

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon

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Final Evaluation Report

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
BLN	Basic Literacy and Numeracy
BPRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
CB-ECE	Community-Based Early Childhood Education
CERD	Centre for Educational Research and Development
CFRA	Child-Focussed Rapid Assessment
CLM	Child Level Monitoring
CPD	Country Programme Document
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DfID	Department for International Development (UK) (now FCDO)
DP	Development Partner
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EISI	Evidence Information System Integration (UNICEF)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (formerly DfID)
FE	Formal Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEROS	Global Evaluation Report Oversight System (UNICEF)
GoL	Government of Lebanon
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INT	Interview
KE	Key Expert
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Development Bank)
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCO	Lebanon Country Office (UNICEF)
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LOST	The Lebanese Organisation for Studies and Training
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education

MoRES	Monitoring of Results for Equity Systems
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLG	No Lost Generation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOS	Out of School
OOSC	Out of School Children
PCGD	Pedagogical Counselling and Guidance Department
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (at U.S. Embassy)
PSB	Programme Strategic Board
RACE	Reaching All Children with Education
SBC	Social and Behaviour Change
SBP	School Bridging Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TA	Technical Assistance
TOC	Theory of Change
TREF	Transition and Resilience Education Fund
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education/ Training
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WCH	War Child Lebanon
WL	World Learning (NGO)
YAD	Youth and Adolescents Development
YBLN	Youth-Basic Literacy and Numeracy

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Executive Summary

Introduction

- (1) PROMAN S.A. has been contracted to provide services for assessing and evaluating the results of the inception phase of the Dirasa Programme (February 2022 to September 2022, covering 5,000 OOSC aged 8-14 years, including 450 children with special educational needs). This report presents the findings and recommendations of the independent summative evaluation which assesses the results at the end of the inception phase.
- (2) Key to the summative evaluation as a whole is the identification of possible bottlenecks and/or flaws in the overall programme focus, approaches, strategies and effectiveness, and also, concomitantly, ways in which these challenges were addressed during the piloting phase or how they would need to be addressed in view of the planned forthcoming upscale phase of the project, and emerging new risks that it might entail.
- (3) The overall objective of the Dirasa Programme is that Lebanese and non-Lebanese out of school children re-enter, catch-up, and transition into further formal and non-formal education for future better livelihood and social cohesion. This overall objective will be achieved through three intermediate results, i.e. (i) Equitable access to high quality education for OOS children through cost effective approach; (ii) Improved soft skills and learning outcomes in foundational literacy in Arabic and second language, and in mathematics; and (iii) Children transition into further formal education or alternative pathways to complete their education.

Methodology

- (4) The evaluation assessed the Dirasa inception phase by means of a sample of 9 (out of 19) schools across seven governorates of Lebanon. Schools were selected in close collaboration with UNICEF Lebanon Country Office (LCO), to target the areas with most OOSC in seven governorates of the country. The evaluation takes into account the entire timeframe of the inception phase following its launch in February 2022, up to the time of this evaluation (August 2022).
- (5) Within the framework of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team has fully observed UNEG norms and standards, and always operated according to UNEG guidelines. Further, all evaluation protocols and tools were submitted to the UNICEF's Ethics Review Board (ERB) for ethics review approval which was granted on 25 August 2022, before commencement of the field and school visits.
- (6) In view of the stated purpose and objectives of the assignment, the general approach followed the OECD/DAC criteria and the Monitoring of Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) framework as a tool to guide the evaluation. The evaluation employed a non-experimental design, with two main sources of data, i.e. documents and stakeholders. Data from stakeholders were derived from interviews with government partners, education representatives from multilateral and bilateral donors, and technical/implementing partners. In addition, the evaluation team consulted with the World Learning team with regard to the ongoing assessment of Dirasa Learning Outcomes.
- (7) Participatory methods were employed such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and technical meetings with key personnel involved in education, within the framework of Dirasa programme objectives. In order to gain different perspectives on a common issue, views were sought from those involved at both a strategic and operational level. The consultant team continuously liaised with the different key players since this exercise is very much regarded as a joint initiative of all stakeholders concerned.

- (8) Documentary sources included documents provided to the consultants at the onset of the mission, including background information policy documents and reports of missions and studies that had been previously undertaken.
- (9) Our consultation standards in the evaluation process ensured that all consultation documents are clear, concise and include all necessary information, and that all relevant target groups were consulted. Tools were adequately adapted to the specific target group(s) who in turn had sufficient time for participation in the survey(s). Eventually, collective or individual responses and feedback was provided in order to acknowledge the importance of the stakeholders' participation.
- (10) Limitations relate to the very short period of the inception phase (6 months, sometimes even shorter due to delayed commencement in certain areas) and the non-availability of originally expected data from the Learning Outcomes Study.

Evaluation Findings

- (11) The evaluation has shown the potential relevance of the Dirasa Programme, and its embodiment in the development cooperation context. The Dirasa Programme fits in principle within the country's 5-year Education Plan, its development objectives, and is part of the strategic link between the 1st funding window of the TREF (public schools) and the 2nd funding window (multiple flexible pathways). As such, the Dirasa Programme can make a relevant contribution to the education sector, specifically within the parameters of the TREF.
- (12) However, there are major weaknesses in the design of the programme which was built on the assumption that channelling support through the private sector would be an innovative approach towards addressing the needs of the OOSC. While such assumption has not been tested, the Programme at the same time foresaw a rapid upscaling from a very short inception phase into a nation-wide upscale phase, raising the number of beneficiaries by 1,000% from 5,000 children to 50,000. This also led to a major weakness, i.e., a multitude of unresolved issues at the end of the inception phase which need to be addressed before moving into a scaling-up phase. Further, the underlying risk analysis underestimated the potential resistance of those who would not benefit from the Programme, should an upscale happen at a rapid pace.
- (13) Due to its implicit emergency focus, the Dirasa Programme over-prioritised "Access" when compared to quality, repeating an error of the early Education for All (EFA) initiative which ultimately led to over-crowded classrooms, an even further deteriorated educational quality, a lack of qualified staff, and insufficient system capacities for transition from basic to secondary education.
- (14) These design weaknesses are also reflected in the Theory of Change. Currently, the ToC is a rather theoretical model of what *could* happen in an ideal scenario, however with an over-emphasis on quantitative aspects and built on (unmentioned) assumptions which are not likely to hold. Taking a more realistic view, the implementation chain is likely to be disrupted at the output level already, if the systemic preconditions for reaching the short-term outcome level are not pro-actively addressed. "Collaboration and coordination between financial, technical and community partners" (as mentioned in the ToC) will not be sufficient; the ToC completely neglects the political and society levels outside the Dirasa communities, whose endorsement of the process would however be vital for any success. This however is a process that takes more time than currently envisaged. Consequently, the ToC is also missing a time dimension.
- (15) The intended results to be achieved by the end of the Dirasa inception phase have been achieved in terms of access to the programme by 5,000 children (given a drop-out rate of 14.7% on average, after 6 months), the distribution of learning materials and the provision of scheduled trainings. However,

since the focus has been on quantitative aspects, there is no clear evidence on either learning outcomes or the effectiveness and relevance of teacher trainings and/or learning materials. While there is some anecdotal evidence on the appreciation of the programme (in particular the extra-curricular activities), a formal evaluation of the learning outcomes by World Learning is still ongoing.

- (16) Effectiveness in the long term will very much depend on the further timing of implementation, in order to ensure continuity (and ultimate survival of the Programme) and sustainability. A rapid increase at this point in time, from 5,000 to 50,000 students, will most likely result in opposition of those who do not benefit from the programme, and will ultimately put the continuity of the entire Programme at risk. Also, access to adequately staffed services (beyond the available facilities of private schools) has yet to be tested at a scale which goes beyond the initial inception phase.
- (17) With regard to the Programme's budget and expenditure, there remains complete uncertainty in terms of duration (for how long the Programme is intended to run?), participation (what about the remaining harder-to-reach OOSC, i.e. up to 600,000 who would not benefit despite the significant systemic risks already being encountered?) and availability of funding. The current estimated cost of USD 45 million per year has not yet been secured, and it appears doubtful – given the systemic risks of the Programme – that potential donors will get easily involved. Further, compared to the budget of the inception phase, the budget of the upscale phase deviates from the initial approach by recruiting a large number of staff from the communities which raises questions about their capacities when compared to the high number of international staff recruited during the inception phase.
- (18) There is a significant and severe risk that the Dirasa programme, if going nationwide at the proposed rapid pace with an immediate increase of 1,000% of beneficiaries, would distort the entire education system by creating unrealistic expectations (leading to raised demands), and particularly by creating pull factors for Syrian students out of the public education system. It also cannot be assumed that such an increase of mostly Syrian beneficiaries during the first phase of the scale-up would be easily accepted by Lebanese parents who are suffering from an economic crisis which forces them to take their children out of private school due to an unaffordability of the school fees.
- (19) As such, the Dirasa Programme potentially endangers social stability in Lebanon by intensifying resentment of those not directly benefitting from it. Rising social instability, paired with growing resentment towards the Syrian population (and donors giving preferential treatment to Syrians – even if only perceived as such) could lead to severe political and systemic shocks, reaching far beyond the education sector. Due to the financial support channelled to private schools through the Syrian students attending them, an increasing number of Lebanese students will feel deprived of learning at private schools (due to their inability to pay school fees) and will resent such support provided by UNICEF, resulting – amongst other – in a risk for UNICEF's institutional reputation which might even affect the reputation of the entire UN family.

Basic options for a future strategy

- (20) Based on the findings, there are basically two options to consider for a future strategy, i.e., (i) an immediate termination of the programme and its subsequent complete re-design; or (ii) a continuation of the programme at a much slower pace with an extended pilot phase and a postponed decision with regard to a possible scale-up.
- (21) **Option 1: Due to the apparent design weaknesses of the Dirasa Programme, the Programme should enter into an immediate exit strategy, combined with a complete re-design of the programme:** The exit strategy will aim at completing the anticipated bridging process for the 5,000 children already enrolled in the programme, while at the same time terminating the Programme with regard to any new enrolments. At the same time, and based on the experiences made during the inception phase and the

findings of this evaluation, the Theory of Change will be redesigned in close collaboration with key stakeholders, also involving key ministries outside MEHE (e.g., Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior, etc.). This will then result in a completely new approach with a new name which also might take different directions (depending on the outcomes of the consultations), or might lead to a decision of abandoning the intervention altogether.

- (22) **Option 2: Despite the current design weaknesses of the Dirasa Programme, the Programme will continue, although at a much slower pace:** This option will ensure continuity for the children already enrolled in the Programme, while at the same time allowing for rectification of current shortcomings during an extended pilot phase. As with Option 1, the Theory of Change will be redesigned, and a decision of further extensions will be postponed to the beginning of the second year (i.e., school year 2023/24). "Too many beneficiaries too fast" will potentially lead to a total collapse of the Programme which still has to cope with too many uncertainties and unclarified issues.
- (23) We have a slight preference for Option 2, primarily due to the continuity for children already enrolled under the Programme. All following recommendations are therefore given based on the general conclusion that the Dirasa Programme should continue, although at a much slower pace (i.e., Option 2).

General recommendations

- (24) **Recommendation 1:** Turn the current inception phase of the Dirasa Programme into a genuine Pilot Phase, covering a period of two full years up to the end of the first two-year cycle of the current cohort (covering 5,000 children). At the beginning of the second year (i.e., school year 2023/24), a small upscale could be considered if by that time the recommendations for the first year have been fully addressed.
- (25) **Recommendation 2:** In order to avoid severe political and systemic shocks, consult in depth during the entire process of Dirasa implementation with all relevant Ministries outside MEHE, especially the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, in order to fully respect the conflict sensitivity approach and the principle of "do no harm". The tense socio-political and economic situation of Lebanon requires special precautions in programme implementation.

Recommendations for immediate action

- (26) **Recommendation 3:** Abandon the current preparations for upscaling from 5,000 to then 50,000 beneficiaries in 250 schools. Instead, expand the current inception phase by at least one full school year, turn it into a genuine pilot phase, address the current short-comings and update the Theory of Change accordingly.
- (27) **Recommendation 4:** Develop an explicit exit strategy for the Dirasa Programme in order to lay the foundations for a predictable financial planning, and in order to be able to strategically abandon the Programme in the case of emerging undesired effects.

Recommendations for action to be taken within one year

- (28) **Recommendation 5:** Closely align the Dirasa programme with the implementation of the TREF. Open issues stemming from the initial "inception phase" need to be tackled by a joint "Strategic Management Board" to be established under the TREF, focusing on the interdependencies between the two funding windows, and harmonising approaches in order to avoid the emergence of parallel structures.
- (29) **Recommendation 6:** Closely monitor and continuously evaluate the extended pilot phase, specifically with regard to monitoring of learning outcomes, quality of teaching (i.e., not only quantities of training sessions), behavioural and attitudinal changes at classroom level.

- (30) Recommendation 7: Undertake an assessment of private schools (including those already in the [extended] inception phase), identifying those most in the need of financial support and at the same time considered to be of high-quality potential; then support those under a slightly extended pilot (see also Recommendation 10 below). At the same time, review the criteria used for schools participating in the Programme, and also investigate the possibility of targeting more semi-private schools under Dirasa since they are financially struggling even more than the private schools - and some of them are teaching Lebanese and refugees from different nationalities in the same shift (AM shift).
- (31) Recommendation 8: Undertake a study on the absorption capacity of the formal education system against the prospective outputs of the Dirasa Programme, as a guideline for the limitations of Dirasa implementation. At the same time, further investigate alternative pathways (beyond BLN and ALP) for OOSC and also young adults, also taking into account significantly differing dropout rates across Governorates.
- (32) Recommendation 9: In case of any anticipated significant changes in implementation methodology, ensure that such changes are reflected in the extended inception phase. Avoid the “testing” of such changes during the implementation of an already upscaled phase since any negative effects cannot be easily rectified anymore.

Recommendation for action to be taken after one year

- (33) Recommendation 10: Following the one-year extended inception phase, and provided all open issues have been successfully addressed, scale up slightly (e.g., to 40 schools) and prepare for the transition of the first cohort (from the initial 19 schools) to the public education system. When choosing the schools, also consider prioritising semi-private schools (in line with Recommendation 7 above). A comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of the children accessing the school and the financial situation of the school is highly needed, ideally through regular meetings between specialists and teachers that would result in a specified action plan to address the needs of the children with disabilities.

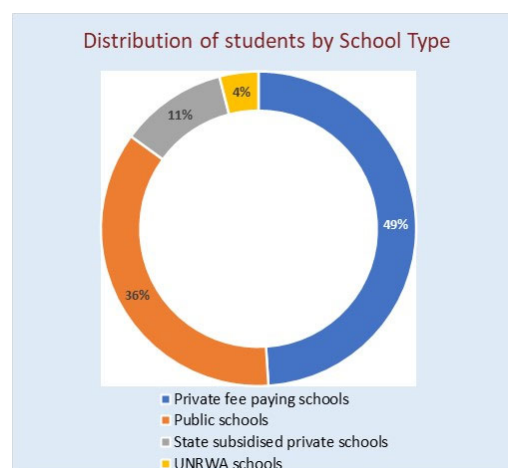
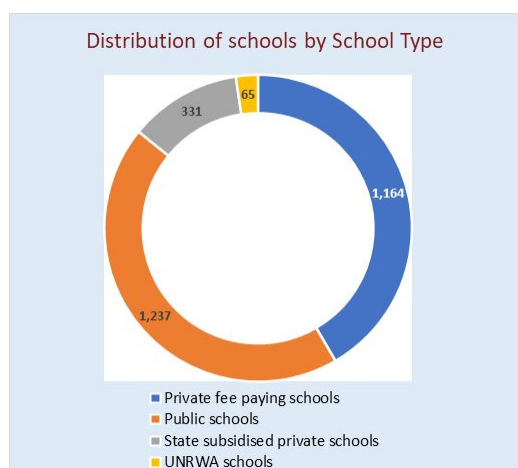
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the outbreak of the Syrian war in 2011, approximately 1.5 million Syrians have sought refuge in Lebanon (UNHCR). Of all Lebanon's public sectors, the education system is amongst those most heavily affected by the crisis. The system's capability to cater for the education needs of more than 600,000 school aged Syrian refugee children and a growing number of vulnerable Lebanese children has been considerably overstressed (HRW 2021). Although the international community and Lebanese government have taken joint initiatives to address the effects of the crisis and in particular to increase access of Syrian and vulnerable Lebanese children to education, challenges persist in many regards, and in particular in terms of quality of education and the system's institutional capacities. According to the 2020-2021 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), the number of Syrian children out of school increased to 445,000 children, an increase from 55% (2020) to 63% (2021). The total number of Lebanese children out of school is estimated to be 22% of the Lebanese school-aged population (N=257,000), bringing the total to approximately 700,000 children (37% of the total school-aged population).

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) of Lebanon has always been a highly committed partner in supporting refugee children in accessing their rights to formal education. In order to address the critical education needs of thousands of school age, vulnerable Lebanese and displaced Syrian children in Lebanon, the Ministry launched the *Reaching All Children with Education* over two periods, i.e. 2014-2016 (RACE I) and 2017-2021 (RACE II), aiming at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Non-formal education (NFE) pathways offered for children were designed to ensure the transition to formal education (FE) by the time the child successfully completed the pathway requirements and thus met FE enrolment criteria. The implementation of NFE programmes and retention support typically takes place within community learning spaces; however, many NFE implementing organisations implement the retention support programmes on public schools' premises. MEHE's Programme Management Unit (PMU) is responsible for the effectiveness and efficiency of all NFE delivery in Lebanon and for reporting progress in line with the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP).

The private sector is a defining feature of the Lebanese education system. In addition to public schools, education service is provided by private fee paying schools and semi-private (state subsidised private) schools. Nearly half of all students are in private fee-paying schools while 11% (116,000) are enrolled in state-subsidised private schools, with 4% enrolled in UNRWA schools for Palestinians.



Data Source: KASPARIAN, Lila (2022): L'éducation scolaire au Liban: entre urgence de sauvetage et impératif de développement à long-terme

In terms of demand, the number of students in private schools has declined over the past two years, due to the deterioration of the living conditions of families. As of now, the economic crisis makes private education a “luxury service” resulting in the transfer of a growing number of Lebanese students to free public schools. In this regard, in 2020-2021, public schools received more than 53,000 students from the private sector, representing 14% of their students.

1.2 The School Bridging Programme “Dirasa”

Against this background, in February 2022 UNICEF Lebanon launched the inception phase of the UNICEF School Bridging Programme or Dirasa, described by UNICEF as a new innovative approach to bring out-of-school children (OOSC) in Lebanon back to school.¹ Dirasa is built on a whole-system approach featuring multiple and flexible pathways as a bridge that aims at facilitating the re-entry for 100,000 marginalised out-of-school children and adolescents. The Dirasa Programme is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities. It is expected that transition into formal or non-formal education will further contribute to future livelihoods options and social cohesion. Dirasa therefore aims at (i) increasing the number of children in school; (ii) ensuring private schools to remain operational; and (iii) providing flexible learning pathways with a variety of inclusive education models supporting a bridge to formal education as well as other learning opportunities. Thus, the Dirasa Programme targets an expansion of supply of educational opportunities for OOSC, and at the same time unfolds a complementary focus where the private sector complements international support, i.e., by subsidising the public formal sector.

Apart from MEHE, Dirasa key stakeholders are the Network of Private schools, Education Sector partners in Lebanon, the Child Protection Sector, United Nations (UN) agencies (such as UNHCR and the World Food Programme [WFP]), and regional offices of MEHE, together with local stakeholders such as different mayors, school directors and caregivers. MEHE through the Director-General (DG) office and a senior UNICEF Consultant developed and endorsed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the Dirasa programme. Consultations with the Education and Child Protection Sectors focused on learning from previous interventions in Private and semi-private schools in Lebanon. Here, coordination among UN agencies included UNHCR on referral of refugee children, and WFP on supporting few schools of the Dirasa programme with school meals. During the inception phase, UNICEF held several meetings with the Network of Private schools in Lebanon, aiming at presenting the context and situation of OOSC and the planned structure and design of the Dirasa programme.

The implementation of the Dirasa programme during the inception phase was divided across three main levels:

- **Technical Partner:** Responsible for the quality aspect of the programme, from developing the programmatic approach conducting teaching training and following up on learning outcomes evaluation.
- **Community Engagement Partner:** Responsible for the community engagement component outreach and referral. The community partner was to be also responsible for conducting monitoring visits to the school to ensure the quality of programme delivery and proper and accurate reporting on children's attendance and transition rate. For the inception phase, the Community partner was responsible to follow up on the financial component; transferring the tuition fees and operational cost to the schools.
- **Private school selected to take part in the Inception Phase:** Responsible for the programme implementation component from the education to wellbeing of children and teachers.

¹ The budget of the Dirasa Inception phase has been around 3 million US Dollars.

Monthly coordination meetings between UNICEF, the community support partner and technical partners were conducted monthly, focusing on main achievements, bottlenecks and the overall monitoring of programme. A meeting with all school directors is scheduled to take place twice a year, and two meetings have already happened during the inception phase.

The project overall objective is that **Lebanese and non-Lebanese out of school children re-enter, catch-up, and transition into further formal and non-formal education for future better livelihood and social cohesion**. This overall objective will be achieved through three intermediate results, i.e.:

- **Outcome 1:** Equitable access to high quality education for OOS children through cost effective approach.
- **Outcome 2:** Improved soft skills and learning outcomes in foundational literacy in Arabic and second language, and in mathematics.
- **Outcome 3:** Children transition into further formal education or alternative pathways to complete their education

The complete Theory of Change is presented in Annex 1 to the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluation, contained in Appendix 3.

PROMAN S.A. was contracted to provide services for assessing and evaluating the results of the inception phase of the Dirasa Programme (February 2022 to September 2022, covering 5,000 OOSC aged 8-14 years, including 450 children with special educational needs), also as a point of reference for informing a possible upscale phase of the programme. Such possible upscale would initially target 51,000 children (70% non-Lebanese and 30% Lebanese), 90% of which in the age range 8-11 years, including children with disabilities. By 2023-2024, Dirasa aims to reach 100,000 OOSC across 400 private schools.²

1.3 Purpose, objectives and outputs of the evaluation

According to the ToR, the **specific purpose** of the consultancy is an evaluation of the Dirasa Project inception phase.

Therefore, it is a **summative evaluation** of Dirasa's inception phase which assesses the results at the end of the inception phase in preparation for the next programme cycle. It should inform future programming through evidence-based planning and by generating recommendations to inform the design of future phases of the programme.

Apart from assessing the results achieved during the inception phase of the Dirasa programme, the evaluation will acknowledge specific achievements and make recommendations with regard to possible adjustments in the upscale phase of the programme. Further, it will support accountability requirements, both internally within UNICEF, and externally with regard to government and donors.

The **main objectives** of the summative evaluation are

- to provide an independent assessment of the UNICEF Lebanon Dirasa programme against its original design and development objectives, its implementation, collaboration processes with sector partners,

² According to UNICEF, the capitalisation on existing private schools is one of the innovations of the Dirasa initiative. As pointed out in a donor brief by UNICEF, "it is the first time private schools in Lebanon are being used as a platform to facilitate the re-entry of out-of-school children and youth into formal education. Given the strong capacity of these private schools, Dirasa can reach out-of-school children at a greater scale and more efficiently than the traditional Non-Formal Education model, which is built on smaller, more costly centres."

and results achievement with a particular emphasis on its contribution to Lebanon Education sector results;

- to critically measure and assess the overall relevance to the country context and the needs of OOSC, the Dirasa Programme's effectiveness in achieving planned results, and its coherence during its inception phase;
- to analyse the factors that affected progress towards results and the hindering and supporting effect of the country context, and capture challenges, lessons learned, and success factors during Dirasa's piloting phase;
- to identify possible unintended effects of the Dirasa pilot and broader impacts, both positive and negative, at four levels (child, school, community, system);
- to provide strategic learning and recommendations aimed at informing the upscale phase of the programme design and implementation by UNICEF Lebanon;
- to assess the logic of the Theory of Change and its pathways according to the achieved results in the piloting phase;
- to explore if and to which extent the project has been successful in facilitating better inclusion of adolescent girls and children with disabilities;
- to highlight areas requiring further focus and possibly further research, and main risks to be considered during the upscale phase, outlining possible mitigation results;
- to identify longer-term implications for sustainability and expectations, especially in relation to the likelihood of exacerbating intercommunal tensions, possible tendencies on the side of private schools to prioritise Syrian students due to the guaranteed income from UNICEF, ability of parents to sustain their children's education after the end of UNICEF support.

Key to the summative evaluation as a whole will be the identification of possible bottlenecks and/or flaws in the overall programme focus, approaches, strategies and effectiveness, and also, concomitantly, ways in which these challenges were addressed during the piloting phase or how they would need to be addressed in view of the forthcoming upscale phase of the project, and emerging new risks that it might entail.

2 Overall framework of the evaluation

2.1 Evaluation scope and intended use

This **scope of the summative evaluation** seeks to assess and evaluate the inception phase of the Dirasa programme against the OECD/DAC criteria, examining the progress in all focus areas from community to school level. It will examine the challenges and barriers encountered during the implementation of the programme, its activities and outputs, and will assess the utilisation of partnerships employed in achieving the targets.

The evaluation assessed the Dirasa inception phase by means of a **sample of 9 (out of 19)³ schools across seven governorates of Lebanon**. The evaluation takes into account the entire timeframe of the inception phase following its launch in February 2022, up to the time of this evaluation (August 2022).

The **intended use of the summative evaluation** is directed towards UNICEF's possible upscale phase of the programme, and will provide inputs into the appropriateness and effectiveness of current (and future) programme focus and implementation modalities. 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 upcoming months. The evaluation outcomes will be used by UNICEF Education section, donors of Dirasa, MEHE, and other stakeholders in the sector like private schools and other implementers of similar interventions.

2.2 Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

Organised around the Dirasa Programme Theory of Change (ToC), evaluation questions and evaluation criteria are presented in detail in the **evaluation matrix** below. In order to further operationalise the evaluation questions for the evaluation, matching indicators were formulated by the Evaluation Team as shown in the matrix.

Out of the OECD/DAC criteria, the ToR prioritised the criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness and Coherence since “they respond best to the evaluation purpose and objectives” (p.4 of the ToR). This has been reflected accordingly in the Evaluation Matrix. In addition, the evaluation incorporates equity and gender equality considerations as cross-cutting issues. This Evaluation Matrix is built on the evaluation questions in the ToR (#1-9 in the table below). **As requested by UNICEF, the matrix excludes issues related to learning achievements/outcomes since these are being addressed by the technical partner World Learning.⁴**

Donor partners requested to also focus on identifying risks around Dirasa expansion plans and possible mitigation measures. It was felt that Dirasa seems to be a positive solution to address learning losses in the immediate term, with some very concerning longer-term implications for sustainability and expectations. That might create a risk of further exacerbating intercommunal tensions at a time when things are already very tense. Such additional aspects primarily related to sustainability have been added to the Evaluation matrix under #A-C in the table below.

³ Originally, school visits to 10 schools across all of the eight Governorates of Lebanon were foreseen. However, due to delays in the start of the field visits, one of the previously selected schools already closed due to school holidays.

⁴ During the Education Expert's meeting with UNICEF (Cesar Al Fakih and Tilal Mohamed Salih) on 08 August 2022 it was also explicitly highlighted that there would be no need to do any classroom observations or any assessments related to the quality of implementation since another partner (World Learning) would be handling this part of the evaluation. The focus needed to be on the community coherence and the project's impact on the community.

Thus, the Evaluation Matrix also prepares the ground for collecting data in order to compare with UNICEF's existing risk assessments and mitigation measures, and to assess their adequacy and suitability.

OECD/DAC evaluation criteria are coded as follows:

1 – Relevance; 2 – Effectiveness; 3 – Efficiency; 4 – Coherence; 5 – Sustainability

(Focus on Relevance, Effectiveness and Coherence, as stated in the ToR, p.3: "Critically measure and assess the overall relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the UNICEF Dirasa programme during its inception phase.")

#	Evaluation Question (as per the ToR)	Related Indicators (formulated by the Evaluation Team)	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources, Instruments
1a	How aligned is Dirasa project with global priorities (UNICEF strategic plan, SDGs, and core commitments to children), and with to the country context, and its government priorities?	Degree to which Dirasa project ToC and logframe aligns with UNICEF Strategic Plan, SDGs, country context and government priorities Degree to which government documents are describing/citing Dirasa Programme Availability of Dirasa references in publicly available documents	1	UNICEF Strategic Plan SDGs MEHE annual plans/reports and announcements Government documents Newspaper/Magazine articles NGO newsletters/ annual reports
1b	To what extent do the project results contribute to the achievement of UNICEF LCO child survival outcome 2 "By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development"?	Clarity of strategies for implementation of Dirasa Programme Coherence of strategies for implementation of Dirasa Programme Documentation of strategy implementation and output monitoring in relation to LCO output indicators 2.1.1-2.1.10	1, 4	Policy papers Monitoring reports Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
1c	How relevant is UNICEF's Dirasa programme to the country needs in general, and the OOSC needs in particular?	Degree of engagement of stakeholders Degree of attitudinal change	1	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
2	To what extent is Dirasa design able to adapt its strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context?	Ratings of core partners, based on past experience with Dirasa Programme (if applicable)	1	Interviews with government counterparts and partners, e.g. government officials (MEHE), partner agencies, NGO representatives, and academics Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications
3	How relevant is Dirasa programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into consideration any disparities initiative, and what efficiencies have been realised as a result of that division of responsibilities?	Ratings of core partners, based on past experience with Dirasa Programme (if applicable)	1	Interviews with government counterparts and partners Documents (plans and progress reports Key partner informants perceptions including those about division of

#	Evaluation Question (as per the ToR)	Related Indicators (formulated by the Evaluation Team)	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources, Instruments
				responsibilities and any effects derived from them Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications
4	To what extent is the project design and approach effective in achieving its planned results?	See below for sub-questions	2	See below for sub-questions
4a	To what extent was the project able to increase equitable access to quality education for highly marginalised OOS children?	Completeness in the description of barriers, disaggregated by types of OOSC Degree of consistency between the characteristics of different OOSC subgroups (profile) and the barriers identified for them	2	Detailed perceptions from key informants Expert assessments regarding targeting of barriers in existing socio-cultural contexts
4b	To what extent is the project able to facilitate transition into further formal education or alternative learning pathways? Was teaching the children done at the right level?	Ratings of beneficiaries Ratings of core partners Numbers of students already transited (if applicable)	2	Student records on transition (if available) Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
4c	How successful was the inception phase in providing needed capacity building for teachers and school staff, enhancing teaching environment in private schools, and delivering an Integrated package of services to all children of targeted schools?	Degree to which teachers apply student-centred methodologies Degree to which teachers psycho- socially relate to the particular situation of their learners Status of the school environment (degree to which well-being can be realised) Ratings of teachers and school staff	2	Documentation of capacity building (if available) Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
4d	To what extent is the project able to prevent struggling private schools from collapsing?	Status of private schools (in terms of financial resources, HR capacities and community acceptance)	2	Documentation of private schools (if available) Expert review Stakeholder interviews
4e	How likely is the project to enhance parents' awareness on the importance of education, and ensuring wellbeing of children and teacher at school level?	Degree of parents' awareness on the importance of education Stakeholders' assessments with regard to Dirasa's role on ensuring their wellbeing	2, 4	Stakeholder interviews FGDs
4f	Was the project able during its piloting phase to reach the most marginalized children? How well do the private school selection criteria support the project reaching the most vulnerable?	Ratings of MEHE officials Ratings of beneficiaries	2	Private school selection criteria Stakeholder interviews
4g	How effective is the project design and approach in managing conflict sensitivity?	Ratings of beneficiaries	2	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs

#	Evaluation Question (as per the ToR)	Related Indicators (formulated by the Evaluation Team)	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources, Instruments
4h	What were the challenges faced in implementing the project? What are the enabling factors of success and the lessons learned from implementation?	Ratings of beneficiaries	2	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
4i	What are the critical lessons learned from the implementation of programme especially, related to system strengthening, strategic partnerships, evidence generation and advocacy?	Ratings of beneficiaries	2	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
4j	What were the unintended effects/ negative impact from the Dirasa programme on school and community?	Ratings of beneficiaries	2	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs
5	To what extent has the Theory of Change (ToC) been followed in implementation of Dirasa to achieve results identified? Were the critical components of the work consistent with what was planned, and if not, what changes were made and why?	Degree to which ToC Inputs have been pursued and related Input Indicators have been achieved	2, 4	Project implementation documents, work plans Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff Interviews Expert review
6	In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation? And how adequate is this approach?	Changes in equity-related quantitative data between the launch of the Programme (February 2022) and now Ratings of beneficiaries	2, 4	Equity-related quantitative data Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff Interviews Expert review
7	In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF Dirasa programme been gender responsive or transformative?	Changes in gender-related quantitative data between the launch of the Programme (February 2022) and now Ratings of beneficiaries	2	Gender-related quantitative data Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff Interviews Expert review
8	How does Dirasa support for OOSC fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programmes/interventions)? Is this intervention a part of a coherent approach that is likely to have positive results, or are there critical gaps?	Clarity of strategies for implementation of Dirasa Programme Degree of synergies of the Dirasa Programme with activities of other partners Degree of synergies of LCO output indicators 2.1.1-2.1.10 with indicators of other partners	4, 1, 5	Policy papers Indicators of other partners working in a similar field Monitoring reports Expert review Stakeholder interviews
9	How does Dirasa project align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF?	Degree of synergies of the Dirasa Programme with activities of other UNICEF interventions	4, 5	Policy papers Indicators of other related UNICEF interventions Monitoring reports Expert review

#	Evaluation Question (as per the ToR)	Related Indicators (formulated by the Evaluation Team)	Evaluation Criteria	Data sources, Instruments
		Degree of synergies of LCO output indicators 2.1.1-2.1.10 with indicators of other UNICEF interventions		Stakeholder interviews
A	Does Dirasa present a risk/ incentive that parents would want to prioritise sending children to private schools as opposed to public schools?	Risk rating against information/data collected from stakeholders	5, 3	Stakeholder interviews, particularly donors Parent FGDs
B	Is there an inherent risk of exacerbating tensions between Lebanese and Syrian parents should refugee children be fully covered by UNICEF, i.e. in the case of Dirasa schools wanting to prioritise Syrian children (given that they bring guaranteed income unlike their Lebanese counterparts)?	Risk rating against information/data collected from stakeholders	5, 4	FGDs (Parents, Teachers) Interviews (School Director, MEHE) Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff
C	Is there a risk of raising parents' expectations – post Dirasa – without necessarily having the ability to meet them? ⁵	Risk rating against information/data collected from stakeholders	5, 3	FGDs (Parents, Teachers) Interviews (School Director, MEHE) Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff

2.3 Ethical considerations

Within the framework of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team has fully observed UNEG norms and standards, and always operated according to UNEG guidelines. Further, all evaluation protocols and tools were submitted to the UNICEF's Ethics Review Board (ERB) for ethics review approval which was granted on 25 August 2022, before commencement of the field and school visits.⁶

The Evaluation Team specifically observed the following:

- **Securing necessary approvals:** The Evaluation Team worked in accordance with the local laws and always obtained any required approval in advance from the relevant organisation and the local/national authorities.
- **Respect for rights of individuals and institutions:** The Evaluation Team accorded respondents the opportunity to participate voluntarily while maintaining their anonymity, and to make an independent decision of their wish to participate without pressure or fear of penalty. Also, interviewers assured respondents that information would be confidential, and that reports would be written such that responses/contributions would not be traced back to them. Also, interview notes and any recordings were accessible to the team members only.

⁵ Dirasa covers two years of education for refugee children, after which they would need to transition to formal education which has limited capacity to absorb more children. Also parents are perhaps more interested in keeping children in private schools post Dirasa.

⁶ Research Ethics Approval letter included in Appendix 9.

- **Respect for cultural identities and sensitivities:** Variances in ethnicities, local culture, religious beliefs, gender, disability, age were acknowledged and respected. As a result, evaluation processes were mindful of cultural settings, developmental status/ capacities, and needs of the respondents.
- **Professional responsibilities and obligations of evaluators:** Evaluators exercised independent judgement and operated in an impartial and unbiased manner. During data collection, sensitive issues such as concerns and appearances of conflict of interest were raised and/or addressed promptly. To the extent possible and given the data limitations, this evaluation aimed at producing an evaluation report which is comprehensive and balanced, based on evidence that was examined.
- **Data analysis methods:** Data were primarily qualitative, based on **researchers' notes** generated during interviews and FGDs. The evaluation team jointly consulted on the generated data and related them to the evaluation questions. In addition, researchers' own judgment based on their expertise came into play when putting responses collected in the field into context. In addition, quantitative data were collected, such as number of SEN students enrolled and drop-out rates.
- **Data storage:** Data were temporarily stored on researchers' computers. After each school visit, the Field Researcher stored the consent forms safely in a cabinet at her premises. At the end of the consultancy, the hard copies of the consent forms were delivered to UNICEF for archiving. All data related to the subjects were deleted from the consultant's database two weeks after its delivery to UNICEF. The team of consultants is the only party who had access to all the collected data. No personal data whatsoever has been kept apart from the signed consent forms handed over to UNICEF for further handling according to UN regulations.

3 Methodology and Approach

3.1 General approach

Generally, significant emphasis is being laid on thorough consultations with Government and partners. We strongly support a strong participatory process, involving all existing steering and planning committees in particular beneficiaries, i.e. the out-of-school children of Lebanon.

The evaluation employed a non-experimental design, with two main sources of data, i.e. documents and stakeholders. Data from stakeholders were derived from interviews with government partners, education representatives from multilateral and bilateral donors, and technical/implementing partners. In addition, the evaluation team consulted with the World Learning team with regard to the ongoing assessment of Dirasa Learning Outcomes.

Participatory methods were employed such as focus group discussions (FGDs) and technical meetings with key personnel involved in education, within the framework of Dirasa programme objectives. In order to gain different perspectives on a common issue, views were sought from those involved at both a strategic and operational level. The consultant team continuously liaised with the different key players since this exercise is very much regarded as a joint initiative of all stakeholders concerned.

Documentary sources included documents provided to the consultants at the onset of the mission, including background information policy documents and reports of missions and studies that had been previously undertaken.⁷

3.2 The MoRES Framework

In view of the stated purpose and objectives of the assignment, the general approach followed the *Monitoring of Results for Equity Systems* (MoRES) framework as a tool to guide the evaluation. The conceptual framework of MoRES is used as an ex-post reference to UNICEF planning, with the following central principles:

- **Equity Refocus:** Reconfirms UNICEF's commitment to promote the use of data and evidence in advocacy and programming for implementation of essential services to address the critical needs of marginalised and disadvantaged children.
- **Management for Results:** Can only be achieved if there is real time and frequent data to act upon. While building up on existing approaches (like results-based management), MoRES addresses the critical need for intermediate, real-time process/outcome measures between routine monitoring of inputs and outputs as a part of development programmes, on the one hand, and monitoring of high-level outcomes/impact every three to five years, on the other.
- **Bottleneck and Barrier Analysis:** Underscores that there are critical conditions or determinants which either constrain or enable the achievement of results for particular groups of children. The four determinants are enabling environment, supply, demand and quality of services and goods.

The MoRES approach is based on ten determinants of bottlenecks which are grouped in four different headings (enabling environment, supply, demand, and quality):

⁷ A comprehensive list of documents consulted in provided in Appendix 2.

Code ⁸	Determinant	Description
Enabling environment		
E1	Social norms	Widely followed social rules of behaviour
E2	Legislation/Policy	Adequacy of laws and policies
E3	Budget/Expenditure	Allocation and disbursement of required resources
E4	Management/Coordination	Roles and accountability/coordination/partnerships
Supply		
S1	Availability of essential commodities/inputs	Essential commodities/inputs required to deliver a service or adopt a practice
S2	Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information	Physical access (services, facilities, information)
Demand		
D1	Financial access	Direct and indirect cost of services/practices
D2	Social and cultural practices and beliefs	Individual/community beliefs, awareness, behaviours, practices, attitudes
D3	Timing and continuity of use	Completion/continuity in service, practice
Quality		
Q1	Quality of care	Adherence to required quality standards (national or international norms)

MoRES entails four levels of planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and analyses of results which feed into each other and are complementary:

- **Level One** is about effective equity focussed planning to identify bottlenecks and barriers for achieving results (situation analysis and strategic planning);
- **Level Two** is about monitoring implementation of UNICEF's inputs and activities which contribute to addressing child deprivations;
- **Level Three** is about programme assessment/monitoring, analyses and timely actions to remove local or group specific barriers and bottlenecks, strategic adjustments to programme interventions at all levels and informing policy dialogue;
- **Level Four** is about monitoring trends in the situation of children (validating outcomes and estimating progress towards reducing child deprivations)

Overall, MoRES (and its analytical framework) supports linking UNICEF's support to the strengthening of policies and systems to concrete changes in the life of children. The underlying emphasis is on

- the flexibility of the approach;
- the economy of indicators to be monitored (regarding their ability to feed back into programming); and
- the ways and means to identify, collect and collate the relevant data.

⁸ Matching codes are also included in the *Evaluation Matrix* (Section 4), in order to show in detail the relation of evaluation questions and related survey tools to the MoRES framework and the respective determinants.

Taking the MoRES framework as a point of reference for the evaluation, the evaluation questions presented in the previous Section 2 have been assessed and reflected upon accordingly, as shown in detail in Appendix 14.

The MoRES framework plays an important part when formulating the conclusions. It thus represents the final step in a five-step process of the evaluation:

*Step 1: **Data collection** (individual notes always remained confidential and were destroyed after data processing)*

Step 2: Formulating responses to the evaluation questions on the basis of field consultations and school visits (documented in the Evaluation Matrix, Appendix 10)

*Step 3: Formulating **findings against the OECD/DAC criteria** (Chapter 4 of this report)*

*Step 4: Utilising the determinants of the MoRES framework to **condense the findings** presented against the OECD/DAC criteria (Step 3, above) and to **shift the focus to a more systemic view, thus triangulating and validating/reinforcing the findings** presented in Chapter 4*

*Step 5: Formulating **conclusions** (presented in text boxes using bolded italics)*

3.3 Evaluation tools

Apart from the (quantitative and qualitative) secondary data collected through the desk review, the evaluation employed a primarily qualitative methodological approach, to ensure that data can be sufficiently triangulated to deliver valid and reliable judgments. Equity and gender aspects will be considered throughout the evaluation.

A set of qualitative tools was applied⁹, comprising aspects of, inter alia,

- behaviour (mindset);
- community coherence and the Dirasa's impact on the community;
- parental and community involvement in school matters;
- well-being of students and teachers;
- relevance of Programme to country needs and needs of OOSC;
- degree of adaptability of Dirasa programme in case of changing country contexts;
- effects of support provided to private schools.

All tools (and related consent forms) were pre-tested with children and adults from the neighbourhood of the Lebanese Education Expert.

3.3.1 Interviews

Data from stakeholders were derived from interviews held with officials from MEHE and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), UNICEF, other Development Partners (DPs), technical/implementing partners, the Director General (DG) of MEHE, representatives of (private) schools and school communities with a particular focus on issues related to social cohesion and perceptions of stakeholders with regard to the Programme. Specific

⁹ Appendix 5 contains the set of specific tools and instruments.

guidelines were designed for all interviews in order to ensure comparability, and also in order to facilitate easy processing and subsequent quantification of responses.¹⁰

At field level, we aimed at conducting two interviews (one interview with the School Director, another interview with a representative of MEHE), but were not able to conduct interviews with MEHE representatives at field level due to the persistent strike of MEHE staff. In the absence of MEHE staff, we extracted secondary information on MEHE issues and concerns through documents or information received from other stakeholders, including the DG MEHE.

3.3.2 Technical meetings

Technical meetings were held with personnel at central level. In order to gain different perspectives on a common issue, views were sought from those involved at both a strategic (policy) and operational level. Technical meetings also took the form of expert (focus) groups or even ad hoc meetings with a specific group of technical experts, as identified during the consultation process.

An comprehensive list of all individuals consulted is included in Appendix 1.

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussions

Participatory methods such as focus group discussions were employed at field level. The big advantage of focus groups is that opinions and views can be elicited among a group of people, whereby the dynamics of the group can be utilised for sparking off subsequent statements, ultimately generating new ideas and/or stimulate reflexion from different angles. Since participants in a focus group are more or less peers in a common process, the atmosphere is generally free of fear and hierarchical constraints, thus yielding a high degree of openness, trust and free expression of thoughts. Focus groups can be utilised to gather factual data, to reflect on qualitative issues, and also to create a platform for brainstorming innovative ideas and solutions to identified problems.

For every school, we conducted three FGDs with about 10 participants each (teachers, students, parents/caregivers¹¹), thus leading to a total of about 300 participants in FGDs.¹² A detailed timetable is included in Appendix 8.

In order to fully maintain the voluntary character of the FGDs, we presented the objective of the discussions to the students (in cooperation with the School Director and the parents), and then asked for volunteers. Where there were more than ten volunteers, we made a random selection, taking into account equity issues such as gender balance and representation of students with SEN.

As also highlighted in the ToR, we ensured that locations for FGDs were easily accessible for female participants and individuals with disabilities and that the date and time for FGDs was set so as not to interfere with

¹⁰ Guidelines for structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) can be found in Appendix 6. Invitation of subjects will be done in a manner sensitive to any potential vulnerabilities or weaknesses (real or perceived) of the subject group.

¹¹ Throughout this document, the use of the term “parents” also includes “caregivers” (in the absence of parents).

¹² During the last field visit (19th September), students could not be met since the Programme stopped on 18th September. However, school director, teachers and parents were met as planned.

women/girls, men/boys' routines. The evaluation team adhered to all applicable protocols according to the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.¹³

3.3.4 Sociological sensing

Sensing is a term coined by Harvie FERGUSON (2006) and commonly used in Phenomenological Sociology. It is an important qualitative method especially in cases where concrete data from stakeholders is not readily available, but where phenomena can be sensed by the researcher in the field and compared with his/her own experience in a variety of settings. By characterising sensed phenomena and comparing them to similar evidence, sensed assumptions can then be utilised for further research by means of questionnaires and items for interviews.

With regards to the assessment of (changing) mindsets and behaviour patterns, *sensing* generated an additional pool of evidence during field visits, and even trips through Beirut when visiting stakeholders: “what does it mean to live in Beirut?” “How do people adjust to the situation in their daily lives?” “How does this environment ‘feel’ in the eyes of the researcher?”. The process of sociological sensing is therefore an integral part of the evaluation methodology, and has been applied by the Evaluation Team throughout.

Sociological sensing thus facilitated the assessment of contextual conditions which cannot necessarily captured by interviews/FGDs alone. It represents a “qualitative feel” for issues related to the research context, equivalent to a non-formalised “pool of evidence” which has later been related to the research questions by the Evaluation Team.

3.4 Consultation standards and possible limitations

Our consultation standards in the evaluation process ensured that all consultation documents are clear, concise and include all necessary information, and that all relevant target groups were consulted. Tools were adequately adapted to the specific target group(s) who in turn had sufficient time for participation in the survey(s). Eventually, collective or individual responses and feedback was provided in order to acknowledge the importance of the stakeholders' participation.

Limitations relate to the very short period of the inception phase (6 months, sometimes even shorter due to delayed commencement in certain areas) and the non-availability of originally expected data from the Learning Outcomes Study.

3.5 Sampling method

Schools were selected in close collaboration with UNICEF Lebanon Office, to target the areas with most OOSC in seven governorates of the country.

The table below shows the 19 schools participating in the Dirasa inception phase, the schools selected for the sample are marked in light blue, taking into account issues of school size, surrounding population size and geographical location, to arrive at a balanced sample. Detailed schedules for the school visits can be found in Appendix 8.

¹³ Document Number: CF/PD/DRP/2015-001 Effective Date: 01 April 2015 Issued by: Director, Division of Data, Research and Policy (DRP).

School Name	Governorate	N children enrolled in Dirasa	N children enrolled in private school (excluding Dirasa)	N Teachers in Dirasa
Al Salah Islamic School	Baalbek - Hermel	75	1,454	11
Al Quairawan	Baalbek - Hermel	75	455	5
Al Amal	Beqaa	75	735	4
Al Thakafa Islamic School	West Beqaa	100	651	13
Ajyal al Mawaheb	Beqaa	325	255	16
Mar Mansour Private School - Al mahaba	Beirut	250	620	18
Wahat Al Rajaa Private School	Mount Lebanon	100	200	4
Green Land Private School	Mount Lebanon	500	380	17
Rawdat Al Iman Private School	Mount Lebanon	120	900	6
Al Nashii Al Salim Private School	Mount Lebanon	100	170	4
Al Minieh Islamic Secondary School	Tripoli	448	550	17
Iman Islamic school	Akkar	75	528	7
Hideyeh Namouzajiyeh Private School	Akkar	760	330	30
Lycee Abdel Hafiz	Akkar	350	725	19
Al Tafawok Al Hadisa	Akkar	375	210	19
Al Waha Private School	Akkar	150	260	6
High School Al Fares el Tarbawiyeh	Akkar	722	744	27
Specialised Academic Science High School – Stars College	Nabatiyeh	200	1,455	9
Al ilm wal Iman Islamic School	South	200	272	10
TOTALS		5,000	10,894	242

Data source: UNICEF Lebanon Country Office

- The sample (Total enrolment N=2,845) reflects a represented school population of 56.9%.
- The sample includes the schools with the largest enrolment (N=700) and the lowest enrolment (N=100) respectively.
- The sample reflects schools with the largest enrolment overall (excluding Dirasa, total enrolment N=1,455) and the second lowest enrolment overall (excluding Dirasa, total enrolment N=200).

4 Evaluation findings

This chapter assesses the achievements and challenges of the Dirasa Inception Phase according to five organising criteria as follows:

- **Relevance of UNICEF's approach**
 - *Programme design and implementation*
 - *Adaptability of strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context*
 - *Relevance in addressing inherent equity gaps*
 - *Relevance towards the work of national partners*
- **Effectiveness of project design and approach in achieving its planned results**
 - *Increasing equitable access to quality education for highly marginalised OOS children, including adolescent girls and children with disabilities*
 - *Facilitating transition into further formal education or alternative learning pathways*
 - *Providing needed capacity building for teachers and school staff, enhancing teaching environment in private schools, and delivering an Integrated package of services to all children of targeted schools*
 - *Preventing struggling private schools from collapsing*
 - *Enhancing parents' awareness on the importance of education, and ensuring wellbeing of children and teacher at school level*
 - *Effectiveness of the project design and approach towards managing conflict sensitivity*
 - *Adequacy of school selection criteria support the project reaching the most vulnerable*
- **Efficiency of the Programme**
 - *Cost implications of scaling up*
 - *Drop-out*
 - *Implications of costs and risks for the sustainability of the programme*
- **Coherence**
 - *Alignment of Dirasa with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF*
 - *Coherence with the work of external partners*
 - *Coherence of implementation strategies*
 - *Plausibility of the Theory of Change*
 - *Hindering factors to facilitating successful implementation*
 - *Additional challenges reported by School Directors, Teachers and Parents*
- **Sustainability of results for children and system changes**
 - *Lessons learned – enabling and hindering factors of success*
 - *Unintended effects/negative impact from the Dirasa programme*
 - *Potential systemic risks*

Additional findings regarding quality, cohesion, adequacy, coordination, protection, HR and gender have been mainstreamed under these five organising criteria.

The data analysis followed a mixed methods approach, combining secondary data from documents with anecdotal evidence from the field visits. Starting point of the analysis were the available documents and field notes, which were used to fill the evaluation matrix (see Appendix 10) with adequate data providing information about the achievement of the related indicators. Qualitative data collected in the field were triangulated on the basis of all data sources which verified the findings.

All findings are directly related to the Evaluation Questions presented in Section 2.1 and are presented below according to OECD/DAC criteria as also indicated in the complete Evaluation Matrix (Appendix 10). Findings have been formulated against the indicators, and on the basis of the data sources, as also detailed in Section 2.1 and in the Evaluation Matrix (Appendix 10). While the assessments below are clustered around the OECD/DAC criteria, assessments can cut across various evaluation questions. For direct assessments of specific evaluation questions, the Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 10 can be consulted.

4.1 Relevance of UNICEF's approach

4.1.1 Programme design and implementation

- (1) The three outcomes of the Dirasa programme¹⁴ support **Pillar 1 of the Lebanon five-year General Education Plan 2021-2025**, i.e., *Equitable access to and participation in education* (To increase equitable access, participation and completion for all learners in Lebanon, with a focus on the most vulnerable), and here specifically **Priority Area 1**, i.e., *Improve enrolment and retention of vulnerable groups* (To ensure that all children receive the support they need to access, participate and complete education).
- (2) The Dirasa programme is linked to the **second funding window of the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF)** as a possible implementation modality. As stated in the MoU, “the second funding window supports multiple flexible pathways, such as the school-Based Bridging Programme [Dirasa, JP] implemented at private schools, and support and upgrade to the NFE framework aimed at offering education opportunities for Out-Of-School Children. CPs [Contributing Partners] stipulate the allocation preferences to priorities of the 5-Year Plan in consultation with MEHE and in their bilateral agreements with UNICEF. A contribution can be channelled through one or both windows.”
- (3) The strategic link between the two funding windows is a sound foundation for further exploring the prospects of the Dirasa programme.¹⁵
- (4) The programme further supports **UNICEF Lebanon Country Office (LCO) Outcome 2: By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development.**
- (5) It also feeds into the Country Programme Document (CPD) Outputs 2.1 and 2.2, i.e.

¹⁴ Outcome 1: Equitable access to high quality education for OOS children through cost effective approach; Outcome 2: Improved soft skills and learning outcomes in foundational literacy in Arabic and second language, and in mathematics; Outcome 3: Children transition into further formal education or alternative pathways to complete their education.

¹⁵ Even in the case of Dirasa not considered fully adequate as an implementation modality by stakeholders at this point in time (or by the evaluation team due to their respective concerns raised in this evaluation), there could be possibilities for modifying current procedures with regard to supporting multiple flexible pathways which do not necessarily have to include Dirasa as a fully scaled up implementation modality.

- **CPD Output 2.1, Pillar I, Improved Access to Education:** *Increased demand and reduced normative and financial barriers for enrolment and retention into formal and non-formal education and early development opportunities for children 3-14; and*
 - **CPD Output 2.2, Pillar II - Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning Environments:** *Increased capacity of public schools teachers and education personnel to deliver child-centred and flexible pedagogy in inclusive environments.*
- (6) Based on Dirasa’s risk analysis¹⁶ against feedback received from stakeholders, the programme however seems to **underestimate the political sensitivities of the Lebanese context** during an economically worsening situation which forces many Lebanese students out of private schools since their parents are no longer in position to pay for their schools fees. A scenario of Syrian refugee students entering the private schools at a large scale and at a fast pace might be relevant from a point of addressing inherent equity gaps and providing a safe haven for Syrian OOSC, but neglects the resulting negative perceptions of Lebanese society who see themselves deprived of similar opportunities.
- (7) Pathways have been only vaguely described in the Concept Note, stating that children having completed two years of the programme “will be supported to transition to mainstream public schools or to alternative learning pathways, including TVET and youth programmes” (p.12). Theoretically, the aim of Dirasa is therefore to refer children to the grade appropriate to their age and education level; practically however, it can reasonably be expected that given the current composition of Dirasa classes, one of the major pathways will be to transition into 3rd grade of primary school.
- (8) The implementation period of Dirasa’s inception phase has been very short (6 months) and points to a multitude of **weaknesses related to its design**:
- Principals, teachers, parents and students are not aware of the pathways
 - It is still difficult to predict how many Dirasa graduates would take which pathway, if any
 - Certification processes after completion of the initial 2 years are still unclear
 - There are severe concerns with regard to absorption capacity into the second shift of public schools,¹⁷ especially if a rather large number of children would need to enrol in 3rd Grade
 - There are no criteria for desired competencies and/or learning achievements after 2 years
 - Learning objectives do not yet seem to be unified/harmonised between the schools of the classes within the schools
 - Parent engagement is still low (most of the parents do not even know the location of the schools)
 - There are no insights into the quality of learning (learning outcomes study not yet completed)
- Even though UNICEF intends to address these challenges while implementing the upscaling phase, it will be important to address the challenges before the upscaling (see also Recommendation 3).
- (9) Children attending the Dirasa programme do not seem to be aware what kind of bridging process is intended. The Dirasa Programme foresees that “children with a relatively strong education background will transition to formal education at the end of year 1; either to a near public schools or at the same private school. While children who will require further education support will continue until the 2nd

¹⁶ Please refer to Appendix 12 for a comprehensive assessment of UNICEF’s risk analysis.

¹⁷ According to information received from UNICEF, there are currently 320 second-shifts operating out of 1,200+ public schools.

programmatic year, to transition the year after either to formal education or the most appropriate education pathway.” However, given the composition of children in current Dirasa classes, it can be expected they mostly would aim at joining 3rd Grade after 2 years. That might be unattractive and, as a consequence, lead to drop-out of children and/or severe frustration after re-joining the formal system (again, leading to drop-out and thus negatively affecting overall relevance of the programme).

- (10) Based on school principals’ interviews and FGDs, implementation strategies are unclear to stakeholders, starting with implementing partners, down to school directors, and ending with teachers. School directors reported that the programme started without any prior preparation or organisation both logistically in terms of school readiness and teacher preparedness and readiness (most of the trainings were conducted in the middle or at the end of the inception phase), as well as academically in terms of tests, student divisions, and educational resources as also reported by the teachers.
- (11) Further, while Dirasa is potentially relevant to the needs of integrating OOSC into the education system, the beneficiaries will be mostly Syrian refugees who have so far not been accommodated in private schools. While such approach is certainly an innovation, its effects on the system and on public opinion have not yet been tested, assessed and evaluated.

4.1.2 Adaptability of strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by a changing country context

- (12) It is one of the major weaknesses of the Dirasa Programme that its forward predictability is poor, primarily since the inception phase has not been long enough to closely analyse and anticipate changing needs and priorities caused by a changing country context. In particular, it lacks any kind of exit strategy (for example, if required funding could not be secured or if the resistance from the Lebanese general public would force the programme to end) to prevent a sudden collapse of the entire programme.
- (13) In the case of emerging undesired effects, and since there is no exit strategy in place, the programme has foreseen no targeted provisions that all children already taking part will be able to complete the two-year cycle, which is dangerous since it might create frustration and further tension.

4.1.3 Relevance in addressing inherent equity gaps

- (14) “Increasing the number of children in [private] school” to overcome equity gaps is one of the aims of the Dirasa Programme, also in order to “ensure private schools remain operational” – this however puts “numbers” above “quality” and turns the Dirasa Programme primarily into a funding-generating instrument ultimately strengthening the private sector.
- (15) While focussing on access, UNICEF’s intention also is to “provide a safe haven for children out of school” and to “get them off the streets” – while this is commendable, it however does not consider future sustainability. Likewise, inequity issues will grow when comparing enrolment opportunities of Lebanese and Syrian students (the latter receiving tremendous support to the disadvantage of the Lebanese students).
- (16) The inception phase of the Dirasa programme primarily focused on the “equitable access” part of the Programme’s Theory of Change, neglecting the aspect of pursuing (or preparing for the acquisition of) “high quality education”. This refers to a lack of qualitative monitoring, specifically with a view to the outcomes of teacher training and their impact on classroom practice and learning outcomes.

4.1.4 Relevance towards the work of national partners

- (17) The **first funding window of the TREF** can potentially provide a strong foundation for preparing the public school system for absorption of larger capacities of OOSC; this specifically refers to the potential creation of additional learning spaces in newly constructed classrooms (**KfW**), and the provision of permanent Technical Assistance (TA) to MEHE (through **EU**).

4.2 Effectiveness of project design and approach in achieving its planned results

4.2.1 Increasing equitable access to quality education for highly marginalised OOSC, including adolescent girls and children with disabilities

- (18) Anecdotal evidence from the field visits seems to confirm that learners, parents and communities appreciate the programme even though they mainly refer to the extracurricular play activities (“HOOPS”¹⁸) and do not seem to be familiar with the pathways. Parents and children (except in one school) said that the children were excited to come to school, they felt safe, their teachers and supervisors were very welcoming and patient, they organised some fun activities with them, and they brought for them some treats or small gifts.
- (19) However, transportation/distance from school remains to be a barrier. Distance alone is not the decisive factor; it is also related to safety issues, e.g. requirement to cross a busy highway, incidents of bullying faced by children (by Lebanese children and even adults) while walking to school. Also, violence by adults directed towards Syrian children.

“If transportation will not be provided next year, then the programme will be in danger, and we will lose the students to the streets.”

- (20) There appears to be a lack of experience and preparedness in dealing with OOSC, especially with working children, which negatively affected the children’s attendance. Some of the children were asked to stay at home for one to two weeks or even for a full month as a punishment when they misbehave. This was a recurrent treatment, however, the timelines differ between schools and between the type of misbehaving.

4.2.2 Facilitating transition into further formal education or alternative learning pathways

- (21) Since the inception phase only lasted 6 months, it has not been expected that any transition would take place during that period. In order to make a valid statement, the inception phase would need to be extended.
- (22) Lebanon’s total enrolment in the afternoon shift in public schools amounts to 150,000 students¹⁹ – there is no capacity assessment as to the feasibility of extending access to afternoon classes, even at a rate of 50% of Dirasa completers. Based on consultations with MEHE, it even appears doubtful if 50% of

¹⁸ “HOOPS” is a Lebanese NGO established in 2001, and has partnered with UNICEF in addition to several local and international NGOs for the past 14 years to deliver programmes and initiatives that target children, youth and their caregivers in underserved communities. They specialise in sports for development programmes, psychosocial support, and awareness raising sessions for young refugees and the Lebanese community.

¹⁹ Cf Joint Statement from the Ministry of Education, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, UNICEF and UNHCR in Lebanon, 10 October 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/press-releases/public-schools-non-lebanese-children-open-monday>. UNICEF Country Office also informed us that currently 340 public schools are operating as 2nd shift out of over 1,200 public schools

5,000 students (enrolled in the Inception Phase) could be accommodated in afternoon classes at the time of anticipated transition (most of which would likely transit to 3rd Grade).

- (23) The age difference of students in Grade 3 will provide new challenges which have never been experienced before – for example, key informants did not consider it feasible to have a high number of over-aged students (based on Dirasa enrolment ambitions) in the respective classes of the public schools.
- (24) While the pathways for transition are clear from the project documents (i.e., for most students, 2 years Dirasa leading to admission at Grade 3 in public schools), stakeholders including school directors, teachers, and parents did not seem to be aware of these pathways.
- (25) Furthermore, school directors, teachers, and parents are uncertain whether the students will be upgraded to the next level, remain at their current level, or be referred to public schools. These uncertainties are the result of the absence of clear and unified assessment methods in the programme, dispatched to all involved schools, as well as clearly explained programme strategies and referral pathways.
- (26) Teachers and principals stated they would be overwhelmed with carrying out tests (3 different types – pre- and post-test of UNICEF [BLN], World Learning programme tests, their own tests) – overwhelmed to such a degree that testing took more time than teaching, especially since there was no clear time schedule for the testing.

4.2.3 Providing needed capacity building for teachers and school staff, enhancing teaching environment in private schools, and delivering an Integrated package of services to all children of targeted schools

- (27) According to information received from the implementing partners and the technical partner, capacity building for teachers and school staff has been undertaken, although at a rather small scale (i.e. below the desired 50 hours of training per teacher/staff member). Nevertheless, the number of trainings provided – or even the number of hours of training – is not an indicator for the effectiveness of such training.
- (28) Teacher trainings were conducted between March 14th and April 9th, i.e., up to two months after the implementation had started. Teachers and school directors stated they wished if all the trainings had been conducted before the start of the project, “not in the middle of the implementation”. As teachers reported, trainings targeted topics that were inapplicable in the context of the programme in terms of the high level of academic content presented. Case studies and examples given in the training were regarded to be very difficult; working on content for Maths was intended for higher grades for formal education students “*as if made for formal education classes*”. With regard to reaching strategies such as classroom management or motivational strategies, “*content was targeted to younger students and not older working students*”.

“How can differentiated instruction work in a class where students have behavioural issues?!”

- (29) The Maths component training was given in a foreign language while the books received were in Arabic.
- (30) Trainings did not address the behavioural challenges of the students targeted by the programme, nor were they tailored for the context of the targeted students – no consideration was given to the obvious gap between students’ academic abilities and their age. As directly stated by the teachers, the trainings were far from the reality, they did not target the context of such a programme and such students.

Teachers all demanded to have trainings that dealt with severe behavioural issues in the classroom. The teachers further stated that they were left alone in dealing with behavioural issues and three of them were injured while trying to stop fights between students.

“We need a training on how to deal with the challenges in the behaviour of these kids, we needed a live class; trainers should come into class in real life, experience it in real, and then come and teach us how to manage these classes”.

- (31) Furthermore, there was no follow up or guidance on the topics given in the training during the implementation. Also, the teachers were told that they would be given resources after the trainings so that they could use and implement them in the classroom, but they never received any.
- (32) During the inception phase, implementing partners assigned a relatively large number of full-time qualified “education specialists” (e.g., N=6 for 14 schools) to provide ongoing coaching support to teachers at schools – however, plans for the upscale phase see a significant reduction (e.g., N=0.5 for 60 schools!), reducing the number of full-time qualified staff (“education officers”) and increasing the number of lesser qualified staff (called “technical classroom observers”, N=1 for 4 schools, together with 1 focal point and 1 inclusion officer at the level of each school), with – e.g., in Beirut/Mount Lebanon – only 1 vehicle covering 60 schools to be shared among all staff. Key informant interviews confirmed that a reduction of the proportion of qualified staff will impact negatively on the quality of training support.
- (33) Unfortunately, the Learning Outcomes Study – which could have provided at least some indication of the possible impacts of such trainings – has been delayed and is only expected to be finalised later this year – and even then, only generating a baseline for further follow-up one year later.
- (34) In the absence of the Learning Outcomes Study, BLN assessments conducted by War Child and LOST during March (pre-test) and August (post-test) however indicate improvements between baseline and follow-up assessment – this however still needs to be verified by the Learning Outcomes Study which has been identified as the method for tracking progress under the Programme.
- (35) While the HOOPS activities appear to be popular and have been enjoyed by children, and any initiative reaching out to OOSC in order to get them off the streets is certainly useful, it needs to be borne in mind that Dirasa’s ToC has higher (learning) objectives and also carries a considerable cost. As observed during field visits and stakeholder consultations, even though the number of sessions scheduled and implemented per week for HOOPS are less than the learning-teaching sessions, most of the positive feedback from caregivers and children²⁰ were linked to the HOOPS programme and not the learning-teaching sessions.
- (36) Currently available textbooks are not being used due to language issues (Mathematics books are in Arabic, not in French or English – so the teachers cannot explain the concepts) or inadequacy for the target group (BLN).

4.2.4 Preventing struggling private schools from collapsing

- (37) The connection and causal relationship between the Dirasa “whole-system approach featuring multiple and flexible pathways that lead to formal education” and the focus on private schools as service

²⁰ Feedback given regarding “What do you like the most in this programme?”; “What will you miss at the end of the programme?”; “What would you like to keep for the following year?”; “What learning subjects do they like the most?”; “What activities do they enjoy inside the class?”

providers is not clear – such connection seems to be “constructed” and mainly appears to be a strategic one which allows the channelling of funds via the Syrian students to the private schools.

- (38) One of the aims of the Dirasa Programme is to “prevent struggling private schools from collapsing” – this raises the question if (mostly Syrian) OOSC are not instrumentalised to maintain the private schools’ system.
- (39) In fact, the schools targeted by the Dirasa programme are a mix of private and semi-private schools (also visited during the field visits).
- (40) Certainly not all private schools in Lebanon are good ones, and stakeholder consultations confirmed that a significant proportion of private schools should rather be closed than supported; further, 238 private schools stated their “unwillingness” towards UNICEF to be included in such a support programme. One school director from those “unwilling” schools mentioned that probably only schools “at the verge of collapse” would participate in the Programme.
- (41) School directors stated that the money received from the programme did help in some renovations in the school. However, they highlighted that the running cost of the programme has been high, also in terms of generator and fuel bills, especially for operating fans and air conditioners , and ink and usage of the school photocopier for photocopies of books and tests that had to be used.

4.2.5 Enhancing parents' awareness on the importance of education, and ensuring wellbeing of children and teacher at school level

- (42) Engagement of stakeholders, i.e., school administrators, teachers, and parents varied from one school to the other, out of 9 schools visited, 3 of them had clear and/or effective channels of communication between the school and the parents. Yet, all parents expressed that if they were to come to the school to communicate with the administration, they would definitely welcome them. However, they were never invited by the administration or by the implementing partner to any kind of meeting (e.g., introductory meetings, awareness sessions). No calls/invitations were shared with them, and no PTA groups were established. Only 1 out of 9 schools had one meeting with the parents to introduce the programme. None of the other 8 schools conducted any awareness sessions or parents-teachers’ meetings.
- (43) Parents and students stated that the school is a safe place where children are well treated and taken care of by their teachers and school directors. However, in 4 schools, the parents reported alarming incidents with bus drivers who pose a threat to the children’s safety and wellbeing, including verbal and physical abuse, and ill-treatment of the children. In one school, students and their parents reported alarming cases of violence and physical abuse done by the school supervisors.
- (44) Generally, attitudes between teachers and parents have not changed; teachers believe that the majority of parents do not care about their children’s education, do not follow up with their children’s studies at home, do not teach their children to preserve their books and stationery, are mainly concerned with receiving aid, and do not care about their children’s attire and hygiene.
- (45) The most substantial attitudinal change was manifested in students’ attitudes towards school life and academic engagement. Teachers, school directors and parents highlighted the difference in students’ behaviours, social and communication skills, discipline, and respect of school and classroom rules. Yet, all school directors and teachers stated that the path to students’ attitudinal change was very difficult. 3 out of 9 schools reported that they were still dealing with student behavioural issues.

- (46) Parents demand that their children have school bags, books, and stationery, to have homework assigned so that they could follow up with their children's studies at home, and to provide their children with school uniforms because they are not able to afford presentable attire for school.

4.2.6 Effectiveness of the project design and approach towards managing conflict sensitivity

- (47) The effectiveness of the project design and approach towards managing conflict sensitivity is constrained since Lebanese are largely excluded from the support. Since the number of Lebanese students in the nine visited schools was zero, there were no Lebanese parents and, consequently, also no Lebanese students or parents in the FGDs (which needs to be reconsidered during a possible follow-up survey since the opinions of the Lebanese school population are crucial for the overall assessment of the programme), and since conflicts between Syrian and Lebanese mainly took place outside the school, a key aspect of conflict sensitivity management cannot really be assessed.
- (48) During FGDs teachers stated they were "left alone" to deal with conflicts and bullying behaviours between children. Some of the teachers showed proactive approaches, i.e., planning and conducting some extracurricular activities with children.
- (49) Some Syrian parents coming from different governorates in Syria had the chance to bond with each other through the project. They reported that during the implementation of Dirasa, positive relationships emerged between children, and such relationships reflected positively on the relationships between the parents. Some children said that they would miss their teachers and friends of school since they would be the only children, they would allow their children to play with.

4.2.7 Adequacy of mechanisms to support the project reaching the most vulnerable

- (50) Inconsistencies and sometimes complete absence of specialised services offered in some schools, along with an absence of coordination between specialists and teachers, hindered the setting-up of an educational plan for students with disabilities.
- (51) When teachers were asked to elaborate on children with disabilities, they were not aware of criteria of disability. In some schools, there was support by speech therapists, however, the coordination between teachers and specialist was missing. Further, therapy services are provided either in the clinic of the therapist or inside the school whenever possible, hence not all teachers/schools do interact with therapists.²¹
- (52) FGDs with teachers revealed that once a student is referred to a specialist, there is complete absence of communication between the specialist and the teachers who are not made aware of the case of the student, the steps taken to address the disability, and their role in the classroom towards the student. Teachers stated that in order for the inclusion to work correctly and efficiently, there needs to be close coordination and collaboration between teachers and specialist who will be both following up and addressing the needs of the student inside and outside the classroom. Adaptations in the classroom are not implemented due to the absence of coordination between specialists and teachers.
- (53) It appears that implementing partners did not outreach enough for children with disabilities. Further, none of the schools visited during the field visits were included in any awareness raising. Enrolment of students with disabilities in the visited schools is notably low; none of the 9 schools visited had more

²¹ Inclusion officers are the focal points who deal with the therapists and channel any needed information to the teachers. During a possible upscale and/or an extended inception phase, UNICEF intends to have inclusion focal points in each school to support this role.

than 10 CWDs. School directors were unable to provide reasons behind this low number because they were not in charge of targeting the children (and their subsequent enrolment), and they mostly only received list of students to be enrolled in the programme from the implementing partner.

A director said that they would have been able to enrol more students with disabilities if the parents were more upfront with sharing such information. He said that parents were scared because they thought the school would not take their children if they had disabilities. The school find out the disability of the children once they started attending the programme.

Another director stated that she believed that many students with disabilities were not reached because sometimes they did not disclose such information. Furthermore, because the programme started very fast, the outreach and enrolment might not have been done properly. And thus, more time should have been given to the preparation phase in order to include more students with disabilities.

4.3 Efficiency of the Programme

4.3.1 Cost implications of scaling up

- (54) The Dirasa Programme is unclear about its duration – it is just stated in the Concept Note that “the programme will aim to enrol all 100,000 children by October 2022 [sic] however, if the beneficiary target is not met, the enrolment will continue in the following year, until the target is met after the first year” (p.11). This has now been reduced to 51,000 children for the first year, which would already extend the total duration to three years at least. Further, UNICEF education staff indicated during consultations that the ultimate number of beneficiaries might be a moving target (given an OOSC population of 700,000).
- (55) While the inception phase reached 5,000 children and was budgeted at USD 3 million for six months (unit cost per child extrapolated to one full year USD 1,200), UNICEF states that the estimated scaling-up cost to 51,000 learners would require USD 23 million (unit cost per child USD 451), and USD 45 million when scaling up to 100,000 children (unit cost per child USD 450)²². While this significant lesser unit cost can partly be explained by reduced transaction costs, its calculation also points to much lower paid staff (from the communities) and a reduced provision of support services which will most likely not be sufficient to provide services qualitatively comparable with the those provided during inception phase through implementing partners’ own full-time staff.

4.3.2 Drop-Out

- (56) High drop-out rates potentially impact negatively on any Programme’s efficiency. In the Dirasa Programme, from 5,000 children initially enrolled in the 19 schools selected for the inception phase, 737 dropped out which represents a drop-out rate of 14.7% after just 6 months.

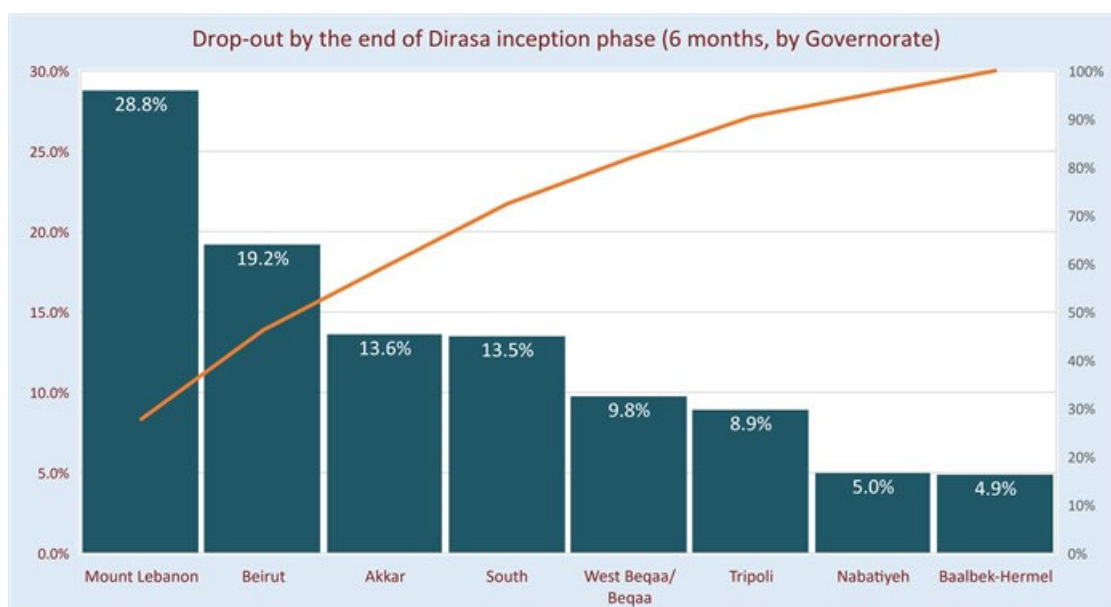
School Name	Governorate	N children initially enrolled	N children dropped out	Drop-out rate
Al Salah Islamic School	Baalbek-Hermel	75	4	5.3%
Al Quairawan	Baalbek-Hermel	75	4	5.3%
Al Amal	Baalbek-Hermel	75	3	4.0%

²² UNICEF Dirasa Donor Brief, p.2. A more detailed budget breakdown which arrived at a unit cost of USD 436 for 51,000 children was produced by the Country Office and shared with the Evaluation Team during their mission to Beirut.

School Name	Governorate	N children initially enrolled	N children dropped out	Drop-out rate
Al Thakafa Islamic School	West Beqaa	100	3	3.0%
Ayjal Al Mawaheb	Beqaa	325	31	9.5%
Mar Mansour Private School - Al mahaba	Beirut	250	48	19.2%
Wahat Al Rajaa Private School	Mount Lebanon	100	36	36.0%
Green Land Private School	Mount Lebanon	500	177	35.4%
Rawdat Al Iman Private School	Mount Lebanon	120	6	5.0%
Al Nashii Al Salim Private School	Mount Lebanon	100	17	17.0%
Al Minieh Islamic Secondary School	Tripoli	448	40	8.9%
Iman Islamic school	Akkar	75	20	26.7%
Hideyeh Namouzajiyeh Private School	Akkar	760	135	17.8%
Lycee Abdel Hafiz	Akkar	350	36	10.3%
Al Tafawok Al Hadisa	Akkar	375	0	0.0%
Al Waha Private School	Akkar	150	22	14.7%
High School Al Fares el Tarbawiyeh	Akkar	722	118	16.3%
Specialised Academic Science High School – Stars College	Nabatiyeh	200	10	5.0%
Al ilm wal Iman Islamic School	South	200	27	13.5%
TOTALS		5,000	737	14.7%

Data source: UNICEF Lebanon Country Office

- (57) However, there are significant differences between the Governorates, with the highest drop-out rates in Mount Lebanon (28.8%) and Beirut (19.2%). The chart below visualises the differences, together with a *Pareto line* showing the cumulative total.



Based on data provided by UNICEF Country Office

- (58) However, drop-out rates after an inception phase of 6 months do not provide a basis solid enough for comparing with any benchmarks of other NFE programmes. Before upscaling the Programme, the reasons for the exceptionally high drop-out in two Governorates should however be investigated.

4.3.3 Implications of costs and risks for the sustainability of the programme

- (59) The economic situation increasingly forces Lebanese parents to withdraw their children from private school and to send them to the unpopular public school instead – the larger the upscale, the stronger the potential resentment on the side of the Lebanese population.
- (60) Due to the financial support channelled to private schools through the Syrian students attending them, during a rapid nation-wide upscale an increasing number of Lebanese students will feel deprived of learning at private schools (due to their inability to pay school fees) and will resent such support provided by UNICEF, resulting – amongst other – in a risk for UNICEF’s institutional reputation which might even affect the reputation of the entire UN family.
- (61) The Dirasa Risk Matrix partly acknowledges these concerns; the mitigation strategies however appear to be over-optimistic and also have not yet been tested in any way (see Appendix 12 for a detailed analysis and assessment).

4.4 Coherence of the Programme

4.4.1 Alignment of Dirasa with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF

- (62) According to the Dirasa Concept Note, UNICEF further provides a holistic package of services for all children enrolled in the Dirasa, comprising
- Child Protection (through training of school counsellors that will be responsible for providing psychosocial support to children and teachers and follow up on school environment and children wellbeing);
 - WASH (through integrating the teacher’s guidebook on climate change as part of programme delivery, providing children with awareness on topics related to climate change and environment);
 - Youth-and-Adolescent service provision (adolescents aged 12-14 enrolled in the programme will be provided with a basic upshift programme in addition to a life skills programme and career guidance support, thus preparing alternative pathways into vocational education or TVET);
 - Social Assistance (supporting eligible children enrolled in the targeted private schools with monthly cash assistance for the scholastic year, to increase school retention and attendance).

4.4.2 Coherence with the work of external partners

- (63) Given the current crisis faced by the education sector and magnitude of the needs, several donors are investing in technical assistance for enlarging the capacities of MEHE in delivering quality education for all children through a more efficient education system. A network of technical assistance to MEHE, piloted by the Directorate General for Education, is planned but not yet in place. A first coordination workshop between donors took place in May 2022 in order to ensure complementarity between support delivered by various external partners.
- (64) UNICEF is currently providing technical assistance to MEHE through the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF), and is closely cooperating with EU and KfW under the first funding window. UNICEF’s related Implementation Support Team (IST) with a team of 5 short term experts is based in

MEHE with possible extension/alignment depending on EU investment. The 5 positions are related to elements also supported by the EU during their forthcoming TA component, i.e. programme planning and budget; economic policy, data management and reporting; School Information Management System management; financial management, information management and reporting.

- (65) There are further complementarities with the work of UNESCO (supporting the 5-Year general education plan), UNHCR (field coordinators for second shift education); France (one technical assistant located at MEHE and CERD for strategic planning in teaching in French in Lebanon); and World Bank (numerous positions linked to the execution of World Bank's education programme on Support to Race II [S2R2]; 30 ongoing positions at DGE; more than 100 positions at CERD).

4.4.3 Coherence of implementation strategies

- (66) Coherence of implementation strategies was negatively affected by the programmatic strategy applied by UNICEF where different approaches were followed across the schools by placing children either according to their age or academic level, with a view to identifying the best approach to be followed in an upscale phase. Also, the implementation in 14 of the 19 schools aimed to assess how the digital component assisted children in enhancing their learning outcomes compared to the schools with no digital component. Some schools implemented the "Learning passport" and some did not.
- (67) More importantly, there is incoherence regarding the number of days in a week. Partners of some schools implemented the programme over three days a week, while others over four and five. The days of teaching were left to the school to agree on as long as the programme goals and aims were met; such scheduling was communicated and agreed upon between the school directors and the implementing partners. Parents and teachers reported such incoherence affected student learning outcomes as well as academic experience especially when the number of "days off" exceeded the days in school.

4.4.4 Plausibility of the Theory of Change

- (68) At input level, the Theory of Change puts forward relevant interventions targeted at reaching the desired outputs. They include three important types of interventions, i.e. (i) a school and community perspective (school-community collaboration, establishing safe learning environments); (ii) basic core strategies (needs assessments, mentoring/tutoring, training, adaption of curricula, hiring of specialised staff such as school counsellors); and (iii) provision of financial support (comprising fees, indirect costs and financial support for transition).²³
- (69) The link to reaching the desired outputs is vastly dependent on the assumption that there is political willingness and societal agreement to providing massive additional financial support largely aimed at Syrian refugee students. However, such assumption is missing in the Assumptions list of the ToC, and there is no indication that society would be prepared to accept such support in the light of the current economic crisis which forces many Lebanese students out of private school.
- (70) Therefore, reaching the outputs of the Theory of Change requires more than just UNICEF support. Apart from the assumption mentioned above, the inception phase – after 6 months of implementation – has not yet provided any evidence regarding the achievability of the outputs. Also, the strong focus on training activities (and also hiring other human resources such as teachers) takes a mere quantitative view, thus neglecting the quality outcomes of such training which would eventually lead to the desired quality impact. The same refers to the human resources – it will be quality that matters, and such staff

²³ Please refer to Appendix 3 for a diagram of the comprehensive Theory of Change.

will be probably more costly than foreseen in the available budgets which are largely assuming a low salary in the area of USD 200 per teacher per month.

- (71) The short-term outcomes are rather “*desired* outcomes” which – theoretically – *could* be realised once all outputs will have been achieved. There is however no indication at this point in time that the system would be able to respond to an “increased demand for further education” and/or that (public) schools would actually “have capacity/infrastructure to accommodate OOSC”. If “OOSC enrol (in the right grade) and stay in school”, that is based on another (unmentioned/missing) Assumption that schools are ready (and willing) to absorb large numbers of mostly Syrian refugee students, many of whom will be over-aged and will put an additional strain on the system. Further, at this point in time there is no evidence of “high-quality instruction” which would result in the desired OOSC’s “skills, confidence and motivation to transition” to the formal system.
- (72) The intermediate outcomes are thus based on many unlisted assumptions, take an over-ambitious and unrealistically optimistic view and are hardly achievable – at least not in the desired short term with 51,000 students ready for transition in two years’ time.
- (73) Ultimately, “future better livelihoods” could be a theoretical impact of the Dirasa Programme – however, this view overlooks the fact that at the impact level OOSC will have just joined the formal system which as such does not produce any “better livelihoods”. Rather, OOSC *might* have been guided on the path for achieving better living conditions, but most of them will only have reached Grade 3 of the public system with a long way to go and a realistic possibility of dropping out again of the formal system – which in the 2nd shift does not provide for a school environment comparable to the one aimed at by the Dirasa Programme.

4.4.5 Hindering factors to facilitating successful implementation

- (74) Criteria for selection of participating private schools exclude Lebanese students since it is very rare to find a Lebanese child not having attended school for more than 2 years – Lebanese students have a chance to register in a public school easier than Syrians.
- (75) Based on the field visits, principal interviews and FGDs, the vast majority (clearly over 70%, sometimes even 100%) of beneficiaries are Syrians. When asked about the lack or absence of Lebanese students, school directors, teachers, and parents stated the inability of Lebanese parents to embrace the presence of their children in the same class as Syrian students, especially students coming from camps.
- (76) The curriculum used under the Dirasa programme includes three main subjects (Maths, Arabic language and a foreign language; French or English and few learning materials to cover the science subject). While the science topics were included in the “Learning Passport”, many teachers however stated that they faced challenges in applying this topic due to internet challenges, or the difficulty of the content, the language used in the videos. Therefore, the students could not be fully prepared for integrating into the formal school.

4.4.6 Additional challenges reported by School Directors, Teachers and Parents

- (77) Challenges reported by School Directors and Teachers:
- Absence of clear implementation processes and procedures
 - Short notice prior to the start of the implementation
 - Tardiness in school and teacher payments

- Absence of adequate books that would respond to the targeted students' actual academic needs
- Tardiness in receiving books and stationery
- Shortage of books and stationery
- Shortage of iPads to implement the “Akelius Programme”
- Absence of clear assessments and clear and concise methods of conducting them
- Absence of clear and concise indicators regarding students' classes divisions
- Tardiness and inadequacy of training.
- Absence of clear referrals of students with disabilities
- Absence of referrals of students with psychological and behavioural challenges
- Inconsistencies in the specialized services offered in schools
- Absence of communication between specialists on one hand, and school directors and teachers on the other
- Absence of clear, concise, and effective channels of communication between parents on one hand, and school directors and teachers on the other
- Absence of a clear educational pathway for the students
- Insufficient or complete absence of implementing partners in charge of the education quality
- Insufficient organisation within the implementing NGOs and inefficient communication with the schools
- Absence of guidelines regarding anti-violence measures to be taken by the school against violent students
- Absence of degrees or certifications for students at the end of the programme that would be recognised by MEHE and thus schools
- Low teacher salaries which pose a threat on the implementation of the next phase
- Cancellation of transportation will pose a threat to the programme

(78) Challenges reported by Parents:

- Absence of communication with the school and/or the teachers
- Absence of books or copy books at home and homework so that the parents could follow up with their children's studies
- Absence of a degree or certification
- Absence of report cards or assessments and evaluations of the performance of the child
- Long school day and no food provided to the children

4.5 Sustainability of the Programme

4.5.1 Lessons learned – enabling and hindering factors of success

(79) Successes reported by School Directors and Teachers:

- The programme has exposed the children to school life (especially working children)
- Holistic approach of the programme: academic, and health care
- Changes in the children's behaviours in terms of discipline, respect of school and classroom rules, respect of authority, and commitment to their studies. Also, substantial progress in their social skills, acceptance of each other as classmates especially acceptance of the other sex, and cleanliness and hygiene
- Thanks to the programme, the students learned how to hold a pen, and how to read and write

(80) Successes reported by Parents:

- The programme gave an opportunity for the children to be in a school setting rather than being at home all the time or on the streets which has greatly affected their psychological wellbeing
- It gave them a routine to follow, commitments, and a purpose; they are motivated to go to school
- The programme has had an impact on the psychological state of the children. They are happier, they feel safe at school, they are well taken care of, and they feel welcomed and respected at their schools; they love their teachers and their classmates
- The children have improved in their behaviours, manners, and social and communication skills
- They are now able to hold a pen, read, write, and know a foreign language

(81) Parents expressed the expectation for their children to receive official MEHE certificates. Without such certificates, the values of Dirasa would be very limited.

(82) In general, community acceptance differs between the governorates. In the areas close to the Syrian borders, the acceptance and social cohesion is easy to feel and detect, however in the areas far from the border the scenario is different – two directors were using a discriminating language while talking about Syrian parents and Syrian children.

„The Lebanese crisis will never make Lebanese students be in the same classes as Syrian students. Dirasa honestly is made for Syrians and not actually Lebanese“.

„Lebanese parents do not accept the idea that their kids are with Syrians especially because these Syrian kids swear a lot, hit each other, have behavioural issues. Violence starts at home, the parents hit them, force them to work, some kids sleep in class because they are tired from work. UNICEF should stop that. Parents hit their kids, so the kids hit their friends at school, and that's why we don't mix all the classes together during recess especially younger and older students“.

“The students are very smart and mature, maybe because their surroundings impacted on them since this Lebanese area is considered as a somehow aristocratic area, so of course, the Syrian students would be positively affected by their environment.”

4.5.2 Unintended effects/negative impact from the Dirasa programme

(83) Parents prefer Dirasa over the 2nd shift in the public schools due to the smaller numbers of children inside the classes, the better presence of teachers, the safety provided at the school, the behaviour of their children, and the respect shown towards them by the teachers. Thus, Syrian students currently enrolled at the 2nd shift of public schools might wish to receive the same support as their “out-of-school” counterparts, even though they would not be eligible – especially since the quality at second shift classes in public schools is regarded as extremely low.

Parents whose children were previously enrolled in public schools highlighted the difference between such public schools and the current private school in terms of the respect they and their children are treated with, the care their children receive in the school and inside the classroom, the absence of verbal and physical abuse, the professionalism of the school body, and the engagement of the teachers in the children's quality of education.

Furthermore, parents also highlighted the importance of having classes in the morning shift, which positively affects both teachers and students.

- (84) This in turn might even stimulate a process whereby Dirasa students would not want to transfer to public schools, and rather stay at “their” private school (continuously paid for by the Programme?).
- (85) In two schools, teachers reported that parents enrolled their children both in the afternoon shift in Public Schools and in Dirasa (however only being interested in one subject, i.e. English). It can be reasonably assumed that such double registrations happen more frequently than originally expected.

4.5.3 Potential systemic risks

- (86) School directors stated that if the programme were to target more Syrian families for the upcoming implementation year, then there will be resentment from the host community towards the school and UNICEF in general for focusing on the needs of refugees while ignoring Lebanese families who are as much in need, which would in fact, create more tension between Syrian families and the host communities.
- (87) Thus, the Dirasa Programme runs the risk to severely distort the Lebanese education system, by creating unrealistic expectations (leading to raised demands), and particularly by creating pull factors for Syrian students out of the public education system.
- (88) The Dirasa Programme potentially endangers social stability in Lebanon by intensifying resentment of those not benefitting from the programme. Rising social instability, paired with growing resentment towards the Syrian population (and donors giving preferential treatment to Syrians – even if only perceived as such) could lead to severe political and systemic shocks, reaching far beyond the education sector, and even affecting UNICEF's reputation.²⁴

²⁴ Please also refer to a comprehensive re-assessment of UNICEF's Risk Matrix, contained in Appendix 12.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions against the MoRES assessment framework²⁵

The findings of the previous section are summarised in terms of the critical conditions or determinants which either constrain or enable the achievement of results for the Dirasa Programme during its inception phase and during a possible scaling-up. Thus, the determinants of the MoRES framework are being utilised to condense the findings presented against the OECD/DAC criteria (Chapter 4, above) and to shift the focus to a more systemic view, thus triangulating and validating/reinforcing the findings.

Key Conclusions are presented in text boxes using bolded italics

5.1.1 Enabling environment

Code ²⁶	Determinant	Description
Enabling environment		
E1	Social norms	Widely followed social rules of behaviour
E2	Legislation/Policy	Adequacy of laws and policies
E3	Budget/Expenditure	Allocation and disbursement of required resources
E4	Management/Coordination	Roles and accountability/coordination/partnerships

The Dirasa Programme has been conceived as an emergency measure, primarily directed at significantly reducing the number of (mostly Syrian) OOSC while at the same time providing financial support to private schools at the verge of collapse. It has been developed comprising an inception phase (the object of this evaluation) to be immediately followed by a large scaling-up phase, raising the number of beneficiaries from initially 5,000 to 50,000 one year later and even 100,000 in two years' time.

As such, it has neglected a deeper consideration of existing **social norms** and also existing **legislation and policy**. In particular, it cannot be assumed that a 1,000% increase of beneficiaries during the first phase of the scale-up will be easily accepted by Lebanese parents who are suffering from an economic crisis which forces them to take their children out of private school due to an unaffordability of the school fees. While the inception phase was a rather small-scale project the desired scaling-up will create a nationwide impact, expected to raise media interest and frequent media coverage.

The Dirasa Programme potentially endangers social stability in Lebanon by intensifying resentment of those not benefitting from the programme. This could lead to severe political and systemic shocks, reaching far beyond the education sector, and even affecting UNICEF's reputation.

With regard to the Programme's **budget and expenditure**, there remains complete uncertainty in terms of duration (for how long the Programme is intended to run?), participation (what about the remaining harder-to-reach OOSC, i.e. up to 600,000 who would not benefit despite the significant systemic risks already being encountered?) and availability of funding. The current estimated cost of USD 45 million per year has not yet been

²⁵ Cf also Section 3.2.

²⁶ Matching codes are also included in the *Evaluation Matrix* (Section 4), in order to show in detail the relation of evaluation questions and related survey tools to the MoRES framework and the respective determinants.

secured, and it appears doubtful – given the systemic risks of the Programme – that potential donors will get easily involved. Further, compared to the budget of the inception phase, the budget of the upscale phase deviates from the initial approach by recruiting a large number of staff from the communities which raises questions about their capacities when compared to the high number of international staff recruited during the inception phase.

The Dirasa Programme is unpredictable in terms of funding requirements and also lacks an exit strategy – with additional risks in case of such funding cannot be secured, resulting in a sudden collapse of the entire Programme.

Important prerequisites for a successful upscaling are still not in place. From a **management/coordination** perspective, this refers to unclear certification processes, uncertainty regarding absorption capacities of public schools, an unawareness by a large part of the beneficiaries (students and their parents) on the various intended pathways, low parent engagement and undefined desired competencies and/or learning achievements to be realised after one programme cycle (2 years).

Dirasa's inception phase points to a multitude of weaknesses which need to be addressed before even considering a further upscaling.

5.1.2 Supply and Demand

Code ²⁷	Determinant	Description
Supply		
S1	Availability of essential commodities/inputs	Essential commodities/inputs required to deliver a service or adopt a practice
S2	Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information	Physical access (services, facilities, information)
Demand		
D1	Financial access	Direct and indirect cost of services/practices
D2	Social and cultural practices and beliefs	Individual/community beliefs, awareness, behaviours, practices, attitudes
D3	Timing and continuity of use	Completion/continuity in service, practice

The Dirasa Programme aims at (rapidly) raising the **availability of essential commodities/inputs** through utilising the infrastructure of private schools and by giving direct support to the private sector. On the supply side, the private sector will be further privileged, while on the demand side, **financial access** to funds for paying for services of private schools will be passed on to the mostly Syrian OOSC who will be fully subsidised by the Programme. Given the anticipated large scale of service provision (eventually targeting 100,000 OOSC), this will challenge **current social and cultural practices** within the education system and even larger society. An integration of (mostly Syrian) refugee children into the private school system is an innovation for which society has not yet been prepared and which cannot be regarded as an innovation which would be readily welcomed by those Lebanese who need to withdraw from private schools since they do not have access to similar subsidies.

²⁷ Matching codes are also included in the *Evaluation Matrix* (Section 4), in order to show in detail the relation of evaluation questions and related survey tools to the MoRES framework and the respective determinants.

The Dirasa Programme runs the risk of severely distort the Lebanese education system, by creating unrealistic expectations (leading to raised demands), and particularly by creating pull factors for Syrian students out of the public education system.

Further, there is no clear causal relationship between (i) keeping private schools open and (ii) providing a bridging programme to children. This raises the question if (mostly Syrian) OOSC are not instrumentalised to maintain the private schools' system.

Timing and continuity appears to be a key issue here. While the inception phase of the Dirasa, although very short, underlined the potential relevance to the needs of integrating OOSC into the education system, also showing at least some evidence of learning and appreciation from beneficiaries, **simply more evidence is required on the potential benefits and especially risks to be expected during a rapid scale-up of the Programme.** A rapid increase at this point in time, from 5,000 to 50,000 students, will most likely result in opposition of those who do not benefit from the programme, and will ultimately put the continuity of the entire Programme at risk. Also, **access to adequately staffed services** (beyond the available facilities of private schools) has yet to be tested at a scale which goes beyond the initial inception phase.

5.1.3 Quality

Code ²⁸	Determinant	Description
Quality		
Q1	Quality of care	Adherence to required quality standards (national or international norms)

Due to its implicit emergency focus (see also 5.1.1), the Dirasa Programme over-prioritised “Access” when compared to quality, repeating an error of the early *Education for All* (EFA) initiative which ultimately led to over-crowded classrooms, an even further deteriorated educational quality, a lack of qualified staff, and insufficient system capacities for transition from basic to secondary education.

The inception phase of the Dirasa Programme primarily focused on the “equitable access” part of the Programme’s Theory of Change, neglecting the aspect of pursuing (or preparing for the acquisition of) “high quality education”.

As already stated under 5.1.1 above, it cannot be formally assessed at this point in time to which degree the Dirasa Programme adheres to existing quality standards, since so far no specific desired competencies and/or learning achievements have been formulated and/or being agreed upon which should be realised after one programme cycle of two years.²⁹

For future guidance, quality should be assessed across three performance standards, i.e. (i) Quality of Teaching and Learning; (ii) Effectiveness of Leadership and Management; and (iii) Students’ Personal Development and Well-Being including Students’ Behaviours and Safety. This should include at least the following 20 quality areas:

²⁸ Matching codes are also included in the *Evaluation Matrix* (Section 4), in order to show in detail the relation of evaluation questions and related survey tools to the MoRES framework and the respective determinants.

²⁹ As stated earlier, a Learning Outcomes Study by *World Learning* is ongoing and expected to be available by the end of October. This however would only portray the status quo; what will be important would be a clear definition of the competencies by the end of the Programme Cycle (before transition according to the pathways, mostly transiting into 3rd Grade of public school).

- Familiarity and self-confidence of the teacher regarding the subjects taught
- Time to engage in discussions with students
- Interaction with colleagues and peer-coaching
- Importance and usage of ICT at the respective schools
- Impact of teacher training
- Opportunities to develop students' thinking and innovation skills
- Integration and inclusion of children with special needs
- Adequacy of classroom sizes (6x8 metres for urban schools, 5X6 metres for rural schools)
- Gender-balanced opportunities
- Availability, utilisation and impact of school development plans
- Understanding of Teacher Professional Standards
- Testing and assessment
- Degree of application of group work and interactive teaching methodologies
- Regular supervision of teaching
- Safety of school environment (e.g. free from bullying and corporal punishment)
- Participation of parents and students
- Follow up on non-attendance
- Self-evaluation of schools
- Access to extra-curricular activities
- The continuity of learning (distance learning)

5.2 Summary conclusions

The evaluation has shown the **potential relevance of the Dirasa Programme**, and its embodiment in the development cooperation context. The Dirasa Programme fits in principle within the country's 5-year Education Plan, its development objectives, and is part of the strategic link between the 1st funding window of the TREF (public schools) and the 2nd funding window (multiple flexible pathways). As such, the Dirasa Programme can make a relevant **contribution to the education sector**, specifically within the parameters of the TREF.

However, there are major weaknesses in the **design** of the Programme which was built on the assumption that channelling support through the private sector would be an innovative approach towards addressing the needs of the OOSC. While such assumption has not been tested, the Programme at the same time foresaw a rapid upscaling from a very short inception phase into a nation-wide upscale phase, raising the number of beneficiaries by 1,000% from 5,000 children to 50,000. This also led to a major weakness, i.e., a multitude of unresolved issues at the end of the inception phase which need to be addressed before moving into a scaling-up phase. Further, the underlying risk analysis underestimated the potential resistance of those who would not benefit from the Programme, should an upscale happen at a rapid pace.

These design weaknesses are also reflected in the **Theory of Change**. Currently, the ToC is a rather theoretical model of what *could* happen in an ideal scenario, however with an over-emphasis on quantitative aspects and built on (unmentioned) assumptions which are not likely to hold. Taking a more realistic view, the implementation chain is likely to be disrupted at the output level already, if the systemic preconditions for reaching the short-term outcome level are not pro-actively addressed. "Collaboration and coordination between financial, technical and community partners" (as mentioned in the ToC) will not be sufficient; the ToC completely

neglects the political and society levels (outside the Dirasa communities!), whose endorsement of the process would however be vital for any success – a process that takes more time than currently envisaged. Consequently, the ToC is also missing a time dimension.

The intended **results** to be achieved by the end of the Dirasa inception phase (as per the logframe) have been achieved in terms of access to the programme by 5,000 children (given a drop-out rate of 14.7% on average, after 6 months), the distribution of learning materials and the provision of scheduled trainings. The focus has been on quantitative aspects, there is no clear evidence on either learning outcomes or the effectiveness and relevance of teacher trainings and/or learning materials. While there is some anecdotal evidence on the appreciation of the programme (in particular the extra-curricular activities), a formal evaluation of the learning outcomes by World Learning is still ongoing. Dirasa's **contribution to education sector results** thus cannot be assessed after the inception phase; there however remains a **significant and severe risk that the Dirasa programme**, if going nationwide at the proposed rapid pace with an immediate increase of 1,000% of beneficiaries, **distorts the entire education system** by creating unrealistic expectations (leading to raised demands), and particularly by creating pull factors for Syrian students out of the public education system.

Effectiveness in the long term will very much depend on the further timing of implementation, in order to ensure **continuity** (and ultimate survival of the Programme) **and sustainability**.

5.3 Recommendations

Before outlining the recommendations, there are basically two options to consider, i.e.,

- immediate termination of the programme and complete re-design; or
- continuation of the programme at a much slower pace with an extended pilot phase and a postponed decision with regard to a possible scale-up.

This is further outlined below.

5.3.1 Basic options for a future strategy

Option 1: Due to the apparent design weaknesses of the Dirasa Programme, the Programme should enter into an immediate exit strategy, combined with a complete re-design of the programme.

- The exit strategy will aim at completing the anticipated bridging process for the 5,000 children already enrolled in the programme, while at the same time terminating the Programme with regard to any new enrolments. At the same time, and based on the experiences made during the inception phase and the findings of this evaluation, the Theory of Change will be redesigned in close collaboration with key stakeholders, also involving key ministries outside MEHE (e.g., Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior, etc.). This will then result in a completely new approach with a new name which also might take different directions (depending on the outcomes of the consultations), or might lead to a decision of abandoning the intervention altogether.

Option 2: Despite the current design weaknesses of the Dirasa Programme, the Programme will continue, although at a much slower pace.

- This option will ensure continuity for the children already enrolled in the Programme, while at the same time allowing for rectification of current shortcomings during an extended pilot phase. As with Option 1, the Theory of Change will be redesigned, and a decision of further extensions will be postponed to the beginning of the second year (i.e., school year 2023/24). “Too many beneficiaries too fast” will

potentially lead to a total collapse of the Programme which still has to cope with too many uncertainties and unclarified issues.

We have a slight preference for Option 2, primarily due to the continuity for children already enrolled under the Programme.

*All following recommendations are therefore given based on the general conclusion that **the Dirasa Programme should continue, although at a much slower pace (i.e., Option 2).***

5.3.2 General recommendations

Recommendation 1:

- Turn the current inception phase of the Dirasa Programme into a genuine Pilot Phase, covering a period of two full years up to the end of the first two-year cycle of the current cohort (covering 5,000 children). At the beginning of the second year (i.e., school year 2023/24), a small upscale could be considered should by that time the recommendations for the first year have been fully addressed.

Recommendation 2:

- In order to avoid severe political and systemic shocks, consult in depth during the entire process of Dirasa implementation with all relevant Ministries outside MEHE, especially the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, in order to fully respect the conflict sensitivity approach and the principle of “do no harm”. The tense socio-political and economic situation of Lebanon requires special precautions in programme implementation.

5.3.3 Recommendations for immediate action

Recommendation 3:

- Abandon the current preparations for upscaling from 5,000 to then 50,000 beneficiaries in 250 schools. Instead, expand the current inception phase by at least one full school year, turn it into a genuine pilot phase, address the current short-comings and update the Theory of Change accordingly.

Recommendation 4:

- Develop an explicit exit strategy for the Dirasa Programme in order to lay the foundations for a predictable financial planning, and in order to be able to strategically abandon the Programme in the case of emerging undesired effects.

5.3.4 Recommendations for action to be taken within one year

Recommendation 5:

- Closely align the Dirasa programme with the implementation of the TREF. Open issues stemming from the initial “inception phase” need to be tackled by a joint “Strategic Management Board” to be established under the TREF, focusing on the interdependencies between the two funding windows, and harmonising approaches in order to avoid the emergence of parallel structures.

Recommendation 6:

- Closely monitor and continuously evaluate the extended pilot phase, specifically with regard to monitoring of learning outcomes, quality of teaching (i.e., not only quantities of training sessions), behavioural and attitudinal changes at classroom level.³⁰

Recommendation 7:

- Undertake an assessment of private schools (including those already in the [extended] inception phase), identifying those most in the need of financial support and at the same time considered to be of high-quality potential; then support those under a slightly extended pilot (see also Recommendation 10 below). At the same time, review the criteria used for schools participating in the Programme, and also investigate the possibility of targeting more semi-private schools under Dirasa since they are financially struggling even more than the private schools – and some of them are teaching Lebanese and refugees from different nationalities in the same shift (AM shift).

Recommendation 8:

- Undertake a study on the absorption capacity of the formal education system against the prospective outputs of the Dirasa Programme, as a guideline for the limitations of Dirasa implementation. At the same time, further investigate alternative pathways (beyond BLN and ALP) for OOSC and also young adults, also taking into account significantly differing dropout rates across Governorates.

Recommendation 9:

- In case of any anticipated significant changes in implementation methodology, ensure that such changes are reflected in the extended inception phase. Avoid the “testing” of such changes during the implementation of an already upscaled phase since any negative effects cannot be easily rectified anymore.

5.3.5 Recommendation for action to be taken after one year**Recommendation 10:**

- Following the one-year extended inception phase, and provided all open issues have been successfully addressed, scale up slightly (e.g., to 40 schools) and prepare for the transition of the first cohort (from the initial 19 schools) to the public education system. When choosing the schools, also consider prioritising semi-private schools (in line with Recommendation 7 above). A comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of the children accessing the school and the financial situation of the school is highly needed, ideally through regular meetings between specialists and teachers that would result in a specified action plan to address the needs of the children with disabilities.

³⁰ MoRES emphasises strengthening the capacity of government and partners to regularly monitor (emerging trend is every six months to a year) intermediate outcomes (between outputs and higher level outcomes/impact) to enable more effective programme implementation and timely course corrections in plans and strategies at all levels.

APPENDIX 1:

List of persons consulted

List of persons consulted

AL FAKIH, Cesar, Programme Officer, Education Specialist, UNICEF Country Office Lebanon, Beirut.

ARAB, Oumnia, Area Project Manager, AVSI Foundation, Beirut.

ARSLANIAN, Andrea, Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF, Beirut.

ASSAF, Paulette, Deputy Project Director, World Learning, Beirut.

BAZZI, Lynn, Education Programme Associate, UNICEF, Beirut.

BEIGBEDER, Edouard, Country Representative, UNICEF, Beirut.

BOUTROS, Oula, Focal Point: Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), Ministry of Social Affairs, Beirut.

BOUTROS, Youssef (Joe), Senior Refugee & Humanitarian Specialist, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), Embassy of the United States of America, Beirut.

CHEDID, Camille, Programme Manager, World Learning, Beirut.

CHLELA, Joanne, Senior Education Consultant for UNICEF based at MEHE, Beirut.

CHOUAF, Soad, Project Manager, ALPHA Association, Beirut.

DAUBLAIN, Maxence, Programme Manager: Education, EU Delegation, Beirut.

DEBS, Mohamad, Project Coordinator, The Lebanese Organisation of Studies and Training (LOST), Baalbeck.

EL ASHKAR, Imad, Director General, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Beirut.

EZZEDDINE, Alice, Inclusion Officer, War Child Holland in Lebanon, Beirut.

FORTIN, Alvaro, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Country Office Lebanon, Beirut.

FRANK, Lukas, Portfolio Manager, KfW, Beirut.

GHANEM, Lama, Research and Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Country Office Lebanon, Beirut.

GORANA, Flutra, Country Director, War Child Holland in Lebanon, Beirut.

GREPSTAD, Mari, First Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Beirut.

HAGE, Rania, Education Specialist, AVSI Foundation, Beirut.

HALLAK, Jessica, Programme Implementation Manager, War Child Holland in Lebanon, Beirut.

HIGGINS, Ettie, Deputy Representative, UNICEF, Beirut.

KAMWESIGYE, Justus, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF, Beirut.

KASPARIAN, Lila, Socio-economist & Management Consultant, Beirut.

KIM, Lisa, Education Manager, UNICEF, Beirut.

KOTOB, Dr. Wafa, Country Representative, World Learning, Beirut.

LAKKIS, Dr. Ramy, Founder and General Manager, The Lebanese Organisation of Studies and Training (LOST), Baalbeck.

McALLISTER, Matthew R., Embassy of the United States of America, Beirut.

MERHI, Mirvat Merhi, Programme Officer, World Learning, Beirut.

MOUCHREF, Aicha, Senior International Assistance Officer, Embassy of Canada, Beirut.

NASSEREDDINE, Tamara, Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Country Office Lebanon, Beirut.

PRAUHART, Andreas Sami, Consultant, UNICEF (via Zoom).

RAFIQUE, Atif, Chief of Education, UNICEF Country Office, Beirut.

SALIH, Tilal Mohamed Salih, Education Manager, UNICEF Country Office Lebanon, Beirut.

APPENDIX 2:

List of documents consulted

List of documents consulted

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UNICEF (undated_c): Theory of Change.

UNICEF (undated_d): School Bridging Programme Logframe.

UNICEF (undated_e): Private School Selection Criteria.

UNICEF (undated_f): School Bridging Programme management structure.

UNICEF (undated_g): School Bridging Programme complementarity with other sectors.

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UNICEF Terms of Reference for Dirasa:

- *Caregiver Committee Member*
- *Community Outreach Worker*
- *Dirasa Programme Strategic Board (PSB)*
- *Inclusion Officer / Special Educator*
- *Information Manager*
- *School Principal*
- *School Principal Assistant*
- *School Teacher*
- *Technical School Monitor*

APPENDIX 3:

**Terms of Reference
(including Theory of Change)**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INSTITUTIONAL CONSULTANCY/CONTRACT

Section:	PRIME/Education	Date:	July, 2022
Title:	Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project pilot	Duty station:	Beirut, Lebanon
Reporting to:	Evaluation Officer (PRIME)	Contract type:	LTA
Duration:	2 months	Start date:	Aug 2022

Section	Content
Project	<p><u>Context</u></p> <p>Since the start of the Syria Crisis, the ministry of education and higher education in Lebanon - MEHE has been more than a willing partner to support refugee children in accessing their rights to formal education. Initially opening more than 1,200 public schools to refugee children, MEHE opened a Second Shift system in 2013/14 scholastic year to accommodate refugees and meet its obligation to provide children with access to quality education in safe and protective environments. Since 2013, MEHE has progressively opened new Second Shift schools reaching a total of 345 Second Shift schools for the 2020-21 scholastic year.</p> <p>Supporting enrolment in formal education is key to child rights principles (education, participation, and a healthy future); however, the financial burden operationalizing a response of this scale has been significant. Setting out its projected additional budget as an appeal through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) each year - MEHE has partnered with the international community to cover the costs of educating a large majority of Lebanese poor and non-Lebanese refugee children; however, challenges persist.</p> <p>According to the Child-Focused Rapid Assessment (CFRA)⁵ conducted by UNICEF in April 2021, children are missing out on education. As per the 2020-2021 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), the number of Syrian children out of school increased from 55% to 63% between 2020 and 2021 (a total of 445,000 children). The total number of Lebanese children out of school is estimated to be 257,000 (22% of the Lebanese school-aged population), bringing the total to approximately 700,000 children (37% of the total school-aged population).</p> <p>Children are missing out on education</p> <p>Over 1.2 million school-aged children (enrolled in public, private, semi-private, and UNRWA schools) were affected by COVID-19 related school closures mandated by the MEHE and the Ministry of Public Health for the 2020/21 school year an additional 50,000 children attending non-formal education suffered disruptions. The 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon found that only 11 per cent of Syrian children aged 3 to 5 years and 53 per cent of Syrian children aged 6 to 14 years were attending school with cost of enrolment as the most common reason for non- attendance.</p> <p>The impact of COVID-19 and multiple crises in Lebanon has had severe effects on the ability of parents and caregivers to keep their children in school. The quality of education has also suffered resulting in growing learning gaps and an overall de-prioritization of education. Many families have resorted to negative coping mechanisms, such as child labour and early marriage to survive and make ends meet, depriving many of their right to education. A 2021 UNICEF report, “Lebanon: Children’s future on the line”, indicates that, in general, 9 per cent of families residing in Lebanon sent their child to work, 15 per cent stopped their children’s education and 60 per cent had to buy food on credit or borrow money. The situation is more dire for Syrian households with 22 per cent sending their child to work, 35 per cent stopping their education and 100 per cent had to buy food on credit or borrow money. There is a need to support cash assistance for education to improve the enrolment and retention of vulnerable Lebanese and non-Lebanese children in public schools.</p> <p><u>Dirasa Programme</u></p> <p>To help deal with these challenges, UNICEF Lebanon has developed the Dirasa Programme, a whole-system approach featuring multiple and flexible pathways as a bridge that facilitates the re-entry for 100,000 marginalised out-of-school children and adolescents. The programme’s key objective is to help out-of-school Lebanese and non- Lebanese children aged 8-14 to return to formal education and create pathways into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and youth programmes for older adolescents.</p> <p>A key secondary objective of the Dirasa Programme is to provide support to private schools that are struggling due to the current economic crisis and are at risk of closing. Some of these schools might be the only option for children in the most disadvantaged areas, and the risk of closure will have a hugely negative impact on those most marginalized children. As around 60 per cent of learners in Lebanon are in private educational institutions, this is the</p>

right time to start supporting private schools – if these schools close, the public system would struggle to absorb the learners, and many would drop out of schools.

The programme provides support for the hosting schools by covering the fees of the newly enrolled children, providing a fixed lumpsum of cash support to school that covers their operational cost and enhancement of school environment. In addition to providing teacher training and capacity building, supporting referral mechanisms and multiple integrations of service for the benefit of all children.

Dirasa is a whole-system approach, using multiple and flexible pathways that lead to formal education. It aims to partner with approximately 400 private schools to facilitate re-entry for 100,000 out-of-school children and adolescents into formal education by end of 2022. The beneficiaries will be aged 8-14, and of these, 30 per cent will be Lebanese and 70 per cent non-Lebanese. For older adolescents, Dirasa will create pathways into TVET and youth programmes. Ninety per cent of the targeted children will be 8-11-year-olds who either: have not been to school before; dropped out of school more than two years ago; or have been enrolled in Non-Formal Education (NFE) programs and were not able to transition to formal education. Children aged 12-14 who have been out of school for 2 years or less and are not able to directly reintegrate into formal education will make up the remaining 10 per cent.

Schools will be selected based on a set of selection criteria to target the areas with most OOSC in 8 governorates of the country. Dirasa takes a child centered approach, providing them with a tailored program, derived from the Lebanese curriculum but based on their needs, preparing them to transition into formal education and alternative pathways by the end of the program. In addition to access to high quality education, Dirasa offers a complimentary package of services that ensures well-being and proper development of children through providing a package of psychosocial support, life skills, sports for development, social assistance, upshift program and career guidance for older adolescents.

Dirasa will support children for two years in the host private schools. Once they complete the programme, they will be supported to transition to formal education or the most appropriate education pathway. The programme will aim to enrol all 100,000 children by October 2022, however, if the beneficiary target is not met, enrolment will continue in the following year until reaching the target.

Why is the SBP Innovative?

It is comprehensive and provides a multiple and flexible pathway for out-of-school children based on their age group and academic level, facilitating their re-entry into the formal education system, and creating pathways to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and youth programmes for older adolescents.

It creates a pathway back to formal education: Children enrolled in the School Bridging Program, after completion of year one, will sit a placement test that will assess their education level and transition them to the most suitable grade, either in the same private school or another nearby public school. Children that require further support, will continue for an additional year in the program and will be offered multiple referral pathways, including continuation in the same private school, transition to a public school, or specialized youth and adolescent's program, or TVET.

It offers high quality education and is tailored to out-of-school children's needs. It provides learners with a tailored program (derived from the Lebanese curriculum) based on their specific needs, so that they can catch up on lost learning.

It capitalizes on existing private schools. It is the first time private schools in Lebanon are being used as a platform to facilitate the re-entry of out-of-school children and youth into formal education. Given the strong capacity of these private schools, the SBP can reach out-of-school children at a greater scale and more efficiently than the traditional Non-Formal Education model, which is built on smaller, more costly centres.

It aims to provide additional services to children in the school, contingent upon funding. In addition to gaining access to high quality education, the SBP aims to offer a complementary package of services such as psychosocial support, life skills trainings, career guidance for older adolescents, sports for development and social assistance to ensure learners' well-being and proper development.

It promotes integration, between out-of-school children and children already enrolled in the participating private schools.

Project Theory of Change

The Dirasa Programme aims to: 1) Increase the number of children in school, 2) Ensure private schools remain operational and 3) Provide flexible learning pathways with a variety of inclusive education models supporting a bridge to formal education as well as other learning opportunities.

The project overall objective is that **“Lebanese and non-Lebanese out of school children re-enter, catch-up, and transition into further formal and non-formal education for future better livelihood and social cohesion”**.

This overall objective will be achieved through three intermediate results:

- **Outcome 1:** Equitable access to high quality education for OOS children through cost effective approach.
- **Outcome 2:** Improved soft skills and learning outcomes in foundational literacy in Arabic and second language, and in mathematics.
- **Outcome 3:** Children transition into further formal education or alternative pathways to complete their education

Through achieving the above, the project supports **UNICEF LCO Outcome 2 “: By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development”**.

The project results and intermediate results feed into **CPD output 2.1** Pillar I - Improved Access to Education “Increased demand and reduced normative and financial barriers for enrolment and retention into formal and non- formal education and early development opportunities for children 3–14” and **CPD Output 2.2** Pillar II - Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning Environments “Increased capacity of public schools teachers and education personnel to deliver child-centered and flexible pedagogy in inclusive environments”.

The complete theory of change is presented in annex 1.

Project Progress

The Dirasa Programme will be implemented in two phases. The first phase or inception phase of Dirasa program was launched in February 2022; successfully enrolling 5,000 children (200 are Lebanese Children in addition to 400 children with disabilities) in 19 private schools across all the 8 governorates in Lebanon. Around 60 per cent of the children enrolled in the inception phase have been part of different NFE programs funded by UNICEF. Furthermore, 90 per cent of the target children are 8-11-year-olds who either have never been to school before; dropped out of school more than two years ago; or have formerly been enrolled in Non-Formal Education (NFE) programs but were not able to transition to formal education. Meanwhile, children aged 12-14 who have been out of school for 2 years or less and are not able to directly reintegrate into formal education makes up the remaining 10 per cent.

Based on lessons learned from the inception phase, activities will be scaled up from October 2022 to 250 schools, targeting approximately 51,000 out-of-school children (OOSC). It is expected that 70 per cent of the beneficiaries will be non-Lebanese and 30 per cent Lebanese. The programme will aim to enroll all 100,000 children by October 2023. However, if the beneficiary target is not met, the enrollment will continue in the following year, until the target is met.

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

This evaluation is being conducted for the purposes of accountability (internal and to government and donors), learning and inform future programming through evidence-based planning, generating recommendations to inform the design of future phases of the programme. This evaluation will assess the results achieved during the inception phase of Dirasa programme and evaluate what worked well and what has to be adjusted in the upscale phase of the programme. Within this framework, the evaluation will:

- i. Provide an independent assessment of the UNICEF Lebanon Dirasa program in terms of design, implementation, and results achievement with a particular emphasis on its contribution to Lebanon Education sector results on access and equity, equity, and efficiency.
- i. Critically measure and assess the overall relevance, effectiveness, and coherence of the UNICEF Dirasa programme during its inception phase;
- ii. Analyse the factors that affected progress towards results and capture challenges, lessons learned, and success factors during the inception phase.
- iii. Provide strategic learning and recommendations aimed at informing the upscale phase of the programme design and implementation in UNICEF Lebanon. The evaluation should focus on providing more information on what has worked or not and why, what implementation strategies has proved to be effective and what has to be adjusted for the upscale phase.

	<p>Objectives</p> <p>Specifically, the evaluation serves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate if the program is responding to the needs of out of school children and have met the objectives highlighted in the TOC. Assess the logic pathway of the Theory of Change according to the achieved results in the piloting phase. Analyze to which extent the context of the country hindered or help the implementation of the Dirasa programme (Especially in responding to the high number of OOSC deteriorating economic situation and impact on private sector). Explore if and to which extent was the project successful in facilitating better inclusion of adolescent girls and children with disabilities) Highlight what areas require further focus, and main risks to take into consideration during the upscale phase. Examine to what extent the program's outputs contributed to the expected results during the inception phase. The areas of attention will include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment and retention of highly marginalized OOSC in Dirasa Program through learning in a school environment. Functioning of data and information systems supported by UNICEF Capacity building of Teacher and School Personal, if it had the needed impact or further capacity building is required Program quality and if the curriculum content is relevant to the children needs Wellbeing of children and teachers taking part in the programme. Evidence on sustainability of results achieved by UNICEF and partners; Evidence on strong partnerships and coordination mechanisms for the education sector; and Evidence on internal coherence of Dirasa programme and integrated programming with Child Protection, SBC, and YAD. Reduction of education cost for children already enrolled in the private schools Evidence on enhancing social cohesion and inclusion at local level
<p>Intended use of findings</p>	<p>This evaluation seeks to capture learning and recommendations for UNICEF's upscale phase of the program. 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 upcoming months.</p> <p>The evaluation outcomes will be used by UNICEF Education section, donors of Dirasa, MEHE, and other stakeholders in the sector like private schools and other implementers of similar interventions.</p>
<p>Scope</p>	<p>Programmatic Scope: This evaluation seeks to assess the inception phase of the Dirasa programme 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, from community level child level and school level. 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>Geographic Scope: The evaluation will be designed to assess Dirasa programme across the 8 governorates of Lebanon.</p> <p>Timeline: This evaluation will examine the support provided by Dirasa from Feb 2022 to Aug 2022. It will be launched in start of August and should be finalized by 1st week of September 2022.</p>
<p>Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions</p>	<p>This evaluation will be assessed using OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, 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.</p> <p>Relevance</p> <p>Q1. How aligned is Dirasa project with global priorities (UNICEF strategic plan, SDGs, and core commitments to children), and with to the country context, and its government priorities?</p>

- To what extent do the project results contribute to the achievement of UNICEF LCO child survival outcome 2 “By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development”.
- How relevant is UNICEF’s Dirasa programme to the country needs in general, and the OOSC needs in particular?

Q2. To what extent is DIRASA design able to adapt its strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context?

Q3. How relevant is Dirasa programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into consideration any disparities

Effectiveness

Q4. To what extent is the project design and approach effective in achieving its planned results:

- To what extent was the project able to increase equitable access to quality education for highly marginalized OOS children?
- To what extent is the project able to facilitate transition into further formal education or alternative learning pathways? Was teaching the children done at the right level?
- How successful was the inception phase in providing needed capacity building for teachers and school staff, enhancing teaching environment in private schools, and delivering an Integrated package of services to all children of targeted schools?
- To what extent is the project able to prevent struggling private schools from collapsing?
- How likely is the project to enhance parents' awareness on the importance of education, and Ensuring wellbeing of children and teacher at school level?
- Was the project able during its piloting phase to reach the most marginalized children? How well do the private school selection criteria support the project reaching the most vulnerable?
- To what extent was the project able to enhance children learning outcomes?
- How effective is the project design and approach in managing conflict sensitivity?
- To what extent has the school funds being used as planned? did it support the school in enhancing the learning environment?
- What were the challenges faced in implementing the solution? What are the enabling factors of success and the lessons learned from implementation?
- **Q15.** What are the critical lessons learned from the implementation of programme especially, related to system strengthening, strategic partnerships, evidence generation and advocacy?
- What were the unintended effects/ negative impact from the Dirasa programme on school and community?

Q5. To what extent has the Theory of Change (ToC) been followed in implementation of Dirasa to achieve results identified? Were the critical components of the work consistent with what was planned, and if not, what changes were made and why?

Q6. In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation? And how adequate is this approach?

Q7. In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF Dirasa programme been gender responsive or transformative?

Coherence

Q8. How does Dirasa support for OOSC fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programmes/interventions)? Is this intervention a part of a coherent approach that is likely to have positive results, or are there critical gaps?

Q9. How does Dirasa project align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF?

Evaluation approach and Methods

Design: Overall study design for the evaluation will be theory-based contribution analysis. A theory-based equity focused evaluation using contribution analysis will ensure i. inputs leading to outputs and outcomes, and ii. 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 end of inception phase. The evaluation design will be primarily based on a review of the existing documents, monitoring data, field work, focus group discussions with school directors, teachers, school staff, children and caregivers.

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.

Methodology: The evaluation will employ a primary qualitative methodological approach to answer the evaluation questions, using several methods and data source, to ensure that data can be sufficiently triangulated to deliver aggregate judgments.

Primary qualitative data collection methods will include interviews, group discussions, and Focus Group Discussion with the project main stakeholders and beneficiaries. Primary data will also be collected during field visits to the school and class observations.

Secondary data sources are quantitative and qualitative. Secondary qualitative data source includes desk review of literature related to the project, the sector, and similar projects implemented by other actors. Secondary quantitative data generated from project monitoring documents, and existing surveys/assessments-especially related to learning outcomes, will be analyzed to validate the findings.

The methodology should also apply a gender-response evaluation lens; equity and gender aspects will be present in the implementation phases of the qualitative component.

Qualitative data collection methods include:

Desk review (secondary): The evaluation team will conduct a systematic literature review of relevant internal and external documents. These include the project proposal, PD and its modifications if any, learning baseline report, project work plans, annual and quarterly reports, Project document signed with implementing partners, UNICEF Education Strategy and workplan, RACE II strategy document and all other project documents relevant to answering the evaluation questions. In addition, the evaluation team will review relevant external studies of Lebanon's education sector that may lend additional context to the project's relevance and effectiveness. Evaluation team will review literature on Good practices or case studies of focus areas, documentation on key lesson learning or areas strategies not working well.

Key Informant Interviews (primary): The qualitative interview protocols will focus on exploring the relevance of the Dirasa project to OOSC long and short-term needs, how effective the project has been so far in its piloting phase, and how effective the anticipated results will be. The KIIs will provide an in-depth understanding of project achievements to date, factors that influenced the effectiveness of project intervention, and implementation of project interventions.

KIIs and Group Interviews will be conducted with UNICEF, implementing partners, representatives' private schools, teachers, school principals, students & caregivers, community members, municipalities, etc.

Focus Group Discussions (primary): the information from FGDs will help the evaluation answer the effectiveness based on beneficiaries and partners experience with the project, and capture challenges, success factors and stories. Data collected from FGD will help triangulate and validate the data collected during interviews, as well as monitoring data. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with programme partners and beneficiaries: Teachers, Students, Community members, and others.

Field Observations (primary): Observations during field visits, such as class observations, will allow the evaluation team to collect evidence on teacher performance, student engagement, and others.

The following Gender considerations will be taken into account:

- o Key informant Sex and age disaggregated indicators will be incorporated.
 - o The evaluation team, involved in data collection should be gender balanced, with the division of responsibilities as equally divided as possible.
 - o 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.
- o The evaluation team is expected to abide by the protocols provided by UNICEF through the training.

	<p>o The final report should include a clear gender analysis of the impact of gender roles and norms on the drivers of the intended behaviours.</p>
Principles and Ethical Conduct of Evaluation	<p>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>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"> o United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Standards for Evaluation in the UN System o United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms for Evaluation in the UN System, including impartiality, independence, quality, transparency, consultative process o Ethical Guidelines for UN Evaluations and the UNICEF procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis will guide the overall process o UNICEF adapted evaluation report standards and GEROs o 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>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>The report should be written in a style accessible by the general audience and within a 50-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 (2 – 5 pages) IV. Introduction & Background V. Methodology VI. Limitations VII. Ethical Considerations

	VIII. Results, Discussion, & Recommendations IX. Conclusion X. Annexes The report should be written in a style accessible by the general audience and within an 50-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.														
Timeline & deliverables	<table><tr><th>Activity</th><th>Deliverables</th><th># of Days</th></tr><tr><td>Inception phase</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft inception reportPresentation to reference groupFinal inception report. 20% payment</td><td>10 days</td></tr><tr><td>Data collection Phase</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">Post data collection debrief; validation workshop with stakeholders for presentation of main findings and recommendations (30% Payment)</td><td>15 days</td></tr><tr><td>Analysis, triangulation, and report writing</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft evaluation reportFinal report meeting UNICEF quality standards and completed comments matrix (50% Payment)</td><td>20 days</td></tr></table>			Activity	Deliverables	# of Days	Inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft inception reportPresentation to reference groupFinal inception report. 20% payment	10 days	Data collection Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Post data collection debrief; validation workshop with stakeholders for presentation of main findings and recommendations (30% Payment)	15 days	Analysis, triangulation, and report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft evaluation reportFinal report meeting UNICEF quality standards and completed comments matrix (50% Payment)	20 days
	Activity	Deliverables	# of Days												
	Inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft inception reportPresentation to reference groupFinal inception report. 20% payment	10 days												
	Data collection Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Post data collection debrief; validation workshop with stakeholders for presentation of main findings and recommendations (30% Payment)	15 days												
	Analysis, triangulation, and report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft evaluation reportFinal report meeting UNICEF quality standards and completed comments matrix (50% Payment)	20 days												
Total duration is 45 days .															
The evaluation team must provide the following products electronically (details and duration will be specified at the inception meeting):															
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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 evaluationAdditional context to the one mentioned in the ToR if applicableConfirmation of the evaluation criteria and questions refined from the literature review and preliminary interviewsMethods of data collection, including sampling and consideration of ethical considerationsData analysis methodsEvaluation 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 measuresIndicative work planProposed structure for the final report in line with UNEG and UNICEF standardsAppendices: list of key documents reviewed, set of proposed tools for data collection, list of key informants and sites to visitPPT 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.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.															

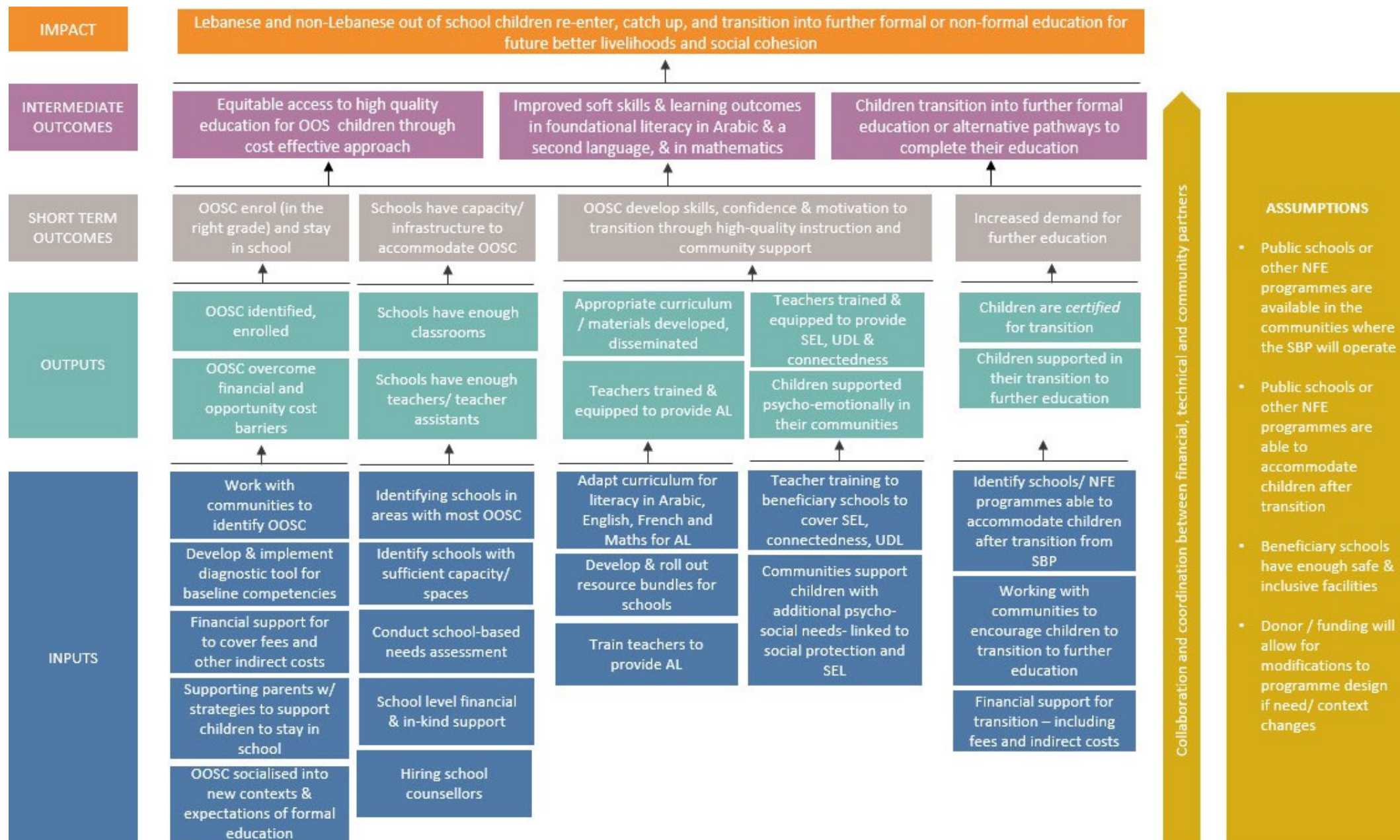
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Final report, of no more than 50 pages integrating all the comments. The evaluation report must comply with the UNICEF standards for evaluation reports. The report will be subject to a detailed and in-depth quality review by the UNICEF country office and the regional 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.
Payment schedule	<p>Payment 1: 20% after completion of 1st deliverable (submission of inception report)</p> <p>Payment 2: 30% after completion of 2nd deliverable (submission of data collection debrief and analysis tabulations)</p> <p>Payment 3: 50% after completion of 3rd deliverable (final study report and presentation)</p>
Dissemination plan	<p>Make the reports of fully accessible to all organizations that might make use of them. Ensure the widest possible dissemination of results by calling discussion meetings with donors, ministry officials and community leaders, and by ensuring press coverage of these meetings.</p> <p>In addition to the formal evaluation report, other knowledge products and processes will be used to optimize the dissemination and make findings more readily available. These include other written materials such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uploading the report to UNICEF's Evidence Information System Integration (EISI) - Evaluation Brief - Roundtable with stakeholders - Other platforms, where relevant. <p>The findings can also be shared through activities such as presentations at meetings, at workshops and in existing communities of practice, and for webinars. Such presentations can even be recorded and shared more widely, for example, through YouTube or Vimeo.</p>
Timing	August to October 2022
Reporting Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Contractor will regularly update UNICEF Lebanon Research & Evaluation Officer on the progress of the evaluation to ensure that the analysis represents the needs and expectations of UNICEF. - The reports will be electronically submitted to the Research & Evaluation Officer. - All deliverables are expected to be in accordance with the terms of this contract as described in the section on Scope. - The final report must adhere to standards of evaluation report as outlined in <u>UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards</u>. - All the products developed during the course of this consultancy must comply with the standards of research integrity, i.e., plagiarism- free. - The final report will be submitted in the evaluation database Evidence Information System Integration (EISI). The Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS) will report on the quality of the evaluations, by reviewing and assessing the quality of final evaluation reports commissioned by UNICEF Offices. The quality of the evaluation report is then reported to senior management mainly through three channels: a) annual report of the EO Director to the Executive Board; b) the Global Evaluation Dashboard, and c) inclusion of this information in the Global Evaluation database.
Management arrangements and quality assurance	<p>Evaluation Manager: To ensure independence of the evaluation, the Evaluation Specialist of UNICEF Lebanon will be the overall manager of the evaluation. The manager will ensure compliance with UNICEF norms and standards as well as compliance with quality standards. He/she will be the UNICEF focal point for the evaluation team and will be responsible for document validation. He/she will also ensure that the evaluation reference group is informed of the status of the evaluation.</p> <p>Evaluation Quality Control will be conducted through a review of terms of reference, methodology and reports and will be carried out by the Evaluation Manager in coordination with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERM) and the UNICEF Regional Evaluation Advisor.</p>

	<p>Reference Group will be established, and will include UNICEF programme staff, implementing partners, government, and representatives of right holders. It will endorse the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report and participate in the preliminary findings workshop.</p> <p>UNICEF Education Section will ensure that all documents needed for the evaluation are available and provide timely feedback to the evaluation manager.</p>
<p>Profile Requirements</p>	<p>The evaluation will be carried out by an external evaluation firm with solid expertise and experience in the Education sector. The Company must have expertise in conducting similar evaluations on Education programmes or similar for organizations operating in the international development sector. The selected firm should have a good knowledge of the Lebanon context and the sector.</p> <p>To carry out this evaluation, the firm is expected to put together an evaluation team composed of a maximum of 3 team members, including at least the following: a Team Leader, Education expert, and data analyst. The Team Leader will be primarily responsible for the evaluation, and team members will work closely together to co-produce and implement an appropriate methodology and approach for answering evaluation questions and achieving results expected. The Evaluation Team is expected to be mixed in teams of gender and cultural backgrounds, where at least one of the team members has expertise on gender.</p> <p>Team Leader, Consultant, Evaluation Expert; The Team Leader will coordinate the evaluation team and ensure the design of the evaluation, the steering of the evaluation process, quality assurance and delivery of the evaluation report in close collaboration with the other members of the team.</p> <p>He/she must have the following profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced university degree in Evaluation, Economics, Public Policy or Social Sciences or similar relevant fields, with a minimum of 10 years' experience in carrying out evaluation in the sector; • At least ten years of professional experience in evaluations with strong evidence of understanding global standards, theories, models and methods related to evaluation; • Proven experience in designing, leading and conducting evaluations of similar scope in the context of developing programming, which involve critical analysis of organizational strategies and strategic positioning; • Relevant working experience preferably in leading Education-related evaluations, not only on specific interventions but also on OOSC and Education programmings; • Relevant experience in data collection, qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques; • Knowledge in new methods of knowledge management and production • Familiar with facilitating working groups, including supervising a research team; • Relevant experience in gender assessments and gender sensitive/ responsive programming • Knowledge of the UNICEF/UN programming; • Excellent written and oral communication skills in English. <p>Education expert (s) will provide technical expertise on Education services and programming in the various stages of the evaluation. She/he will ensure that evaluation design, methods and tools are adapted to the Education context in the country, while taking into consideration the economic situation, OOSC and barriers facing children enrolment in education. The education specialist will be expected to contribute to data collection as needed and ensure that the final evaluation report, including recommendations, accurately reflects the local governance context in Lebanon.</p> <p>He/she will also contribute to the different stages of the evaluative process and must have the following profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least master's degree in Education, or relevant fields; • A minimum of seven years of experience working in the education field including emergency response, planning, and implementation of programmes and/or action research in the sector; • Excellent understanding of education issues in the country facing OOSC, • Good knowledge of Education sector programmes as well as in-depth knowledge of education systems in Lebanon; and the results of the NFE assessment. • Availability throughout the consulting period; • An ability to work in a team; • Experience working in other countries of the sub-region is an asset; • Excellent oral and written skills in English or Arabic is mandatory. <p>Data analyst(s)/Research Assistant(s) will play the role of technical support and support to the Team Leader and the entire evaluation in the design of collection tools, collection, processing, analysis of quantitative data and preparation of the report.</p>

	<p>He/she must have the following profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University degree in statistics, or other fields relevant to the consultation.• At least 2 years of experience in the field of evaluation of development programmes and projects.• Good skills in methodology for collecting, processing, and analyzing quantitative or qualitative data.• Good command of data collection by digital means.• Good command of sampling methods and techniques.• Good knowledge in the follow-up of studies and research.• Perfect mastery of computer tools (spreadsheet, word processing, statistical software) including digital data collection tools; OR• Good command of qualitative data analysis software such as ATLAS Ti,SPHINX PLUS;• Expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods and evaluation methods based on gender, equity and human rights;• Good ability to adapt to the flexibility of working time;• Good oral and written communication skills in Arabic, teamwork, and facilitation of participatory processes. <p>Mixed teams of national and international consultants involving women are strongly encouraged. The firm is free to integrate within the evaluation team other local human resources to facilitate the conduct of the evaluation, particularly exchanges with the beneficiary communities of the project and the collection of quantitative and qualitative data.</p> <p>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.</p>				
Technical and Financial Evaluation Criteria	<p>The below technical criteria will be used to select the more suitable offer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Methodology/approach to project demonstrating how you will answer the evaluation questions; Proposed timeline and milestones; evaluation matrix, Project dependencies and assumptions; Project implementation and work plan showing the detailed sequence and timeline for each activity and days necessary for each proposed team member2. Clear mechanisms to ensure gender dimensions, contextual, age related, and disability factors are explored and considered. Clear description of anticipated or actual ethical issues as well as measures and methods to address or mitigate against these issues3. Details of the proposed team for the assignment including the following information Title/Designation of each team member on the project<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Educational qualifications and professional experiences○ Previous experience in working on similar project and assignment- List all similar projects they worked on and their roles on those projects4. Demonstrated experience in writing logical and succinct reports, similar to the ones mentioned in the ToR, English is a must. Two published reports to be submitted.				
Detailed tasks and estimated duration	Activities	Duration (Days)	Team Leader, Evaluation	Team member 1	Team member 2
	Working days				
	I. Inception Phase	10 days	10 days	10 days	10 days
	Signature of the contract		-	-	-
	Initial meeting with evaluation manager		1 day	1 day	1 day
	Review of the literature, and preliminary interviews		3 days	3 days	3 days
	Evaluation matrix validation workshop and formalization of headings		1 day	1 day	1 day
	Development of data collection tools		2 days	2 days	3 days
	Submission of the draft inception report		2 days	2 days	1 day
	Revision of the inception report based on the comments		1 days	1 days	1 day

	II. Data collection phase	15 days	15 days	15 days	15 days
	Meeting with UNICEF staff and other stakeholders		2 days	2 days	2 days
	Field work (and updating the evaluation manager regularly on the progress of work by WhatsApp, Tel, email, etc.)		9 days	9 days	9 days
	Data processing and analysis		3 days	3 days	3 days
	PPT presentation of preliminary conclusions		1 days	1 days	1 days
	III. Report Writing Phase	20 days	20 days	20 days	13 days
	Drafting of the interim evaluation report		12 days	12 days	7 days
	Submission of the Interim Evaluation Report (Draft 0)		1 day	1 day	1 day
	Submission of the revised version of the report (Draft 1) incorporating the comments of the ERG.		3 days	3 days	1 day
	Submission of the final version of the report incorporating comments Reference group and key stakeholders		2 days	2 days	2 days
	Workshop to disseminate results		2 days	2 days	2 days
	Total number of days	45 days	45 days	45 days	38 days

Project Theory of Change



APPENDIX 4:

Timetable / workplan

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot				
No.	Phases and activities	Working days		
		KE1	KE2	
OUTPUT I. Inception Report				
1.1	Study of Key Project Documentation and initial briefing (03-05 August)	3	2	02 - 03 - 04 August
1.2	Review of evaluation questions, constructing evaluation matrix and defining final evaluation design and tools	3	2	05 - 08 - 09 August
1.3	Drafting of Inception Report and development of evaluation tools	3	1	10-12 August
OUTPUT II. Data Collection and Presentation of Preliminary Findings				
2.1	Stakeholder Consultations (KE2) - Preparation of the field visits (KE1 and KE2) - Further refinement of tools and IR (KE1)	2	2	15-16 August
2.1.1	Submission and discussion of Revised Inception Report			17 August
2.1.2	Approval phase of IR, including approval by IRB			18-23 August
2.2.	Start of data collection phase, incl. key stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, school visits	0	3	24-31 August
2.2.2	Travel of Team Leader to Lebanon			28 August
2.3	Data Collection phase, including provisional analysis of data and discussion of such analysis at an internal meeting with UNICEF on 12 September	15 1	10	29 August-19 September
OUTPUT III. Final Evaluation Report and Presentation				
3.1.1	Drafting presentation of preliminary findings to donors (based on initial discussion with UNICEF on 12 September, all other consultations and field visits)	3	2	20-21-22 September
3.1.2	Submission of final presentation to donors (incorporating feedback from UNICEF submitted by 23 September)	1	1	27 September
3.2	Drafting of the Draft Evaluation Report	4	2	28-29-30 September, 03 October
3.3	Drafting Revised Draft Evaluation Report , incorporating comments received from UNICEF Evaluation Team	1		07 October
3.4.1	Drafting Penultimate Evaluation Report , incorporating comments received from UNICEF Education Team	2		20-21 October
3.4.2	Drafting presentation of Penultimate Evaluation Report (internal UNICEF presentation)	1	1	25 October
3.4.3	Presentation of Penultimate Evaluation Report (internal UNICEF presentation)	1	1	09 November
3.5.1	Drafting Revised Penultimate Evaluation Report (if needed, based on feedback received during presentation)	1		10-11 November
3.5.2	Presentation of Revised Penultimate Evaluation Report to stakeholders (including preparation of presentation)	1	1	16 November
3.6.1	Drafting of Final Evaluation Report incorporating feedback from donors	2	1	17-18 November
3.6.2	(Online) presentation of the Final Evaluation Report	1	1	TBD
Total per expert		45	30	
Total working days		75		
Legend				
<div>Expert present in Lebanon</div>				
KE1 - Team Leader, Evaluation and Education Expert				
KE2 - Education Expert				

APPENDIX 5:

Data collection tools

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon

Interview Sheets

INT-1, INT-2

The interview sheets are designed in such a way that five similar core topics will be covered by all four target groups interviewed, in order to easily compare and cross-reference the answers during analysis and interpretation.

Contrarily to Focus Group and Round Table Discussions where the discussion focus will be narrower, such design allows a certain degree of flexibility when conducting the interview. The interviewer should focus on the main areas of expertise on the side of the interviewee and thus generate the most rewarding outcome of the interview.

The five core topics covered are

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Topic 1: | Introduction |
| Topic 2: | Expectations of the Dirasa Programme |
| Topic 3: | Most important challenges of the Dirasa Programme |
| Topic 4: | Dirasa Programme in practice |
| Topic 5: | Cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships ³¹ |

*Within every core topic, **additional guiding questions** are given. It will **not be necessary to cover all guiding questions at every interview**; their purpose is merely to guide the discussion. Issues not covered at one specific interview can be covered at another interview. **Looking at the total of the interviews conducted, all guiding questions should have been covered.***

³¹ With schools/education institutions, communities, Ministries, Development Partner organisations, NGOs, etc.

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon

INT-1: School Directors

Topic 1: Introduction

- What do you know / what information do you have about the Dirasa programme?
- How have you (or your school) been actively involved in the Dirasa Programme?
- What is your involvement in education now, apart from the Dirasa Programme?

Topic 2: Expectations of the Dirasa Programme

- In what way does the Dirasa Programme consider issues related to disability, family background and income, gender and/or ethnicity/religion?
- Thinking of the needs of out-of-school children, what would you wish for from the Dirasa Programme? Has that happened already? If not, what would be needed to make it happen?
- What do you see as strengths or opportunities of the Dirasa approach? What are weaknesses?
- How do you rate the Dirasa strategy for overcoming barriers to students' enrolment and learning related to disability, family background and income, gender and/or ethnicity/religion?
- What kind of qualifications (*including attitude, self-esteem, behaviour*) do you expect students to have when leaving school?

Topic 3: Most important challenges of the Dirasa Programme

- Based on your experience, what are the most important challenges that a school bridging programme such as Dirasa is facing? (*To be followed up from the challenges mentioned. Ask for concrete examples to clarify statements and/or verify understanding. If no challenges are mentioned, additional questions should be asked as listed below*)
- What characteristics (*infrastructure, school organisation, school culture including language, etc.*) influence enrolment and learning achievements, particularly the enrolment and participation of marginalised students?
- How would you assess the resources (*human, financial, time*) required to implement the Dirasa Programme?

Topic 4: Dirasa Programme in practice

- (How often) do you (or your school) interact with other educational partners on the Dirasa Programme? What are the benefits of these interactions?
- Personally as a school director, what is the most important challenge you are faced with professionally when it comes to the implementation of the Dirasa Programme?
- In your opinion, how does the Dirasa Programme relate to the needs and priorities of Lebanon?
- Can you tell us a success story where the Dirasa Programme made a big difference to a child?
- What are the extra curricula activities implemented in the schools? How do you ensure that they are aligned with the CWD and are gender sensitive?
- Do you celebrate specific days such as: children day, refugee day?

Topic 5: Cooperation with students, parents and communities

- Have roles, functions, and/or responsibilities of your school changed since the onset of the Dirasa Programme?
- Can you give us an example if/how cooperation with other educational partners/specialists is different under the Dirasa Programme from what used to happen in more "traditional" settings?
- Can you give us an example of how the Dirasa Programme facilitated discussions and cooperation between yourself, school communities and other stakeholders?
- In cooperating with parents and care-givers, what kind of changes (if any) did you observe due to the Dirasa Programme?
- How did you manage to keep in communication with the caregivers/students during the school closure due COVID 19?
- Have any awareness sessions been conducted to the caregivers? To students?
- When children or teachers face conflict/ bullying, how do you deal with the situation?

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon**INT-2: Governorate MEHE officers****Topic 1: Introduction**

- What do you know / what information do you have about the Dirasa programme?
- How have you (or your Governorate) been actively involved in the Dirasa Programme?
- What is your involvement in education now, apart from the Dirasa Programme?

Topic 2: Expectations of the Dirasa Programme

- In what way does the Dirasa Programme consider issues related to disability, family background and income, gender and/or ethnicity/religion?
- Thinking of the needs of out-of-school children, what would you wish for from the Dirasa Programme? Has that happened already? If not, what would be needed to make it happen?
- What do you see as strengths or opportunities of the Dirasa approach? What are weaknesses?
- How do you rate the Dirasa strategy for overcoming barriers to students' enrolment and learning related to disability, family background and income, gender and/or ethnicity/religion?
- What kind of qualifications (*including attitude, self-esteem, behaviour*) do you expect students to have when leaving school?

Topic 3: Most important challenges of the Dirasa Programme

- Based on your experience, what are the most important challenges that a school bridging programme such as Dirasa is facing? *(To be followed up from the challenges mentioned. Ask for concrete examples to clarify statements and/or verify understanding. If no challenges are mentioned, additional questions should be asked as listed below)*
- What characteristics (*infrastructure, school organisation, school culture including language, etc.*) influence enrolment and learning achievements, particularly the enrolment and participation of marginalised students?
- How would you assess the resources (*human, financial, time*) required to implement the Dirasa Programme?

Topic 4: Dirasa Programme in practice

- (How often) do you (or your school) interact with other educational partners on the Dirasa Programme? What are the benefits of these interactions?
- Personally as a school director, what is the most important challenge you are faced with professionally when it comes to the implementation of the Dirasa Programme?
- In your opinion, how does the Dirasa Programme relate to the needs and priorities of Lebanon?
- Can you tell us a success story where the Dirasa Programme made a big difference to a child?

Topic 5: Cooperation with students, parents and communities

- Have roles, functions, and/or responsibilities of your office changed since the onset of the Dirasa Programme?
- Can you give us an example that shows how cooperation with other educational partners/specialists is different under the Dirasa Programme from what used to happen in more "traditional" settings?
- Can you give us an example if/how the Dirasa Programme facilitated discussions and cooperation between yourself, schools, school communities and other stakeholders?
- In cooperating with school directors (and their communities), what kind of changes (if any) did you observe due to the Dirasa Programme?

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon**Focus Group Discussion Sheets****FGD-1 TEA, FGD-2 STU, FGD-3 PAR**

The design of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sheets takes into account that a variety of issues have already been discussed in-depth during the other consultations.

The Focus Group Discussion Sheets are designed in such a way that core topics will be covered, although with a different focus for every target group.

The five core topics covered are

- Topic 1: Family characteristics and possible barriers for children's schooling surrounding the family context
- Topic 2: Expectations of the Dirasa Programme
- Topic 3: Most important challenges of the Dirasa Programme
- Topic 4: Dirasa Programme in practice – classroom experiences
- Topic 5: Cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships³²

These topics are spread across the target groups as follows:

Target Group / Sub-Group	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
Teachers		X	X	X	X
Students	X	X		X	X
Parents and Care-Givers	X		X	X	X

*Within every Focus Group, **additional guiding questions** are given across the selected core topics above. It will be important for the interviewer **to first listen carefully to what the FGD participants bring up on their own** before providing additional guidance for the discussion. Specific **keywords for discussion** are provided on the following sheets.*

³² With schools/education institutions, communities, Ministries, Development Partner organisations, NGOs, etc.

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon**FGD-1 TEA: Teachers****Keywords:**

Professional vision

Social reality; attitude and behavioural change

Relevance of Dirasa; transition opportunities

Topic 2: Expectations of the Dirasa Programme

- Thinking of the needs of out-of-school children, what would you wish for from the Dirasa Programme? Has that happened already? If not, what would be needed to make it happen?
- What do you see as strengths or opportunities of the Dirasa approach? What are weaknesses, or threats?
- How do you rate the Dirasa strategy for overcoming barriers to students' enrolment and learning related to disability, family background and income, gender and/or ethnicity/religion?

Topic 3: Most important challenges of the Dirasa Programme

- Based on your experience, what are the most important challenges that a school bridging programme such as Dirasa is facing? (To be followed up from the challenges mentioned. Ask for concrete examples to clarify statements and/or verify understanding. If no challenges are mentioned, additional questions should be asked as listed below)
- What characteristics (*infrastructure, school organisation, school culture including language, etc.*) influence enrolment and learning achievements, particularly the enrolment and participation of marginalised students?
- How would you assess the resources (human, financial, time) required to implement the Dirasa Programme?

Topic 4: Dirasa Programme in practice – classroom experiences

- Judging from your day-to-day teaching experience, how well were you prepared for teaching under the Dirasa Programme? What was of particular benefit, what would still be needed?
- What new skills or methods do you use most? When do you use them and what for?
- As teachers, what is the most important challenge you are faced with professionally when it comes to the implementation of the Dirasa Programme?
- Can you tell us a success story where the Dirasa Programme made a big difference to a child?

Topic 5: Cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships

- Judging from your discussions with parents, how do you think they feel about the Dirasa Programme?
- Can you give us an example that shows how cooperation with students, parents or community members is different from what used to happen in more "traditional" settings?
- What professional skills are required to address the learning needs of students in your school? Is there any support you would wish for?
- In cooperating with school directors (and their communities), what kind of changes (if any) did you observe due to the Dirasa Programme?

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon**FGD-2 STU: Students****Keywords:**

Your dreams
Your expectations
Family context, family roles

Topic 1: Family characteristics and possible barriers for children's schooling surrounding the family context

- Tell us about yourselves – where do you come from?
- What is it like for you in the area/town/village where you live? What kind of tasks do you have (next to going to school)?
- What are your professional aspirations?

Topic 4: Dirasa Programme in practice – classroom experiences

- What experiences or activities do you enjoy in class? Why? Which ones don't you enjoy? Why? What would you change? What do you miss in school if you are in a long vacation?
- What extra-curricular activities conducted in school do you like most? Why? Do you participate in these activities? Which one? What does like most about it?
- If you want to celebrate your birthday, whom do you invite from the school?
- Do you celebrate specific days such as: children day, refugee day?
- If you have a problem with someone in class, how do you go about it? Can you give an example?
- In your personal experience, how do teachers react to you if you don't really understand the lesson?
- How do you know how well you are doing in school?

Topic 5: Cooperation, collaboration and partnerships

- For you, who are the most important persons in your family and in your village? Is there somebody else important, maybe also outside the village? Do these persons cooperate with each other (talk with each other, visit each other)? How?
- If one student in the class got sick, do you visit him/her?
- Would you encourage your neighbours to come to the programme? Why?
- When you face a conflict in the school, what do you do usually? To whom you will go?
- Are your parents or your parents' friends interested in what is going on at school? If so, what do they do?
- When you talk to your parents at home, how do they feel about school?
- What do you play in the playground? What games? With whom?

Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon**FGD-3 PAR: Parents****Keywords:**

Value attached to education

Expectations of school/education

School reality, roles, attitude; parent-school relations

Topic 1: Family characteristics and possible barriers for children's schooling surrounding the family context

- What is your background?
- Tell us a bit about your children – how many, how old, which classes?
- What do you know about the Dirasa Programme? Did you attend any awareness sessions under the programme?
- How can the Dirasa Programme help your child to become a better student?
- Where would you like to see your children in 5 years' time? In your opinion, what would be a good future for your son(s), for your daughter(s)?

Topic 3: Most important challenges of the Dirasa Programme

- Based on your experience, what are the most important challenges that a school bridging programme such as Dirasa is facing?
(To be followed up from the challenges mentioned. Ask for concrete examples to clarify statements and/or verify understanding. If no challenges are mentioned, additional questions should be asked as listed below)
- What characteristics (infrastructure, school organisation, school culture including language, etc.) influence enrolment and learning achievements?
- What influences the enrolment and participation of marginalised students?
- What do you think about including more schools into the Dirasa programme?

Topic 4: Dirasa Programme in practice – classroom experiences

- Just think about an average school day. What do you hear from your children about school? Is it different in any way from what you hear (heard) from other children?
- Can you think of an example of a very special lesson that your children might have told you about?
- Thinking of your children, has the Dirasa Programme made them different in any way? How?
- How do your children feel about going to school? How do they feel about their teachers?

Topic 5: Cooperation with school, education care specialists, family and community members

- If people want to convince you of something they feel would be good for you, what should they do? Whom would you listen to, whose opinion would be valuable for you?
- Can you give us an example that shows how cooperation with students, parents or community members is different under the Dirasa Programme from what used to happen in more "traditional" settings?
- If your child faces conflict or bullying in school, what do you do usually?
- In talking to school directors and teachers, what kind of changes (if any) did you observe due to the Dirasa Programme?
- How did you manage to maintain communication with the teachers/ principals during the school closure due to COVID 19?

APPENDIX 6:

Protocols for Interviews and FGDs

Consent forms

Introduction to be read to ADULTS
by Data Collector BEFORE starting the interview or the group discussion

Hello, my name is _____, and I work for PROMAN, a company contracted by UNICEF to conduct an *Independent Evaluation for the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon*.

As an important part of our study, we would like to invite you to share your views on the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon, funded by UNICEF. We would therefore very much appreciate your participation in this study. Your participation involves an interview/group discussion about your experiences with the Dirasa Programme Pilot.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you don't want to be in the study, it is OK. If you want to be in the study now and change your mind later, that's OK too. You can stop at any time. If you agree to participate, you can decide not to answer any question and can stop at any time. Your decision about whether to participate in this study or to answer any specific questions will in no way affect any services that you receive. If you do choose to participate, please answer the questions honestly and openly, so that we can understand your experience and find out what you really think and have experienced.

The interview will take you about half an hour to complete /
 The group discussion will take you about 45 minutes to complete.

The information you provide will be confidential and never connected to you. Other people will not know if you are in this study or what you have said. We will put information we learn from you together with information we learn from other people in the study. No one will be able to tell what information came from you. When we tell other people about this research, we will never use your name, and no one will ever know what answers you gave. Only a few researchers will have access to this information, and all information will be stored safely and destroyed under the care of the lead researcher.

Your participation in this study may not benefit you directly, but it may benefit others, as your responses may improve the Dirasa Programme, and therefore education in Lebanon.

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also contact Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail: tnassereddine@unicef.org

- Do you have any questions now?
- Do you understand everything I have explained?
- Do you agree to participate in this interview/group discussion?

Consent may be signed, or agreed to verbally – Contact info should be provided for subject to keep.

مقدمة تقرأ للراشدين
من قبل جامعي البيانات قبل البدء بالمقابلة أو بنقاش المجموعات

مرحباً، أنا إسمي ----- واعمل مع " برومان " المتعاقد مع يونيسف لتقييم برنامج " دراسة" التجريبي في لبنان بشكل مستقل كجزء مهم من دراستنا، نود أن ندعوك للاستماع إلى وجهات نظرك حول برنامج دراسة التجريبي في لبنان، الممول من "يونيسف". لذلك نحن نقدر كثيراً مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة. تتضمن مشاركتك مناقشة جماعية حول تجاربك مع برنامج دراسة التجريبي مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة طوعية. إذا كنت لا تريد أن تكون في الدراسة ، فلا بأس بذلك. إذا كنت تريد أن تكون في الدراسة الآن وتغيير رأيك لاحقاً ، فلا بأس بذلك أيضاً. يمكنك التوقف في أي وقت. إذا وافقت على المشاركة ، فيمكنك أن تقرر عدم الإجابة على أي سؤال ويمكنك التوقف في أي وقت

إن قرارك بشأن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة أو الإجابة على أي أسئلة محددة لن يؤثر بأي حال من الأحوال على أي خدمات تتلقاها. إذا اخترت المشاركة، يرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة بصدق وانفتاح، حتى تتمكن من فهم تجربتك ومعرفة ما تفكر فيه حقاً واختبرته

تستغرق المقابلة حوالي نصف ساعة لإكمالها

ستستغرق المناقشة الجماعية حوالي 45 دقيقة لإكمالها

ستكون المعلومات التي تقدمها سرية ولن تكون متصلة بك أبداً. لن يعرف الآخرون ما إذا كنت في هذه الدراسة أو ما قلته. سنضع المعلومات التي نتعلمها منك مع المعلومات التي نتعلمها من أشخاص آخرين في الدراسة

لن يتمكن أحد من معرفة المعلومات التي جاءت منك. عندما نخبر الآخرين عن هذا البحث ، لن نستخدم اسمك أبداً ، ولن يعرف أحد أبداً الإجابات التي قدمتها. لن يتمكن سوى عدد قليل من الباحثين من الوصول إلى هذه المعلومات ، وسيتم تخزين جميع المعلومات بأمان وتدميرها تحت رعاية الباحث الرئيسي

قد لا تفيدك مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة بشكل مباشر، ولكنها قد تفيد الآخرين، لأن ردودك قد تحسن برنامج دراسة، وبالتالي التعليم في لبنان

قبل أن تقول نعم أو لا لوجودك في هذه الدراسة ، سنجيب على أي أسئلة لديك. إذا انضمت إلى الدراسة ، يمكنك طرح الأسئلة في أي وقت. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو استفسارات، يمكنك أيضاً الاتصال بتمارا ناصر الدين من اليونيسف، باستخدام البريد الإلكتروني التالي: tnassereddine@unicef.org

هل لديك أي أسئلة الآن؟

هل تفهم كل ما شرحتة؟

هل توافق على المشاركة في هذه المقابلة / المناقشة الجماعية؟

قد يتم توقيع الموافقة ، أو الموافقة عليها شفهيًا - يجب تقديم معلومات الاتصال للاحتفاظ بها

Introduction to be read to PARENTS/CAREGIVERS of CHILDREN/STUDENTS
(<18 years)
by Data Collector BEFORE starting the group discussion

Hello, my name is _____, and I work for PROMAN, a company contracted by UNICEF to conduct an *Independent Evaluation for the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon*.

As an important part of our study, we would like to invite your child to hear her/his views on the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon, funded by UNICEF. We would therefore very much appreciate your child's participation in this study. Your child's participation involves a group discussion about her/his experiences with the Dirasa Programme Pilot.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If your child doesn't want to be in the study, it is OK. If your child does want to be in the study now and change her/his mind later, that's OK too. Your child can stop at any time. If you agree for your child to participate, your child can decide not to answer any question and can stop at any time. Your decision about whether your child should participate in this study or to answer any specific questions will in no way affect any services that you and your child receives. If you do choose for your child to participate, we will ask your child to answer the questions honestly and openly, so that we can understand her/his experience and find out what s/he really thinks and has experienced.

The participation in the group discussion will take your child about 45 minutes.

The information your child provides will be confidential and never connected to her/him. Other people will not know if your child is in this study or what s/he has said. We will put information we learn from your child together with information we learn from other children in the study. No one will be able to tell what information came from your child. When we tell other people about this research, we will never use your child's name, and no one will ever know what answers s/he gave. Only a few researchers will have access to this information, and all information will be stored safely and destroyed under the care of the lead researcher.

Your child's participation in this study may not benefit you directly, but it may benefit others, as your child's responses may improve the Dirasa Programme, and therefore education in Lebanon.

Before you say yes or no to being in this study, we will answer any questions you have. If you join the study, you can ask questions at any time. If you have any questions or concerns, you may also contact Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail: tnassereddine@unicef.org

- Do you have any questions now?
- Do you understand everything I have explained?
- Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Consent may be signed, or agreed to verbally – Contact info should be provided for subject to keep.

مقدمة يجب قراءتها لأولياء الأمور / مقدمي الرعاية للأطفال / الطلاب (>18 سنة)

من قبل جامعي البيانات قبل البدء بنقاش المجموعات

مرحباً، أنا إسمي ----- وعمل مع " برومان " المتعاقدة مع يونيسف لتقييم لبرنامج " دراسة " التجريبي في لبنان بشكل مستقل.

كجزء مهم من دراستنا، نود أن ندعو طفلك (تك) للاستماع إلى وجهات نظره (ها) حول برنامج دراسة التجريبي في لبنان، الممول من "يونيسف". لذلك نحن نقدر كثيراً مشاركة طفلك (تك) في هذه الدراسة. تتضمن مشاركة طفلك مناقشة جماعية حول تجاربه مع برنامج دراسة التجريبي

مشاركة طفلك (تك) في هذه الدراسة طوعية. إذا كان طفلك (تك) لا يريد أن يكون في الدراسة ، فلا بأس بذلك. إذا كان طفلك يريد أن يكون في الدراسة الآن ويغير رأيه لاحقاً ، فلا بأس بذلك أيضاً. يمكن لطفلك التوقف في أي وقت. إذا كنت توافق على مشاركة طفلك ، فيمكن لطفلك أن يقرر عدم الإجابة على أي سؤال ويمكنه التوقف في أي وقت

إن قرارك بشأن ما إذا كان يجب على طفلك المشاركة في هذه الدراسة أو الإجابة على أي أسئلة محددة لن يؤثر بأي حال من الأحوال على أي خدمات تتلقاها أنت وطفلك. إذا اخترت أن يشارك طفلك ، فسوف نطلب من طفلك الإجابة على الأسئلة بصدق وصراحة ، حتى تتمكن من فهم تجربته ومعرفة ما يفكر فيه حقاً وما اختبره

ستستغرق المشاركة في المناقشة الجماعية حوالي 45 دقيقة

ستكون المعلومات التي يقدمها طفلك (تك) سرية ولن تكون مرتبطة به أبداً. لن يعرف الآخرون ما إذا كان طفلك (تك) في هذه الدراسة أو ما قاله. سنضع المعلومات التي نتعلمها من طفلك (تك) مع المعلومات التي نتعلمها من الأطفال الآخرين في الدراسة. لن يتمكن أحد من معرفة المعلومات التي جاءت من طفلك (تك). عندما نخبر الآخرين عن هذا البحث ، لن نستخدم أبداً اسم طفلك (تك) ، ولن يعرف أحد أبداً الإجابات التي قدمها (تها). لن يتمكن سوى عدد قليل من الباحثين من الوصول إلى هذه المعلومات ، وسيتم تخزين جميع المعلومات بأمان وتدميرها تحت رعاية الباحث الرئيسي

قد لا تفيدك مشاركة طفلك (تك) في هذه الدراسة بشكل مباشر، ولكنها قد تفيد الآخرين، لأن استجابات طفلك (تك) قد تحسن برنامج دراسة وبالتالي التعليم في لبنان.

قبل أن تقول نعم أو لا لوجودك في هذه الدراسة ، سنجيب على أي أسئلة لديك. إذا انضمت إلى الدراسة ، يمكنك طرح الأسئلة في أي وقت. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو استفسارات، يمكنك أيضاً الاتصال بتمارا ناصر الدين من اليونيسف، باستخدام البريد الإلكتروني: tnassereddine@unicef.org

هل لديك أي أسئلة الآن؟

هل تفهم كل ما شرحتة؟

هل توافق على المشاركة في هذه المقابلة؟

قد يتم توقيع الموافقة ، أو الموافقة عليها شفهيًا - يجب تقديم معلومات الاتصال للاحتفاظ بها

Consent Form to participate in Interview – School Director, MEHE Staff

Informed consent form must be completed and signed for every subject

Name: _____

City/Governorate: _____

I agree for myself to be engaged in the key informant interview as part of the Independent Evaluation for the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon subject to the following conditions:

- The objective of the assessment is to hear my views on the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon, funded by UNICEF.
- The data collected from the interview is strictly for assessment purposes
- The interview will take a maximum of half an hour.
- No names will be recorded for the processing of the interview and there will be no recording of the session, I will remain fully anonymous.
- I do not have to participate if I do not want to, and I can end the discussion at any time with no repercussions.
- I have the right to ask any questions during the interview/discussion.
- I can leave/stop the interview at any time since my participation is fully voluntary.
- If I have any questions or concerns after this discussion, I can communicate with Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail to give my feedback: tnassereddine@unicef.org

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Phone #: _____

For verbal approval please add the contact information for future reference/verification:

نموذج الموافقة على المشاركة في المقابلة – مدير المدرسة، موظفو وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي

ينبغي تعبئة نموذج الموافقة لكل موضوع والتوقيع عليه

الإسم: -----
المدينة – المحافظة: -----

أوافق على المشاركة في المقابلة المخصصة لمقدمي المعلومات الأساسيين كجزء من التقييم المستقل لبرنامج "دراسة" التجريبي في لبنان وفقاً للشروط التالية:

- الهدف من التقييم هو الاستماع إلى آرائي حول برنامج دراسة التجريبي في لبنان، الممول من اليونيسف
 - البيانات التي تم جمعها من المقابلة هي لأغراض التقييم حصراً
 - تستغرق المقابلة نصف ساعة كحد أقصى
 - لن يتم تسجيل أي أسماء خلال المقابلة ولن يكون هناك تسجيل للجلسة ، وسأظل مجهول (ة) الهوية تماماً
 - لست مضطراً للمشاركة إذا كنت لا أريد ذلك ، ويمكنني إنهاء المناقشة في أي وقت دون أي تداعيات
 - لدي الحق في طرح أي أسئلة أثناء المقابلة / المناقشة
 - يمكنني مغادرة / إيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت لأن مشاركتي طوعية بالكامل
- إذا كان لدي أي أسئلة أو استفسارات بعد هذه المناقشة، يمكنني التواصل مع تمارا ناصر الدين من اليونيسف، باستخدام البريد الإلكتروني tnassereddine@unicef.org: التالي لتقديم ملاحظاتي

التوقيع: -----

التاريخ: -----

رقم الهاتف: -----

للحصول على موافقة شفوية ، يرجى إضافة معلومات الاتصال للرجوع إليها / التحقق منها في المستقبل.

Consent Form to participate in Group Discussion – Children/Students

Informed consent must be completed and signed for every subject

Name of the child (Age): _____

City/district: _____

School/centre: _____

I, as the parent/legal guardian of the child named below, agree for my child to be engaged in the group discussion for the **Independent Evaluation for the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon** subject to the following conditions:

- The objective of the assessment is to hear my children's views on the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon, funded by UNICEF.
- The data collected from the group discussion is strictly for assessment purposes.
- The group discussion will take a maximum of 45 minutes.
- No names will be recorded for the processing of the discussion and there will be no recording of the session, all participants will remain fully anonymous. I have taken note that all children participating in the discussion will be told by the researcher to keep all information confidential.
- My child does not have to participate if s/he does not want to, and s/he can leave the discussion at any time with no repercussions.
- My child has the right to ask any questions during the discussion.
- My child can leave the discussion at any time since her/his participation is fully voluntary. *In such a case we would like to ask your child to exit the room quickly and quietly to minimise disruption to the other participants. If you would like her/his discussion statements to be removed from any research materials, you should contact Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail: tnassereddine@unicef.org.*
- If either myself or my child has any questions or concerns after this discussion, either one of us can communicate with Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail to give our feedback: tnassereddine@unicef.org.

Name of the parent: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Phone #: _____

For verbal approval please add the contact information for future reference/verification:

وذج الموافقة على المشاركة في المناقشة الجماعية - الأطفال / الطلاب

ينبغي تعبئة نموذج الموافقة لكل موضوع والتوقيع عليه

إسم الطفل وسنّه: -----

المدينة- المحافظة : -----

مدرسة- سنتر: -----

باعتباري الوالد/الوصي القانوني على الطفل المذكور أعلاه ، أوافق على مشاركة طفلي في المناقشة الجماعية للتقييم المستقل لبرنامج دراسة التجريبي في لبنان وفقا للشروط التالية:

- الهدف من التقييم هو الاستماع إلى آراء طفلي حول برنامج "دراسة" التجريبي في لبنان، الممول من يونيسف

-البيانات التي يتم جمعها من المناقشة الجماعية هي لأغراض التقييم فقط

-تستغرق المناقشة الجماعية 45 دقيقة كحد أقصى

لن يتم تسجيل أي أسماء خلال المناقشة ولن يكون هناك تسجيل للجلسة ، وسيبقى جميع المشاركين مجهولي الهوية تماما . لقد تم إعلامي بأن الباحث سيطلب من كل الأطفال المشاركين الحفاظ على سرية جميع المعلومات

-لا يتعين على طفلي المشاركة إذا كان لا يريد ذلك ، ويمكنه مغادرة المناقشة في أي وقت دون أي تداعيات

-يحق لطفلي طرح أي أسئلة أثناء المناقشة

يمكن لطفلي مغادرة المناقشة في أي وقت لأن مشاركته طوعية بالكامل. في مثل هذه الحالة ، نود أن نطلب من طفلك - الخروج من الغرفة بسرعة وهدوء لتقليل الاضطراب للمشاركين الآخرين

إذا كنت ترغب في إزالة بيانات المناقشة الخاصة به / به من أي مواد بحثية ، فيجب عليك الاتصال بتمارا ناصر الدين tnassereddine@unicef.org :من اليونيسف ، باستخدام البريد الإلكتروني التالي

إذا كان لدي أو لدى طفلي أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بعد هذه المناقشة ، فيمكن لأي منا التواصل مع تمارا ناصر الدين من tnassereddine@unicef.org :يونيسف ، باستخدام البريد الإلكتروني التالي لتقديم ملاحظتنا

إسم ولي الأمر: -----

الإمضاء: -----

التاريخ: -----

رقم الهاتف: -----

للحصول على موافقة شفوية ، يرجى إضافة معلومات الاتصال للرجوع إليها / التحقق منها في المستقبل

Consent Form to participate in Group Discussion – Teachers/Parents

Informed consent must be completed and signed for every subject

Name: _____

City/Governorate: _____

I agree for myself to be engaged in the group discussion for the Independent Evaluation for the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon subject to the following conditions:

- The objective of the assessment is to hear my views on the Dirasa Programme Pilot in Lebanon, funded by UNICEF.
- The data collected from the interview is strictly for assessment purposes
- The group discussion will take a maximum of 45 minutes.
- No names will be recorded for the processing of the interview and there will be no recording of the session, I will remain fully anonymous. I have taken note that I, and everyone else participating in the discussion is asked to keep all information confidential.
- I do not have to participate if I do not want to, and I can end the discussion at any time with no repercussions.
- I have the right to ask any questions during the interview/discussion.
- I can leave the discussion at any time since my participation is fully voluntary. *In such a case we would like to ask you to exit the room quickly and quietly to minimise disruption to the other participants. If you would like your discussion statements to be removed from any research materials, you should contact Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail: tnassereddine@unicef.org.*
- If I have any questions or concerns after this discussion, I can communicate with Tamara Nassereddine of UNICEF, using the following e-mail to give my feedback: tnassereddine@unicef.org.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Phone #: _____

For verbal approval please add the contact information for future reference/verification:

نموذج الموافقة على المشاركة في المناقشة الجماعية- معلمين- أهل- مقدّم رعاية

ينبغي تعبئة نموذج الموافقة لكل موضوع والتوقيع عليه

الإسم: -----

المدينة – المحافظة: -----

أوافق على المشاركة في جلسة المناقشة كجزء من التقييم المستقل لبرنامج "دراسة" التجريبي في لبنان وفقا للشروط التالية

-الهدف من التقييم هو الاستماع إلى آرائي حول برنامج دراسة التجريبي في لبنان، الممول من اونيسف

-البيانات التي تم جمعها من المقابلة هي لأغراض التقييم حصرا

-تستغرق جلسة المناقشة 45 دقيقة كحد أقصى

لن يتم تسجيل أي أسماء خلال المقابلة ولن يكون هناك تسجيل للجلسة ، وسأظل مجهول (ة) الهوية تماما. لقد تمّ لفت نظري ونظر جميع المشاركين بالجلسة إلى سرية المعلومات.

-لست مضطرا للمشاركة إذا كنت لا أريد ذلك ، ويمكنني إنهاء المناقشة في أي وقت دون أي تداعيات

لدي الحق في طرح أي أسئلة أثناء المقابلة / المناقشة

يمكنني مغادرة / إيقاف المقابلة في أي وقت لأن مشاركتي طوعية بالكامل. في مثل هذه الحالة ، نود أن نطلب منك الخروج من الغرفة بسرعة وهدوء لتقليل الاضطراب للمشاركين الآخرين

إذا كنت ترغب في إزالة بيانات المناقشة الخاصة بك من أي مواد بحثية ، فيجب عليك الاتصال بتمارا ناصر الدين من يونيسف ، tnassereddine@unicef.org : باستخدام هذا الإيميل:

إذا كان لدي أي أسئلة أو استفسارات بعد هذه المناقشة، يمكنني التواصل مع تمارا ناصر الدين من يونيسف، باستخدام البريد [?] tnassereddine@unicef.org: الإلكتروني التالي لتقديم ملاحظاتي

التوقيع: -----

التاريخ: -----

رقم الهاتف: -----

للحصول على موافقة شفوية ، يرجى إضافة معلومات الاتصال للرجوع إليها / التحقق منها في المستقبل.

APPENDIX 7:

**Initial list of key informants to be consulted
(provided by UNICEF before the field mission)**

Key informants to be consulted (in addition to School Directors of the sampled schools)			
(Initial List)			
Organisation	Name of the focal point	Position	e-mail
WCH	Flutra Gorana	Education Manager	Flutra.Gorana@warchild.nl
LOST	Omar Bayan	Education Manager	obayan@lostlb.org
MEHE	Joanne Chlela	MEHE Senior Consultant	JChlela@MEHE.gov.lb
LOST	Assem Chreif	CEO LOST	achreif@lostlb.org
WCH	Jessica Hallak	Programme Manager	Jessica.Hallak@warchild.nl
WCH	Elie Dagher	Education Programme Manager	elie.dagher@warchild.nl
MEHE	Joanne Chlela	MEHE Senior Consultant for Dirasa	J.chlala@mehe.gov.lb
WL	Wafa Kotob	WL Head	wafa.kotob@worldlearning.org
WL	Paulette Assaf	WL Programme Manager	paulette.assaf@qitabi.org
Norway	Mari Lundebby Grepstad		Mari.Lundebby.Grepstad@mfa.info
EU	Maxence Daublain		maxence.daublain@eeas.europa.eu
BRPM	Youssef (Francis) Boutros		BoutrosY@state.gov

APPENDIX 8:

Detailed schedule for school visits

Detailed schedule for school visits, following meetings held by the Education Expert with UNICEF on 08 August 2022, 17 August and 02 September 2022

Detailed schedule for school visits			
	School Name	GPS coordinates	Governorate
30.08.2022	Al thakafa	33.745373,35.874798	West Beqaa
31.08.2022	Ajyal al Mawaheb	33.769326 35.910599	Beqaa
01.09.2022	Green Land Private School	33°50'18.5"N 35°30'26.2"E	Mount Lebanon
06.09.2022	Mar Mansour Private School- Al mahaba	33.8972356, 35.4949291	Beirut
07.09.2022	Wahat Al Rajaa Private School	33.9643285,35.6607514	Mount Lebanon
13.09.2022	Specialised Academic Science High School - Stars College	33°22'34.2"N 35°27'36.3"E	Nabatiyeh
14.09.2022	Al Minieh Islamic Secondary School	34.467052,35.934528	Tripoli
15.09.2022	High School Al Fares el Tarbawiyeh	34.498709664140534, 35.995312668810975	Akkar
19.09.2022	Al Ilm Wal Iman Islamic School	33°33'32.6"N 35°22'56.0"E	South

APPENDIX 9:

**Research Ethics Approval for the Evaluation
by UNICEF Ethics Review Board (ERB)**



Research Ethics Approval

25 August 2022

Dr. Joachim Friedrich Pfaffe
PROMAN S.A.
68, rue Michel Hack
L-3240 Bettembourg, LUXEMBOURG

RE: Ethics Review Board findings for: *Independent Evaluation for Dirasa Project Pilot, Lebanon*
(HML IRB Review #605LEBA22)

Dear Dr. Pfaffe.

Protocols for the protection of human subjects in the above study were assessed through a research ethics review by HML Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 17 – 25 August 2022. This study's human subjects' protection protocols, as stated in the materials submitted, received ethics review approval.

You and your project staff remain responsible for ensuring compliance with HML IRB's determinations. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ensuring prompt reporting to HML IRB of proposed changes in this study's design, risks, consent, or other human protection protocols and providing copies of any revised materials;
- conducting the research activity in accordance with the terms of the IRB approval until any proposed changes have been reviewed and approved by the IRB, except when necessary to mitigate hazards to subjects;
- promptly reporting any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others in the course of this study;
- notifying HML IRB when your study is completed.

HML IRB is authorized by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Research Protections (IRB #1211, IORG #850, FWA #1102).

Sincerely,

D. Michael Anderson, Ph.D., MPH
Chair & Human Subjects Protections Director, HML IRB

cc: Jamil El Khoury, Tamara Nassereddine, Emmanuel Saka, Penelope Lantz, JD

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APPENDIX 10:

**Evaluation Matrix with summary of findings
from the school visits and field consultations**

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
R 1a	How aligned is Dirasa project with global priorities (UNICEF strategic plan, SDGs, and core commitments to children), and with to the country context, and its government priorities?	Degree to which Dirasa project ToC and logframe aligns with UNICEF Strategic Plan, SDGs, country context and government priorities	UNICEF Strategic Plan SDGs MEHE annual plans/reports and announcements Government documents Newspaper/ Magazine articles NGO newsletters/ annual reports	The programme is potentially relevant to the needs of integrating OOSC into the education system. The three outcomes of the Dirasa programme support Pillar 1 of the Lebanon five-year General Education Plan 2021-2025, i.e., Equitable access to and participation in education (To increase equitable access, participation and completion for all learners in Lebanon, with a focus on the most vulnerable), and here specifically Priority Area 1, i.e., Improve enrolment and retention of vulnerable groups (To ensure that all children receive the support they need to access, participate and complete education).
		Degree to which government documents are describing/citing Dirasa Programme		Not observed
		Availability of Dirasa references in publicly available documents		n/a
R, C 1b	To what extent do the project results contribute to the achievement of UNICEF LCO child survival outcome 2 “By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development”?	Clarity of strategies for implementation of Dirasa Programme	Policy papers Monitoring reports Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	Based on school principals’ interviews and FGDs, implementation strategies are unclear to stakeholders starting with implementing partners, down to school directors, and ending with teachers. School directors reported that the program started without any prior preparation or organization both logistically in terms of school readiness and teacher preparedness and readiness, as well as academically in terms of tests, student divisions, and educational resources as also reported by the teachers.
		Coherence of strategies for implementation of Dirasa Programme		More importantly, there is incoherence regarding the number of days in a week; partners of some schools implemented the programme over three days a week, while others over four and five. Parents and teachers reported such incoherence affected student learning outcomes as well as academic experience especially when the number of “days off” exceeds the days in school. Based on the field visits, principal interviews and FGDs, most of beneficiaries are Syrians. When asked about the lack or absence of Lebanese students, school directors, teachers, and parents stated these reasons: the inability of Lebanese parents to embrace the presence of their children in the same class as Syrian students, especially students coming from camps.
		Documentation of strategy implementation and output monitoring in		A director said that they would have been able to enrol more students with disabilities if the parents were more upfront with sharing such information. He said that parents were scared because they thought the school would not take their children if they had disabilities. The school find out the disability of the children once they started attending the programme.

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
		relation to LCO output indicators 2.1.1-2.1.10		Another director stated that she believed that many students with disabilities were not reached because sometimes they did not disclose such information. Furthermore, because the programme started very fast, the outreach and enrolment might not have been done properly. And thus, more time should have been given to the preparation phase in order to include more students with disabilities.
R 1c	How relevant is UNICEF's Dirasa programme to the country needs in general, and the OOSC needs in particular?	Degree of engagement of stakeholders	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	Engagement of stakeholders, i.e., school administrators, teachers, and parents varied from one school to the other, out of 9 schools visited, 3 of them had clear and/or effective channels of communication between the school and the parents. Yet, all parents expressed that if they were to come to the school to communicate with the administration, they would definitely welcome them. However, they were never invited by the administration or by the implementing partner to any kind of meeting (e.g., introductory meetings, awareness sessions). Only 1 out of 9 schools had one meeting with the parents to introduce the programme. None of the other 8 schools conducted any awareness sessions or parents-teachers' meetings.
		Degree of attitudinal change		<p>The most substantial attitudinal change was manifested in students' attitudes towards school life and academic engagement. Teachers, school directors and parents highlighted the difference in students' behaviours, social and communication skills, discipline, and respect of school and classroom rules. Yet, all school directors and teachers stated that the path to student attitudinal change was very difficult. 3 out of 9 nine schools reported that they were still dealing with student behavioural issues.</p> <p>Attitudes between teachers and parents have not changed; teachers believe that the majority of parents do not care about their children's education, do not follow up with their children's studies at home, do not teach their children to preserve their books and stationery, are mainly concerned with receiving aid, and do not care about their children's attire and hygiene.</p> <p>On the other hand, parents demand that their children have school bags, books, and stationery, to have homework assigned so that they could follow up with their children's studies at home, and to provide their children with school uniforms because they are not able to afford presentable attire for school.</p>
R 2	To what extent is Dirasa design able to adapt its strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context?	Ratings of core partners, based on past experience with Dirasa Programme (if applicable)	Interviews with government counterparts and partners, e.g. government officials (MEHE, MoSA), partner agencies, NGO representatives, and academics Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications	<p>It is one of the major weaknesses of the Dirasa Programme that its forward predictability is poor, primarily since the inception phase has not been long enough to closely analyse and anticipate changing needs and priorities caused by a changing country context. In particular, it lacks any kind of exit strategy (for example, if required funding could not be secured or if the resistance from the Lebanese general public would force the programme to end) to prevent a sudden collapse on the entire programme.</p> <p>In the case of emerging undesired effects, and since there is no exit strategy in place, the programme has foreseen no targeted provisions that all children already taking part will be able to complete the two-year cycle, which is dangerous since it might create frustration and further tension.</p>
R 3	How relevant is Dirasa programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into	Ratings of core partners, based on past experience with Dirasa	Interviews with government counterparts and partners	The inception phase of the Dirasa primarily focused on the "equitable access" part of the Programme's Theory of Change, neglecting the aspect of pursuing (or preparing for the acquisition of) "high quality education".

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
	consideration any disparities initiative, and what efficiencies have been realised as a result of that division of responsibilities?	Programme (if applicable)	Documents (plans and progress reports Key partner informants perceptions including those about division of responsibilities and any effects derived from them Stakeholder feedback Government and partner publications	<p>“Increasing the number of children in [private] school” to overcome equity gaps is one of the aims of the Dirasa Programme, also in order to “ensure private schools remain operational” – this however puts “numbers” above “quality” and turns the Dirasa Programme primarily into a funding-generating instrument ultimately strengthening the private sector.</p> <p>While focussing on access, UNICEF’s intention also is to “provide a safe haven for children out of school” and to “get them off the streets” – while this is commendable, it however does not consider future sustainability. Likewise, inequity issues will grow when comparing enrolment opportunities of Lebanese and Syrian students (the latter receiving tremendous support to the disadvantage of the Lebanese students).</p>
ES 4	To what extent is the project design and approach effective in achieving its planned results?	See below for sub-questions	see below for sub-questions	see below for sub-questions
ES 4a	To what extent was the project able to increase equitable access to quality education for highly marginalised OOS children?	Completeness in the description of barriers, disaggregated by types of OOSC	Detailed perceptions from key informants	<p>Transportation/distance from school remains to be a barrier. Distance alone is not the decisive factor; it is also related to safety issues, e.g. requirement to cross a busy highway, incidents of bullying faced by children (by Lebanese children and even adults) while walking to school. Also, violence by adults toward Syrian children. “If transportation will not be provided next year, then the programme will be in danger, and we will lose the students to the streets “</p> <p>There appears to be a lack of experience and preparedness in dealing with OOSC, especially with working children ,which negatively affected the children’s attendance. Some of the children were asked to stay at home for one to two weeks or even for a full month as a punishment when they misbehave.</p> <p>The curriculum used under the Dirasa programme includes three main subjects (Maths, Arabic language and a foreign language; French or English and few learning materials to cover the science subject). While the science topics were included in the “Learning Passport”, many teachers however stated that they faced challenges in applying this topic due to internet challenges, or the difficulty of the content, the language used in the videos. Therefore, the students could not be fully prepared for integrating into the formal school.</p>
ES 4b	To what extent is the project able to facilitate transition into further formal education or alternative learning pathways? Was teaching the children done at the right level?	Ratings of beneficiaries	Expert review Stakeholder interviews	<p>While the pathways for transition are clear from the project documents (i.e., for most students, 2 years Dirasa leading to admission at Grade 3 in public schools), stakeholders including school directors, teachers, and parents do not seem to be aware of this pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore, school directors, teachers, and parents are uncertain whether the students will be upgraded to the next level, remain at their current level, or be referred to public schools. These uncertainties are the result of the absence of clear and unified assessment methods in the programme, dispatched to all involved schools, as well as clearly explained programme strategies and referral pathways.</p> <p>Teachers and principals stated they would be overwhelmed with carrying out tests (3 different types – pre- and post-test of UNICEF [BLN], World Learning programme tests, their own tests) – overwhelmed to such a</p>

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
				degree that testing took more time than teaching, especially since there was no clear time schedule for the testing.
ES 4c	How successful was the inception phase in providing needed capacity building for teachers and school staff, enhancing teaching environment in private schools, and delivering an Integrated package of services to all children of targeted schools?	Degree to which teachers psycho-socially relate to the particular situation of their learners	Documentation of capacity building (if available) Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	<p>Teacher trainings were conducted months after the implementation had started. As teachers reported, they targeted topics that were inapplicable in the context of the programme in terms of the high level of academic content presented. Case studies and examples given in the training were regarded to be very difficult; working on content for Maths was intended for higher grades for formal education students “as if made for formal education classes”. With regard to reaching strategies such as classroom management or motivational strategies, “content was targeted to younger students and not older working students”. “How can differentiated instruction work in a class where students have behavioural issues?!”</p> <p>The Maths component training was given in a foreign language while the books received were in Arabic.</p> <p>Trainings did not address the behavioural challenges of the students targeted by the programme, nor were they tailored for the context of the targeted students – no consideration was given to the obvious gap between students’ academic abilities and their age. As directly stated by the teachers, the trainings were far from the reality, they did not target the context of such a programme and such students. Teachers all demanded to have trainings that dealt with severe behavioural issues in the classroom. “We need a training on how to deal with the challenges in the behaviour of these kids, we needed a live class; trainers should come into class in real life, experience it in real, and then come and teach us how to manage these classes”.</p> <p>Furthermore, there was no follow up or guidance on the topics given in the training during the implementation. Also, the teachers were told that they would be given resources after the trainings so that they could use and implement them in the classroom, but they never received any.</p>
		Status of the school environment (degree to which well-being can be realised)		The teachers said that they were left alone in dealing with behavioural issues and 3 of them were injured while trying to stop fights between students.
		Ratings of teachers and school staff		Parents and children (except in one school) said that the children were excited to come to school, they felt safe, their teachers and supervisors were very welcoming and patient, they organised some fun activities with them, and they brought for them some treats or small gifts.
ES 4d	To what extent is the project able to prevent struggling private schools from collapsing?	Status of private schools (in terms of financial resources, HR capacities and community acceptance)	Documentation of private schools (if available) Expert review Stakeholder interviews	<p>School directors stated that the money received from the program did help in some renovations in the school. However, they highlighted that the running cost of the program has been high as well in terms of generator and fuel bills, especially for operating fans and ACs and ink and usage of the school photocopier for photocopies of books and tests that had to be used.</p> <p>All directors also highlighted big disadvantages in receiving financial support in LBP.</p> <p>As semi-private schools are facing financial challenges more than private schools. When choosing the schools in future phase, a serious assessment of the vulnerability of the children accessing the school and the financial situation of the school is highly needed.</p>

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
ES, C 4e	How likely is the project to enhance parents' awareness on the importance of education, and ensuring wellbeing of children and teacher at school level?	Degree of parents' awareness on the importance of education	Stakeholder interviews FGDs	<p>None of the schools visited had hosted or conducted any awareness sessions to the parents regarding any topic. Only one school conducted a meeting with the parents in which the implementing partner introduced the program.</p> <p>In two schools, teachers reported that parents enrolled their children both in the afternoon shift in Public Schools and in Dirasa (however only being interested in one subject, i.e. English).</p> <p>Community acceptance differs between the governorates. In the areas close to the Syrian borders, the acceptance and social cohesion is easy to feel and detect, however in the areas far from the border the scenario is different – two directors were using a discriminating language while talking about Syrian parents and Syrian children.</p> <p>„The Lebanese crisis will never make Lebanese students be in the same classes as Syrian students. Dirasa honestly is made for Syrians and not actually Lebanese</p> <p>“The students are very smart and mature, maybe because their surroundings impacted on them since this Lebanese area is considered as a somehow aristocratic area, so of course, the Syrian students would be positively affected by their environment”</p> <p>„Lebanese parents do not accept the idea that their kids are with Syrians especially because these Syrian kids swear a lot, hit each other, have behavioural issues. Violence starts at home, the parents hit them, force them to work, some kids sleep in class because they are tired from work. UNICEF should stop that. Parents hit their kids, so the kids hit their friends at school, and that's why we don't mix all the classes together during recess especially younger and older students.”</p>
		Stakeholders' assessments with regard to Dirasa's role on ensuring their wellbeing		<p>Parents and students stated that the school is a safe place where children are well treated and taken care of by their teachers and school directors.</p> <p>However, in 4 schools, the parents reported alarming incidents with bus drivers who pose a threat to the children's safety and wellbeing, including verbal and physical abuse, and ill-treatment of the children.</p> <p>In one school, students and their parents reported alarming cases of violence and physical abuse done by the school supervisors</p>
ES 4f	Was the project able during its piloting phase to reach the most marginalized children? How well do the private school selection criteria support the project reaching the most vulnerable?	<p>Ratings of MEHE officials</p> <p>Ratings of beneficiaries</p>	<p>Private school selection criteria</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p>	<p>Dirasa only focuses on ages 8-12 (pilot) and up to 15 in a possible scale-up, meaning that a large part of children would not be covered. When teachers were asked to elaborate on children with disabilities, they were not aware of criteria of disability. In some schools, there was support by speech therapists, however, the coordination between teachers and specialist is missing.</p> <p>Enrolment of students with disabilities is notably low. School directors were unable to provide reasons behind this low number because they were not in charge of targeting the children (and their subsequent enrolment), and they mostly only received list of students to be enrolled in the programme from the implementing partner.</p>

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
				<p>Inconsistencies and sometimes complete absence of specialised services offered in some schools, along with an absence of coordination between specialists and teachers, hindered the setting up of an educational plan for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Criteria for selection of participating private schools exclude Lebanese students since it is very rare to find a Lebanese child not having attended school for more than 2 years - Lebanese students have a chance to register in a public school easier than Syrians.</p>
ES 4g	How effective is the project design and approach in managing conflict sensitivity?	Ratings of beneficiaries	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	<p>There were no Lebanese students or parents in the FGDs – below some ideas related to the conflict sensitivity</p> <p>According to UNICEF, the School counsellor/social worker is supposed to play an important role in managing conflict sensitivity within the school. They were supposed to be hired in all targeted schools to follow up on children and teacher's wellbeing. However, during FGDs teachers stated they were "left alone" to deal with conflicts and bullying behaviours between children. Some of the teachers showed proactive approaches , i.e., planning and conducting some extracurricular activities with children.</p> <p>Recreational focal points will be hired at the school level to follow up on children wellbeing through art, music, and sports classes targeting all children enrolled in the targeted schools. This will enhance children well-being and increase the interaction among the children and their parents.</p> <p>Staff and school counsellors in the targeted schools will be trained on the referral pathway for children to specialized services. UNICEF community support partners will provide a full-service mapping to each school and follow up on the referrals conducted to ensure that all children enrolled at the school and who require specialized services are supported and followed up on.</p> <p>The relevance of Dirasa is negatively affected since Lebanese are largely excluded from the support.</p> <p>However, some Syrian parents coming from different areas in Syria reported that during the implementation of Dirasa, emerging positive relationships between children reflected positively on the relationships between the parents. Some children said that they would miss their teachers and friends of school since they would be the only children, they would allow their children to play with.</p>
ES 4h	What were the challenges faced in implementing the project? What are the enabling factors of success and the lessons learned from implementation?	Ratings of beneficiaries	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	Detailed Challenges, Successes, and Recommendations in the document "Challenges, Successes, and Recommendations emerging from the FGDs."
ES 4i	What are the critical lessons learned from the implementation of programme especially, related to system strengthening, strategic partnerships, evidence generation and advocacy?	Ratings of beneficiaries	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
ES 4j	What were the unintended effects/ negative impact from the Dirasa programme on school and community?	Ratings of beneficiaries	Expert review Stakeholder interviews FGDs	School directors stated that if the program were to target more Syrian families for the upcoming implementation year, then there will be resentment from the host community towards the school and UNICEF in general for focusing on the needs of refugees while ignoring Lebanese families who are as much in need, which would in fact, create more tension between Syrian families and the host communities.
ES, C 5	To what extent has the Theory of Change (ToC) been followed in implementation of Dirasa to achieve results identified? Were the critical components of the work consistent with what was planned, and if not, what changes were made and why?	Degree to which ToC Inputs have been pursued and related Input Indicators have been achieved	Project implementation documents, work plans Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff Interviews Expert review	<p>At input level, the Theory of Change puts forward relevant interventions targeted at reaching the desired outputs. They include three important types of interventions, i.e. (i) a school and community perspective (school-community collaboration, establishing safe learning environments); (ii) basic core strategies (needs assessments, mentoring/tutoring, training, adaption of curricula, hiring of specialised staff such as school counsellors); and (iii) provision of financial support (comprising fees, indirect costs and financial support for transition).</p> <p>The link to reaching the desired outputs is vastly dependent on the assumption that there is political willingness and societal agreement to providing massive additional financial support largely aimed at Syrian refugee students. However, such assumption is missing in the Assumptions list of the ToC, and there is no indication that society would be prepared to accept such support in the light of the current economic crisis which forces many Lebanese students out of private school.</p> <p>Therefore, reaching the outputs requires more than just UNICEF support. Apart from the assumption mentioned above, the inception phase – after 6 months of implementation – has not yet provided any evidence regarding the achievability of the outputs. Also, the strong focus on training activities (and also hiring other human resources such as teachers) takes a mere quantitative view, thus neglecting the quality outcomes of such training which would eventually lead to the desired quality impact. The same refers to the human resources – it will be quality that matters, and such staff will be probably more costly than foreseen in the available budgets which are largely assuming a low salary in the area of USD 200 per teacher per month.</p> <p>The short-term outcomes are rather “desired outcomes” which – theoretically – could be realised once all outputs will have been achieved. There is however no indication at this point in time that the system would be able to respond to an “increased demand for further education” and/or that (public) schools would actually “have capacity/infrastructure to accommodate OOSC”. If “OOSC enrol (in the right grade) and stay in school”, that is based on another (unmentioned/missing) Assumption that schools are ready (and willing) to absorb large numbers of mostly Syrian refugee students, many of whom will be over-aged and will put an additional strain on the system. Further, at this point in time there is no evidence of “high-quality instruction” which would result in the desired OOSC’s “skills, confidence and motivation to transition” to the formal system.</p> <p>The intermediate outcomes are thus based on many unlisted assumptions, take an over-ambitious and unrealistically optimistic view and are hardly achievable – at least not in the desired short term with 51,000 students ready for transition in two years’ time.</p> <p>Ultimately, “future better livelihoods” could be a theoretical impact of the Dirasa Programme – however, this view overlooks the fact that at the impact level OOSC will have just joined the formal system which as such does not produce any “better livelihoods”. Rather, OOSC might have been guided on the path for achieving better living conditions, but most of them will only have reached Grade 3 of the public system with a long</p>

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
				<p>way to go and a realistic possibility of dropping out again of the formal system which in the 2nd shift does not provide for a similar school environment as the Dirasa Programme was aiming at.</p> <p>In conclusion, the ToC is a rather theoretical model of what could happen in an ideal scenario, however with an over-emphasis on quantitative aspects and built on (unmentioned) assumptions which are not likely to hold. Taking a more realistic view, the implementation chain is likely to be disrupted at the output level already, if the systemic preconditions for reaching the short-term outcome level are not pro-actively addressed. “Collaboration and coordination between financial, technical and community partners” (as mentioned in the ToC) will not be sufficient; the ToC completely neglects the political and society levels (outside the Dirasa communities!), whose endorsement of the process would however be vital for any success – a process that takes more time than currently envisaged. Consequently, the ToC is also missing a time dimension.</p>
ES, C 6	In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation? And how adequate is this approach?	Ratings of beneficiaries	<p>Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Expert review</p>	<p>The inception phase of the Dirasa primarily focused on the “equitable access” part of the Programme’s Theory of Change, neglecting the aspect of pursuing (or preparing for the acquisition of) “high quality education”.</p> <p>“Increasing the number of children in [private] school” to overcome equity gaps is one of the aims of the Dirasa Programme, also in order to “ensure private schools remain operational” – this however puts “numbers” above “quality” and turns the Dirasa Programme primarily into a funding-generating instrument ultimately strengthening the private sector.</p> <p>While focussing on access, UNICEF’s intention also is to “provide a safe haven for children out of school” and to “get them off the streets” – while this is commendable, it however does not consider future sustainability. Likewise, inequity issues will grow when comparing enrolment opportunities of Lebanese and Syrian students (the latter receiving tremendous support to the disadvantage of the Lebanese students).</p>
ES 7	In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF Dirasa programme been gender responsive or transformative?	<p>Changes in gender-related quantitative data between the launch of the Programme (February 2022) and now</p> <p>Ratings of beneficiaries</p>	<p>Gender-related quantitative data</p> <p>Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Expert review</p>	No specific issues were observed.
ES, R, S 8	How does Dirasa support for OOSC fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programmes/interventions)? Is this intervention a part of a coherent approach that is likely	Degree of synergies of the Dirasa Programme with activities of other partners	<p>Policy papers</p> <p>Monitoring reports</p> <p>Expert review</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews</p>	The Dirasa is linked to the second funding window of the Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) as a possible implementation modality. As stated in the MoU, “the second funding window supports multiple flexible pathways, such as the school-Based Bridging Programme [Dirasa, JP] implemented at private schools, and support and upgrade to the NFE framework aimed at offering education opportunities for Out-Of-School Children. CPs [Contributing Partners] stipulate the allocation preferences to priorities of the 5-Year Plan in consultation with MEHE and in their bilateral agreements with UNICEF. A contribution can be channelled through one or both windows.”

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
	to have positive results, or are there critical gaps?			<p>The strategic link between the two funding windows is a sound foundation for further exploring the prospects of the Dirasa programme. Even in the case of Dirasa not considered fully adequate as an implementation modality at this point in time, there could be possibilities for modifying current procedures. The first funding window of the TREF can potentially provide a strong foundation for preparing the public school system for absorption of larger capacities of OOSC; this specifically refers to the potential creation of additional learning spaces in newly constructed classrooms (KfW), and the provision of permanent Technical Assistance (TA) to MEHE (through EU).</p> <p>The programme however seems to underestimate the political sensitivities of the Lebanese context during an economically worsening situation which forces many Lebanese students out of private schools since their parents are no longer in position to pay for their schools fees. A scenario of Syrian refugee students entering the private schools at a large scale and at a fast pace might be relevant from a point of addressing inherent equity gaps and providing a safe haven for Syrian OOSC, but neglects the resulting negative perceptions of Lebanese society who see themselves deprived of similar opportunities.</p>
C, S 9	How does Dirasa project align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF?	Degree of synergies of the Dirasa Programme with activities of other UNICEF interventions	Policy papers Monitoring reports Expert review Stakeholder interviews	<p>The three outcomes of the Dirasa programme support Pillar 1 of the Lebanon five-year General Education Plan 2021-2025, i.e., <i>Equitable access to and participation in education</i> (To increase equitable access, participation and completion for all learners in Lebanon, with a focus on the most vulnerable), and here specifically Priority Area 1, i.e., <i>Improve enrolment and retention of vulnerable groups</i> (To ensure that all children receive the support they need to access, participate and complete education).</p> <p>The programme further supports UNICEF Lebanon Country Office (LCO) Outcome 2: By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development. It also feeds into the Country Programme Document (CPD) Outputs 2.1 and 2.2, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD Output 2.1, Pillar I, Improved Access to Education: Increased demand and reduced normative and financial barriers for enrolment and retention into formal and non-formal education and early development opportunities for children 3-14; and • CPD Output 2.2, Pillar II - Improved Quality of Teaching and Learning Environments: Increased capacity of public schools teachers and education personnel to deliver child-centred and flexible pedagogy in inclusive environments. <p>According to the Dirasa Concept Note, UNICEF further provides a holistic package of services for all children enrolled in the Dirasa, comprising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection (through training of school counsellors that will be responsible for providing psychosocial support to children and teachers and follow up on school environment and children wellbeing); • WASH (through integrating the teacher's guidebook on climate change as part of programme delivery, providing children with awareness on topics related to climate change and environment)

No.	Evaluation question	Indicator	Specific Data Source	Summary INT, FGD
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth-and-Adolescent service provision (adolescents aged 12-14 enrolled in the programme will be provided with a basic upshift programme in addition to a life skills programme and career guidance support, thus preparing alternative pathways into vocational education or TVET); Social Assistance (supporting eligible children enrolled in the targeted private schools with monthly cash assistance for the scholastic year, to increase school retention and attendance). <p>Clashing procedures in terms of payment amounts and dollars vs LBP, teachers under Dirasa are getting paid in LBP, However, in other projects funded by UNICEF, teachers are getting paid in USD.</p>
S, EY A	Does Dirasa present a risk/ incentive that parents would want to prioritise sending children to private schools as opposed to public schools?	Risk rating against information/data collected from stakeholders	Stakeholder interviews, particularly donors Parent FGDs	<p>Parents stated that school is a safe place for their children. Parents whose children were previously enrolled in public schools highlighted the difference between such public schools and the current private school in terms of the respect they and their children are treated with, the care their children receive in the school and inside the classroom, the absence of verbal and physical abuse, the professionalism of the school body, and the engagement of the teachers in the children's quality of education. Furthermore, parents also highlighted the importance of having classes in the morning shift, which positively affects both teachers and students.</p> <p>Parents prefer Dirasa over the PM shift in the public schools due to the smaller numbers of children inside the classes, the better presence of teachers, the safety provided at the school, the behaviour of their children, and the respect shown towards them by the teachers</p>
S, C B	Is there an inherent risk of exacerbating tensions between Lebanese and Syrian parents should refugee children be fully covered by UNICEF, i.e. in the case of Dirasa schools wanting to prioritise Syrian children (given that they bring guaranteed income unlike their Lebanese counterparts)?	Risk rating against information/data collected from stakeholders	FGDs (Parents, Teachers) Interviews (School Director, MEHE) Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff	<p>Given the low or mainly inexistent number of Lebanese students enrolled in the program, answers to the question remain as hearsay because of the absence of any Lebanese parent in the FGDs. However, some school directors and some teachers said that Lebanese parents do embrace the presence of their children in the same class as Syrian students, especially students coming from camps. More importantly, the directions did recount the bullying of Syrian students by Lebanese students who were in formal classes at the school.</p> <p>School directors stated that if the program were to target more Syrian families for the upcoming implementation year, then there will be resentment from the host community towards the school and UNICEF in general for focusing on the needs of refugees while ignoring Lebanese families who are as much in need, which will in fact, create more tension between Syrian families and the host communities.</p>
S, EY C	Is there a risk of raising parents' expectations – post Dirasa – without necessarily having the ability to meet them?	Risk rating against information/data collected from stakeholders	FGDs (Parents, Teachers) Interviews (School Director, MEHE) Assessments of UNICEF and other implementing staff	<p>Dirasa covers two years of education for refugee children, after which they would need to transition to formal education which has limited capacity to absorb more children. Also, parents are perhaps more interested in keeping children in private schools post Dirasa.</p> <p>Parents expressed the expectation for their children to receive official MEHE certificates. Without such certificates, the values of Dirasa would be very limited.</p>

APPENDIX 11:

**Challenges, successes, and recommendations
emerging from the FGDs**

Challenges, successes, and recommendations emerging from the FGDs

➤ Challenges

Challenges reported by School Directors and Teachers:

- Absence of clear implementation processes and procedures
- Short notice prior to the start of the implementation
- Tardiness in school and teacher payments
- Absence of adequate books that would respond to the targeted students' actual academic needs
- Tardiness in receiving books and stationery
- Shortage of books and stationery
- Shortage of iPads to implement "Akelius Programme"
- Absence of clear assessments and clear and concise methods of conducting them
- Absence of clear and concise indicators regarding students' classes divisions
- Tardiness and inadequacy of training.
- Absence of clear referrals of students with disabilities
- Absence of referrals of students with psychological and behavioural challenges
- Inconsistencies in the specialised services offered in schools
- Absence of communication between specialists on one hand, and school directors and teachers on the other
- Absence of clear, concise, and effective channels of communication between parents on one hand, and school directors and teachers on the other
- Absence of a clear educational pathway for the students
- Insufficient or complete absence of implementing partners in charge of the education quality
- Insufficient organisation within the implementing NGOs and inefficient communication with the schools
- Absence of guidelines regarding anti-violence measures to be taken by the school against violent students
- Absence of degrees or certifications for students at the end of the programme that would be recognised by MEHE and thus schools
- Low teacher salaries which pose a threat on the implementation of the next phase
- Cancellation of transportation will pose a threat to the programme

Challenges reported by Parents:

- Absence of communication with the school and/or the teachers
- Absence of books or copy books at home and homework so that the parents could follow up with their children's studies
- Absence of a degree or certification
- Absence of report cards or assessments and evaluations of the performance of the child
- Long school day and no food provided to the children

➤ Successes

Successes reported by School Directors and Teachers:

- The programme has exposed the children to school life (especially working children)
- Holistic approach of the programme: academic, and health care
- Big changes in the children's behaviours in terms of discipline, respect of school and classroom rules, respect of authority, and commitment to their studies. Also, substantial

progress in their social skills, acceptance of each other as classmates especially acceptance of the other sex, and cleanliness and hygiene

- Thanks to the programme, the students learned how to hold a pen, and how to read and write.

Successes reported by Parents:

- The programme gave an opportunity for the children to be in a school setting rather than being at home all the time or on the streets which has greatly affected their psychological wellbeing
- It gave them a routine to follow, commitments, and a purpose. They are motivated to go to school
- The programme has had an impact on the psychological states of the children. They are happier, they feel safe at school, they are well taken care of, and they feel welcomed and respected at their schools. They love their teachers and their classmates
- The children have improved in their behaviours, manners, and social and communication skills
- They are now able to hold a pen, read, write, and know a foreign language.

Successes Reported by Students:

They love coming to school, they love how their teachers encourage them to learn and do better, and they love having friends at school. They know that education is important for their future and in their daily lives, and they can see their progress by comparing their knowledge and abilities before the programme, and after it. The love that they are now able to read and write, solve mathematical problem, and know a foreign language. They really enjoy the extra-curricular activities (given by HOOPS).

➤ **Recommendations**

Recommendations of School Directors and Teachers:

- Pre-preparation and planning of the programme, provision of all resources and materials to be used, and conduction of teacher trainings, all to be prior to the implementation
- Higher budget for the school, and especially higher salaries for the teachers
- Degree or certification for the students
- School uniform, or any kind of unified attire, school bags for the students
- Food or snacks for the students
- More stationery for the students and the teachers
- Add a new component in the programme that would target parents in terms of awareness sessions and psychological support

Recommendations specific to Teachers:

- All tools, tests, and resources to be introduced in trainings or meeting prior to the beginning of the programme
- Clear strategies for student divisions
- Books to be made more level appropriate and more targeted towards the needs of the students in the programme
- Tests to be made in accordance with the content of the books
- Trainings to match the content of the books
- Clear strategy between teachers and specialists handling students with disabilities
- More support to the teachers by the implementing partners
- Have field visits for the students and introduce arts and crafts lessons

Recommendations of Parents:

- Great importance on the programme remaining in the morning shift
- Stress on the need for this programme to continue
- The parents stressed on the importance of providing transportation for the next cycle of the programme due to financial reasons, and more importantly due to safety concerns
- Need to have an 'official' degree or certificate that would be recognised in Lebanon and abroad
- Necessity to have the programme reach a wider age range of students (younger and older)
- More communication with the directors and teachers
- School uniforms for the children, school bag, books, copy books, and stationery for the children to bring home
- Implement the programme over 5 days a week
- Add vocational component

Technical recommendation:

- There is a need for a standardised unified assessment procedure based on clearly defined competencies for joining Grade 3 after 2 years of participation to certify the child's competencies allowing her/him to join Grade 3 in public schools.
- Review the learning passport resources with teachers' support, in line with the necessary competencies to be acquired as a prerequisite for joining Grade 3.
- People leading the EGRA/EGMA assessment need to train teachers and IP's personnel, and that should lead to a specific curriculum for Dirasa.

APPENDIX 12:

**UNICEF Risk Assessment:
Re-Assessment in light of Evaluation findings**

Risk Category	Risk Description	Likelihood of Occurrence	Impact on Project	Mitigation Strategy (UNICEF)	Residual Risk	Assessment (Evaluation Team)	Re-Assessed Risk
Social tension/ Reputation Risk	Communities, especially Lebanese, may feel left out since majority of the children supported through the programme will be Syrian refugees thereby creating tension within communities supported by the programme	Likely	Moderate	<p>The programme will also include support for vulnerable Lebanese children (up to 30%).</p> <p>All children in the supported schools will be provided in kind support (school materials) and schools will be provided additional top-up grants for whole school improvement</p> <p>UNICEF team will work with local community engagement partner to sensitize communities on the support being provided to the whole community through the programme</p>	Moderately likely	<p><i>Most OOSC supported by the Programme will be Syrian. The total amount of OOS Lebanese (according to the criteria, i.e. having been out of school for at least 2 years) will be marginal.</i></p> <p><i>It remains doubtful if the top-up grants will be sufficient to pay for quality teachers and/or to upgrade the school environment to really make a difference for all children in the school.</i></p> <p><i>The engagement with local communities will not be sufficient to address the potential reservations of an entire nation of Lebanese parents who - due to their inability of paying school fees - are being forced to take their children out of private school. We fully support the risk description by UNICEF as documented in the second column, and at the same time consider the impact on the project as critical.</i></p>	Critical
Financial Risk	Delay in payments to schools given the scale of the programme	Unlikely	Severe	<p>UNICEF is partnering with a specialized managing agent responsible for managing the contracts with all the schools and ensuring payments are provided on time.</p> <p>UNICEF will include timeliness of payments to school as a high priority KPI for Managing Agent's performance and payment terms</p> <p>The programme will clearly agree the steps required to trigger payments (i.e. what data needs to be collected and by when) and schools sensitised to deadlines and processes.</p>	Very unlikely	<p><i>We tend to agree with UNICEF's assessment as far as it relates to the inception phase.</i></p> <p><i>However, procedures will be more difficult once the project is being scaled up. There remains a possibility that payments will not be made in time due to the non-availability of funding.</i></p>	Moderately likely
Financial Risk	Leakage of funds at school level	Unlikely	Severe	<p>Managing Agent will be required to work with schools to develop detailed financial reporting tools and templates. Schools will provide Quarterly and Annual financial reports on how funds (school grants and student fees) were used by the schools.</p> <p>Additionally, UNICEF and Managing Agent will work together to provide a list of acceptable expense lines to schools for use of school grants to ensure transparency.</p> <p>payments made on per child basis against approved lists, which will be audited through random spot checks</p>	Very unlikely	<p><i>We tend to agree with UNICEF's assessment as far as it relates to the inception phase.</i></p> <p><i>However, procedures will be more difficult once the project is being scaled up. Then more schools and Governorates are participating, the higher the risk of leakage of funds at school level. This needs to be gradually tested during a gradual approach as suggested in our recommendations</i></p>	Moderately likely
Cannibalization	Children already enrolled in Public schools might dropout enrol in private schools through this programme	Unlikely	Moderate	<p>Clear definitions of OOS will be agreed to discourage transfers. The community engagement partners will work closely with local communities to identify children that have been out of school. Children will be differentiated by those who are OOS for a long time/out of school for the last term onwards, and those who completed the previous years but state they planned to drop out (the high risk group for transfers).</p> <p>At national level, UNICEF will work with MEHE to get all possible data on student enrolment and out of school children to find communities with highest population of out of school children and communities not served by public schools.</p>	Very unlikely	<p><i>UNICEF's assessment neglects the pulling factors that will most certainly attract Syrian children currently enrolled in 2nd shift public schools. In particular following a nation-wide upgrade, there will be significant awareness among the Syrian population that there is a free pathway into better private schools education (at least at a subjective perceptual level). Eventually, there is a high risk that neither UNICEF nor MEHE will be in a position to contain emerging societal tensions anymore.</i></p>	Critical
Drop outs	Children, especially older children, drop out of the schools either within first two years of enrolment or after the end of bridging period	Likely	Severe	<p>UNICEF will ensure that all children are paired with schools that are within walking distance (<5km). This will ensure that transport time and additional costs don't become a reason for families to remove children from school. Where schools are not available within walking distance, children with paired with schools that can provide them with transport, with UNICEF paying the schools for transport.</p> <p>Community Engagement partner as well and UNICEF's social protection team will work closely with the families and caregivers throughout the duration of the programme to ensure they pre-empt high risk children and families and provide them with any additional support required.</p> <p>Schools will be encouraged to set-up community and parents forums to keep the families of the beneficiaries engaged.</p> <p>Older beneficiaries will be provided guidance of alternative pathways, and will be provided referrals to all available technical and vocational opportunities. They will also be provided guidance on their income prospects if they continue with formal and/or technical education to ensure they stay engaged.</p>	Unlikely	<p><i>Transport is a key issue for possible drop-out and does not refer to the length of distance only. The requirements to cross busy roads, or the dangers along the way to school (bullying, harassment) might equally lead to drop-out, even though the way to school is short.</i></p> <p><i>The capacities of UNICEF's social protection team are expected to reach their limits once an upscale has been initiated (from 5,000 to 50,00 children).</i></p> <p><i>Most children enrolled under the Dirasa Programme will aim at joining the public school system in 3rd Grade. Currently, children, parents, teachers and even school directors to not seem to be aware of the potential pathways. Drop-out might start occurring at a much larger scale (currently around 14%) once children and parents realise that after 2 years attending the Programme, this will only lead to joining public school at Grade 3 - when the children are partly already 15 years old. In addition, parents expect a certification which at the moment cannot be guaranteed - this might also lead to drop-out.</i></p>	Critical
COVID/ Other Crisis	Partial or full school closure due to new COVID cases or other reasons including conflict or economic crisis	Likely	Severe	<p>UNICEF already has digital platforms such as LP & Akelius available to use in Lebanon. Incase of partial or full school closure, children and teachers will be provided with internet and data bundles and learning resources to continue distance learning.</p> <p>Local partner will be required to follow-up with children and families as well as teachers on weekly basis to help them with any emerging issues.</p>	Unlikely	<p><i>The digital platforms have not been tested within a Dirasa set-up covering 50,000 or even 100,000 children. In addition, internet connections outside the larger centres are instable, and children/parents to dot have the necessary hardware for using internet and data bundles. The risks are particularly severe should the Programme be upscaled in a rapid fashion.</i></p>	Severe
Timelines	Programme may not be able to procure and mobilise all the partners in time there by delaying the identification and enrolment of OOSC before the end of calendar year	Likely	Moderate	<p>UNICEF will start the procurement of all partners in second quarter of the 2022, as soon as the programme is approved</p> <p>UNICEF has already developed the ToRs for the procurement of the Managing Agent to expedite the process once the programme is approved</p>	Moderately likely	<p><i>Since UNICEF has already started this process, the (quantitative) risk has proven to be unlikely. The problem lies with the qualitative aspect regarding the capacities of the implementing partners, but that is not directly related to this particular risk.</i></p>	Unlikely
Procurement	Programme my struggle with finding the right Managing Agent with experience of working in Lebanon and an existing on ground team to mobilise quickly to meet programme timelines	Moderately likely	Severe	UNICEF in coordination with it's technical advisors will start scoping potential Managing Agents	Unlikely	<i>As above.</i>	Unlikely
Financial Risk	Given Lebanon's economy the unit costs (fees and other school expenses) can go up	Likely	Severe	UNICEF will carry out all project costing in dollars to ensure increase in unit costs don't impact the project budget	Unlikely	<i>We tend to agree with UNICEF's assessment. Problem however remains if sufficient funding will be available, and if the procedures of funding private schools with USD will be acceptable to Government.</i>	Moderately likely
Other Ethical Concerns	Families and communities may try to bribe schools/local partners to get into the programme (to get enrolled in private schools)	Moderately likely	Severe	<p>Managing Agent and UNICEF will work together to put in place procedures for the local partners to follow to identify and recommend OOSC.</p> <p>Local partners will be given clear instructions on evidence to be shared for all OOSC identified for participation in the programme</p>	Unlikely	<i>There is currently no evidence regarding the effectiveness of procedures put in place by UNICEF. In any case, a rapid upscale from 5,000 to 50,000 children will present a completely new situation.</i>	Severe

APPENDIX 13:

**“Good practice” example:
Project “Rainbow of Hope”**

“Good practice” example:

Project “Rainbow of Hope”

“Rainbow of Hope” is a project implemented by “Search for Common Ground, Lebanon” and funded by the United States Embassy in Lebanon, public affairs section.

The project worked to bridge social and educational divides between Lebanese and Syrian children, ages 6 to 11, in 20 communities in Lebanon. This was in support of the larger goal to strengthen social cohesion in Lebanon. Through co-education, Rainbow of Hope encourages children to develop respectful and empathetic relationships with each other while building teachers’ and animators’ capacity to use an English language curriculum along with recreational activities that promote nonviolent conflict resolution and acceptance.

The curriculum uses a storytelling learning approach to teach English and to promote conflict transformation principles through two English classes and one recreational activity session per week for 6 months.

By interacting with one another through the programme, the children learned to share resources, diffuse tensions while playing, and overcome prejudices and stereotypes across nationalities.

Adding to that, the project created a space for Lebanese and Syrian parents/caregivers to meet and share common concerns regarding their children’s education and development. In each community, a parents’ committee was created and engaged throughout the project’s implementation, building relationships and trust among members, ultimately affecting how the parents influenced their children.

APPENDIX 14:

**Assessment of the Evaluation Questions
against the determinants of the MoRES Framework**

Taking the MoRES framework as a point of reference for the evaluation, the evaluation questions presented in the Section 2 have been assessed and reflected upon accordingly, as shown below.

MoRES Determinants are coded as follows:

E – Enabling environment; S – Supply; D – Demand; Q – Quality

(Sub-codes according to details provided in the table above)

#	Evaluation Question	MoRES Determinants
1a	How aligned is Dirasa project with global priorities (UNICEF strategic plan, SDGs, and core commitments to children), and with to the country context, and its government priorities?	E2, E4
1b	To what extent do the project results contribute to the achievement of UNICEF LCO child survival outcome 2 “By the end of 2021, the most disadvantaged girls and boys between 03-18 years of age benefit from equitable access to quality, relevant, and inclusive learning and early development”?	E2, E4
1c	How relevant is UNICEF’s Dirasa programme to the country needs in general, and the OOSC needs in particular?	E1, D2
2	To what extent is Dirasa design able to adapt its strategies to changes in needs and priorities caused by changing in country context?	E1, E2, Q1
3	How relevant is Dirasa programme in addressing inherent equity gaps – taking into consideration any disparities initiative, and what efficiencies have been realised as a result of that division of responsibilities?	E2, D3
4	To what extent is the project design and approach effective in achieving its planned results?	E2, Q1
4a	To what extent was the project able to increase equitable access to quality education for highly marginalised OOS children?	S1, S2
4b	To what extent is the project able to facilitate transition into further formal education or alternative learning pathways? Was teaching the children done at the right level?	S1, S2
4c	How successful was the inception phase in providing needed capacity building for teachers and school staff, enhancing teaching environment in private schools, and delivering an Integrated package of services to all children of targeted schools?	D3
4d	To what extent is the project able to prevent struggling private schools from collapsing?	S1, D1
4e	How likely is the project to enhance parents' awareness on the importance of education, and ensuring wellbeing of children and teacher at school level?	E1, D2
4f	Was the project able during its piloting phase to reach the most marginalized children? How well do the private school selection criteria support the project reaching the most vulnerable?	S2, D1
4g	How effective is the project design and approach in managing conflict sensitivity?	E1, D2, Q1
4h	What were the challenges faced in implementing the project? What are the enabling factors of success and the lessons learned from implementation?	E4
4i	What are the critical lessons learned from the implementation of the programme, especially, related to system strengthening, strategic partnerships, evidence generation and advocacy?	E4, Q1
4j	What were the unintended effects/ negative impact from the Dirasa programme on school and community?	E4, Q1

#	Evaluation Question	MoRES Determinants
5	To what extent has the Theory of Change (ToC) been followed in implementation of Dirasa to achieve results identified? Were the critical components of the work consistent with what was planned, and if not, what changes were made and why?	E4, S1, Q1
6	In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF education programming integrated an equity-based approach into the design and implementation? And how adequate is this approach?	D3, Q1
7	In what ways and to what extent has the UNICEF Dirasa programme been gender responsive or transformative?	Q1
8	How does Dirasa support for OOSC fit with the work of external partners (global partners, regional partners, government, partner programmes/interventions)? Is this intervention a part of a coherent approach that is likely to have positive results, or are there critical gaps?	E2, E4
9	How does Dirasa project align with/fit with other interventions being carried out by UNICEF?	E4
A	Does Dirasa present a risk incentive that parents would want to prioritise sending children to private schools as opposed to public schools?	S1, D1,D3
B	Is there an inherent risk of exacerbating tensions between Lebanese and Syrian parents should refugee children be fully covered by UNICEF, i.e. in the case of Dirasa schools wanting to prioritise Syrian children (given that they bring guaranteed income unlike their Lebanese counterparts)?	E1, D2
C	Is there a risk of raising parents' expectations – post Dirasa – without necessarily having the ability to meet them?	S1, D1, Q1