowed for responding to various emerging challenges, but perhaps to a greater extent than to systemic problems.** There is now, however, a clear expectation among the interviewed stakeholders of a stronger focus on the latter, given the very limited sustainability of the approach so far.

There is a fair share of ambivalence in opinions on LCO-EP's effectiveness. Perceptions of effectiveness depend on the pillar and correspond to the allocated funding. Stakeholders recognize the influence of the context on effects and see limitations as to what UNICEF can do without government's engagement in a system change. But, they had and have much higher expectations as to results, given the level of funding, so they often tend to take a pessimistic view of achievements overall. Stakeholders clearly acknowledge UNICEF's significant efforts, but donors, for example, seem to lack knowledge or be confused about UNICEF's work in some areas, which again underlies the importance of communication.

Deficiencies in the LCO-EP's monitoring and results framework, as well as problems of data availability and quality affect the programme's evaluability. Some indicators are suboptimal to measure progress, either in view of the pursued results or dynamic context changes. Other indicators rely on government statistics, which are either not available or not reliable. The findings point to the need to develop better indicators which would be more independent of government data. In this context, solutions adopted in TREF are viewed as better suited for timely monitoring of results and financial transfers, as well as overall accountability.

4.2.2 Conclusions on access to education

Access was rightly prioritized when it comes to resources, given the overwhelming needs. It is still valid as a major focus, considering the high vulnerability and dependence of the system on international aid. Measured primarily by the level of enrolment of children in schools, LCO-EP has been effective in achieving many of its access-related targets, despite highly adverse circumstances. There is a widespread perception that UNICEF played an instrumental role in ensuring access to education for Syrian refugee children.

There remain, however, questions around the relevance of support in the access pillar, given a large number of out-of-school children (OOSC). While **subsidization as a modality was appreciated, enrolment as its basis was seen as suboptimal.** Stakeholders considered attendance as a more relevant indicator in view of the pursued objectives of not only enrolling children but also retaining them in education. The lesson has already been learnt and implemented in the development of TREF. Support for transportation was also considered instrumental in ensuring access. Beyond subsidization, provision of in-kind support, such as delivery of handbooks and stationary, strongly contributes to children's ability to benefit from education and should be continued. In-kind support could also be used as a vehicle for communicating about UNICEF's actions, thus helping parents and children see the Agency's contribution.

UNICEF's engagement in the provision of the NFE as part of its access pillar is highly relevant to the Lebanese context. In fact, it could be increased in view of stakeholder feedback. Regarding **NFE modalities** so far, there have been issues such as prohibitive entry requirements, but given a large number of remaining OOSC thought could also be given to better targeting and outreach strategies. **Bridging the NFE to the FE is another challenge** for which solutions have not been found. They would likely necessitate a stronger stance in

advocacy vis-à-vis MEHE, considering the latter's role in the process and position on refugee integration. While some children have been able to cross the path from the NFE to the FE, the programme's success in bridging this gap has been lower than expected. Again, TREF goes in the right direction, since it aims to bring dispersed NFE initiatives under one roof in the so-called Window II. However, donor feedback shows that, as opposed to Window I, **Window II is still underdeveloped, which limits possibilities to commit funding**. Donor interviewees expect UNICEF to propose an appropriately concrete solution for donors to fund, and there has been some sense of urgency around seeing a clear vision of the NFE in UNICEF's current programming.

In light of stakeholder feedback, an aspect that has not been tackled either, but should, is the humanitarian nature of many access interventions in the programme. These interventions rely on massive financial transfers. The view among the interviewed stakeholders is that there should be more strategic thinking about emergency interventions. While the latter are still needed, the balance should tip more towards development work to achieve better sustainability in the long run.

4.2.3 Conclusions on the quality of education

UNICEF Lebanon's education programme aimed at supporting the quality of education, a valid objective considering the context and needs. However, its contribution in the quality pillar has been much lower financially than in the access pillar. The joint efforts of UNICEF and CERD in teacher training have resulted in the strengthening of teachers' competencies. However, gaps in official data and a lack of access to classrooms for UNICEF and CERD make it impossible to assess the extent to which teacher training has translated into student learning outcomes. In this respect, the evaluation revealed **a need for program indicators that would be independent of government data and could allow to better measure higher-level results under the quality pillar**.

The evaluation confirms the systemic need to work on the quality of education, including curricula reforms and increasing teacher competences. UNICEF's work responded to this demands in part by developing the TTCM. The fieldwork suggests that teachers and principals could benefit from more emphasis within the program. The productivity allowance under TREF responds to a significant need for financial support. However, there is also a need to develop non-financial interventions to build teachers' child rights-based attitudes, as well as maintain their motivation and engagement. These could also serve to ensure teacher well-being in the face of multiple pressures.

Fostering inclusive education, UNICEF has attempted to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups. Beyond catering to Syrian refugees, the program rolled out a complex intervention targeting CWD, whose embeddedness in national policies shows potential for sustainability. This work could further be developed with an added focus on children with speech difficulties. The data does not reveal much consideration of intersectionality within the program, which suggests that improvements could be sought in this respect.

UNICEF's contribution on quality focused mostly on horizontal themes, such as inclusion and equality, as well as safety. This represents a specific aspect of quality. It is relevant in view of the context, yet the broad framing of UNICEF's work on quality – at least at a theoretical level – appears to be misleading in light of this specific focus. What UNICEF does and what results it achieves in this area are not clear to at least some stakeholders. **UNICEF's work would thus benefit from better external communication. It could perhaps be reframed directly as work on equality, inclusion and safety in education, rather than quality of education.** The latter appears to imply, at least to some stakeholders, work on curricula for school subjects such as math or Arabic, etc. The evaluation does not necessarily point to a conclusion that UNICEF should or should not go in this direction. While UNICEF has implemented quality-related, classroom level interventions, the evidence suggests that quality of education is not associated with UNICEF, nor seen as its strength. In addition to CERD, there are international and national actors, such as UNESCO or QITABI, well-placed to work on new curricula. On the other

hand, the work on horizontal aspects of quality, such as inclusion, equality or safety, is well-linked to UNICEF's other sectoral expertise and work. This is where UNICEF has comparative advantage and can work in an integrated, multidisciplinary and multisectoral manner. The research, including results of fieldwork at schools, also confirms a need to continue developing interventions to tackle these matters, as discriminatory attitudes among teachers and bullying at schools were highlighted among problems.

4.2.4 Conclusions on system-strengthening

As for strengthening the education system, most of the planned activities were not carried out, which precludes an assessment of effectiveness in this area. While LCO-EP foresaw such interventions, they were rather limited. Although some successes can be seen in the adoption of policies on inclusion and child protection. There is also an indication that the time may now be right for pursuing a stronger reform agenda.

*"It's a golden opportunity now. The MEHE needs the international community and UN support. We can enforce some policies. We can bridge the gap in policies."*²⁵³

The evaluation confirmed many systemic issues within the education sector and an overwhelming need for reforms. The system-strengthening work has been energized with the launch of TREF, yet appears to largely focus on education data. This is of course relevant, as the lack of accurate data poses a serious challenge which, if solved, could open the way to tackling other systemic problems. Yet, as stakeholders observe, there are also **other pressing systemic problems independent of data which could be tackled in UNICEF's advocacy** for specific policies and legal developments. **There is a sense of frustration among donor stakeholders especially that well-known systemic issues are not tackled.** These include, for example, reducing the requirements for refugees' access to the NFE, or lowering the numbers of schools and teachers and thus increasing system efficiency.

Related to this is the observed stakeholder perception that UNICEF is particularly well-placed to work with the government at the system level. A good relationship with the main donors, but especially with MEHE, is seen as the Agency's comparative strength, which potentially creates greater expectations. With donor support, UNICEF can leverage its massive access interventions in discussions with the government. The stakeholders consider these funds to be a strong argument in negotiations, one that possibly allows UNICEF to maintain a firmer stance on certain issues. Interviewees have called for more pressure, possibly conditionality, toward MEHE whilst stating that UNICEF is the adequate stakeholder to exercise this pressure. The donors and the World Bank are seen as important partners for cooperation in this area.

²⁵³ IDI 29.

4.3 Recommendations

The evaluation findings and conclusions lead to a number of recommendations which have been divided below into two main groups – system-level recommendations and program-level recommendations. The former, while they are directed largely at UNICEF, depend for success on cooperation with all relevant actors, such as donors, INGOs and the Lebanese government. The latter will mainly require a management response from UNICEF and donors.

4.3.1 System-level recommendations

UNICEF should strongly engage in advocacy for and implementation of broader education system reforms. This recommendation is supported by analysis under all evaluation criteria and with respect to all pillars. UNICEF is seen as particularly well-placed for this role due to: (i) the scale of its interventions, (ii) donor trust, (iii) depth of its relationship with MEHE and (iv) system-level know-how.

Based on the findings from the national- and local-level research, following up on this recommendation would include:

1. a stronger push for policy and legislative reforms (accompanied by efforts to change related practices) to:
 - a. remove barriers to refugee participation in education, e.g. by ensuring smooth pathways from the NFE to the FE for all children;
 - b. find a systemic solution to ensure timely access to education for children of Lebanese mothers who do not have the Lebanese nationality;
 - c. reduce systemic inefficiencies in the education sector, e.g. by:
 - i. reforming the teacher employment and contracting arrangements to simplify the system, and
 - ii. decreasing the high teacher-to-student ratio in Lebanese schools and the number of schools;
 - iii. removing ghost teachers from pay-roll;
 - d. increase the quality of education, e.g. through pushing for:
 - i. changes in curricula to modernize teaching and set ambitious learning targets, especially for Cycle 3 which is perceived as neglected by parents and teachers;
 - ii. consistent and robust teacher recruitment policy, and
 - iii. strengthened teacher competence framework and professional development pathway, linked to performance assessment and incentives;
 - e. promote the public school system and to ensure that MEHE's financial commitments to this system systematically increase over time, including through increases in and paying teacher salaries. Specifically, UNICEF could encourage MEHE to develop fundraising activities towards that aim, e.g. among the Lebanese diaspora.
2. continuation of current system-strengthening efforts to increase MEHE's capacity regarding education data collection and analysis, including supporting MEHE in producing an Information Management

Strategy. MEHE committed itself to producing an Information Management Strategy 2019-2021 as an effort for a clear way forward on quality data collection and analysis, but this commitment has not been fulfilled as of the submission of this report;

3. pushing for stronger coordination within MEHE to benefit further work on the quality of education, especially between MEHE's DG, CERD and DOPS to ensure clarity in and complementarity of mandates and effective communication between these units. Communication between MEHE units could be strengthened by consistent inclusion of relevant MEHE staff (beyond DG which is a core member) in the work of the SMB;
4. encouraging MEHE to improve communication with schools. Currently, school directors and teachers feel unsupported, as they have low awareness of MEHE's plans and priorities, or the roles of key education bodies, such as CERD and DOPS. Improving communication channels and disseminating relevant information could help boost collaboration and cooperation within the education system;
5. attracting men to the teaching profession to broaden the talent pool. Currently, the profession is heavily feminized, with some visited schools having no male teachers;
6. aiming for a sustainable approach to achieving inclusion and relevance of education services for refugees.

Many of those reforms will be a mid- to long-term effort, but **the initiation of this work is urgent in view of decreasing donor patience and funds.**

UNICEF needs to strongly coordinate and cooperate with donors, the World Bank and other UN agencies on the advocacy and implementation of the reform agenda. It should build on the existing previous plans to avoid reinventing the wheel. Such plans have been put forward before, e.g. by the World Bank.²⁵⁴ Given the magnitude of their respective interventions, **UNICEF and the World Bank need to join forces and speak in one voice on systemic reforms.**

There needs to be more assertiveness vis-à-vis MEHE among the international community to ensure that the push for reforms is effective. Introduction of conditionality related to specific reforms should be considered.

4.3.2 Program-level recommendations

The table below presents the main recommendations related specifically to LCO-EP. These are directed at UNICEF, although the involvement of different actors may be necessary.

Priority: *H – high, M – medium, L – low*

Criterion	Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe
Relevance Effectiveness	Continue the provision of stationery and textbooks to schools. The lack of relevant supplies was identified as a fundamental issue hindering effective educational practices by all stakeholders in the visited locations.	H	Short-term
Relevance Effectiveness	Invest in a school transportation system for students and teachers. Consider replacing the current transportation subsidy system, which has sparked controversy among parents, with	H	Mid-term

²⁵⁴ World Bank (2021), Foundations for building forward better. An education reform path for Lebanon, available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/627001624033308257/pdf/Foundations-for-Building-Forward-Better-An-Education-Reform-Path-for-Lebanon.pdf>

	direct funding for a safe transportation system. Interviews revealed that transportation unavailability or danger remains a primary barrier to school attendance for students and school staff.		
Relevance	Address other types of in-kind support expected by school communities , including further renovation works, solar panels, heating systems, alternative electricity production systems, food packages, drinking water and computers. However, regarding computers, it is essential to note that fieldwork revealed some locations where digital equipment is underutilized due to the lack of necessary skills among school staff and electricity access limitations.	M	Short-, mid- to long-term
Relevance	Introduce outdoor activities and recreational activities for children. These activities not only provide an opportunity for physical exercise but also contribute to children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and reduce stress and anxiety levels. During the interviews, parents particularly emphasized the importance of including outdoor and art activities in the school curriculum, hoping that this would improve the well-being of their children.	H	Mid-term
Relevance	Implement PSS programs during the first shift and increase school staff awareness of the role of PSS counsellors. PSS is essential for addressing the emotional and mental health needs of students. In the face of crises affecting the Lebanese population as well, limiting the provision of PSS to the second shift does not seem justified. Moreover, such a distinction may create a sense of unfair privilege for non-Lebanese students and exacerbate hostilities between different nationality groups.	M	Mid-term
Relevance Effectiveness	Improve communication regarding the programme , e.g. by developing stories about the programme's aspirations, specific work and how it benefits different stakeholders. Improved communication should target a wide range of stakeholders, including donors, the Lebanese public, and stakeholders at school level (principals, teachers and parents):	H	Short- to mid-term
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clearer communication to donors on what the programme does under the quality pillar. 	H	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the communication plan with school principals, especially during onboarding, after a change in school leadership. The communication plan should include clear information about UNICEF's and the international community's efforts to support the Lebanese community and the education sector in general. It should also provide transparency regarding the calculation of school 	H	

	<p>funding to address any existing ambiguities that might lead to resentment in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an analogous communication plan with the Lebanese population, showcasing the support that UNICEF provides to the first shift in schools and the education sector as a whole. • Provide advance notice about UNICEF's planned activities, such as summer schools. Currently, some participating schools still have not received detailed information on this matter. Ensuring timely communication and sharing upcoming initiatives would help schools prepare and participate effectively in UNICEF's programmes. 	H	
		M	
Relevance	<p>Develop a clear vision of TREF window II and specific proposals for donors to facilitate funding decisions and fund allocation.</p> <p>Donors see the need to increase engagement on the NFE, but they expect clear communication and initiative from UNICEF.</p>	H	Short-term
Relevance	<p>Develop further interventions which address the needs of teachers and principals to increase/maintain their motivation and engagement, as well as address well-being.</p>	H	Short- to mid-term
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop methods to recognize and appreciate the efforts of individual principals and teachers through positive acknowledgement. Currently, they feel underappreciated by MEHE, and many schools continue to function solely due to their heroic efforts. Recognizing their hard work and dedication can foster a sense of value and motivation among the education professionals. 	H	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider involving school principals in training sessions targeted at teachers. This approach can foster better collaboration between school staff at different levels, align the understanding of educational goals, and ensure consistent implementation of the acquired knowledge throughout the school. 	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethink the timing of training sessions. Avoid conducting training on public holidays and better align the training calendar with the school year to enable teachers to start the new academic year equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. 	M	
Relevance	<p>Continue efforts to improve teachers' approach towards students, addressing aggressive and offensive behaviors.</p> <p>Additionally, sensitize teachers to the issue of access to toilets</p>	H	Short- to mid-term

	for children during class time, which was identified as a problem in several visited schools. By promoting a positive and respectful teacher-student relationship, students are more likely to feel safe, supported, and motivated to learn. Ensuring easy access to toilets for children during class time is essential for their comfort, health, and dignity.		
Relevance	<p>Continue supporting inclusive education by strengthening the offer for children with learning difficulties, including specifically speech difficulties, and increasing accessibility of school infrastructure.</p> <p>Consider strengthening the intersectional perspective within the programme. It is crucial to identify and address the specific groups at risk of exclusion from education, such as Syrian Kurds and refugees with disabilities, among others. Analysis may include five key factors suggested by the UNDP (discrimination, geography, governance, socio-economic status, and shocks and fragility).</p>	M	Short- to mid-term
Relevance	<p>Develop interventions that support community cohesion between the Lebanese and the Syrian populations.</p> <p>These could take the form of outdoor activities with parents and children from both communities or parents' gatherings at schools.</p>	H	Short- to mid-term
Effectiveness Efficiency	<p>Develop a better monitoring and results framework for the programme, especially by reviewing indicators.</p> <p>The indicators should fit the results pursued and a dynamically changing context (e.g. percentage vs. numeric) and, at least some, should be independent from governmental statistics.</p> <p>Considering employing a participatory approach to developing indicators by involving key stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and local communities. This way UNICEF could ensure that the LCO-EP reflects their goals and values related to education.</p>	M	Short-term
Efficiency	Continue to improve the data collection capacity at MEHE to generate reliable data about the education system.	H	Short- to mid-term
Coherence Sustainability	Increase coordination and cooperation on education interventions with the World Bank and UN agencies, leveraging international interventions and investments to effect systemic changes, but also to allow for prioritization within the programme itself.	M	Mid- to long-term
Sustainability	Consider introducing conditionality to tie fund disbursement within the program with progress in systemic reforms.	M	Mid-term

5.0 Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Question	Measure(s)/ Indicator(s)	Data Collection Methods	Data Sources ²⁵⁵	Data Analysis
1. Relevance				
1.1. How aligned is UNICEF's education programme with global priorities (UNICEF strategic plan, SDGs, and core commitments to children)?	Level of alignment between UNICEF education programme and global priorities as identified in strategic documents of leading international actors (esp. UN)	Desk research	Strategic documents on relevant global priorities; Programme documents	Thematic analysis Comparative analysis
1.2. How relevant is the UNICEF education programme and its interventions to the country context?	Level of alignment between UNICEF education programme and the needs of children and families in Lebanon in the education and related sectors (e.g. child protection, social protection)	Desk research IDIs	Strategic national documents, secondary research results on the Lebanese context; Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2	Thematic analysis Comparative analysis
1.3. How relevant is the UNICEF education programme to government priorities?	Level of alignment between UNICEF education programme and government priorities in the area of education	Desk research IDIs	Strategic national documents; Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 2	Thematic analysis Comparative analysis
1.4. Were the mechanisms and approaches applied in the programme relevant for achievements of the objectives? – What other mechanisms and approaches could UNICEF have used to achieve its programme objectives, i.e., working differently and working on different things?	Evidence on relevance of designed interventions to the programme's objectives, stakeholders' ideas about alternative approaches which could have been used to achieve the same goals	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents; Programming documents of other mechanisms Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 2, Cat. 4	Thematic analysis Comparative analysis
1.5. How relevant is UNICEF's programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into consideration any disparities?	Identified inherent equity gaps (in particular gender, disabilities, nationality, refugee status) Alignment between UNICEF's programme and inherent equity gaps	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents; Secondary research results relevant to equity gaps Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 6	Thematic analysis Gap analysis
1.6. To what extent has UNICEF been able to adapt its programme to changes in needs	Evidence on flexible programme design	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents; Secondary	Thematic analysis

²⁵⁵ Interviews will be held with the following stakeholder categories: Category 1: UNICEF; Category 2: Government actors; Category 3: Donor representatives; Category 4: UN agencies; and Category 6: Local level government actors; FGDs will be conducted with: Category 5: Implementing Partners/CSOs/NGOs (both at National and sub-national level).

and priorities caused by changing in country context, Covid-19, and socio economic and financial crisis?	Evidence on changes adopted in response to changing context		research results identifying changes in needs and priorities Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2	
2. Effectiveness				
<p>2.1. To what extent was UNICEF support effective in achieving its intended results, on the following levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The overall expected outcome of UNICEF Education programme ▪ The contribution to the broader education goals ▪ Results at national and regional levels, in all areas of focus? 	<p>Level of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning environments</p> <p>Level of improvement in retention and completion</p> <p>Degree to which specific indicator targets have been achieved</p> <p>Evidence of the programme's contribution to intended outcomes and broader education goals, including good practices</p> <p>Evidence of intended result achievement at national and municipality levels in all areas of focus, including good practices</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Field visit observations</p> <p>Deep dive assessments</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Secondary quantitative data</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4, Cat. 6</p> <p>FGDs: Cat. 5</p> <p>Field visit notes</p> <p>Deep dive notes</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Contribution analysis</p> <p>Statistical analysis</p>
<p>2.2. Was the UNICEF programme implemented as originally planned in the Programme Strategy Notes (PSN)?</p> <p>- To what extent the initial assumptions were followed?</p>	<p>Degree to which programme implementation followed the ToC</p> <p>Degree to which results identified in PSN have been achieved</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Secondary quantitative data</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Contribution analysis</p> <p>Statistical analysis</p>
2.3. What unintended consequences or effects did UNICEF support to the education programme have, both positive and negative?	Evidence of unintended consequences or effects of programming support (positive or negative)	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p> <p>FGDs</p> <p>Field visit observations</p> <p>Deep dive assessments</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4</p> <p>FGDs: Cat. 5</p> <p>Field visit notes</p> <p>Deep dive notes</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Contribution analysis</p>
2.4. In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation during the implementation?	<p>Degree to which an equity-based approach has been integrated in the design and implementation of the programming</p> <p>Evidence of practical integration of equity-based approach in intervention implementation, including good practices</p> <p>Evidence of the identified inherent equity gaps (related to disabilities, ethnicity, gender, refugee/minority status) being addressed in intervention implementation</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p> <p>Field visit observations</p> <p>Deep dive assessments</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 6, Cat. 3, Cat. 4</p> <p>Field visit notes</p> <p>Deep dive notes</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Contribution analysis</p>
2.5. Does the UNICEF education programming actively contribute to the promotion of the right to education, especially for the most vulnerable?	<p>Level of visibility and agreement towards the right to education among the programme's stakeholders</p> <p>Evidence of the interventions' influence on this visibility or agreement</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 6</p> <p>FGDs: Cat. 5</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Contribution analysis</p>
2.6. In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programme been	Evidence of practical mechanisms ensuring gender responsiveness	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents	Thematic analysis

gender responsive or transformative?	Degree to which gender responsive/transformative mechanisms have been applied in the programming	Field visit observations Deep dive assessments	Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 6 Field visit notes Deep dive notes	Contribution analysis
3. Efficiency				
3.1. To what extent were UNICEF activities delivered in a timely manner, within the planned monetary resources allocated?	Degree of disparities between planned and used resources Evidence of delays and challenges in intervention implementation and adaptations made in response Degree of disparities between planned and actual timeline/workplan	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents Secondary financial data Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3	Thematic analysis Statistical analysis
3.2. Did UNICEF have appropriate structures, and adequate resources (technical and financial) to deliver its education programme? If there were any lack/problem in resources/capacity, how was this addressed?	Levels of financial progress indicators and other resource indicators Stakeholder testimonies regarding the adequacy of structures and sufficiency of resources Stakeholder testimonies on gaps in resources/capacity Evidence regarding actions taken to address gaps, including good practices	Desk research IDIs FGDs	Programme documents. secondary financial data Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3 FGDs: Cat. 5	Thematic analysis Contribution analysis Gap analysis
3.3. To what extent was UNICEF able to effectively collaborate and coordinate externally with key stakeholders, and leverage existing partnerships?	Evidence of collaboration, coordination and partnerships, including stakeholders' testimonies on the level and sufficiency of such and good practices Degree to which collaboration and cooperation with stakeholders and partners facilitated efficient programme implementation, its strengthening and improvement Degree to which collaboration and cooperation with stakeholders and partners facilitated engagement with existing platforms during programme implementation Degree to which collaboration and cooperation with stakeholders and partners facilitated adapting existing educational resources during programme implementation Degree to which collaboration and cooperation with stakeholders and partners facilitated advocacy and actions aimed at systemic change	Desk research IDIs FGDs Field visit observations Deep dive assessments	Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4 FGDs: Cat. 5 Field visit notes Deep dive notes	Thematic analysis Contribution analysis Gap analysis
3.4. Were there any inefficiencies because UNICEF did not work with certain partners (or if UNICEF only worked with the same set of partners)?	Stakeholder testimonies regarding actors that have not been engaged with, and effects of such lack of collaboration	Desk research IDIs FGDs	Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 6 FGDs: Cat. 5 Field visit notes Deep dive notes	Thematic analysis Contribution analysis Gap analysis
3.5. Were appropriate monitoring and financial accountability mechanisms in place? - To what extent are social and gender disaggregated data collected and	Evidence of monitoring and accountability mechanisms being applied during implementation and effects of such application Stakeholder statements regarding the assessment of monitoring and accountability mechanisms	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2	Thematic analysis

monitored during the programming?	Degree to which disaggregated data are used at different levels across the programme			
3.6. How efficiently did UNICEF respond to equity-based challenges?	Evidence of actions taken in response to equity-based challenges, stakeholder assessment of the efficiency of such actions	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2 Field visit notes Deep dive notes	Thematic analysis
4. Coherence				
4.1. How does UNICEF's work fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programmes/interventions)?	Evidence regarding interventions implemented in the education sector in Lebanon by other actors (e.g. UNESCO, World Bank, UNHCR), including stakeholder testimonies about the alignment with such interventions	Desk research IDIs FGDs	Programme documents; Programming documents of other interventions Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4, FGDs: Cat. 5	Thematic analysis Comparative analysis
4.2. How does UNICEF Education programme align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF?	Evidence regarding interventions implemented by UNICEF in Lebanon in sectors other than education, including stakeholder testimonies about the alignment with these interventions Evidence of synergy effects and intervention coherence/complementarity	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents; Programming documents of other interventions Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3	Thematic analysis Comparative analysis
4.3. How does UNICEF Education programme support coordination at MEHE to ensure complementarity and reduce duplication?	Evidence of synergy effects and intervention coherence/complementarity Stakeholder testimonies about mechanisms introduced at MEHE as a result of programme support	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2	Thematic analysis
5. Impact				
5.1. What has been so far the impact of the UNICEF Education to the overall education sector in Lebanon? Has UNICEF been able to leverage its impact e.g., by attracting other partners (private, public, or other donors)?	Evidence of changes in the education sector in Lebanon resulting from programme implementation Evidence of activities aimed at visibility and promotional activities, in particular addressed to partners and other stakeholders, and results of these activities	Desk research IDIs FGDs Field visit observations Deep dive assessments	Secondary quantitative data Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4, Cat. 6 FGDs: Cat. 5 Field visit notes Deep dive notes	Thematic analysis Contribution analysis
5.2. What approaches have the potential for further upscaling through work of UNICEF and its partners?	Evidence of types of activities and approaches with high replicability and scalability Stakeholder testimonies regarding the types of activities and approaches that have particular upscaling potential or constitute good practices	Desk research IDIs FGDs Field visit observations Deep dive assessments	Secondary quantitative data Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4, Cat. 6 FGDs: Cat. 5 Field visit notes Deep dive notes	Thematic analysis Contribution analysis
5.3. What strategic shift is needed to maximize the impact of UNICEF support to education programming? Are there choices	Identified needs and challenges faced by partners and beneficiaries	Desk research IDIs	Programme documents	Thematic analysis

to be made to focus more / scale up on specific areas and downsize / drop others that might appear less essential or with less impact under the crisis, given the magnitude of the needs and difficulties of schools to operate, teachers to teach, system to function, and limited learning outcomes? What should be the utmost priority with the resources available?	<p>Evidence of areas or types of activities being less significant given the changing contextual factors and resource availability</p> <p>Evidence of areas or types of activities being increasingly significant given the changing contextual factors and resource availability</p> <p>Stakeholder testimonies regarding strategic changes necessary to maximize programming impact, potential alternative modalities and areas of focus</p>	<p>Field visit observations</p> <p>Deep dive assessments</p>	<p>Secondary quantitative data</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4</p> <p>Field visit notes</p> <p>Deep dive notes</p>	Contribution analysis
6. Sustainability				
<p>6.1. What are the key barriers and bottlenecks towards achieving sustainability of UNICEF education programming?</p> <p>-What are contributing factors and constraints that require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of results?</p>	<p>Evidence of facilitating and hindering factors influencing result sustainability, including good practices in responding to such factors</p> <p>Stakeholder assessments regarding ways to capitalize on facilitating factors and address hindering factors</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p> <p>FGDs</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Secondary quantitative data</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4,</p> <p>FGDs:, Cat. 5</p> <p>Field visit notes</p> <p>Deep dive notes</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p>
6.2. To what extent have UNICEF support programmes been embedded in government programmes? What are the interventions which were costed and advocated with the government?	<p>Degree to which government programmes have changed as result of the intervention</p> <p>Evidence of advocacy and adoption of interventions</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>IDIs</p>	<p>Programme documents</p> <p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 6</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Comparative analysis</p>
6.3. What are the critical lessons learned from the implementation of programme especially, related to system strengthening, strategic partnerships, evidence generation and advocacy?	<p>Identification of good practices/strategies for increasing sustainability, in particular for system strengthening, partnership building, evidence collection and advocacy</p> <p>Identification of gaps in these areas and how they were (or were not) addressed in implementation</p> <p>Stakeholder testimonies about key takeaways from programme implementation and assessments regarding good practice/strategies, gaps and lessons learned</p>	<p>IDIs</p>	<p>Interviews: Cat. 1, Cat. 2, Cat. 3, Cat. 4, Cat. 6</p> <p>Field visit notes</p> <p>Deep dive notes</p>	<p>Thematic analysis</p> <p>Comparative analysis</p>

Annex 2: Bibliography

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Annex 4: Site visits

School code	Date	IDI Principal	REM					FGD				
			F	M	Lebanese	non-Lebanese	REM sum	F	M	FGD sum	Lebanese	non-Lebanese
SC_01	29 May 2023	1	6	0	6	0	6	6	1	7	7	0
SC_02	30 May 2023	1	5	0	5	0	5	5	1	6	4	2
SC_03	31 May 2023	1	4	0	4	0	4	7	0	7	7	0
SC_04	1 June 2023	1	6	0	6	0	6	4	1	5	4	1
SC_05	2 June 2023	1	7	0	7	0	7	4	2	6	0	6
SC_06	7 June 2023	1	4	1	5	0	5	5	3	8	5	3
SC_07	12 June 2023	1	4	0	4	0	4	3	2	5	0	5
SC_08	27 May 2023	1	5	2	7	0	7	5	1	6	6	0
		8	41	3	44	0	44	39	11	50	33	17

TERMS OF REFERENCE
INSTITUTIONAL CONSULTANCY/CONTRACT

Section:	PRIME/Education	Date:	Oct 17th, 2022
Title:	Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2021).	Duty station:	Beirut, Lebanon
Reporting to:	Evaluation Specialist (PRIME)	Contract type:	LTA
Duration:	75 days	Start date:	November 2022

Section	Content
Background	<p>(1) UNICEF Lebanon's Education Programme is planned in synergy with the overall vision of the Lebanon Country Office, in that it advocates for the right to quality education in protected environments for all children as principal and inherent in its interventions and partnerships. The Education Programme is strongly linked to Lebanon's National Priorities for Education, which, for the period covered by the evaluation, were articulated in the RACE II Plan (Reaching All Children with Education 2017-2021) and more recently in the MEHE's Education 5-Year Plan (2021-2025). These Plans envision furthering the agenda of inclusive education for the most vulnerable children in Lebanon and their priorities are in alignment with the goals of the UN system in Lebanon as articulated in the UNSF (United Nations Strategic Framework: 2017-2021; Outcome 3.2), which in turn is tied to SDG Goal 4; "Supporting quality education and life-long learning".</p> <p>(2) Couched within these strategic frameworks, the Education Programme's overarching goal is to support the strengthening of national and local education systems to be more inclusive and equitable in the delivery of quality, inclusive education services to the most vulnerable children, irrespective of their nationality, physical/intellectual abilities, or socio-economic status. Equally important for the Education programme, is the improvement of the quality-of-service delivery so that the educational experience of children is more child-centered and inclusive to produce meaningful learning. The Education Programme also invests beyond supply-sides variables; and addresses demand-side variables like parent-engagement, safe accessibility of learning environments, food poverty, secure living spaces, and disposable family income that impact a child's education pathway and learning outcomes.</p> <p>(3) However, the environment in which the Education Programme is required to operate is chronically prone to increasing political, social, and economic pressures in Lebanon. Noting this, the Education Programme key target population will be the inclusion of excluded children; with a commensurate shift toward a more strongly integrated, inter-sectoral approach to address multiple drivers of child-vulnerability in cooperation with other Programmes of the Lebanon Country Office. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging the most vulnerable children and families in sustainable behavior change intervention that results in more protective environments for children and the retention of children in learning opportunities • ensuring adaptive, child-centered teaching practices and functional learning packages are offered to working, married, or stateless children that results in providing them with some social protection and potentially leads to improved employment potential, • engaging at different levels of policy and practice -both with the government and in communities-to securing safe protective learning spaces for children • involving relevant government authorities in meaningful, evidence-based advocacy to improve child rights-based governance and policies at the national and sub-national levels • impacting national systems to improve teaching methodology, protected environments, and community engagement in schools. • jointly advocating for national policies on gender-based violence, child protection in schools, inclusive education in schools, and strategies on child marriage. <p>(4) UNICEF supports efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in improving the quality of equitable service delivery of education opportunities to the most vulnerable and marginalized children in Lebanon. UNICEF does this by providing several forms of financial subsidies to vulnerable families and enhancing existing (technical, physical, and managerial) capacities of the MEHE towards a more child-centered public education system. The support to formal education includes ensuring enhanced access and retention in education, increased capacity of the public-school teachers and improved governance.</p> <p>UNICEF also supports non-formal education programmes, as part of the multiple flexible pathways, with the support of implementing partners. These programmes target out-of-school children aged 3 to 14. In</p>

line with MEHE’s 5 year-plan, UNICEF is currently piloting a school bridging programme in private schools.

UNICEF Lebanon’s overarching vision for education programming, based on the assessed situation and premised on three main programmatic axes:

1. Contribute to increasing demand and reducing financial barriers for enrolment into formal and non-formal education and early development opportunities for children between 03 to 18 years of age.

2. Contribute to increasing capacity of the education sector (formal and non-formal) to deliver quality and inclusive education services, teaching, and learning environments.

3. Contribute to enhancing governance and managerial capacity of the MEHE and institutions to effectively plan, coordinate, implement, and monitor public education sector (formal and non-formal).

These key programme axes anchor the mandate, advocacy, programming, partnerships of UNICEF Lebanon’s Education Programme to support integrated programming, with a focus on providing meaningful education, to the most marginalized children in Lebanon. UNICEF measures its success by ensuring that the most disadvantaged children between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning, and early development.

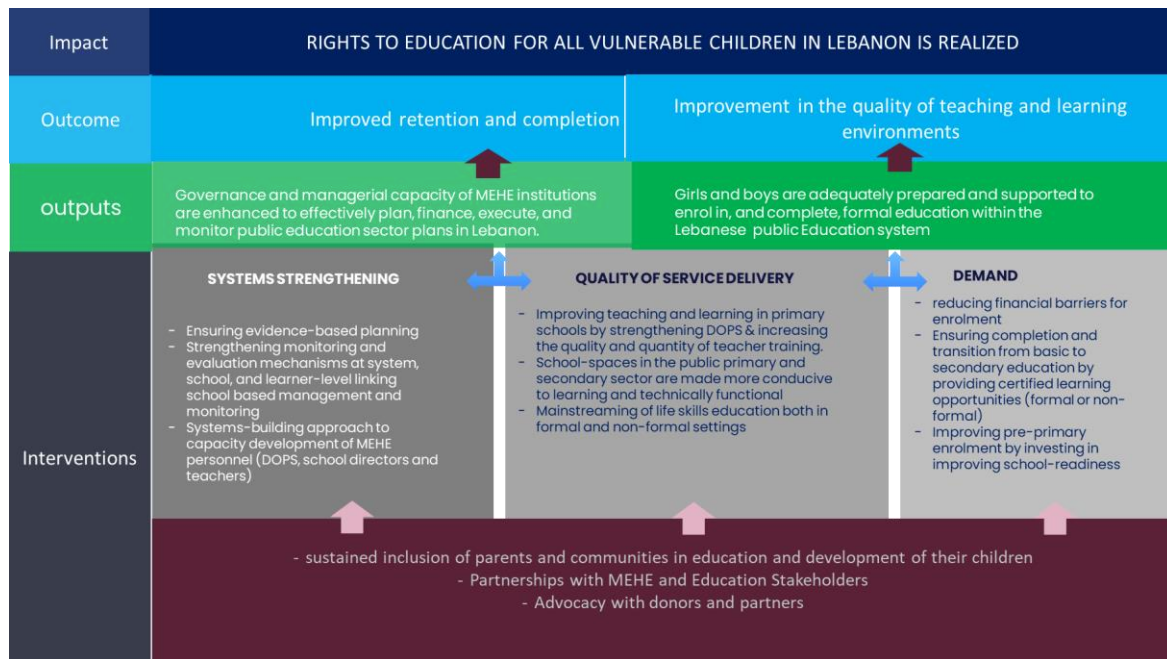


Figure 1. Results structure of the UNICEF education programme

(5) The Education Programme’s main external counterparts are the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), the Centre for Educational Research and Development/CERD), and the Department d’Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire (DOPS), UN agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, and UNHCR), the World Bank, and legally recognized international and national NGO partners, within the Education Sector Working Group.

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

- (6) The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the results (Outputs, outcomes, and impacts) achieved by the education programme between 2016 and 20221. Within this framework, the evaluation will:
- Provide an independent assessment of the UNICEF Lebanon education programme in terms of design, implementation, and results achievement with a particular emphasis on its contribution to Lebanon Education sector results on access, inclusion, equity, and efficiency.
 - Critically assess adaptability, flexibility of UNICEF and its partners in the implementation of the education interventions in a complex and multiple crisis environment with COVID 19 and socio-economic and financial crisis, including facilitating and hindering factors.
 - Critically assess the overall relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the UNICEF Education programming.
 - Critically analyze the factors that affected progress towards results and identify the extent to which the UNICEF education program objectives are contributing to the Lebanon’s education sector results; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Provide strategic learning and actionable recommendations aimed at informing future education programme design and implementation in UNICEF Lebanon. Learning should focus on providing more information on what has worked or not and why, iv. Identify and document implementation strategies that have proved to be effective in increasing access and improving quality learning notably with regards to most vulnerable children (out-of-school children, children with disability, and Syrian refugees). v. Programmatically, this evaluation should also assess whether the education programme has contributed to system strengthening, particularly regarding the production, utilization and generalization of data and evidence, service delivery, awareness and advocacy and demand creation interventions. <p>Objectives</p> <p>(7) The specific objectives of the evaluation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Reconstruct the Theory of Change (ToC) for UNICEF education programme as it was implemented in Lebanon and note the elements that enhanced or hindered achieving positive impacts. This will serve as a basis to develop more focused Evaluation Questions and design. ii. Recommend how the programme's focus and ToC could be enhanced to have a positive impact in the rapidly changing country context. iii. Examine the extent to which UNICEF support to the education sector has been relevant, efficient, and agile according to the context and changing/growing needs. iv. Examine to what extent the program's outputs contributed to the expected results. The areas of attention will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Measuring the extent to which vulnerable children (including children with disabilities) have been able to access (enroll, retain, and complete) the various education opportunities supported by UNICEF b. Functioning of data and information systems supported by UNICEF c. Change in capacity of MEHE and related personnel (teachers and school personnel) and organizations that UNICEF has supported. d. Evidence of sustainability of results achieved by UNICEF and partners. e. Evidence of strong partnerships and coordination mechanisms with Donors, sister UN agencies and the education sector. f. Evidence of internal coherence of the education programme and integrated programming with Child Protection, WASH and YAD. g. Evidence of how UNICEF education program is complementary (or not) with other programs in the education sector by other actors (UNESCO, WB, UNHCR, etc.) with clear division of labor, coordination, and minimal risk of duplication. v. Identify good practices and gaps in the current interventions and recommend improvements or strategic shifts needed.
Scope	<p>(8) Programmatic Scope: This evaluation seeks to assess UNICEF Lebanon's education programme against the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria, i.e., relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the education programme as per programme strategy document in terms of major interventions, strategies, and results. This evaluation will examine the progress in all focus areas of the education programmes, strategies implemented in both humanitarian and development contexts. Further, it would examine the challenges and barriers encountered during the implementation of the programme outputs and activities and understand the partnerships and collaborations/actors employed in achieving the targets.</p> <p>(9) Geographic Scope: The evaluation will be designed to assess UNICEF's support to the education programme and will focus on entire Lebanon, with visit to selected sites, schools, and municipalities.</p> <p>(10) Timeline: This evaluation will examine the support provided by UNICEF through its education programme from 2016 to 2021 (covering pre-COVID-19 and COVID-19 contexts).</p> <p>(11) What is not within the scope of this evaluation: The evaluation is not expected to make causal attribution claims as UNICEF support is only one of the contributors to achieving the intended education outcomes. A theory-based contribution analysis will be used as an approach to assess questions.</p> <p>(12) Programmatic Risks, Challenges, and Limitations: Internal programmatic understanding anticipates that the following risks and limitations may affect the evaluation or its outcomes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Given the impact of COVID-19 on the programme, we are anticipating several challenges during this evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption of ongoing programme due to COVID-19 related prevention measures may result in the evaluation team observing disruption in programming, which is not a result or

	<p>consequence of UNICEF programming. Whenever possible, pre-pandemic and pandemic disaggregation should be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team must consider contingency plan for remote data collection in case face-to-face interactions become unfeasible. <p>2. Rapidly deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country, and Beirut blast in 2020, have affected staff turnover and morale of teachers and staff in government ministries. The evaluators might have to interpret findings in the prevailing context and that programmatic results that were achieved should not be clouded by current situations.</p>
Use of findings	<p>(13) This evaluation seeks to capture learning and recommendations for UNICEF's support to education in Lebanon in the upcoming country programme. The evaluation will help in understanding the programme focus, approaches, strategies, and effectiveness of current modalities of implementation. In addition to identifying bottlenecks and challenges in UNICEF's approach, the findings will also point to examples of good strategies/practices that can be further replicated or scaled up in the next country programme.</p>
Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions	<p>(14) This evaluation will be assessed using criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. These criteria are prioritized because they respond best to the evaluation purpose and objectives. In addition, the evaluation will incorporate equity and gender equality considerations as cross-cutting issues. Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) are clustered according to the evaluation criteria provided. This initial list of questions will be further refined and unfolded by the evaluators and included in the Inception Report following desk review of key documents and interview of evaluation users. Below is what should be under each criterion as per OECD/DAC.</p> <p>(15) Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How aligned is UNICEF's education programme with global priorities (UNICEF strategic plan, SDGs, and core commitments to children)? ○ How relevant is the UNICEF education programme and its interventions to the country context? ○ How relevant is the UNICEF education programme to government priorities? ○ What other mechanisms and approaches could UNICEF have used to achieve its programme objectives, i.e., working differently and working on different things? ○ How relevant is UNICEF's programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into consideration any disparities ○ To what extent has UNICEF been able to adapt its education strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context, Covid-19, and socio economic and financial crisis? <p>(16) Effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent was UNICEF support effective in achieving its intended results, on the following levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The overall expected outcome of UNICEF Education programme ▪ The contribution to the broader education goals ▪ Results at national and municipality levels, in all areas of focus ○ To what extent has the Theory of Change (ToC) been followed in implementation of programmes to achieve results identified in the Programme Strategy Notes (PSN)? ○ What unintended consequences or effects did UNICEF support to the education programme have, both positive and negative? ○ In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation during the implementation? And how adequate is this approach in addressing inherent equity gaps and taking into consideration the disparities? ○ Does the UNICEF education programming actively contribute to the promotion of the right to education, especially for the most vulnerable? ○ In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programme been gender responsive or transformative? <p>(17) Efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent were UNICEF activities delivered in a timely and organized manner, within the planned monetary resources allocated? ○ Were UNICEF programme priorities chosen based on its comparative strengths, capacities, and stakeholders' expectations?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did UNICEF have appropriate structures, and adequate resources (technical and financial) to deliver its education programme? If there were any lack/problem in resources/capacity, how was this addressed? ○ To what extent was UNICEF able to effectively collaborate and coordinate externally with key stakeholders, and leverage existing partnerships, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be as efficient as possible for programme strengthening and improvement? ▪ ensure efficient use of existing platforms (service, community, and media delivery platforms) and resources for educational activities? ▪ Advocate for policies and contributing to system strengthening? ○ Were there any inefficiencies because UNICEF did not work with certain partners (or if UNICEF only worked with the same set of partners)? ○ Were appropriate monitoring and financial accountability mechanisms in place? ○ How efficiently did UNICEF respond to equity-based challenges? ○ To what extent are social and gender disaggregated data collected and monitored during the programming? <p>(18) Coherence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does UNICEF's work fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programmes/interventions)? ○ How does UNICEF Education programme align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF? ○ Are UNICEF interventions part of a coherent approach that is likely to have positive results, or are there critical gaps? ○ How does UNICEF Education programme support coordination at MEHE to ensure complementarity and reduce duplication? <p>(19) Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What has been so far the impact of the UNICEF Education to the overall education sector in Lebanon? Has UNICEF been able to leverage its impact e.g., by attracting other partners (private, public, or other donors)? ○ What approaches have the potential for further upscaling through work of UNICEF and its partners? ○ What strategic shift is needed to maximize the impact of UNICEF support to education programming? Are there choices to be made to focus more / scale up on specific areas and downsize / drop others that might appear less essential or with less impact under the crisis, given the magnitude of the needs and difficulties of schools to operate, teachers to teach, system to function, and limited learning outcomes? What should be the utmost priority with the resources available? <p>(20) Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the key barriers and bottlenecks towards achieving sustainability of UNICEF education programming? ○ To what extent have UNICEF support programmes been embedded in government programmes? What are the interventions which were costed and advocated with the government? ○ What are contributing factors and constraints that require attention to improve prospects of sustainability of results? ○ What are the critical lessons learned from the implementation of programme especially, related to system strengthening, strategic partnerships, evidence generation and advocacy?
Evaluation approach and Methods	<p>(21) Design: Overall study design for the evaluation will be theory-based contribution analysis. A theory-based equity focused evaluation using contribution analysis will enable: 1). analysis of inputs leading to outputs and outcomes, and 2) analysis to focus on whether UNICEF's approach is appropriate to country context and effectively reaching the most marginalized. The evaluation team will elaborate on the design or propose a more appropriate design and methodology to conduct the evaluation during the inception phase. The evaluation design will be primarily based on a review of the existing documents, monitoring data, field work and reconstruction of the programme theory with appropriate indicators, borrowing from the programme documents.</p> <p>The programme theory will be empirically tested through the collection and review of quantitative and qualitative data. The programme theory will establish a logical model of cause-effect linkages by exploring the delivery of results. Reconstructing the programme theory will be a critical first part of the evaluation prior to conducting review of data and fieldwork and will be done through a combination of documentary review and interviews with UNICEF programme staff and key stakeholders.</p>

- (22) **Methodology:** The evaluation will employ a mixed-methodological approach to ensure that data can be sufficiently triangulated to deliver aggregate quantitative and qualitative judgments. The methodology should also apply a gender-response evaluation lens; equity and gender aspects will also be present in the implementation phases of the qualitative component.
- (23) Quantitative
- Secondary data analysis: using a data from Education Management Information System (EMIS) and available raw datasets from studies, research, and evaluations. UNICEF Lebanon will facilitate access to these datasets.
- (24) Qualitative
- Key informant interviews (KIs) with representatives from Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and its technical agencies, municipal level officials and other relevant government institutions, and representatives from key partners.
 - Interview/ discussions with UNICEF programme specialists/Chiefs of Field Offices, and implementing partners
 - Focus group discussions (FGDs) with programme partners and beneficiaries.
 - Observations during field visits to schools and implementing partners.
 - Deep dive assessments at selected schools to understand governance, policy and structural issues.
- (25) Desk review
- Desk review of background documents related to government and UNICEF programming- RACE documents, CPD, strategy notes, UNICEF Global Education strategy, UNICEFs Annual Reports, RAM reports, Sitreps and reports and documentation etc.
 - Review of good practices or case studies of focus areas
 - Review and analysis of documentation on key lesson learning or areas /strategies not working well.
- (26) Sampling
- Purposive sampling will be done for identification of key informants, partners, programme sites and schools. The evaluators should ensure sufficient representation of key stakeholders for interviews and focus groups.
- (27) The following Gender considerations will be taken into account:
- Key informant Sex and age disaggregated indicators will be incorporated to monitor progress on WASH.
 - The evaluation team, involved in data collection should be gender balanced, with the division of responsibilities as equally divided as possible.
 - The evaluation team will ensure that locations for FGDs are easily accessible for female participants and individuals with disabilities and that the date and time for FGDs will be set so as not to interfere with women/girls, men/boys' routines. Same-sex focus group discussions are generally more valuable as women/girls may feel more comfortable speaking about certain topics without the presence of men. Female moderators will be assigned to female participants in the FGDs.
 - Disclosure of incidents might occur during the field work; thus, the evaluators will undergo a training held by UNICEF on handling disclosure and safe referrals to mitigate for such incidents.
 - The evaluation team is expected to abide by the protocols provided by UNICEF through the training.
 - The final report should include a clear gender analysis of the impact of gender roles and norms on the drivers of the intended behaviours.

(28) Data availability and information sources

The evaluation team is expected to assess evaluability and identify data gaps during the inception phase and whether data needed to answer all evaluation questions can be obtained. The evaluation matrix is expected to provide details of data and information sources to answer each question. Information regarding UNICEF interventions in the education sector is readily available and will be shared with the evaluation team. However, evaluators will be expected to gather any other needed information through interviews and observations during the data collection phase.

Potential Information Sources include, but are not limited to:

- Document Review that includes:
 - UNICEF documents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education programme strategy notes that include the expected results, intervention strategies and theory of change ▪ Work Plans and Annual Reports ▪ Evaluations, research and studies conducted during the evaluation period ▪ Programme documents with implementing partners ▪ Appeals and situation reports ▪ Programme monitoring and financial utilization data ▪ Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees (VASYR) ▪ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) • MEHE/education sector Documents and data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategy documents that include Reach All Children with Education (RACE) strategy and assessment reports, education policy ▪ Education sector reports including EMIS reports ▪ MEHE 5-year education plan ▪ MEHE back to learning plan ▪ CERD statistical yearbooks
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Stakeholders	<p>(29) UNICEF education programme works in close collaboration with government and partners in achieving results. UNICEF provides technical and financial support in strengthening the capacities of systems, institutions, partners, and personnel at various levels of the education system in achieving results for children. The list of institutions and stakeholders are given below.</p>	
	Category	Institution
	Government	The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) including relevant departments: the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD), the Department d'Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire (DOPS), the Project Management Unit (PMU)
	Donors	EU, KfW, FCDO, Italy, Norway, Finland, Netherlands, USA, Canada, Australia, France
	UN Agencies	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR); World Bank ESCWA
	Implementing Partners/ CSOs/NGOs (both at National and sub national level)	War Child Holland (WCH) Save the Children Ana Aqraa World Vision (WVL) Terre de Hommes - Italy (TDHI) Al Fayhaa Nabaa Save the Children (SCI) AVSI ALLC LOST Mouvement Social ALPHA ADRA ODA Specialized Partners: Arc en Ciel, Fista, NRDC, OWS, Rahma.

Specific tasks, deliverables and timelines (Annex 1 for detailed tasks).	Activity		Deliverables	# of Days
	Inception phase		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft inception report • Presentation to reference group • Final inception report. 20% payment 	18 days
	Data collection Phase		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post data collection debrief; validation workshop with stakeholders for presentation 	32 days

		of main findings and recommendations (30% Payment)	
	Analysis, triangulation, and report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft evaluation report • Final report meeting UNICEF quality standards and completed comments matrix (50% Payment) • Dissemination workshop to share conclusions and recommendation with relevant stakeholders and external audience 	25 days
<p>Total duration is 75 days.</p> <p>(30) The evaluation team must provide the following products electronically (details and duration will be specified at the inception meeting):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inception report which will describe the detailed intervention methodology, articulated around the following points (maximum 20 pages + annexes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflection on the Terms of Reference including a clear commitment to be able to answer the evaluation questions within the time and budget mentioned. ▪ Confirmation of the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the scope, and the objectives of the evaluation ▪ Additional context to the one mentioned in the ToR if applicable ▪ Confirmation of the evaluation criteria and questions refined from the literature review and preliminary interviews ▪ Methods of data collection, including sampling and consideration of ethical considerations ▪ Data analysis methods ▪ Evaluation matrix showing for each evaluation criterion and question, the collection methods and corresponding data sources. Including a clear statement on how success will be judged in the sub-questions. ▪ Limitations of the evaluation and mitigation measures ▪ Indicative work plan ▪ Proposed structure for the final report in line with UNEG and UNICEF standards ▪ Appendices: list of key documents reviewed, set of proposed tools for data collection, list of key informants and sites to visit 2. PPT presentation of the main preliminary findings and conclusions to the Key Stakeholders; this presentation will be discussed during the mini workshop to report the results of the evaluation towards the end of the field mission. The PPT presentation will also be updated and submitted at the same time as the final report. 3. Draft report presenting all the findings of the evaluation. This report will be the subject of several iterations between the evaluation team and UNICEF until the content of the interim report is in line with UNICEF evaluation report standards and GEROS. Each finding, conclusion and recommendation should be numbered and the link between them should be clearly explicit in the conclusions and recommendations section. 4. Final report, of no more than 60 pages integrating all the comments. The evaluation report must comply with the UNICEF standards for evaluation reports. The report will be subject to a detailed and in-depth quality review by the UNICEF country office and the regional office. 5. Completed Comments matrix either accepting or rejecting with a valid rationale all comments made on the draft report. 6. Raw data, including data collection instruments, electronic transcripts, complete data sets, etc. 7. Dissemination materials for external audience, that include an infographic poster, a policy brief (when applicable) or any other tool for disseminating main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. 			
Management arrangements	<p>(31) Evaluation Manager</p> <p>UNICEF Lebanon Evaluation Specialist will manage and oversee the evaluation and ensure that it upholds the UNICEF /UN Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluations. The evaluation</p>		

	<p>manager will provide quality assurance, with support from the Regional Evaluation Advisor for Middle East and North Africa Region (MENARO).</p> <p>(32) Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)</p> <p>A reference group will be formed to review, guide, and endorse the deliverables and ensure that the evaluation answers all questions. The ERG will consist of members including UNICEF Education staff, key donors, and MEHE. The reference group will be entrusted to guide the evaluation process, including by providing strategic inputs across the whole process, from the design phase to the delivery and comment on the final report. It will also be involved in the recommendation co-creation workshops and in the dissemination.</p>
Payment schedule	<p>Payment 1: 30% after completion of 1st deliverable (submission of inception report)</p> <p>Payment 2: 30% after completion of 2nd deliverable (draft report and presentation of preliminary findings to the reference group)</p> <p>Payment 3: 40% after completion of 3rd deliverable (final study report and presentation)</p>
Principles and Ethical Conduct of Evaluation	<p>(33) The evaluation shall be carried out in accordance with the ethical principles and standards defined by the United Nations Evaluation Group:</p> <p>Confidentiality: The assessment must respect the rights of the persons providing information, guaranteeing their anonymity and confidentiality.</p> <p>Accountability: The report should identify any conflicts or differences of opinion that may have arisen between the consultants and/or between the consultant and those responsible for the programme component regarding the findings and/or recommendations of the evaluation. The entire team must confirm the results presented, with any disagreements to be indicated.</p> <p>Integrity: The evaluator will need to highlight issues not specifically identified in the Terms of Reference, in order to obtain a more complete analysis of the program component.</p> <p>Independence: The evaluation team must ensure that it remains independent of the program under evaluation, and should not be associated with its management, implementation or any other element of it.</p> <p>Incidents: If problems arise during fieldwork, or at any other time during the evaluation, they should be reported immediately to the Evaluation Manager. If this is not done, the existence of such problems can in no way be used to justify the impossibility of achieving the results foreseen by UNICEF in these terms of reference.</p> <p>Validity of information: The consultant must ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the preparation of the reports and will be responsible for the information presented in the final report.</p> <p>Intellectual property: Using the different sources of information, the consultant must respect the intellectual property rights of the institutions and communities consulted.</p> <p>Submission of reports: If the submission of reports is postponed, or in the event that the quality of the reports submitted is significantly lower than what has been agreed, the sanctions provided for in these terms of reference will apply</p> <p>(34) The evaluation consulting firm should adhere to the following UN and UNICEF norms and standards and is expected to clearly identify any potential ethical issues and approaches, as well as the processes for ethical review and oversight of the evaluation process in their proposal. Copies of all these documents will be provided upon request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Standards for Evaluation in the UN System • United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, including impartiality, independence, quality, transparency, consultative process • Ethical Guidelines for UN Evaluations and the UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis will guide the overall process • UNICEF adapted evaluation report standards and GEROs • The evaluation should incorporate the human rights-based and gender perspective and be based on results based management principles and logical framework analysis, in compliance with UNEG guidelines on gender and human rights.

	<p>(35) The evaluation team is required to clearly identify any potential ethical issues and approaches, as well as the processes for ethical review and oversight of the evaluation process in their proposal. Owing to the envisaged participation of human subjects in the evaluation, the evaluation team should seek ethical review board approval either from a recognized Institutional Review Board in Lebanon or via UNICEF's LTA for ethical approval.</p>
Report Structure	<p>(36) The report should be written in a style accessible by the general audience and within an 60-pages limit. The executive summary should not exceed 5 pages, while including a summary on each section of the report and being aligned with the structure of the full report. The report should be both in English and submitted electronically in Word MS format. The structure of the report should be logical and succinct (e.g., background and objectives before the findings and findings are presented before the conclusion). The research team is expected to submit two reports, one in English and another one in Arabic. The following order could be adopted for the report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Table of contents, list of annexes/figures/tables, etc. II. List of Acronyms III. Executive Summary (Max 5 pages) IV. Introduction & Background V. Methodology VI. Limitations VII. Ethical Considerations VIII. Results, Discussion, & Recommendations IX. Conclusion X. Annexes <p>(37) The report should be written in a style accessible by the general audience and within an 80-pages limit. The executive summary should not exceed 5 pages, while including a summary on each section of the report and being aligned with the structure of the full report. The report should be both in English and submitted electronically in Word MS format.</p>
Inception Report Outline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflection on the Terms of Reference including a clear commitment to be able to answer the evaluation questions within the time and budget mentioned. 2. Confirmation of the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the scope, and the objectives of the evaluation 3. Additional context to the one mentioned in the ToR if applicable 4. Confirmation of the evaluation criteria and questions refined from the literature review and preliminary interviews 5. Methods of data collection, including sampling and consideration of ethical considerations 6. Data analysis methods 7. Evaluation matrix showing for each evaluation criterion and question, the data collection methods and corresponding data sources. Including a clear statement on how success will be judged in the sub questions. 8. Limitations of the evaluation and mitigation measures 9. Indicative work plan 10. Proposed structure for the final report in line with UNEG and UNICEF standards 11. Appendices: list of key documents reviewed, set of proposed tools for data collection, list of key informants and sites to visit

Profile Requirements

(38) The evaluation will be carried out by a team of external consultants with solid expertise and experience in the field. The team should have a good knowledge of the Lebanon context and the sector. Team members will work closely together to co-produce and implement an appropriate methodology and approach for answering evaluation questions and achieving results expected. To carry out this evaluation, the evaluation firm will be contracted to provide required expertise.

(39) Required **qualifications and areas of expertise**: The evaluation will have to be conducted by a gender-balanced team comprising sufficient number of qualifying international and national evaluators covering the below requirements (expertise could be combined):

- Team-leader with documented extensive experience (at least 8 full years) in conducting complex development evaluations.
- Team member with specialized experience and technical knowledge and understanding of education programming, including early learning, quality education, education sector analysis and planning.
- Other evaluator(s) with documented experience (at least 5 full years) in conducting development evaluations and application of theory-based evaluation design.
- At least one team member with proven extensive experience in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
- Team members with solid knowledge of human rights-based approaches to programming, gender, results-based management (RBM) principles, participatory approaches
- At least one member with solid knowledge of education in emergencies.
- Team members with experience of working in Middle East and North Africa region (previous work in Lebanon is an asset).
- The evaluation team should include a mix of local and international experts able to conduct interviews in Arabic and English or French.

(40) Mixed teams of national and international consultants involving women are strongly encouraged. The evaluation team will be responsible for all technical aspects of the evaluation, under the guidance of the steering committee and the evaluation manager. The Team Leader will lead the team and be responsible for carrying out evaluation activities at all stages, from methodological design to the presentation of results to the course of workshops through data collection, report writing. He/she will have to report periodically on the progress of the work to the evaluation manager. He/she will guarantee the quality of the expected products.

Detailed tasks and estimated duration

Activities	Duration (Days)	Team Leader, Evaluation	Education expert	Team member 2	Team member 3
		Working days			
I. Inception Phase	18 days	18 days	15 days	10 days	10 days
Signature of the contract		-	-	-	
Initial meeting with evaluation manager		1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day
Review of the literature, and preliminary interviews		5 days	5 days	2 day	2 day
Evaluation matrix validation workshop and formalization of headings		1 day	1 day	1 day	1 day
Development of data collection tools		3 days	3 days	3 days	3 days
Submission of the draft inception report		5 days	3 days	2 day	2 day
Revision of the inception report based on the comments		3 days	2 days	1 day	1 day
II. Data collection phase	32 days	34 days	34 days	33 days	33 days
Meeting with UNICEF staff, major Donors, and other stakeholders		5 days	5 days	5 days	5 days
Field visits (and updating the evaluation manager regularly on the progress of work by WhatsApp, Tel, email, etc.)		21 days	21 days	21 days	21 days
Post data collection debrief		1 day	1 day		
Data processing and analysis		5 days	5 days	5 days	5 days
Meeting + PPT presentation of preliminary conclusions		2 days	2 days	2 days	2 days
III. Report Writing Phase	25 days	25 days	25 days	10 days	10 days

	Drafting of the interim evaluation report		15 days	15 days	5 days	5 days
	Submission of the Interim Evaluation Report (Draft 0)					
	Submission of the revised version of the report (Draft 1) incorporating the comments of the ERG.		5 days	5 days	3 day	3 day
	Submission of the final version of the report incorporating comments Reference group and key stakeholders		3 days	3 days	1 day	1 day
	Workshop to disseminate results		2 days	2 days	1 days	1 days
	Total number of days	75 days	75 days	62 days	51 days	51 days

Annex 6: Ethical protocol

Ethical protocol For “Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)”

The following document discusses ethical issues involved in the “Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)”. It presents procedures which enable the implementation of the research in a manner consistent with the highest standards of ethics and with best practice for research with human subjects. The team members are required to familiarize themselves with this document and follow the procedures it outlines while conducting research activities. Further relevant procedures form part of the overall quality assurance process set up in the project.

Involvement of stakeholders in research

The “Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)” will involve human subjects. Therefore, it has to comply with the highest standards of ethics, including in particular *UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis* and *UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*.

During the evaluation, we will consult eight groups of people:

- ◆ Category 1: UNICEF staff;
- ◆ Category 2: Government actors;
- ◆ Category 3: Donor representatives;
- ◆ Category 4: UN agencies representatives;
- ◆ Category 5: Implementing Partners/CSOs/NGOs (both at national and sub-national level);
- ◆ Category 6: Local level government actors;
- ◆ Category 7: Schools’ managers, teachers and other personnel;
- ◆ Category 8: Parents/caregivers of the children.

Even though children will not be among our respondents, other participants may display vulnerabilities. We expect that this could in particular be the case of parents from vulnerable groups, including parents of children with disabilities, refugee families, minority groups, or persons who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, and whom the research may potentially expose to psychological and social risks. Moreover, within the evaluation, we will seek insight and opinions from government and school personnel of different level, which may potentially involve sensitive or critical opinions of higher-level organizational hierarchies, which may put those individuals in employment risk. Additionally, multiple crises context puts government officials, implementing organizations’ and schools’ personnel, as well as parents/caregivers in a challenging and less comfortable position to participate in research. This should also be accounted for while conducting research with their involvement.

We will use three main data collection methods – individual interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and Ripple Effects Mapping (REM). The researchers will collect various types of data, including personal data, from the above mentioned participants. The extent of personal data collection will depend on the specific cooperation with UNICEF and its implementing partners as our gatekeepers. The exact shape of that cooperation will be decided in the course of data collection, so for the purpose of this protocol, we assume the widest possible data collection and, consequently, the highest standards. In the course of the evaluation, we will collect the following types of data:

- ◆ For the purpose of arranging data collection – respondents’ name and surname, email and/or phone number, if relevant in conjunction with information on the service that they offer or use. This can take the form of lists of potential respondents provided by gatekeepers.
- ◆ Interview/FGDs recordings, if consent to recording was explicitly provided;
- ◆ Interview, FGDs and REM notes/reports and/or transcripts, depending on the need.

Personal data will thus be collected for the purpose of organizing data collection. We foresee pseudonymization of interview, FGDs and REM recordings and notes/transcripts, as part of our procedures (see below); however, it cannot be excluded that some of the information contained therein, even if not explicitly referring to a specific person, will be easily traceable to such a person. Further care will, therefore, need to be taken at the stage of analysis and reporting so as not to accidentally disclose such information.

Basic personal information of participants of the group-based data collection methods envisaged, FGDs and REM, including name and surname and role/affiliation information, will be disclosed to the other meeting participants. In the course of research, we will ensure that a safe space for sharing the views in presence of others is created at all times. We will also make sure that the participants share only a minimum level of personal information that they are comfortable with. We will also offer an opportunity to participate in individual interviews to those respondents who do not feel comfortable with proposed group formats.

Moreover, limited secondary data on children beneficiaries, regarding participation in programme activities and education data (enrolment, performance), will be included in the study. The data will be anonymized for the purposes of analysis, and results of analysis at an aggregate level will be reported.

Discussion of the benefits and harms of participation

The research should carry clear benefits for its participants and these benefits should outweigh any possible harms. Participants should understand both those aspects to make an informed choice about their participation.

We see the following three main benefits for participants:

- ▲ Participation in the evaluation is an opportunity for all parties to have their voice heard in relation to the programme assessed. Their voice will be taken into account while developing reporting documents, conclusions and recommendations.
- ▲ The research can give rise to specific actions in line with respondents' feedback. This, in turn, can lead to better services and support provided.
- ▲ School level beneficiaries who will take part in REM method will also have an opportunity to summarize the results achieved, learn from each other and gain motivation for further work.

With substantial benefits that participants can draw from this research, there are possible harms which could materialize. We assess those as unlikely, both in view of the research team's experience and the evaluation's overall design, yet they are still possible and have to be taken into consideration. These harms could include, for example:

- ▲ The fact that, in some cases, participation may trigger memories of painful experiences. This could potentially relate to data collection involving parents/caregivers of children from vulnerable groups, e.g. including parents of children with disabilities, refugee families, minority groups, or persons who are economically and educationally disadvantaged. This risk cannot be excluded also for the research participants from the Beirut area, with relation to the Beirut blast that occurred during the evaluated period and may be related to in the context of the study.
- ▲ Data breaches, even if adequate procedures are put in place. They could still occur as a result of a mistake or accident, etc.
- ▲ Situations when, in the course of research, respondents report instances of abuse or another serious concern which would require immediate reaction or attention from UNICEF or its implementing partners. Such instances would constitute a limitation on privacy and confidentiality and could trigger reporting from Ecorys to a relevant entity, so the respondent could be involved in a resulting process.

Apart from that, we are aware that, in all cases, we will be asking for individuals' time. While not a harm, it may be an inconvenience, so it should be factored into the work on data collection, e.g. through minimization of the data collection to data that cannot be collected otherwise.

The evaluation, including in particular its data collection component, was designed with ethical considerations in mind. In order to more comprehensively address these considerations, maximize the benefits of participation and prevent or minimize the possible harms, we also developed this ethical protocol. Some of the safeguards that we applied and will continue to apply in the course of research include:

- ▲ Meticulous team selection and preparation;
- ▲ Cooperation with UNICEF and other gatekeepers;
- ▲ Minimization of data collection, in particular with respect to personal data collection;
- ▲ Informed consent procedure;
- ▲ Creation of a safe environment for interactions with participants;
- ▲ Response procedures for safety concerns and grievances;
- ▲ Procedures for protection of privacy and confidentiality, including:
 - de-identification of data through pseudonymization or anonymization,
 - minimization of access to data, and other physical and procedural data protection measures;
- ▲ Removal of data following acceptance of the service.

Specific requirements and procedures

1. Preparation of team members

- a. Team members are required to abide by the laws, regulations and other binding legal standards of the countries in which they conduct research activities.
- b. Team members are required to familiarize themselves with and abide by the *UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis* which is easily available at: www.unicef-irc.org/research-facilitation.html. All procedures applied and followed in this evaluation are without prejudice to the *UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis*.
- c. Team members are also required to follow the procedures as described in Ecorys' offer and revised in the Inception report, in particular ethical principles which have also been included below in pt. 2 of this protocol.
- d. If in the course of the evaluation a question of an ethical nature arises, it is to be resolved in consultation with the Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader, and when it cannot be resolved independently by Ecorys—also with UNICEF.
- e. Team members are required to take part in training related to ethical standards organized by Ecorys. The current protocol should be shared with all evaluation team members prior to the training.

2. Research principles

As noted in the Inception report, the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- ▲ Principle 1. Safety
- ▲ Principle 2. Transparency
- ▲ Principle 3. Voluntary participation
- ▲ Principle 4. Privacy
- ▲ Principle 5. Confidentiality of data
- ▲ Principle 6. Reciprocity

3. Cooperation with UNICEF and other gatekeepers

a. In accessing respondents, team members are required to closely cooperate with UNICEF, UNICEF's partners implementing specific services or other gatekeepers, among others, (1) to minimize the extent of collection and sharing of respondents' personal data, and (2) to create a safer environment for respondents to engage with the evaluation team.

b. Sharing of potential respondents' personal data between the evaluation team and UNICEF, UNICEF's partners implementing specific services or other gatekeepers should be minimized. This means, for example, that such data should be shared in bulk (in one round) rather than over multiple exchanges. This will facilitate its protection and, eventually, removal.

4. Informed consent procedure

a. Informed consent has to be obtained from all research participants before they engage in research. While a written consent is not required if it is explicitly provided orally, it is preferable. Alternative consent procedures (such as clicking on a link to confirm consent) will also be employed for online interviews, where needed. In any event, the consent has to be explicit and active.

b. Team members who carry out interviews and group discussions are required to obtain the interviewee's informed consent prior to the interview. The informed consent forms have been provided in the Inception report as Annex 5.2-5.4. The informed consent forms will be shared with all team members prior to the training on ethical issues to be organized by Ecorys. Interviewers will carry with them printed informed consent forms for in-person interviews.

c. The steps involved in obtaining the informed consent include:

1. Providing the interviewee with the Informed Consent Form prior to the interview (e.g. a printed copy for in-person interviews, or via email or over a communicator used for online meetings),
2. Providing the interviewee with enough time to familiarize themselves with the Informed Consent Form,
3. Researcher's presentation of themselves and Ecorys,
4. Presentation of the evaluation, including the reason why a particular activity is undertaken,
5. Presentation of what will happen during the interview, possible risks and benefits of participation,
6. Clear information that if information concerning abuse is revealed, the researcher will report this fact to the evaluation Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader, and possibly also to UNICEF,
7. Clear information that participation is voluntary,
8. Clear information that the interviewee can refuse to participate or resign at any point, and that neither refusal nor resignation carry any negative consequences,
9. Taking questions from the respondent,
10. Information that if a person agrees then they should sign the form (*alternatively* oral confirmation whether the interviewee agrees or not to take part in an interview),
11. Information that if a person agrees to recording they should explicitly express that by oral confirmation at the beginning of the recording.

d. The information listed under pt. c. above has to be clearly enunciated in addition to being provided in writing as part of the Informed Consent Form. If prior provision of the Informed Consent Form to the interviewee was not possible, it is the more important to take time to go through steps 3-11 above.

e. The interviewer can record the interview only for the purpose of internal reporting. If the interviewer would like to record the interview, they need to obtain a separate explicit consent for recording. The purpose of recording, i.e. to facilitate internal reporting, should be clearly articulated prior to the initiation of recording. To the extent possible, no personal data of the interviewee should be recorded.

f. If a written consent cannot be provided, the team member should make sure that it is explicitly given orally or via other methods which ensure that consent is explicit and actively provided.

5. Creating a safe environment for interviewees

a. Prior and during the interviews, the interviewer needs to make sure that the conditions in which the interview is taking place offer safety. In particular any risks (physical, psychological, social and economic) have to be considered beforehand and mitigation strategies prepared. The interviewer should weigh the risks against benefits. If the former outweigh the latter, they should resign from interviewing a given person. These considerations relate both to in-person and online interviews.

b. Interviewees should be treated with utmost respect.

c. The interviewee should be given a choice when it comes to:

- ▲ The medium of communication (e.g. MS Teams, Webex, Zoom, Skype, phone, in person etc.),
- ▲ Interview date,
- ▲ Interview time and duration, as well as breaks,
- ▲ Any follow up, e.g. they should be asked whether they would like to receive any further information about research results, whether they would be open to further contact, if questions arise.

d. In setting up and conducting the interview, the interviewer should respect the interviewees' commitments, in particular work obligations or duties of care towards children or other family members, etc.

e. Prior to the interview, the interviewer is required to familiarize themselves with all background information to understand the interviewee's position in relation to the evaluation.

f. If, during the interview, the interviewee declines to answer a question, this should be respected.

g. If, during the interview, the interviewee would like to take a break or reschedule, this should be respected.

h. If, during the interview, the interviewee wants to resign from participation, they should not be solicited to continue; although the interviewer may confirm whether the participant truly would like to resign.

i. Once the interview is concluded, participants should be thanked for their participation and should receive feedback on how the information they shared will be used further and when and where, if possible, they could see the results.

6. Procedures in cases assistance or referrals are needed

a. In case abuse or any other serious concern pertaining to UNICEF-related services is revealed, the interviewer is obliged to report this to the evaluation Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader. If deemed needed, the Team Leader will further report such cases to UNICEF. The interviewee should be informed about this during the Informed Consent Procedure.

b. Should any unexpected need for assistance occur, especially lifesaving, or incidents related to any form of violence, there is an ethical obligation to provide respondents with information about services that could help their situation. If referrals are needed, the following procedure is engaged:

- The interviewer asks the respondent if they would like support from a referral service by saying "Would you like me to give you the contact information of an organization that may be able to provide you with support?"
- If respondent says YES, interviewer notifies UNICEF Child Protection unit and provides respondent with contact information for a social service agency.

- Interviewer reassures respondent that the information they have given is confidential, and that they can use the contact information to seek help if they wish.
- Upon consent to receive referral information, the interviewer must inform the participant that they are required to notify their supervisor, but that this is confidential.
- Where a respondent refuses referral information, the interviewer will remind them that all information given is confidential, and that they can change their mind at any time about receiving the information. The interviewer will not force anyone to receive information.
- The respondent will be reminded that if they have any additional questions or complaints about the study, they can use the contact information provided in the Informed Consent Form.
- Interviewers will not give any advice or encourage respondents to contact the referral service.
- Interviewers will not make any statements or promises about the kind of services that may be received or requirements from the referral organisation.

7. Protecting privacy and confidentiality

a. The researchers should minimize collection of data, in particular any personal data. Only that data which is indispensable should be gathered.

b. Data collected during the evaluation can only be processed in connection to this evaluation and to fulfil its explicit objectives.

c. Only evaluation team members or, upon explicit request, UNICEF staff can have access to data collected during the evaluation. Team members have access to data to the extent that it is required to fulfil their roles within the evaluation.

d. Team members are prohibited from disclosing personal data of interviewees to anyone apart from other evaluation team members and, upon explicit request, UNICEF staff.

e. When personal data of research participants needs to be shared, such exchanges should be minimized, i.e. data should be shared once, rather than over multiple exchanges. Any personal data can only be shared in password protected files.

f. The names of all interview recordings, interview notes/reports and transcripts produced during the evaluation should be coded so as to de-identify the interviewees. The list of interviewees with corresponding codes which allows for tracing of a given recording, note/report or transcript to a specific interviewee should be stored separately and should be password protected. Access to such a list should be strictly limited.

g. To the extent possible, as stated above, interview recordings should not contain the interviewee's personal data. The interview notes/reports and transcripts should be written in a way which does not reveal personal data. If there is a risk that interview notes/reports and transcripts may contain personal data, they should be shared in password protected files.

h. Since it is impossible to control what the interviewee discloses, sharing of interview recordings even between evaluation team members should be minimized to instances when it is absolutely necessary. This can happen e.g. when it would not be possible to report on an interview otherwise. When recordings are shared, the files need to be password protected.

i. In all reports from the evaluation, the findings should be summarized to an appropriate level of aggregation, particularly in the instance of clear negative impacts such as stigma and reprisals. The implications of the findings and any potential negative repercussions for particular groups should be considered and measures should be taken to frame the findings in such a way so as to avoid these consequences. Where findings significantly impact (negatively) on the well-being of groups or

individuals, public disclosure and, where relevant, disclosure to specific stakeholders should be reconsidered.

j. During the evaluation, data should be processed in an electronic format as much as possible. Unless more practical given the context (e.g. during local fieldwork), no hard copies of documents should be required and stored, in particular no hard copies of filled out Informed Consent Forms should be kept. In case such documents are provided in hard-copy form, they should be scanned to an electronic format and processed in line with standards outlined above, in particular, their sharing should be minimized and files containing filled-out consent forms need to be password-protected. Any hard copies should therefore be destroyed in an irreversible way, using dedicated shredding devices.

k. Evaluation team members are obliged to protect data collected during the evaluation, in particular they have to make sure that access to such data on their devices is limited and password protected. Evaluation team members are obliged to regularly change the password that protects data collected during the evaluation.

l. Once the tasks of a given team member are successfully completed, the Team Leader will request a given team member to remove all data related to the evaluation from their devices. The team member is required to immediately proceed with data removal.

m. Ecorys will store all data necessary for reporting to UNICEF on its secure internal server. All files containing personal data collected during the evaluation will be additionally password protected. Only Ecorys staff directly involved in the evaluation will access the personal data collected during the evaluation.

n. Ecorys will remove all personal data related to the evaluation upon successful completion of the project confirmed by UNICEF in writing. Once confirmation is received, the data will be removed from the Ecorys server by the Team Leader with the assistance of the Ecorys' IT expert to make sure that it was removed in its entirety without possible restoration. The Team Leader will also make sure that all team members have removed all data related to the evaluation from their devices.

Annex 7: Data collection instruments

7.1. Informed consent form or in-depth interviews

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Participant Informed Consent Form

In December 2022, Ecorys Poland based in Warsaw was commissioned by UNICEF Lebanon to carry out the “Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)”.

The purpose is to provide UNICEF Lebanon with an assessment of UNICEF’s efforts in the field of education in Lebanon. We will assess the extent to which the Education Programme activities are being implemented. We will also look at how these activities are meeting the needs of children at school age, their families, and education sector stakeholders. Finally, we will observe the effectiveness of the implemented activities and the support offered to the government, schools and other organizations of the education sector, and families with school-age children.

During our assessment, we will carry out extensive data collection, including through individual interviews. To have a full picture of UNICEF’s Education programme activities in Lebanon, we would like to consult people with various perspectives. We plan to talk to UNICEF staff, government officials, people who are directly involved in provision of education services, and parents/caregivers of children. This is why we would like to ask you to take part in an interview.

If you agree to the interview, we will ask you some questions related to UNICEF activities within the Education programme in Lebanon. Your participation is fully voluntary. You can refuse to participate or resign at any point. Your refusal to participate or respond to a particular question, or your resignation will not involve any negative consequences. We fully respect your choices. We also believe that the interview will be a good opportunity for you to share your opinions and recommendations. We will take those into account while developing the evaluation reports. The interview should not take longer than [an hour]. If you agree, we will record the interview, but only to facilitate internal reporting.

We are committed to protecting your privacy, so your personal data will only be processed by the evaluation team members and UNICEF, only for the purpose of the evaluation and only when strictly necessary. We will not disclose it to anyone else. You may contact us at any point to request alterations, amendments or removal of your personal data. Importantly, your personal data will not be included in any reports from this evaluation. Your interview will be coded with a unique code consisting of letters and digits, which will not allow for your identification. When we use the information coming from you and want to provide a source of this information, we will only refer to such a code.

If you wish to receive more information about the evaluation or any other matters, you may contact the Evaluation Team members: [name and surname] [Interviewer], [e-mail address].

If you agree to participate in the interview, below please provide:

.....
Signature Date and location

If you agree to recording of your interview, below please provide:

.....
Signature Date and location

7.2. Informed consent form for focus group discussions & REM

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Focus Group Discussion Participant Informed Consent Form

In December 2022, Ecorys Poland based in Warsaw was commissioned by UNICEF Lebanon to carry out the “Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)”.

The purpose is to provide UNICEF Lebanon with an assessment of UNICEF’s efforts in the field of education in Lebanon. We will assess the extent to which the Education Programme activities are being implemented. We will also look at how these activities are meeting the needs of children at school age, their families, and education sector stakeholders. Finally, we will observe the effectiveness of the implemented activities and the support offered to the government, schools and other organizations of the education sector, and families with school-age children.

During our assessment, we will carry out extensive data collection, including through focus group discussions. To have a full picture of UNICEF’s Education programme activities in Lebanon, we would like to consult people with various perspectives on and experiences with the programme. This is why we would like to ask you to take part in a focus group discussion. The group will consist of 5 to 10 persons. We believe that by discussing the experiences and opinions as a group, you could help us to gain deeper understanding.

If you agree to participate in the discussion, we will ask you some questions related to UNICEF activities within the Education programme in Lebanon. Your participation is fully voluntary. You can refuse to participate or resign at any point. Your refusal to participate or respond to a particular question, or your resignation will not involve any negative consequences. We fully respect your choices. We also believe that the focus group discussion will be a good opportunity for you to share our opinions and recommendations. We will take those into account while developing the evaluation reports. The meeting should not take longer than **[two hours]**. If you and other participants agree, we will record the discussion, but only to facilitate internal reporting.

We are committed to protecting your privacy, so your personal data will only be processed by the evaluation team members and UNICEF, only for the purpose of the evaluation and only when strictly necessary. We will not disclose it to anyone else. You may contact us at any point to request alterations, amendments or removal of your personal data. Importantly, your personal data will not be included in any reports from this evaluation. The focus group discussion notes will not mention participants’ personal data, which will not allow for your identification. When we use the information coming from you and want to provide a source of this information, we will only refer to the focus group discussion findings.

If you wish to receive more information about the evaluation or any other matters, you may contact the Evaluation Team members: **[name and surname]** **[Interviewer]**, **[e-mail address]**.

If you agree to participate in the interview, below please provide:

.....
Signature *Date and location*

If you agree to recording of your interview, below please provide:

.....
Signature *Date and location*

7.3. Informed consent for observations

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Observations Informed Consent Form

In December 2022, Ecorys Poland based in Warsaw was commissioned by UNICEF Lebanon to carry out the “Evaluation of UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme (2016-2022)”.

The purpose is to provide UNICEF Lebanon with an assessment of UNICEF’s efforts in the field of education in Lebanon. We will assess the extent to which the Education Programme activities are being implemented. We will also look at how these activities are meeting the needs of children at school age, their families, and education sector stakeholders. Finally, we will observe the effectiveness of the implemented activities and the support offered to the government, schools and other organizations of the education sector, and families with school-age children.

During our assessment, we will carry out extensive data collection, including observations at schools. To have a full picture of UNICEF’s Education programme activities in Lebanon, we would like to see how UNICEF’s Education programme after children’s learning environment.

We ask for your permission to conduct observation in your school. While conducting observations, we will look at WASH infrastructure, school equipment and facilities. During observations, we would like to take pictures of these elements. We will not take pictures of children.

Your school will not be identified in the report in relation to specific results. We will not link your school to any pictures we publish in the report.

If you wish to receive more information about the evaluation or any other matters, you may contact the Evaluation Team members: **[name and surname] [Interviewer], [e-mail address]**.

If you agree to the observation, below please provide:

.....
Signature *Date and location*

If you agree to talking photos from the observation, below please provide:

.....
Signature *Date and location*

7.4. Interview guide (section for all respondent categories)

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation The interview guide (all the IDI groups)

Instruction for the interviewer: *The following questionnaire is intended for individual interviews. Before the interview, familiarise yourself with the relevant Programme documentation. Before initiating the interview provide information regarding the purpose of the interview, and privacy policy and ask whether the interviewee consents to the interview. Ask explicitly whether you can record the interview and explain the purpose of the recording. In case of consent, ensure that the consent is recorded on tape. Answer any questions that the participants may have. Inform the participant that they are free to refuse an answer to any question in the interview.*

Please tailor the questions to the interviewee’s role, and use prompts if needed.

Introduction:

Good morning, my name is [...] and I am a member of the Evaluation Team for the Evaluation of the UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme, currently carried out by Ecorys Poland at the request of UNICEF.

The evaluation aims to assess the UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education programme over the recent years, looking into its effects and processes. By participating in the interview and sharing your views, you are helping us to gain a good understanding of the programme and to suggest recommendations for future improvements. We thank you for agreeing to take part in the interview.

Before we start, I would like to underline that participation in the interview is voluntary. That means we will proceed with the interview only if you confirm your consent. This also means that you can change your mind and stop the interview at any point, as well as refuse to answer any questions you are not comfortable with.

Our interview will be confidential, so you will not be quoted at any point. In the report, the information will be attributed generally to 'the interviews conducted for the purpose of this evaluation over the period ...'. The data will be anonymized and used exclusively for the purpose of this evaluation, stored safely and accessible only to the Evaluation Team. It will be treated in accordance with UNICEF data protection rules and will be deleted after the evaluation is closed.

Do you have any questions regarding privacy and data protection?

For purposes of analysis and accuracy of the interview and only if you are comfortable with that, we would like to record the interview. Would that be fine with you?

Instruction for the interviewer: If the interviewee agrees to the recording, please switch it on and ask consent questions to record consent. If the interviewee does not agree to the recording, please make sure to collect signatures on the informed consent form before the start of the interview.

Do you consent to participate in the interview?

Do you consent to record the interview?

7.4.1 Interview questionnaire for IDIs with UNICEF staff

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Questionnaire

UNICEF Staff (Category 1)

1. Could you briefly describe your role at UNICEF and your links to the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme implemented between 2016-2022?

[Instruction for the interviewer: Please tailor the following questions to the interviewee's role.]

2. In your view, since 2016, what have been the primary needs and challenges in the education sector in Lebanon? Have any changes over occurred in the last years that affected those needs?
3. In general, how did UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme address these needs? Were there any gaps?

[If not addressing/if gaps, follow up to understand why the interviewee thinks that – what was missing?]

4. To your knowledge, were there any changes in the programme introduced during its implementation? Please give examples.

[If yes and the answer is not exhaustive, follow up with:]

- a. What were the reasons for introducing changes?
- b. How did the changes affect the overall programme implementation? Were some implementation aspects more affected than others and how?
- c. Did they help address the emerging needs?

[If the interviewee has experience or specific expertise in one pillar/ area, explore it in greater detail.]

5. What were the main effects of the programme on the three pillars: access to education, quality of education, and institutional capacity of the Lebanese education system?*

*[*If an interviewee has experience or specific expertise in one pillar/ area, explore it in greater detail, based on the in-depth thematic focus sub-questionnaires below the main questionnaire]*

6. To what extent were the results achieved?
 - a. In which areas was the programme the most successful? *[If not covered, follow up regarding access to formal/non-formal education, improved quality of education, improved overall education system]*
 - b. Were there areas where the results were not achieved? Which areas were those? What were the reasons?
7. How did the programme account for and address the needs of children with different vulnerabilities? *[If not mentioned, follow up on needs of girls, Syrian refugees, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households]*
 - a. Can you give examples of positive practices implemented by the programme to address inequality and discrimination? *[If not mentioned, ask about: access to education, training for teachers/school staff, and legal framework – were such considerations successfully reflected at the systemic level? If not, why?]*
 - b. Do you have monitoring tools in place to assess these different vulnerability aspects and the response?
8. *[If not covered before]* How did the programme account for gender considerations?
 - a. Were there any gender-related challenges that required a different approach within implementation?

- b. What practical mechanisms were put in place to account for gender aspects?
 - c. Were the implemented measures sufficiently addressing the gender aspect?
 - d. Did you observe any (positive or negative) effects of the programme on the education of girls?
9. Did the programme bring about any unintended consequences – either positive or negative? Can you give examples? *[If examples are given, follow up to understand the reasons: Did the programme fail to account for some aspects? Was there any external factor that contributed to this unintended result?]*
10. Can you talk about how the programme activities were designed and selected? How were the programme priorities defined?
11. How was the programme managed? Were there any elements in the management structure that hampered implementation? *[If applicable, follow up with why questions, and ask for reasons/examples]*
 - a. Were the resources and capacities (staff, technical knowledge) adequate to the planned activities?
 - b. Was the work plan accurately designed to achieve results and objectives?
 - c. How do you assess the finances and financial management of the programme?
 - d. What monitoring and accountability mechanisms were in place? Do you think they were sufficient? *[If not]* What were the gaps, and what should have been done better?
12. What was the role of MEHE in the Education programme implementation? Were there any differences in how UNICEF and MEHE's respective interventions were carried out and the effects they brought about?
 - a. What are the respective roles, how are the responsibilities shared?
 - b. What mechanisms are in place to ensure smooth coordination?
 - c. Are there any overlaps between the activities carried out by UNICEF and MEHE? *[If yes]* What are the reasons? How can coordination be improved to avoid duplication?
 - d. Did MEHE introduce internally any new tools or practices as a result of the project?
13. Did you encounter any challenges with the programme implementation? What were the reasons? How did you tackle them?
14. Did UNICEF engage with other partners to support the implementation of the programme? Which ones, and did that collaboration help achieve the programme objectives? Are there any gaps?
15. How does UNICEF programme fit with in the broader context of interventions in the region – both by UNICEF and by other actors?
 - a. Are there any synergies?
 - b. Is there sufficient coordination between the different actors? If not, what could be done?
16. What is the added value of UNICEF Education programme?
17. What impact has the UNICEF programme had on the education sector? Which systemic changes did it contribute to? *[If applicable, relate to the effects of the programme discussed before - here, ask about the broader picture]*
18. Looking at the programme's different elements, were there elements that failed to bring about impact? Why?
19. What factors affected the achievement of impact, both positively and negatively? *[If not mentioned, prompt about UNICEF brand/visibility; leverage with partners/government]*
20. Should any changes be made to increase the programme's impact? *[If not mentioned, follow up on the scale, significance/impact of the three programme pillars, what are the most promising activities/focus areas in terms of impact]*
21. Which programme activities have been particularly successful and should be continued/upscaled in Lebanon or could be implemented elsewhere? Why?
22. In general, do you think the programme results are likely to continue?
 - a. According to your knowledge, what measures have been introduced at the systemic level to ensure continuation?

- b. Were any programme elements incorporated within the Lebanese policy framework?
 - c. Is such continuation possible without any further support from UNICEF/other international partners?
23. How to ensure that the results of the programme are continued? What strategies and practices should be implemented? *[If not mentioned, follow up on systemic changes, potential partnerships, evidence collection, advocacy, and visibility]*
24. What are the critical lessons learnt for the future, what were the good practices and strategies that should be continued and implemented - in the education sector in Lebanon, as well as in future UNICEF programming?
25. What are the most important priority areas for future education programming in Lebanon? Are there any gaps that future interventions should address?
26. Do you have any particular recommendations about how the programme could be improved?

7.4.2 Interview questionnaire for IDIs with representatives of Lebanese central government

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Questionnaire

Lebanese government – central level (Category 2)

1. Could you briefly describe your role at your institution and your links to the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme implemented between 2016-2022?

[Instruction for the interviewer: Please tailor the following questions to the interviewee's role.]

2. What are the government priorities for the education sector in Lebanon?
3. To what extent did the UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme and the Lebanon education priorities correspond?
 - a. How was the UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme developed, what were the respective roles of the Lebanese government (MEHE) and UNICEF staff in the design of objectives?
 - b. What are the common points?
 - c. What are the differences?
 - d. Were the Lebanese government priorities redefined/modified in some respects to incorporate/reflect UNICEF education programme objectives? If yes, what were the changes?
4. In your view, since 2016, what have been the primary needs and challenges in the education sector in Lebanon? Have any changes occurred in the last years that affected those needs?
5. In general, how does UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme address these needs? Are there any gaps?
6. In the Lebanese education sector context, do you recall any activities by other international organizations (other than UNICEF) that were successful? Can you give us examples?
7. To your knowledge, were there any changes in the programme introduced during its implementation? Please give examples.

[If yes and the answer is not exhaustive, follow up with:]

- a. What were the reasons for introducing changes?
- b. How did the changes affect the overall programme implementation? Were some implementation aspects more affected than others and how?
- c. Did they help address the emerging needs?

[If the interviewee has experience or specific expertise in one pillar/ area, explore it in greater detail.]

8. What were the main effects of the programme on the three pillars: access to education, quality of education, and institutional capacity of the Lebanese education system?*

*[*If an interviewee has experience or specific expertise in one pillar/ area, explore it in greater detail, based on the in-depth thematic focus sub-questionnaires below the main questionnaire]*

9. To what extent were the results achieved?
 - a. In which areas was the programme the most successful? *[If not covered, follow up regarding access to formal/non-formal education, improved quality of education, improved overall education system]*
 - b. Were there areas where the results were not achieved? Which areas were those? What were the reasons?
10. How did the programme account for and address the needs of children with different vulnerabilities? *[If not mentioned, follow up on needs of girls, Syrian refugees, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households]*
 - a. Can you give examples of positive practices implemented by the programme to address inequality and discrimination? *[If not mentioned, ask about: access to education, training for teachers/school staff, and legal framework – were such considerations successfully reflected at the systemic level? If not, why?]*
 - b. Do you have monitoring tools in place to assess these different vulnerability aspects and the response?
11. *[If not covered before]* How did the programme account for gender considerations?
 - a. Were there any gender-related challenges that required a different approach within implementation?
 - b. What practical mechanisms were put in place to account for gender aspects?
 - c. Were the implemented measures sufficiently addressing the gender aspect?
 - d. Did you observe any (positive or negative) effects of the programme on the education of girls?
12. Did the programme bring about any unintended consequences – either positive or negative? Can you give examples? *[If examples are given, follow up to understand the reasons: Did the programme fail to account for some aspects? Was there any external factor that contributed to this unintended result?]*
13. Can you talk about how the programme activities were designed and selected? How were the programme priorities defined?
14. How was the programme managed? Were there any elements in the management structure that hampered implementation? *[If applicable, follow up with why questions, and ask for reasons/ examples]*
 - a. Were the resources and capacities (staff, technical knowledge) adequate to the planned activities?
 - b. Was the work plan accurately designed to achieve results and objectives?
 - c. How do you assess the finances and financial management of the programme?
 - d. What monitoring and accountability mechanisms were in place? Do you think they were sufficient? *[If not]* What were the gaps, and what should have been done better?
15. What was the role of MEHE in the Education Programme implementation? Were there any differences in how UNICEF and MEHE's respective interventions were carried out and the effects they brought about?
 - a. What are the respective roles, how are the responsibilities shared?
 - b. What mechanisms are in place to ensure smooth coordination?
 - c. Are there any overlaps between the activities carried out by UNICEF and MEHE? *[If yes]* What are the reasons? How can coordination be improved to avoid duplication?
 - d. Did MEHE introduce internally any new tools or practices as a result of the project?
16. Did you encounter any challenges with the programme implementation? What were the reasons? How did you tackle them?
17. Did MEHE engage with other partners to support the implementation of the programme? Which ones, and did that collaboration help achieve the programme objectives? Are there any gaps?
18. What is the added value of UNICEF education programme?

19. What impact has the UNICEF Education Programme had on the education sector? Which systemic changes did it contribute to? *[If applicable, relate to the effects of the programme discussed before - here, ask about the broader picture]*
20. Looking at the programme's different elements, were there elements that failed to bring about impact? Why?
21. What factors affected the achievement of impact, both positively and negatively? *[If not mentioned, prompt about UNICEF brand/visibility; leverage with partners/government]*
22. Should any changes be made to increase the programme's impact? *[If not mentioned, follow up on the scale, significance/impact of the three programme pillars, what are the most promising activities/focus areas in terms of impact]*
23. Which programme activities have been particularly successful and should be continued/upscaled in Lebanon or could be implemented elsewhere? Why?
24. In general, do you think the programme results are likely to continue?
 - a. What measures have been introduced at the systemic level to ensure continuation?
 - b. Were any programme elements incorporated within the Lebanese policy framework?
 - c. Is such continuation possible without any further support from UNICEF/other international partners?
25. How to ensure that the results of the programme are continued? What strategies and practices should be implemented? *[If not mentioned, follow up on systemic changes, potential partnerships, evidence collection, advocacy, and visibility]*
26. What are the critical lessons learnt for the future, what were the good practices and strategies that should be continued and implemented - in the education sector in Lebanon, as well as in future UNICEF programming?
27. What are the most important priority areas for future education programming in Lebanon? Are there any gaps that future interventions should address?
28. Do you have any particular recommendations about how the programme could be improved?

7.4.3 Thematic focus sub-questionnaires for UNICEF staff and representatives of Lebanese central government

Thematic Focus Sub-Questionnaires for UNICEF staff and Lebanese central government staff (Categories 1 and 2)

Instruction on THEMATIC FOCUS SUB-QUESTIONNAIRES: *These questionnaires are dedicated to in-depth exploration of the programme areas, only with staff working and specialised in those who could provide relevant insight. Please use them only with relevant respondents, based on their role and experience.*

THEMATIC FOCUS SUB-QUESTIONNAIRE 1: ACCESS TO EDUCATION

1. Did the programme improve access to education for all children in Lebanon?
2. How did the programme affect enrolment and retention in formal education and completion rates [in the country/in the region]?
3. What were the effects on non-formal education actions?
4. Was school infrastructure and conditions improved thanks to the programme?
5. Were the effects different for different children groups? In what ways? *[If not mentioned, follow up – ask about the effects for Syrian refugees, girls, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households; urban/rural, and effects in different regions.]*

[If the interviewee has expertise/experience in access to education focused on Formal Education - ask the relevant in-depth follow-up questions:]

6. How did the programme affect students' enrolment in formal education [in your region/area]? What were the differences for children at different ages and education levels caused by?
7. What outreach activities were implemented to encourage participation and enrolment? Were any groups specifically targeted (e.g. vulnerable groups, differences between Lebanese and non-Lebanese, special needs, etc.)?
8. Were there any (formal or informal) obstacles to participation in the education of some groups of children? If so, how were they addressed?
9. What was the approach to girls' participation in formal education [in your region/area]? Are there any differences in how parents and communities see the education of girls and boys? If so, how did the programme tackle that?
10. Did the programme improve school access for children with disabilities and special needs? What kind of support was provided? How did it affect these children's participation in formal education?
11. Why do the proportion of enrolled students still drop out and not finish the education cycle? Were there any programme activities aimed at addressing this problem?
12. Did the enrolment/completion gap have something to do with how the programme was structured (i.e., that the cash support followed enrolment only)? How do you assess this aspect of the programme's organisation, could it be improved?
13. Were any measures introduced at the national level, or into the legal framework level to support increased access to education?
14. In what ways could enrolment, retention and completion be improved?

[If the interviewee has expertise/experience in access to education focused on Non-Formal Education - ask the relevant in-depth follow-up questions:]

15. For out-of-school children, what are the main educational gaps and needs?
16. What outreach activities were implemented to encourage participation in non-formal education activities? Were any groups specifically targeted (e.g. vulnerable groups, differences between Lebanese and non-Lebanese, special needs, etc.)?

17. Were there any obstacles to participation in the education of some groups of children? If so, how were they addressed?
18. What kind of non-formal education was provided, and how was it organised?
19. How did the programme affect students' participation in non-formal education [in your region/area]? What were the differences for children of different ages and education levels?
20. How did the programme account for future work opportunities? Was there a vocational training component of the non-formal education element?
21. What was the approach to the participation of girls in non-formal education [in your region/area]?
22. Were the non-formal education opportunities provided to children with disabilities and special needs also? What kind of support was provided? How did it affect these children's participation in non-formal education?
23. Why the transition between NFE and FE remains at a low level? Is it a matter of learning outcomes and preparation, or other factors? How can it be tackled?
24. Were there any programme activities aimed at addressing this problem? What were the observed effects of those activities?
25. Were any measures introduced at the national level, or into the legal framework level to support the provision of non-formal education?
26. Are there any elements missing, or any other skills that should be covered within non-formal education framework?

THEMATIC FOCUS SUB-QUESTIONNAIRE 2: QUALITY OF LEARNING AND EDUCATION

1. Did the programme help to improve the quality of learning and education [in the country/in the region]? Can you give examples?
2. What was the programme's effect on teachers and school staff?
3. Did the programme help to improve child protection in Lebanese schools? [If applicable, follow up on this question w/r to violence in schools, especially against refugee children – did the programme help improve the situation? If not, why - was it because of external factors or did the programme not cover that sufficiently?]
[If the interviewee has expertise/experience in quality of education pillar/designing training, or curricula - ask the relevant in-depth follow-up questions:]
4. Did teachers from different levels of education (pre-school, primary, secondary) obtain training? What were the differences in the scope of training thematic coverage?
5. What training modules did the programme entail for teachers/personnel?
6. Did the training include specific topics regarding gender-related issues, disability and special needs?
7. Were there pieces of training specifically related to teaching/ integration of non-Lebanese children in the education system?
8. What other support was provided to teachers?
9. Are there any changes in how teachers are evaluated?
10. Do you see any effects on learning outcomes? Do you monitor those regularly? (If any monitoring data are available, can those be shared with us?)
11. Have the curricula been changed? What were the changes? What are the effects?

THEMATIC FOCUS SUB-QUESTIONNAIRE 3: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE

1. How did the programme affect the Lebanese education system in general? Were any changes introduced at the systemic level?
2. Is education data systematically collected? What does it cover? Is it used to monitor the education situation, or is it used in policy making process in any other way?
3. Were the school programmes changed? If so, what changed and what are the effects?
4. Were any legal/policy changes introduced in the education sector with the programme's contribution? Can you give examples?

5. Have any new processes been introduced at the organisational level at MEHE or other relevant governmental actors as a result of the programme?

7.4.4 Interview questionnaire for IDIs with Donors

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Questionnaire

Donors (Category 3)

1. Could you briefly describe your role at your institution and your links to the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme implemented between 2016-2022?

[Instruction for the interviewer: Please tailor the following questions to the interviewee's role.]

2. What were your [country/institution]'s reasons and motivations behind the decision to support the programme? What do you see as the programme's priorities?
3. In your view, since 2016, what have been the primary needs and challenges in the education sector in Lebanon? Have any changes occurred over the last years that affected those needs?
4. In general, how does UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme address these needs? Are there any gaps?
5. How were the programme priorities defined?
6. What were the main effects of the programme on the three pillars: access to education, quality of education, and institutional capacity of the Lebanese education system?
7. To which extent were the results achieved?
 - a. In which areas was the programme the most successful? *[If not covered, follow up regarding access to formal/non-formal education, improved quality of education, improved overall education system]*
 - b. Were there areas where the results were not achieved? Which areas were those? What were the reasons?
8. How did the programme account for and addressed the needs of children with different vulnerabilities? *[If not mentioned, follow up on needs of girls, Syrian refugees, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households]*
9. How do you assess the overall programme implementation? Were there any particular successes, or particular problems?
10. Were there any challenges with the programme implementation? What were the reasons, and how were they tackled?
11. How was the programme managed? Were there any elements in the management structure that hampered implementation? *[If applicable, follow up with why questions, and ask for reasons/examples]*
 - a. Were the resources and capacities (staff, technical knowledge) adequate to the planned activities?
 - b. Was the work plan accurately designed to achieve results and objectives?
 - c. How do you assess the finances and financial management of the programme?
 - d. What monitoring and accountability mechanisms were in place? Do you think they were sufficient? *[If not]* What were the gaps, and what should have been done better?
12. According to your knowledge, what was the role of MEHE in the Education Programme implementation? Were there any differences in how UNICEF and MEHE's respective interventions were carried out and the effects they brought about?
13. What is the added value of UNICEF education programme in the context of other interventions in the region?
14. What impact has the UNICEF Education Programme had on the education sector? Which systemic changes did it contribute to? *[If applicable, relate to the effects of the programme discussed before - here, ask about the broader picture]*

15. Looking at the programme's different elements, were there elements that failed to bring about impact? Why?
16. What factors affected the achievement of impact, both positively and negatively? *[If not mentioned, prompt about UNICEF brand/visibility; leverage with partners/government]*
17. Should any changes be made to increase the programme's impact? *[If not mentioned, follow up on the scale, significance/impact of the three programme pillars, what are the most promising activities/focus areas in terms of impact]*
18. Which programme activities have been particularly successful and should be continued/upscaled in Lebanon or could be implemented elsewhere? Why?
19. How to ensure that the results of the programme are continued? What strategies and practices should be implemented? *[If not mentioned, follow up on systemic changes, potential partnerships, evidence collection, advocacy, and visibility]*
20. What are the critical lessons learnt for the future, what were the good practices and strategies that should be continued and implemented - in the education sector in Lebanon, as well as in future UNICEF programming?
21. Do you have any particular recommendations about how the programme could be improved?

7.4.5 Interview questionnaire for IDIs with representatives of other UN agencies

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Questionnaire

Representatives of other UN agencies (Category 4)

1. Could you briefly describe your role at UNICEF and your links to the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme implemented between 2016-2022?
2. *[If not specified before]* Was your institution involved in the implementation of the Programme, and if so, in which activities in particular?

[Instruction for the interviewer: Please tailor the following questions to the interviewee's role.]

3. In your view, since 2016, what have been the primary needs and challenges in the education sector in Lebanon? Have any changes occurred over the last years that affected those needs?
4. In general, how does UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme address these needs? Are there any gaps?
5. How does the UNICEF Education Programme fit in the broader interventions context in the region? Are there any synergies between the Programme and the work carried out by your institution?
6. According to your knowledge, what were the main effects of the programme on the three pillars: access to education, quality of education, and institutional capacity of the Lebanese education system?
7. How did the programme account for and addressed the needs of children with different vulnerabilities? *[If not mentioned, follow up on needs of girls, Syrian refugees, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households]*
8. *[If not covered before]* How did the programme account for gender considerations?
9. Did the programme bring about any unintended consequences – either positive or negative? Can you give examples? *[If examples are given, follow up to understand the reasons: Did the programme fail to account for some aspects? Was there any external factor that contributed to this unintended result?]*

[If the interviewee's institution was involved in the Programme implementation, please ask questions 11-14, if not, skip them]

10. Can you talk about how the programme activities were designed and selected? How were the programme priorities defined?
11. How was the programme managed? Were there any elements in the management structure that hampered implementation? *[If applicable, follow up with why questions, and ask for reasons/examples]*
12. What was the role of MEHE in the Education programme implementation? Were there any differences in how UNICEF and MEHE's respective interventions were carried out and the effects they brought about?
13. Did you encounter any challenges with the programme implementation? What were the reasons? How did you tackle them?
14. Did UNICEF engage with other partners to support the implementation of the programme? Which ones, and did that collaboration help achieve the programme objectives? Are there any gaps?
15. How does UNICEF programme fit within the broader context of interventions in the region – both by UNICEF and by other actors?
 - a. Are there any synergies?

- b. Is there sufficient coordination between the different actors? If not, what could be done?
16. What is the added value of UNICEF Lebanon Education programme?
 17. Are there any gaps or areas for increased collaboration between UNICEF Education programme and interventions carried out by your institution? Are there any missed opportunities?
 18. What impact has the UNICEF programme had on the education sector? Which systemic changes did it contribute to? *[If applicable, relate to the effects of the programme discussed before - here, ask about the broader picture]*
 19. Should any changes be made to increase the programme's impact? *[If not mentioned, follow up on the scale, significance/impact of the three programme pillars, what are the most promising activities/focus areas in terms of impact]*
 20. Which programme activities have been particularly successful and should be continued/upscaled in Lebanon or could be implemented elsewhere? Why?
 21. How to ensure that the results of the programme are continued? What strategies and practices should be implemented? *[If not mentioned, follow up on systemic changes, potential partnerships, evidence collection, advocacy, and visibility]*
 22. What are the most important priority areas for future education programming in Lebanon? Are there any gaps that future interventions should address?
 23. Do you have any particular recommendations about how the programme could be improved?

7.4.6 Interview questionnaire for IDIs with representatives of local government authorities

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Questionnaire

Local level government (Category 6)

1. Could you briefly describe your role at your institution and your links to the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme implemented between 2016-2022?

[Instruction for the interviewer: Please tailor the following questions to the interviewee's role.]

2. What are your institution's priorities for the education sector?
3. What have been the primary needs and challenges in the education sector in your region/area since 2016? Have those needs changed over the last 5 years?
4. Are there any children groups that have disproportionately low access to education? Why is it so?
5. In general, how did UNICEF Education Programme address these needs? Were there any gaps?
6. Has the programme helped to improve access to education for children in your region/area? What were its main effects? *[If the answer is not specific, prompt about enrolment and retention in formal education and completion rates, non-formal-education, school infrastructure and conditions]*
 - a. Were the effects different for different children groups? In what ways? *[If not mentioned, follow up – ask about the effects for Syrian refugees, girls, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households; urban/rural, effects in different regions.]*
 - b. How did the programme account for and addressed the needs of children with different vulnerabilities? *[If not mentioned, follow up on needs of girls, Syrian refugees, children with disability/special needs; children from low-income households]*
7. Did you implement any new programmes or policies at schools in your region as result of the programme? Can you give examples?
 - a. Were the school programmes changed? If so, what changed and what are the effects?
 - b. Did the programme help to improve child protection in Lebanese schools? If so, in what ways? *[If applicable, follow up on this question w/r to violence in schools, especially against refugee children - did the programme help improve the situation? If not, why - was it because of external factors or the programme did not cover that sufficiently?]*
8. Can you give examples of positive practices implemented by the programme?
9. Do you have monitoring tools in place?
 - a. Do you gather education data systematically?
 - b. Do you monitor different vulnerability aspects and the response?
10. Did the programme bring about any unintended consequences – either positive or negative? Can you give examples? *[If examples are given, follow up to understand the reasons: Did the programme fail to account for some aspects? Was there any external factor that contributed to this unintended result?]*
11. To the extent you are familiar with the programme implementation, how do you assess it?
12. Did you encounter any challenges with the programme implementation? What were the reasons? How were they tackled?
13. Do you see any broader change that the Programme brought about in your region?
 - a. Do you see any change at the level of parents/popular attitudes?
 - b. Do you see change in how public administration, teachers approach education of children? *[Prompt: Would you say that the education system in Lebanon is more "student-centred" in effect of the programme?]*

[If applicable, relate to the effects of the programme discussed before - here, ask about the broader picture]

14. Should any changes be made to increase the programme's impact? *[If not mentioned, follow up on the scale, significance/impact of the three programme pillars, what are the most promising activities/focus areas in terms of impact]*
15. Which programme activities have been particularly successful and should be continued/upscaled in Lebanon or could be implemented elsewhere? Why?
16. How to ensure that the results of the programme are continued?
17. What are the most important priority areas for future education programming in Lebanon? Are there any gaps that future interventions should address?
18. Do you have any particular recommendations about how the programme could be improved?

7.5. Interview reporting template

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Reporting template on IDIs in all respondent categories

Instruction for the interviewer: Please report all the information provided by the interviewee under the relevant criterion, answering the guiding questions based on the interviewee's input. The relevant Evaluation Questions are indicated for reference under each category. If there is no information for any given criterion from the interview, please mark it as "not covered". If you add your own comments or explanations, please distinguish them clearly by indicating in the brackets [comment – your initials].

General information

Interview date	Interviewer	Interviewee's unique code	Interviewee's role/institution	Stakeholder group*	Level of confidentiality**

* 1 – UNICEF staff, 2 Central government actors, 3 – Donor representatives, 4 – UN agencies, 6 – Local government actors.

** 1 – Full anonymity, 2 – Citing institution, 3 – Citing position and institution

Relevance

Relevance for country context and in light of changes: Was the programme and its interventions relevant to the country context? Did it respond relevantly to changes (socio-economic crisis, Covid-19, Beirut blast)? How so? Were there any gaps?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 1.2., 1.6, 1.4.

Relevance for children's needs, with the view of equity: Was the programme relevant to all children in Lebanon? Did it adequately identify and address the needs of vulnerable groups of children – girls, refugees, children with disability and special needs, and the economically unprivileged?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 1.5, 1.4.

Relevance of interventions: Were the programme interventions relevant to achieve the programme's objectives to improve access to education, quality, and systemic capacity? Are there any interventions that were not, or where alternative interventions could have been more relevant?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 1.4.

Relevance for Lebanese government priorities: Was the programme relevant to the government's priorities? Were there any gaps?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 1.3.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness – achievement of results: What were the programme's results? Have all the expected results been achieved, as initially outlined? If not, which were not achieved? What were the reasons?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 2.1., 2.2.

Effectiveness – promotion of the right to education: What were the activities aimed at promotion of the right to education for all children? What were the effects in the broader population?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 2.5.

Effectiveness – unintended effects: Were there any unintended effects? Were they positive or negative? Could those effects have been predicted? Provide examples.

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 2.3.

Effectiveness: Equity and gender aspects

Effectiveness and efficiency – equity aspects in the programme's implementation: What were the programme's effects on the most vulnerable groups of children? How were the equity aspects included in programming and implementation? How was the gender aspect included? Did the implementation activities have a sufficient gender focus? What are the effects for girls, as compared to boys? Was the response efficient, or are there any alternative ways that could have allowed for better effects with the same resources?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 2.4., 2.5., 2.6., 3.6.

Efficiency

Efficiency – management and delivery: How is the programme management assessed (financial, staff, timeliness)? Were there any problems? If yes, what were the reasons? How were they addressed? Were there sufficient monitoring and accountability mechanisms in place?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 3.1., 3.2., 3.5.

Efficiency – external collaboration: Was the collaboration and cooperation with partners efficient? Were all the opportunities within existing networks used, or were there any missed opportunities resulting in inefficiencies?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 3.3., 3.4.

Coherence

Coherence with other interventions: In general, is the programme coherent with other interventions of UNICEF in the region? How does it fit in the broader context, interventions

by other partners? Are there any synergies? What is the UNICEF Education programme's added value?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 4.1., 4.2.

Coherence of work of UNICEF and MEHE: How were the activities of UNICEF and MEHE in the programme related? Were there cases of overlaps or gaps (not covered by any of the two)? Were any mechanisms introduced to ensure coordination?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 4.3.

Impact

Impact: What were the impacts of the programme at the systemic level? Were any legislative, policy or organisational changes introduced? Please provide examples.

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 5.1.

Impact – activities: What were the most impactful activities? Were any partnerships or other types of leverage used to increase impact? Which activities could be upscaled or replicated? How to maximise impact?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: EQ 5.2., 5.3.

Sustainability

Sustainability – results: Were any programme interventions embedded in government programming? Are the activities possible to continue without UNICEF's support?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: 6.2.

Sustainability – barriers: What are the barriers to achieving sustainability? What could be done to make the results more sustainable? What are the good practices to achieve sustainability?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: 6.1., 6.3.

Recommendations

Please include here all recommendations or suggestions mentioned by the interviewee.

7.6. Topic guide for FGD with representatives of implementing organizations, NGOs and civil society (Category 5)

Instruction for the interviewer: The following topic guide is intended for focus group discussions. Before the interview, familiarize yourself with the relevant Programme documentation. Prior to initiating the interview ask whether the interviewees consent to the interview. Ask explicitly whether you can record the interview and explain the purpose of recording. In case of consent, ensure that the consent is recorded on tape. Answer any questions that the participants may have.

Focus on facilitating group discussion (i.e. between the participants). Ask the main, open questions to initiate discussion on a given topic, and use the supporting questions to redirect or focus the conversation.

Questions	Timing
Opening <i>Information on the evaluation by facilitator, introduction round</i> 0. How were you involved in the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme?	5-10 min
Effectiveness and impact: 1. What kind of effects did you observe from the work that you did as part of the UNICEF Lebanon Education programme? <i>Prompt about:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What were the direct effects for programme participants/target groups? How did it affect educational opportunities? What was the influence of the project the on local community? Did the project bring about any unintended results? 2. What were the main factors that affected the effective implementation of the programme? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which factors facilitated achievement of results? Which factors hampered the achievement of results? 3. Which programme activities have been particularly successful [in your region] and why? <i>If not mentioned and time allows, prompt about:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which of these activities should be continued/upscaled in Lebanon? 	15-20 min
Efficiency: 4. How do you assess the UNICEF (and MEHE) collaboration with your institutions [implementing organisations/NGO and other stakeholders]? <i>If not mentioned and time allows, prompt about:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> General programme management, information flow between UNICEF, MEHE and stakeholders Were sufficient funds allocated? Are there any differences across regions? 5. Are there any relevant local actors/other organizations that could have been included in project implementation to increase efficiency? <i>Prompt about:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which organizations/what type of organizations should have been included? What could have been different/better if those were included? Do you know why they were not included? 	15-20 min
Sustainability and coherence: 6. Do you think you would be able to implement or continue your project without UNICEF funding?	15-20 min

Prompt about:

- a. What if there was no funding from UNICEF available? Are there any other alternative programs that could have provided support, or could provide support in the future?
 - b. Were there any other programs or initiatives that you collaborated with?
7. How to ensure that the results of the programme are continued? What strategies and practices should be implemented?

If not mentioned and time allows, prompt about:

- a. Systemic/policy changes, potential partnerships, evidence collection, advocacy, visibility
- b. What were the good practices and strategies from the programme that should be continued?

Closing:

5-10 min

Brief summary of the discussion by facilitator

7.7. Topic guide for FGDs with parents and caregivers (Category 8)

Instruction for the interviewer: The following topic guide is intended for focus group discussions. Before the interview, familiarize yourself with the relevant Programme documentation. Prior to initiating the interview ask whether the interviewees consent to the interview. Ask explicitly whether you can record the interview and explain the purpose of recording. In case of consent, ensure that the consent is recorded on tape. Answer any questions that the participants may have.

Focus on facilitating group discussion (i.e. between the participants). Ask the main, open questions to initiate discussion on a given topic, and use the supporting questions to redirect or focus the conversation.

Questions	Timing
Opening <i>Information on the evaluation by facilitator, introduction round</i> <i>Ethical considerations (request that participants keep the discussion confidential), consent, data protection</i>	5-10 min
Background questions 1. Are all children you know currently attending school? <i>If yes →</i> What schools are usually chosen by parents you know? Private or public schools? Why? <i>If no →</i> What are the main reasons why some children you know do not attend school? Are they in informal education? What is their age, gender? What they do when not in school? 2. Are children you know participating in any out-of-school learning activities? Formal, non formal? <i>If no →</i> What are the main reasons? 3. Are there institutions in your area where children aged 3-5 can spend time learning and playing? <i>Prompt: kindergartens, schools with pre-primary classes. community centres etc.</i>	10 min
Key questions 4. Do you know how children can enrol in school or in out-of-school learning activities? Have you been offered any help in getting your children to school? Do you know special programmes for that? 5. Have you seen in the media or received direct messages about learning opportunities for children? 6. Does the school provide free textbooks and stationery? 7. How would you assess the attitude of teachers towards children? Have teachers'/educators' attitudes towards children changed recently? If so, in what way? 8. Has the education in Lebanon improved in the last years? If so, in what way? 9. Do you believe that education is important for children? Did you think the same 5 years ago, or have your views changed? Do children feel that education is important for them? 10. Do children struggle to get to and from school? Has anything changed recently in this respect? 11. Do children enjoy going to school/other learning spaces? What do they like about school/ learning spaces? What do they dislike? What do children think of their teachers/educators? 12. Do you believe that every child is treated as well as his/her peers at school/ learning space? Do you think that boys and girls have equal opportunities at school/regarding out-of-school learning activities? Probe for any other relevant vulnerability. 13. Maybe some of you have or know children with special needs. Can they learn alongside their peers? Has your children's access to school/out-of-school learning activities improved in recent years? 14. Is the school a safe place for children? Are they protected from bullying, peer pressure and violence? Do they have amenities, e.g. inside building toilets, hot water, etc.? Is it equally safe for boys and girls? 15. Is there anything that you think is not so great about school/course your know? What would you change about it? Are there any other needs of children that schools should address? Please explain why.	60 min
Closing: <i>Brief summary of the discussion by facilitator</i>	5-10 min

ANONYMOUS SURVEY FOR FGD PARTICIPANTS

This questionnaire will be distributed to parents after the FGD discussion. Once the questions have been answered, the survey will be placed by parents in a sealed box prepared by the interviewer. If the FGD is conducted online, the survey will be distributed online via a link at the end of the session.

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Anonymous Parents Survey

1. Have you ever been visited by a social worker to help you enroll your child in school/out-of-school learning activities?

Yes /No / I do not know

2. Have you ever concluded a social contract with officials regarding your children's education?

Yes /No / I do not know

3. Did you receive subsidies for your children's education?

Yes /No / I do not know

If YES, in what form?

- cash transfer
- fee waivers
- transportation subsidies
- special-needs equipment
- other (what?).....

If YES, how often do you receive these subsidies?

- one of payment
- once a month
- other, please specify:

If YES, are these adequate for a child to be placed and remain in school?

Yes /No / I do not know

7.8. Reporting template on FGDs with parents and caregivers

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Reporting template on FGDs with parents and caregivers

Instruction for the interviewer: Please report all the information provided by the participants under the relevant criterion, answering the guiding questions based on the interviewee's input. If there is no information for any given criterion from the interview, please mark it as "not covered". If you add your own comments or explanations, please distinguish them clearly by indicating in the brackets [comment – your initials].

General information

FGD date	Interviewer	Region	Level of confidentiality**
			1

** 1 – Full anonymity, 2 – Citing institution, 3 – Citing position and institution

Impact

Impact – awareness of activities: Do parent/caregivers know how to enrol a child in school? Do they know the educational offer? Does anyone support them in the enrolment process? Do social workers contact parents/caregivers to present educational opportunities for children? Do parents/caregivers conclude a social contract with officials regarding their children's education? Have they seen in the media or received direct messages about learning opportunities for children?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 4, FGD 5 + survey 1, survey 2

Impact – access: Are all children attending school? What are the main reasons why some children you know do not attend school? Are they in informal education? Are children participating in any out-of-school learning activities? Formal, non formal? What is their age, gender? What they do when not in school? Are there institutions around where children aged 3-5 can spend time learning and playing? Are there any barriers to children getting to school? Have they changed in recent times??

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 1, 2, 3, 10,

Impact – equality: What is access to school for children with special needs? What are the barriers/facilitators? Do boys and girls have equal opportunities at school/regarding out-of-school learning activities? Has anything changed in these respects?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 12, 13

Impact – support for children: Are children supported with free textbooks and stationery? Do parents/caregivers receive subsidies for their children's education?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 6 + survey 3

Impact – quality of education: What is the quality of education? Has it improved in recent years? Do children enjoy going to school (why yes/no)? What do the children think of the teachers? Has the attitude of teachers towards children changed in recent years? How?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 8, 11

Impact – attitudes: Do parents/caregivers believe that children's education is important? Do they think their views on this subject have changed in the last 5 years? Do children feel that education is important to them?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 9

Impact – safety: Is the school a safe place for children? Are they protected from bullying, peer pressure and violence? Do they have amenities, inside building toilets hot water, etc,? Is it equally safe for boys and girls?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 14

Recommendations: Are there any other problems faced by children/carers regarding education? How can they be tackled? What additional needs of children should the school cater for?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 15

7.9. Interview questionnaire for IDIs with parents and caregivers

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Interview Questionnaire

Parents and caregivers (Category 8)

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. Are all your children currently attending school?
If yes → Do your children attend private or public schools? Why?
If no → What are the main reasons why some of your children do not attend school? Are they in informal education? What is their age, gender? What they do when not in school?
2. Are your children participating in any out-of-school learning activities? Formal, non formal?
If no → What are the main reasons?
3. Are there institutions in your area where children aged 3-5 can spend time learning and playing?
Prompt: kindergartens, schools with pre-primary classes. community centres etc.

KEY QUESTIONS

If a parent has a child/children who do(es) not attend school

4. Do you know how your children can enrol in school or in out-of-school learning activities? Have you been offered any help in getting your children to school? Do you know special programmes for that?
5. Have you seen in the media or received direct messages about learning opportunities for your children?
6. Have you ever been visited by a social worker to help you enroll your child in school/out-of-school learning activities?
7. Have you ever concluded a social contract with officials regarding your children's education?
8. Did you receive subsidies for your children's education? If yes, in what form? Prompt: cash transfer, fee waivers, transportation subsidies, special-needs equipment.
9. Does your child's school provide free textbooks and stationery?
10. How would you **assess** the attitude of teachers towards children? Do you believe that teachers'/educators' attitudes towards children have changed recently? In what way?
11. Do you believe education improved in the last years. If so, in what way?
12. Do you believe that education is important for children? Did you think the same 5 years ago, or have your views changed? Do children feel that education is important to them?
13. Does your child struggle to get to and from school? Has anything changed recently in this respect?
14. Do your children enjoy going to school/other learning spaces? What do they like about school/ learning spaces? What do they dislike? What do your children think of the teachers/educators?
15. Do you believe that your child is treated as well as his/her peers at school? Do you think that boys and girls have equal opportunities at school?
16. Maybe some of you have children with special needs. Can they can learn alongside their peers? Has your children's access to school improved in recent years?
17. Is the school a safe place for children? Are they protected from bullying, peer pressure and violence? Do they have amenities, inside building toilets hot water, etc.? Is it equally safe for boys and girls?
18. Is there anything that you think is not so great about school/course your child attend? Did your child mention anything they did not like? What would you change about it? Are there any other needs of your children that schools should address? Please explain why.

7.10. Reporting template on IDIs with parents and caregivers

UNICEF Lebanon Education Programme Evaluation Reporting template for IDIs with parents and caregivers

Instruction for the interviewer: Please report all the information provided by the participants under the relevant criterion, answering the guiding questions based on the interviewee's input. If there is no information for any given criterion from the interview, please mark it as "not covered". If you add your own comments or explanations, please distinguish them clearly by indicating in the brackets [comment – your initials].

General information

FGD date	Interviewer	Region	Level of confidentiality**
			1

** 1 – Full anonymity, 2 – Citing institution, 3 – Citing position and institution

Impact

Impact – awareness of activities: Do parent/caregivers know how to enrol a child in school? Do they know the educational offer? Does anyone support them in the enrolment process? Do social workers contact parents/caregivers to present educational opportunities for children? Do parents/caregivers conclude a social contract with officials regarding their children's education? Have they seen in the media or received direct messages about learning opportunities for children?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 4, 5, 6, 7

Impact – access: Are all children attending school? What are the main reasons why some children you know do not attend school? Are they in informal education? Are children participating in any out-of-school learning activities? Formal, non formal? What is their age, gender? What they do when not in school? Are there institutions around where children aged 3-5 can spend time learning and playing? Are there any barriers to children getting to school? Have they changed in recent times?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 1, 2, 3, 13

Impact – equality: What is access to school for children with special needs? What are the barriers/facilitators? Do boys and girls have equal opportunities at school/regarding out-of-school learning activities? Has anything changed in these respects?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 15,16

Impact – support for children: Are children supported with free textbooks and stationery? Do parents/caregivers receive subsidies for their children's education?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 8, 9

Impact – quality of education: What is the quality of education? Has it improved in recent years? Do children enjoy going to school (why yes/no)? What do the children think of the teachers? Has the attitude of teachers towards children changed in recent years? How?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 10, 11

Impact – attitudes: Do parents/caregivers believe that children's education is important? Do they think their views on this subject have changed in the last 5 years? Do children feel that education is important to them?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 12

Impact – safety: Is the school a safe place for children? Are they protected from bullying, peer pressure and violence? Do they have amenities, inside building toilets hot water, etc.? Is it equally safe for boys and girls?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 17

Recommendations: Are there any other problems faced by children/carers regarding education? How can they be tackled? What additional needs of children should the school cater for?

This section should answer the following evaluation questions: FGD 18

7.11. Topic guide for REM and FGDs with school management, teachers and educators (Category 7)

This will feed into impact, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability

Instruction for the interviewer: The following topic guide is intended for focus group discussions. Before the interview, familiarize yourself with the relevant Programme documentation. Prior to initiating the interview ask whether the interviewee consents to the interview. Ask explicitly whether you can record the interview and explain the purpose of recording. In case of consent, ensure that the consent is recorded on tape. Answer any questions that the participants may have.

Focus on facilitating group discussion (i.e. between the participants). Ask the main, open questions to initiate discussion on a given topic, and use the supporting questions to redirect or focus the conversation.

Questions	Timing
Opening <i>Brief overview of the session and objectives</i> <p>The purpose of this study is to explore the overall changes that have taken place as a result of UNICEF Lebanon 2016-2022 Education Programme or other recent education reforms. This impact mapping evaluation project will help us better understand the various and complex effects of the programme, on individual participants, groups, schools and communities involved. This mapping evaluation provides a method of visually illustrating the impact of the programme to acknowledge what has been achieved and identify what could still be improved.</p>	5 min
Introduction <p>Please, introduce yourself briefly and your role within the school.</p>	5 min
Peer-to-peer interviews <p>A. Find a partner (not a good friend) B. Share a brief story about how the programme activities made a difference in your school. Please take notes on your stories and share them with the moderator.</p>	15 min
Mapping <p>A. Explain the three levels of ripples and that the purpose of this tool is to better understand the impact of our work by thinking about it as a pebble or boulder in the school/ learning space pond. Think about the whole school/local community and avoid overlooking some aspects. (5 minutes) B. Begin mapping the first ripple by asking, "What is different now than it was in 2016? How has the school/ learning space changed? What are people (authorities, school management, teachers, educators, parents, students) doing differently?" Put the items generated during the first ripple discussion on the map. Continue until all stories have been captured and rippled</p> <p><i>Probe for more ideas by asking about changes/activities not yet mentioned:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has anything changed in the way teachers/educators are recruited? • Has anything changed in the way teachers/educators are evaluated? • Has anything changed in the way teachers/educators are paid and rewarded? • Has anything changed in the workload of teachers/educators? • Has anything changed in the way the school/learning space is managed? • Has anything changed in the way students are educated/approached? • Has anything changed in the way students relate to each other? • Did the participants [teachers/educators] attended any training? What kind? What effects do participants see from these trainings? 	75 min

- Has anything changed in terms of access to new technologies for students/teachers/educators/school management? (Prompt: *Has an online learning platform been introduced for students, teachers, educators?*)
 - Has anything changed in access to school/learning space or specific educational activities for girls/students with disabilities/non-Lebanese students? Has there been a change in the number of female students, students with disabilities and non-Lebanese students?
 - Has anything changed regarding child protection mechanisms at school/learning space?
 - Have renovations been carried out at the school? What these are exactly? How have these affected the accessibility of the school/learning space?
 - Has anything changed with regard to the provision of clean water, toilets, cleaning products and hygiene items in schools/learning space?
 - Has anything changed in terms of art, music, sport and science equipment at the school/learning space?
 - Has anything changed in the school's/learning space's financial situation? Has the school received additional funding for any types of (educational) expenditure?
 - Has anything changed in terms of languages of instruction in schools/learning spaces?
- (40 minutes)

C. Begin mapping the second ripple by focusing on items in the first ripple and using questions like "Who is benefitting from the change and how?" "How is the fact that people are doing things differently affecting others?" "What resulted from the change?" "Are these changes sustainable?" (15 minutes)

- *Use a different colour, so the ripples are evident in the colour scheme.*
- *Draw an arrow from the item in the first ripple to the item in the second. Sometimes there are multiple arrows. The arrows will show the process by which change was accomplished, which can inform new efforts.*

D. Begin mapping the third ripple by asking the question, "What changes are you seeing in the whole community? Are everyday ways of thinking and doing changing? How?" (10 minutes)

- *Use a new colour so the ripples are evident in the colour scheme.*
- *Use an arrow to link items in the second ripple to those in the third ripple.*

E. Finally, ask, "What do you think is the most significant change on the map? Why?" Use red to star those items. (5 minutes)

Reflection and closing

20 min

Initiate a brief discussion on how this reflection process could provide insights into next steps. "What have we learned from the mapping?" "Could anything have been done better?" "Is there a change that should have happened and didn't?" "What should we do next, what are the critical steps? You may use the map to identify impact concentration and gaps.

Thank the participants for engaging in the Ripple Effects Mapping exercise and discuss the next steps: the map will be photographed, digitised and encoded by research team. The original map may remain in the school/learning space as evidence of the change achieved.

The results of the REM discussion will be presented using mind mapping software - XMind. The data produced in the mapping process will be then downloaded into a spreadsheet program and coded by the research team. No other reporting is required.

7.12. Observation guidance

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES OBSERVATION RECORD

Name of Researcher:

Site Location:

Date:

Start time:

Stop time:

I. WASH Checklist

No.	Indicator	Value (Y/N)	Accessibility (Y/N) <i>Is the facility available for persons with disabilities?¹</i>	Comments
1.	Safe water supply accessible on premises (within facility buildings)			
2.	All taps are connected to an available and functioning water supply			
3.	Water is available at the time the assessment is carried out			
4.	The facility has tanks to store water in case of disruption to the main supply, and water storage tanks are protected (e.g. from climate-related extreme weather events)			
5.				
6.				
7.	A drinking water station with safe drinking water is available at school/learning space			

¹ A place can be considered to meet the needs of people with reduced mobility if it meets the following conditions: can be accessed without stairs or steps, in case of toilets: handrails for support are attached either to the floor or sidewalls, the door is at least 80 cm wide, the toilet has a raised seat (between 40–48 cm from the floor), a backrest and the cubicle has space for circulation/manoeuvring (150 x 150 cm). The sink, tap and water outside should also be accessible and the top of the sink 75 cm from the floor (with knee clearance). Switches for lights, where relevant, should also be at an accessible height (max 120 cm).

8.	Facility has a sufficient number of improved toilets for students and teachers/educators ²			
9.	All toilets are available and usable ³			
10.	All toilets have a functioning handwashing station within 5 metres ⁴			
11.	Toilets are clearly separated/labelled for male, female and provide privacy			
12.	At least one usable improved toilet meets menstrual hygiene management needs ⁵			
13.	General waste bins are available in all public areas, litter is regularly removed from the interior and exterior of the facility			

II. School Equipment

No.	Type	Description <i>Describe the type and quantity of the equipment in the school; assess the accessibility of equipment (i.e. teachers and students can use it as needed).</i>
1.	Textbooks, readings	
2.	Stationery	
3.	Science equipment	

² Improved sanitation facilities: include flush toilets into managed sewer or septic tank and soakaway pit, VIP latrines, pit latrines with slab and composting toilets.

³ Available and usable: toilet/latrine should have a door which is unlocked when not in use (or for which a key is available at any time) and can be locked from the inside during use, there should be no major holes in the structure, the hole or pit should not be blocked, water should be available for flush/pour flush toilets and there should be no cracks, or leaks in the toilet structure. It should be within the grounds of the facility and it should be clean as noted by absence of waste, visible dirt and excreta and insects.

⁴ Functioning hand hygiene station at toilets: must include soap and water. Alcohol-based hand rub is not sufficient to remove faecal matter from hands.

⁵ Toilets should have a bin for disposal of waste or an area for washing, with water available. Ideally, sanitary pads should be available at the facility or nearby for menstruating and post-natal women to procure.

4.	Sport equipment	
5.	Art supplies	

III. School Facilities

No.	Type	Value (Y/N)	Accessibility (Y/N)	Description <i>Is the space accessible to teachers/educators and students? Is it open and in use at the time of observation? How is the space equipped?</i>
1.	Library			
2.	Computer room			
3.	Laboratory			
4.	Workshop facilities (Specify what type)			
5.	Gym and other sport facilities			

6.	Canteen			
7	Access for children with physical disabilities (ramps, elevators, etc.)			



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