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IMPACT

of Remote Learning Modality on Non-Formal Education

Supporting the right to quality education for vulnerable Syrian and host community children and youth



DISCLAIMER

“Supporting the right to quality education for vulnerable Syrian and host community children and youth” is a European Union funded project, implemented by Haqqi consortium composed of four partners (Save the Children - Lead, NRC, MAPS and Nabad) with the aim of improving education pathways and well-being for vulnerable children and youth.

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CONTENT

Acronyms

1.	Executive Summary	05
2.	Introduction	06
3.	Rationale: purpose of the desk review	18
4.	Methodology	18
5.	Limitations	20
6.	Desk review findings	21
6.1.	Time Responsiveness	22
6.2.	Capacity Building	22
6.3.	Mode of Delivery	23
6.4.	Supportive environment	25
6.5.	Learning Content & Outcomes	28
6.6.	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Tools	29
6.7.	Other Areas	30
6.8.	Effectiveness of the remote learning programme	30
7.	Conclusions	31
8.	Recommendations	32

Annexes

Annex One - Terms of reference	36
Annex two - documents reviewed	39
Annex three – twin track framework	41

ACRONYMS

- ♦ **A/BLN** = Adapted Basic Literacy and Numeracy
- ♦ **BLN** = Basic Literacy and Numeracy
- ♦ **CBECE** = Community Based Early Childhood Education
- ♦ **CERD** = Centre for Education Research and Development
- ♦ **DL** = Distance Learning
- ♦ **ECE** = Early Childhood Education
- ♦ **EDPU** = Economic Development Policy Unit
- ♦ **FE** = Formal Education
- ♦ **IT** = Information Technology
- ♦ **LAL** = Lebanese Alternative Learning
- ♦ **LCRP** = Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
- ♦ **LMS** = Learning Management System
- ♦ **LP** = Learning Passport
- ♦ **MAPS** = Multi Aid Programs
- ♦ **MEHE** = Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- ♦ **M&E** = Monitoring and Evaluation
- ♦ **NFE** = Non Formal Education
- ♦ **NRC** = Norwegian Refugee Council
- ♦ **PRL** = Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon
- ♦ **PRS** = Palestinian Refugees from Syria
- ♦ **PSS** = Psychosocial Support
- ♦ **RACE** = Reaching All Children with Education
- ♦ **RS** = Retention Support
- ♦ **RL** = Remote Learning
- ♦ **SEL** = Social Emotional Learning
- ♦ **TVE/TVT** = Technical and Vocational Education/ Training
- ♦ **YBLN** = Youth Basic Literacy and Numeracy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction & Background

Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita, which includes 1.5 million Syrian refugees¹. Since 2015, the Government of Lebanon together with humanitarian actors has implemented the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) to address the challenges it faces as a country due to the influx of Syrian refugees. According to the LCRP, this influx has contributed to overwhelming public services, aggravating the economic challenges, and rising social tensions. The economic crisis has been compounded by COVID-19, which added further challenges to vulnerable populations including displaced Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS), and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL).

Amidst these crises, Non-Formal Education (NFE) Programs have been created to prepare out-of-school children to transition into formal education, while engaging INGOs, civil society and local NGOs. These programs are supporting refugee and Lebanese children to develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills, and helping children to remain in and complete their education. Their main goal is to reduce the number of illiterate and out-of-school children and youth and create a holistic approach for them where they can feel safe, especially the most vulnerable.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education² (MEHE) has prioritized some NFE programs including:

- 1** Preparatory Early Childhood Education (Prep-ECE for ages 5 to 7)
- 2** Community-Based Early Childhood Education (CB-ECE for ages 3 to 5)
- 3** Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN for ages 10 - 24)
- 4** The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP for ages 7 to 24)
- 5** Technical and Vocational Training (TVE/TVT for ages 15 to 24+)



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, learning centres closed, and non-formal education classes were implemented remotely over the period from March 2020 to mid-2021.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/unhcr-lebanon-fact-sheet-september2021->

² https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/national_policy-final_en.pdf

Desk Review Objectives

Haqqi Consortium, composed of Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Back to the Future Consortium funded by the European Union, NABAD and Multi Aid Programs (MAPS), initiated a desk review of existing literature (evaluation reports, monitoring reports and other documentation) written by the education sector partners (i.e. national and international NGOs) on remote learning modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the desk review is to establish sector-wide findings on the impact of the remote learning modality in Non-Formal Education (NFE), as well as formulate best practices and recommendations for the provision of the remote learning modality in the future.

Methodology

Out of the Box undertook three steps as part of the desk review methodology.



Documents were sourced within Haqqi members and through Out of the Box who reached out to the Education sector and liaised with its various partners. Additionally, Out of the Box identified and scanned existing literature on the remote modality of non-formal education including MEHE strategies and policies, international published literature (e.g. UNICEF, UNHCR) related to non-formal education. A total of 39 documents from 13 organizations were reviewed.



After evaluating the relevance of the secondary data and whether it's suitable for the desk review's needs, Out of the Box analysed the data. A conceptual model was used to triangulate all secondary data, based on a twin track framework. Through the conceptual model, the impact of remote education employed as part of COVID-19 response was evaluated by exploring a number of areas including Time responsiveness, Capacity building, Mode of delivery, Supportive environment, Learning content & outcomes, M&E tools and other areas. In each of these areas, Out of the Box reviewed documents in terms of the Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact of the remote learning modality. Analysis was done based on priority questions highlighted by the research steering committee in the inception phase.



Out of the Box used Survey Monkey to gather the information under each question across the documents. Using the twin track framework, Out of the Box compiled answers to all questions in the framework once this was completed. Out of the Box summarised the findings, and drew out the main emerging themes. These themes form the basis of the findings of this report. Best practices, lessons learnt and recommendations were gathered across reviewed reports, grouped together and are presented in the report.

Photo taken by Nadine Malli

There were a number of limitations to the desk review

- 1** The reviewed documents did not all have the same purpose, structure and in-depth analysis to enable the review team to answer rigorously all priority questions set in the twin track framework.
- 2** Although the invitation to share reports was sent across the education sector, the findings reflect only the key takeaways extracted from the provided documentation on NFE and cannot be considered as exhaustive.
- 3** The findings in this report are based on reviewing the documents received. Organisations might have implemented remote modalities without including them in the documentation received. These elements were not part of the desk review.
- 4** The main methodology adopted for this research is desk review and therefore, no interviews were included as part of the process.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Time Responsiveness

At the onset of COVID-19 in Lebanon, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) acted quickly to develop a distance learning plan. Reports indicate that overall, the education sector was able to shift to remote education quickly and promptly. However, this plan encountered a number of challenges, including developing distance learning content, supporting teachers (on using digital platforms, accessing the internet, developing peer support networks, etc.), providing guidance to families (on COVID-19, supporting learners, etc.), addressing access and connectivity issues, and enabling access to learning materials.

Capacity Building

The reviewed reports give very limited details on the capacity building implemented at organisational and staff level. However, several reports outlined that teachers training across organisations included guidelines on how to implement remote learning; safeguarding and referrals, psychological first aid, compliance, videography, code of conduct and topics ranging from PowerPoint technology to creative pedagogical studies. Teachers across organisations also emphasised how their peer-to-peer support groups were very beneficial in terms of sharing experiences. Teachers also reported challenges due to remote learning including the extra time needed to follow up with students and the validation of results.



Mode of Delivery

The majority of the reports reviewed highlighted that WhatsApp was the main platform used (8 out of 10 organisations used it). Other platforms included Zoom, YouTube, SMS, Skype, Tabshoura platform and a few specific programs including “Can’t wait to learn” (from War Child Holland) and “I learn from Home” (Seenaryo)³. The reviewed documents had different perspectives when analysing the adequacy of the platforms in fulfilling the needs of the students, teachers and caregivers. UNICEF successfully trialled the Learning Passport (LP) in Lebanon¹¹ and is now working on scaling it up in collaboration with MEHE for secondary and TVET formal education.

WhatsApp groups with children and caregivers were used to share key messages on child safeguarding on a regular basis. These groups were also used to remind children and caregivers of feedback and response mechanisms.

The majority of the documents reviewed addressed the technological barriers to quality implementation of remote learning. These included internet accessibility, cost and signal strength, and the number of devices in a household. These also included providing offline solutions: for example one organisation installed offline boxes (Tabshoura in a box) in centres where multiple users can access the box and work on their lessons. As for children with disabilities, there were different perspectives on how the technological and other needs of children with disabilities were addressed. Based on the reports reviewed some NGOs succeeded in catering for children with disabilities whereas others were not successful in responding to their needs.

³ <https://seenaryoplaykit.org/i-learn-from-home/>

¹¹ Blended TVET & Distance Learning in Lebanon: Challenges and Lessons learned from the field.

Supportive Environment

Under this area, the desk review focused on the context, the involvement of other stakeholders (including MEHE and the education sector) and caregivers/families (their roles, their feedback etc.) in NFE. MEHE did not provide NFE-specific guidance. However, the education sector developed a short-term response for children whose NFE was disrupted. Based on the analysis of documents reviewed for this study, many households struggled to provide a conducive learning environment for their children to participate in remote settings – for example, some houses are overcrowded with limited private space so it is hard for children to focus.

Caregivers had various levels of involvement in the education of the children. This included providing a space for study, answering any questions children may have, and interacting with the teachers. Nine reports reviewed highlighted the satisfaction of caregivers with the remote learning approach. In these reports the satisfaction was rated above 80%. The engagement of the caregivers was critical to the success of the remote learning modalities. Overall, communication channels between education staff and households/caregivers were reported to be positive across the documents reviewed. These communication channels included phone calls, text messages and WhatsApp messages.

Learning Content & Outcomes

All learning content in the remote modality was developed from adaptation of the content delivered in the face-to-face modality and was therefore very relevant to the key learning objectives of NFE programmes and MEHE NFE policy. The social and emotional wellbeing sessions for both learners and caregivers were included across the remote learning documents reviewed. SEL lessons and messages were shared with students across all programmes throughout the pandemic.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Tools

The monitoring and evaluation tools used varied across the remote learning programmes. The tools used in the face-to-face approach were used with slight adaptations to fit the remote modality.

Other Areas

Reviewed reports highlighted how the majority of caregivers and teachers knew how to report child protection risks. Teachers were trained to share Information and advice to caregivers through various mediums.

Effectiveness of the Remote Learning Programs

Several reports documented the effectiveness of the remote learning programmes. There is an increased understanding of the importance of children's education amongst caregivers and parents. Overall, the majority of children who completed the educational cycle demonstrated an improvement in their learning outcomes and acquired the learning objectives. All programmes discussed in the documents reviewed were aligned with the MEHE National Policy for Alternative Education Pathways, the RACEII Strategy and the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan.



Photo taken by Nadine Malli

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on all documents reviewed in the desk review and the analysis completed by the consultants.



Support to Caregivers

- ◆ Consider including tips on management of space within each house and managing other children in the house while caregivers are working with one child.
- ◆ Consider adding advice on positive reward systems to caregiver training.
- ◆ Many caregivers reported the challenge they experienced in supporting students with foreign languages.
- ◆ Consider adding basic foreign language training for caregivers.
- ◆ Consider the enhancement of digital skills for caregivers to increase the engagement and the quality of learning.
- ◆ Consider conducting more PSS sessions for caregivers.
- ◆ Support teachers and caregivers in their use of digital tools: Plan brief training or orientation sessions for both teachers and caregivers. Assist teachers in preparing basic settings such as internet data solutions.

- ◆ Create communities of teachers, caregivers, and school administrators to address feelings of isolation or helplessness, as well as to facilitate the sharing of experiences and discussion of coping strategies when dealing with learning challenges.
- ◆ Consider the introduction of a caregiver support line to help them to share issues and support one another. Some caregivers felt isolated during the COVID19-lockdown period.
- ◆ Consider adapting implementation methodologies to the time availability of the caregiver.
- ◆ Consider reviewing the maximum number of sessions per cycle of activity, and the maximum number of days per week required, given the nature of remote learning, the involvement of caregivers, the competing needs etc.



Technology

- ◆ Consider distributing additional devices in future remote learning programmes accompanied by a distribution policy and risk assessment.
- ◆ Consider the distribution of a hard drive/additional storage cards with learning content to address the challenges of storage on household devices.
- ◆ Consider the inclusion of digital literacy in all non-formal education programmes.
- ◆ Consider future platforms enabling translations between Arabic and foreign languages to facilitate all learners.
- ◆ Consider the distribution of power banks and solar lamps to overcome electricity outage challenges.
- ◆ Consider evaluating the multiple online platforms used during the COVID19-period to provide recommendations for contingency planning for future crisis.



Children's Wellbeing

- ◆ Reflect on the differences in improvement among the CB-ECE subjects within one program and between different programs and partners to identify ways to improve the results in the psychomotor, socio-emotional, and artistic domains remotely.
- ◆ Consider improving the holistic approach to the child in future programme development – balancing between academic and socioemotional skills (strengthening PSS activities).



Ratios

- ◆ Consider (with donor support) increasing the ratio of educational staff and educators to number children for individual follow-up and increased participation and improvement. This could be strengthened through partnerships with local organisations.



Children with Special Needs

- ◆ Strengthen the focus on inclusion of children with special needs.
- ◆ Develop a structured strategy to boost the engagement of children with special needs. This could include regular house visits, weekly face-to-face lessons for this target group etc.



Teachers' Mentoring and Training

- ◆ Provide continuous mentoring sessions for teachers on online teaching and techniques throughout the project.
- ◆ Consider creating guidelines for the establishment of a structured peer to-peer mentoring system.
- ◆ Teachers and educators must receive an adequate professional development package to support teaching and learning in online and remote contexts.
- ◆ Consider the inclusion of blended/remote learning modalities in future teacher training.
- ◆ The impact of remote learning on teachers must be considered – many worked overtime throughout the pandemic preparing materials for students, supporting caregivers and students at home.



Monitoring and Evaluation

- ◆ Consider expanding teachers' training to ensure adequate use of monitoring tools.
- ◆ Strengthen monitoring tools to enable teachers to identify when students are at risks of drop-out and low participation.
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- ◆ Strengthen monitoring tools to enable teachers to identify when students are at risks of drop-out and low participation.
- ◆ Develop ways to monitor learner participation, and to ensure that it is not another member of the household who is completing assignments etc. This can include working with parents/caregivers and reviewing learner practice during sessions.
- ◆ Establish ground rules for distance learning with parents/caregivers and students.
- ◆ Create formative questions, tests, or exercises to closely monitor students' learning progress.
- ◆ Use tools to help students submit feedback and avoid overloading parents by asking them to scan and send students' feedback.
- ◆ Follow up with caregivers across programmes and take their feedback into consideration in strengthening future programmes.



Child Safeguard

- ◆ Put in place measures to ensure that child protection cases in need of referral are followed up on and provided with the needed interventions.
- ◆ Consider the strengthening of complaint and referral mechanisms – in times of emergencies they may need to absorb a higher caseload.



Blended Learning

- ◆ Consider including a combination of online and in-person classes within future programmes to promote personal contact and socialization of the children where possible.
- ◆ Consider including art classes and sports within future programmes, which focus on strengthening children's creativity through drawing, music, and painting.



Procedures and processes in emergencies

- ◆ Consider processes internally in organisations (or in sector groups) to analyse the context regularly and enhance preparedness.



Learning Materials

- ◆ Consider a combination of online and offline materials for learnings in a non-crisis mode.
- ◆ Consider the development of activities that do not require students and/or caregivers to access a printer.
- ◆ All activities should include simple, clear instructions for children and/or caregivers.



Return to School

- ◆ Plan for a coordinated effort to ensure children return to classrooms having missed months of school or after a long interruption/disruption as children coming back to school after remote learning need a transition period.



Online Safety

- ◆ In advance of providing students with learning devices, ensure they are secure based on best practice guidelines and can only be used for educational material.
- ◆ Consider implementing an awareness session for caregivers, teachers and learners on the importance of online safety



MEHE

- Consider developing guidelines and supports for NFE in a remote setting based on the learning from the COVID-19 time period.

Further Research

It was not possible to answer a number of questions from the twin track framework through this research. These are outlined here. Consider further research to answer these questions.



Time Responsiveness

- ◆ How can the responsiveness challenges be addressed in future similar contexts?
- ◆ How responsive and quick were the implementing partners in responding to the emerging need of RL?
- ◆ What were the positive drivers of the timely implementation of RL?



Capacity Building and Team formulation

- ◆ How relevant were the RL capacity development processes at an organisational level?



Mode of Delivery – Technology etc.

- ◆ How did the technology (platform) influence the learners' academic and social achievement?

Other Areas (e.g. children in need of special support, referral of children, responsiveness of other needs raised by families)

- ◆ How effective was the RL programme in responding to other needs raised by families of learners in the RL programme?
- ◆ How efficient was the RL programme in responding to other needs raised by families of learners in the RL programme?
- ◆ What impact did RL on child protection and referral systems?
- ◆ Did RL have any impact on the psychosocial support given to learners and/or caregivers?

Additional areas that were not explored by this research can be researched furthermore to feed into future remote learning modalities. These include:

- ◆ Costs of remote learning
- ◆ Coordination of remote learning on a sector level
- ◆ Evaluation of different materials used
- ◆ Type of child safeguarding issues reported

INTRODUCTION

Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita, which includes 1.5 million Syrian refugees⁴. Since 2015, the Government of Lebanon together with humanitarian actors has implemented the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) to address the challenges it faces as a country due to the influx of Syrian refugees. According to the LCRP, this influx has contributed to overwhelming public services, aggravating the economic challenges, and rising social tensions. The LCRP for 2022-2023⁵ documents how Lebanon has faced an “an unprecedented and multifaceted economic, financial, social and health crisis” since 2019. According to the response plan, “In 2021, almost nine in ten displaced Syrian households were living in extreme poverty, with poverty levels also rising dramatically among Lebanese and Palestine refugee populations”.

The economic crisis in Lebanon is multi-faceted. With limited access to foreign currency, the Lebanese currency has lost more than 90% of its value⁶, and with inflation is affecting all costs, particularly food prices, fuel prices and access to education, Lebanon is suffering from its worst financial crisis in decades. The increased fuel prices throughout 2021 and 2022⁷ led to higher transportation costs for children going to school, resulting in school dropouts when schools reopened. The higher fuel costs have also affected the power sector through increased power outages. These outages have impacted access to reliable internet and the ability of students and families to charge electronic devices, leading to disrupted remote learning periods.

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/unhcr-lebanon-fact-sheet-september-2021>

⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-crisis-response-plan-lcrp-2022-2023>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-currency-plummets-again-amid-financial-crisis-political-deadlock-2022-01-11/>

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-raises-gasoline-prices-document22-09-2021-/>

The economic crisis has been compounded by COVID-19, which added further challenges to vulnerable populations including displaced Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS), and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL). These challenges include rising poverty (people living below the extreme poverty line of LBP10, 000 per person per day), and reduced access to healthcare and education.

Vulnerable populations including displaced Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS), and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon (PRL) have been impacted by the crisis in many ways (health, education and economic). LCRP highlights how vulnerable families have deprioritised education during this crisis. MEHE 2020/21 enrolment figures show that at least 440,000 non-Lebanese children between 3 and 18 were out of school. The plan highlights how vulnerable families have deprioritised education during this crisis and documents how MEHE 2020/21 enrolment figures show that at least 440,000 non-Lebanese children between 3 and 18 were out of school.

The plan outlines how prohibitive costs are preventing younger children especially girls to attend school. Older boys and young men drop out to earn a living for their families, and force marriages cause older girls and young women to drop out. In terms of remote learning in-equalities, also exist. The report highlights “difficulties are being faced in the delivery of remote learning due to the challenge of accessing devices, internet and electricity for all students (Lebanese and non-Lebanese). This has caused a severe inequity in access, including in second-shift schools where WhatsApp has been used as the main platform for e-learning.” The crisis increased the gap in accessing education for the vulnerable populations.

Against this backdrop, Lebanon’s response has been crucial, especially on the education front, to prevent a generation of young refugees and disadvantaged Lebanese from falling behind.

Amidst these crises, Non-Formal Education (NFE) Programs have been created and prioritized by MEHE to prepare out-of-school children to transition into formal education. NFE were implemented with the support of INGOs, civil society and local NGOs. These programs are supporting refugee and Lebanese children to develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills, and helping children to remain in and complete their education. Their main goal is to reduce the number of illiterate and out-of-school children and youth and create a holistic approach for them where they can feel safe, especially the most vulnerable.

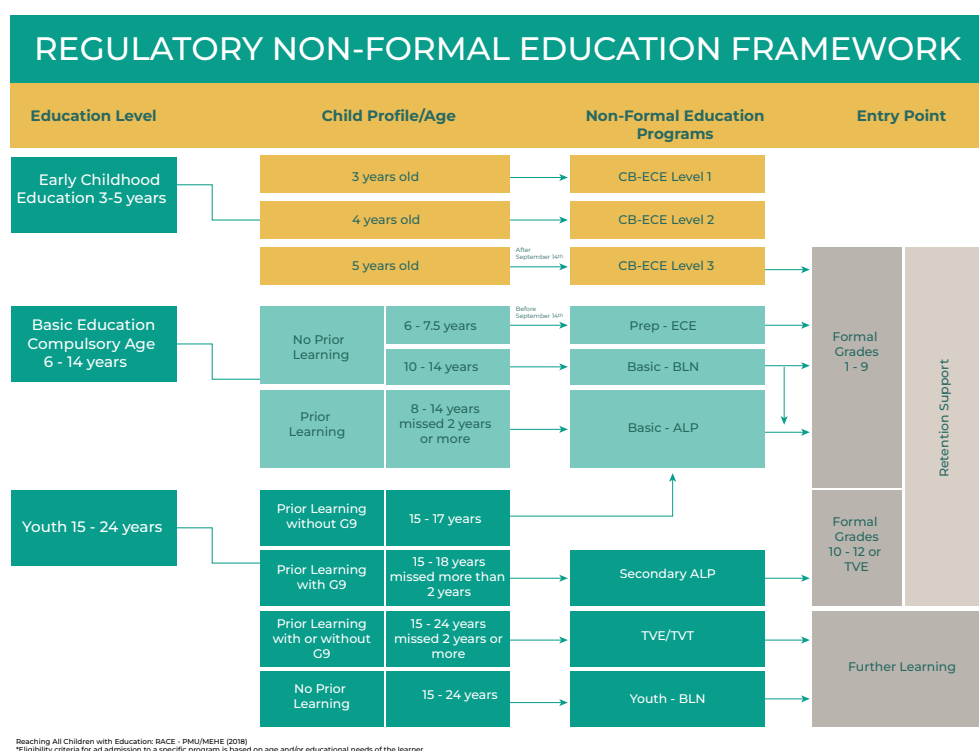
The Ministry of Education and Higher Education⁸ (MEHE) has prioritized some NFE programs in the order listed below:

1

Preparatory Early Childhood Education (Prep-ECE for ages 5 to 7) which is conducted in public schools during the regular academic year in parallel with other cycles. The Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) developed the program content. It compiles the curriculum from KG1, KG2, and KG3 into a single program.

⁸ https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/national_policy-final_en.pdf

- 2 **Community-Based Early Childhood Education (CB-ECE for ages 3 to 5)** is implemented in a community context by qualified NGOs under MEHE SOPs. CERD developed the program content. It is divided into 3 successive stages, each of which is offered for only 3–4 months.
- 3 **Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN for ages 10 - 24)** – to be implemented in community setting by eligible NGOs under MEHE SOPs for children (Basic-BLN for ages 10 – 14) and adolescents (youth-BLN for ages 15-24). The program content is developed/approved by CERD.
- 4 **The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP for ages 7 to 24)** was introduced into public schools for children. This includes basic-ALP for ages 7 to 14 and Secondary-ALP for ages 15 to 24 who have missed two or more years of school. CERD created the program content. It was intended to reflect a streamlined version of the Lebanese national curriculum.
- 5 **Technical and vocational training (TVE/TVT for ages 15 to 24+)** is implemented in a well-equipped setting and through linkages with the private sector.



The diagram above is taken from the National policy and gives an outline of the Reaching All Children with Education: RACE – PMU / MEHE (2018).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, learning centres closed, and non-formal education classes were implemented remotely over the period from March 2020 to mid-2021. While learning centres are now re-opened, and children have resumed face-to-face learning.

RATIONALE: PURPOSE OF THE DESK REVIEW

Haqqi Consortium, composed of Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Back to the Future Consortium, NABAD and Multi Aid Programs (MAPS), initiated a desk review of existing literature (evaluation reports, monitoring reports and other documentation) written by the education sector partners (i.e. national and international NGOs) on remote learning modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the desk review is to establish sector-wide findings on the impact of the remote learning modality in Non-Formal Education (NFE), as well as formulate best practices and recommendations for the provision of the remote learning modality in the future. By taking stock of lessons learned and best practices that were implemented as part of the remote modality, this desk review will support the sector be better prepared for future potential crises.

METHODOLOGY

The desk review included three steps:

- 1 Identifying and scanning existing literature on remote modality of non-formal education through carrying out a literature review process.
- 2 Evaluating and analysing secondary data.
- 3 Formulating conclusions, best practices, and recommendations.









Identifying and scanning the existing literature

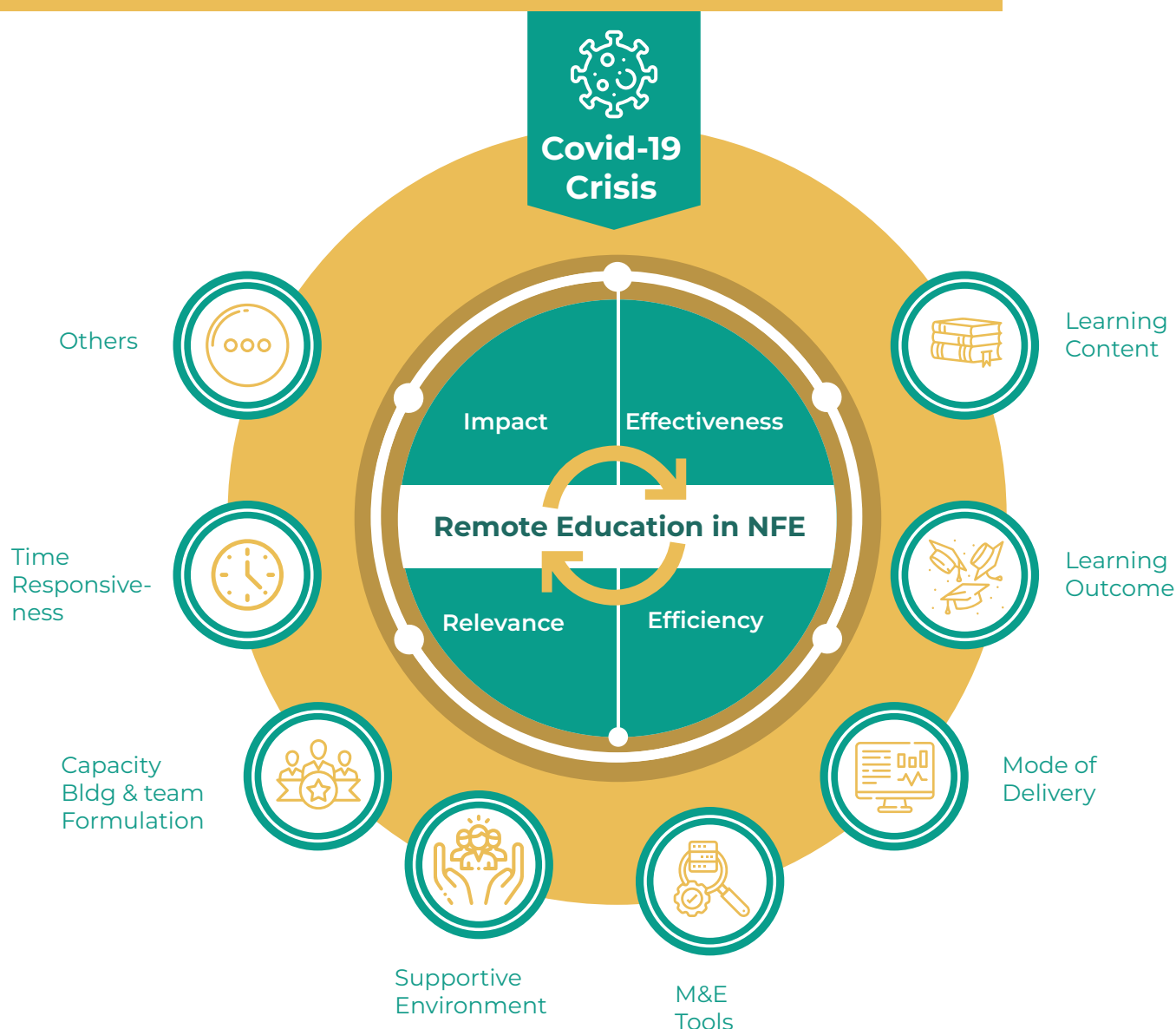
Documents were sourced within Haqqi members and through Out of the Box who reached out to the Education sector and liaised with its various partners. Save the Children emailed members of Haqqi consortium informing them that they had commissioned a desk review research to assess the impact of remote learning approaches for non-formal education programmes. The email explained that the objective of the exercise was to establish sector-wide findings on the impact of remote education in NFE, as well as formulate best practices and recommendations for the provision of remote NFE in the future. It also explained that the review wanted to take stock of lessons learned and best practices that were implemented as part of remote learning, which will help the sector to be prepared for any future crisis and to inform current blended learning approaches.

The email requested respondents to share any evaluation reports, lessons learnt reports, research, monitoring reports, outcome level reports or any other relevant documentation or literature related to remote/blended learning approaches in NFE. Additionally, Out of the Box identified and scanned existing literature on the remote modality of non-formal education including MEHE strategies and policies, international published literature (e.g. UNICEF, UNHCR). Out of the Box also reached out to its partners in the sector who were not members of Haqqi to request documents as well using a similar email as that used by Save the Children. A total of 39 documents from 13 organizations were reviewed. The list of these documents is included in Annex 2.

Evaluating and analysing secondary data

Out of the Box reviewed the documents received in two parts: evaluation and analysis. Firstly, Out of Box evaluated the relevance the secondary data. The purpose of this was to see if the document was suitable for the desk review's needs. This involved asking some probing questions about the data provided. Out of the Box used these questions to guide its selection of the documents retrieved.

 Question	 Explanation
What was the data's original purpose?	 Understanding what data was originally collected.
Why was the data collected?	 Understanding why the data was originally collected, by whom, to determine if the data is right for the desk review purpose, or if it is biased in any way.
When was the data collected?	 Over time, the context changes and projects evolve. Identifying when the data were first collected, and in which COVID-19 phase can provide invaluable insights.
Where was the data collected?	 Did the data represent different geographical needs or is it for a specific area?
What methodology was used, and what questions were participants asked?	 It is important to understand the methodology that was used, explaining in detail how the data was collected as well as the wording of survey questions: especially for qualitative datasets, questions may be deliberately phrased to preclude certain answers. Understanding these issues shapes how data is perceived. It is also important to understand the representativeness of the sample size used and the limitations of the study as these will affect the analysis.
Do we need additional complementary data?	 Following the review and analysis of documents received, Out of the Box identified questions that needed follow-up with the consortium members. These questions were sent to the members, and their responses are included in this report.



Out of the Box explored through its conceptual model the impact of remote education employed as part of COVID-19 response by reviewing the following key areas:

- ◆ Time responsiveness
- ◆ Capacity building
- ◆ Mode of delivery
- ◆ Supportive environment
- ◆ Learning content & outcomes
- ◆ M&E tools
- ◆ Other Areas.

In each of these areas, Out of the Box reviewed documents in terms of the Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Impact of the remote learning modality. The twin track framework (Annex 3) includes questions under each of the key conceptual model areas. All documents were reviewed based on the framework, and analysis was completed based on the priority questions that were highlighted by the research steering committee in the inception phase. Some questions were not addressed within the reports reviewed. Therefore, the steering committee agreed onto prioritize three of the unaddressed questions that had not been answered by the desk review, and circulated these to members of Haqqi consortium to answer and provide feedback. These findings are included in this report.

Formulating conclusions, best practices and recommendations

Out of the Box used Survey Monkey to gather the information under each question across the documents. Using the twin track framework, Out of the Box compiled answers to all questions in the framework. Once this was completed, Out of the Box summarised the findings, and drew out the main emerging themes. These themes form the basis of the findings of this report. Best practices, lessons learnt and recommendations were gathered across reviewed reports, grouped together and are presented in this report.

LIMITATIONS

- 1** The reviewed documents did not all have the same purpose, structure and in-depth analysis to enable the review team to answer rigorously all areas of the twin track framework. It was not possible to answer all of the priority questions from the documents reviewed. Three of these questions were answered through email feedback from members of the Haqqi Consortium.
- 2** Although the invitation to share reports was sent across the education sector, the findings reflect only the key takeaways extracted from the provided documentation on NFE and cannot be considered as exhaustive
- 3** The findings in this report are based on reviewing the documents received. Organisations might have implemented remote modalities without including them in the documentation received. These elements were not part of the desk review.
- 4** The main methodology adopted for this research is desk review and therefore, no interviews were included as part of the process.

DESK REVIEW FINDINGS

#	Organization	Approach	Platform	Distributed devices
1	ANA AQRA	ANA AQRA designed the methodology and the lessons. The Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL) team adapted them into digital lesson plans, and created visuals and audio for each one of them.	WhatsApp	No
2	AVSI	The teacher sent learning materials to students and instructions for caregivers on how to use the material. Children and caregivers sent concerns and questions privately to the teachers. Children submitted assignments privately to teachers.	WhatsApp	Yes
3	Caritas	The teachers sent their educational materials to the eflow technical team, who uploaded it to the eflow system. The teachers also distributed material to the student groups via WhatsApp, and the students responded privately with their worksheets. Tablets and recharge cards were distributed to students to facilitate the process.	Initially WhatsApp; then eflow Platform (https://www.eflow.app/) & Signal	Yes
4	International Rescue Committee (IRC)	The teacher sent learning materials to students and also sent instructions for caregivers. Students responded privately to teachers, sharing any concerns as well their assignments. IRC distributed power banks, solar lamps and internet data bundles/rechargeable phone cards to students. They also provided tablets to students. A digitised curriculum was installed on the tablets, which enabled students to learn offline as well as online. This complemented the WhatsApp platform.	WhatsApp Tablets with a digitised curriculum installed	Yes
5	Lebanon Alternative Learning (LAL) (AVSI, Terre des Hommes Italy)	"Tabshoura-in-a-box" Offline boxes were installed in the centres where multiple users can access the box and work on their lessons without any interruptions. In addition, the mobile Application allowed both students and facilitators to download the content and use it offline. LAL distributed tablets to students.	Tabshoura is free access platform	Yes
6	Nabad Association	Nabad distributed tablets to students.	WhatsApp, Signal, Teams, Zoom, E-flow, Tabshoura.	Yes
7	Norwegian Refugee Council	The teachers distributed the material to students via WhatsApp groups. Students responded privately to teachers with any concerns and with their assignments. Tablets were distributed to the students.	WhatsApp	Yes
8	Relief International	Tablets were distributed to the students. Zoom sessions were used for learning.	Online zoom sessions	Yes
9	Save the Children	The approach included online support via what's App (messages, voice notes, videos, etc.) and other platforms. Regular phone calls with caregivers and children were conducted	Mainly WhatsApp	Yes
10	UNICEF	One-way (educator-learner) or two-way remote learning modalities were available (a loop between educator and learner). Two-way modalities enabled students to communicate with their teachers via phone, SMS, and WhatsApp.	Phone, SMS, and WhatsApp	No

6.1. Time Responsiveness

The reviewed literature did not contain enough information related to the timeliness of shifting to remote modality and therefore, it was not possible to analyse the impact of this timeliness on children's education. Feedback was sought from Haqqi Consortium partners and other education partners to fill this information gap, and is included in this section.

At the onset of COVID-19 in Lebanon, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) acted quickly to develop a distance learning plan. Reports indicate that overall, the education sector was able to shift to remote education quickly and promptly. This was achieved through work done by MEHE and Education partners across the sector who were responsive and able to adapt to COVID-19 protocols through the good communications within and between organisations. However, this plan encountered a number of challenges, including developing distance learning content, supporting teachers (on using digital platforms, accessing the internet, developing peer support networks, etc.), providing guidance to families (on COVID-19, supporting learners, etc.), addressing access and connectivity issues, and enabling access to learning materials. These issues needed to be addressed in a timely manner to ensure a swift response. Education partners prepared their capacity-building plans to address these challenges. For instance, some NGOs developed an induction package on remote learning for teachers and new joiners to the education team. These packages could be used to improve time responsiveness in future similar contexts where remote learning would be applied.

6.2. Capacity Building

Although the reviewed reports give very limited details on the capacity building implemented at organisational and staff level, teachers of one organisation reported positive guidance received from their organisation on how to implement remote learning. Their training included how to deal with students, how to evaluate them, how to follow up with them on their daily educational activities, how to prepare lessons, and how to send comprehensive and easy-to-understand learning videos, pictures, and recordings. Throughout the implementation of the remote learning, teachers of this organisation were supported through messages/calls from staff members and through peer networks, and were able to discuss any challenges they were experiencing. Teachers of this organization, across all programmes, acquired several new skills, including video production and editing techniques, technology skills, and digital literacy.

According to the impact report of one organisation, some teachers struggled with their role as facilitators of remote learning modalities rather than "teachers" in the traditional sense. They were there to facilitate the student's learning, but all materials were online. Another organisation reported that the capacity building plan for educators during remote modality included safeguarding and referrals, psychological first aid, compliance, videography and code of conduct. The report also documented the organisation's smooth on-boarding processes for teachers and students, which resulted in higher enrolment than face-to-face.

The evaluation of another organisation's distance learning programme detailed how trainings were given to teachers on a range of topics from PowerPoint technology to creative pedagogical studies. Teachers interviewed as part of this evaluation complimented the organisation for the teachers' in-service training. The implementation of distance learning by this organisation had several positive outcomes, including improved technological skills (PowerPoint, Excel, KOBO, videotaped sessions, instructional videos); improved pedagogical skills; improved understanding of the characteristics of distance learning (definition, advantages, and challenges); and improved planning skills for distance learning. The evaluator documented positive results across all outcomes.

Teachers across organisations emphasised how their peer-to-peer support groups were very beneficial in terms of sharing experiences, information and ideas, and inquiring about matters they do not know about.

Teachers reported that they experienced a number of challenges with remote learning. These included the extra time needed to follow up with students – often students were not available by phone, and several calls needed to be made; it was challenging to validate all results as there were cases where older siblings completed assessment on behalf of younger siblings.

6.3. Mode of Delivery

The majority of the reports reviewed highlighted that WhatsApp was the main platform used. A WhatsApp Group for each class was set up, and private messaging was used by the children to send their assignments to their teachers. Other platforms included Zoom, YouTube, SMS, Skype, Tabshoura platform and a few specific platforms including “Can’t wait to learn” (from War Child Holland) and “I learn from Home” (Seenaryo)¹⁰. Teachers used different formats and channels as needed, and the learning packages included learning kits, worksheets and leaflets in various languages distributed as hard copies to students.

The reviewed documents had different perspectives when analysing the adequacy of the platforms in fulfilling the needs of the students, teachers and caregivers. For example, using WhatsApp does not allow for child-centred interactivity, but teachers also tutored students through one-to-one sessions (using voice and video calls) which compensated for this. The ability of the student to replay videos was considered an advantage of online learning – this meant that the student could learn at their own pace and at a time that worked for themselves and their family. It also helped parents and caregivers to follow up with students at a time that is convenient to them.

Across a series of monitoring reports carried out by one organisation, the majority of caregivers were either satisfied or highly satisfied with the remote learning approach. The majority reported a good ability to understand and implement the shared activities with their children and reported how their children enjoyed them. UNICEF successfully trialled the Learning Passport (LP) in Lebanon¹¹ and is now working on scaling it up in collaboration with MEHE for secondary and TVET formal education. UNICEF also promoted the use of EdTech modalities (for example Akelius Digital Language Learning Course) in TVET and implemented them with young Syrian refugees

¹¹ Blended TVET & Distance Learning in Lebanon: Challenges and Lessons learned from the field.

¹⁰ <https://seenaryoplaykit.org/i-learn-from-home/>



Online Safety

Limited information was available from in the reviewed documents reviewed to answer the priority questions of this area and therefore feedback was sought from Haqqi Consortium members. One organisation reported that no specific activities were carried out to address internet safety during remote learning. However, WhatsApp groups with children and caregivers were used to share key messages on child safeguarding on a regular basis. These groups were also used to remind children and caregivers of feedback and response mechanisms. The IT Department of another organisation implemented a number of changes on the devices distributed to students to support online safety. These included the following:

- ◆ Ensured that all programs and apps have the most updated security fixes installed.
- ◆ Checked passwords, and updated any password highlighted as potentially vulnerable or used on multiple accounts.
- ◆ Checked all applications, and websites` privacy settings.
- ◆ Locked Google Play to limit the apps downloaded.
- ◆ Banned all suspicious websites.

Another organization reported how their Technical Officer checked all video content before circulation. The officer reviewed the content to ensure it will not cause any harm to the students. Teachers also advised students not to open any link they do not know the source or content of, and this was addressed by sharing a voice message with the students before sharing any video, briefly explaining what they will be watching.



Technological Barriers

The remote learning programmes that were reviewed as part of the desk review tried to address the needs of all the intended populations. However, this was not always possible due to several encountered challenges (e.g. technological barriers). The Economic Development Policy Unit (EDPU) published a report on blended TVET and distance learning in Lebanon¹¹. This report explains how learners from low-income and refugee families have less access to modern technology, devices and internet connectivity, and how this contributes to student drop-out rates. Teachers interviewed as part of this paper highlighted how the lack of adequate ICT based tools and learning materials have negatively affected students' learning experience and motivation.

The majority of the documents reviewed addressed the technological barriers to quality implementation of remote learning. These included internet accessibility, cost and signal strength, and the number of devices in a household. Some families have one phone and it was often not available during the day for children to access. In families with multiple siblings accessing online sessions, the lack of more than one device meant that some children missed out if for example, Zoom sessions were overlapping. Devices in families were not always updated with the latest technology, and so do not necessarily support remote learning platforms.

¹¹ Blended TVET & Distance Learning in Lebanon: Challenges and Lessons learned from the field.

The availability of electricity also was a challenge for households (due to interrupted power supplies), as well as language barriers (translation barriers from English to Arabic). Some projects provided tablets, which helped in alleviating the pressure resulting from the lack of availability of devices at a household level.

Some efforts were made to overcome technological barriers. These included providing offline solutions: for example one organisation installed offline boxes (Tabshoura in a box) in centres where multiple users can access the box and work on their lessons. At the time of this report, this project is currently developing a mobile App, which will allow both students and facilitators to download the content and use it offline.

As for children with disabilities, there were different perspectives on how the technological and other needs of children with disabilities were addressed. Based on the reports reviewed some NGOs succeeded in catering for children with disabilities whereas others were not successful in responding to their needs. Some organisations reported that some caregivers felt that distance learning was not suitable for children with special needs, and that often children with special needs were more aggressive when learning from home. Similarly, the Lebanon Education Sector report says that “children with special needs were not catered for with the new approaches”. This report is based on an online survey conducted by the Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS). The study was conducted by information collected from a total of 678 persons who responded to an online survey. The majority were parents (299), followed by teachers (274) and (105) students.

Nevertheless, one organisation outlines in its evaluation how its ABLN programme is adapted for learners with special needs. The report documents how learners with special needs were able to access 86% of the content shared, and were able to re-share around 46% of assignments requested of them by educators. Children with special needs progressed in the programme, with 92% demonstrating improvement between pre- and post-tests. The report concludes that households with learners who have special needs need extra support from teachers, and need continuous and close follow-up during remote learning. Students with special needs in CB-ECE require more support than students with special needs in A/BLN.”

6.4. Supportive Environment

Under the topic of supportive environment, the desk review focused on the context, the involvement of other stakeholders (including MEHE and the education sector) and caregivers/families (their roles, their feedback etc.) in NFE.

The Education Sector short-term Response to COVID-19 in Lebanon Guiding Framework was published in May 2020¹². This report highlights that MEHE did not provide NFE-specific guidance. However, the report documents how the education sector developed a short-term response for children whose NFE was disrupted.

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-education-sector-short-term-response-covid-19-guiding-framework>

The report sets out how the sector response was to be guided by a number of principles:

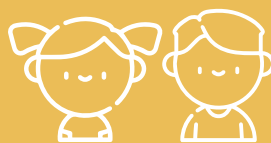
- 1** Safeguarding the right of education for all and ensuring equity and equality, especially for the most vulnerable;
- 2** Promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of families, learners and teachers/ facilitators as a priority during the crisis period;
- 3** Ensuring the continuity of learning through distance learning solutions and modalities;
- 4** Strengthening support to, and coordination among, education sector partners.

The education sector developed a specific framework to guide, support and coordinate the provision of accessible, relevant and age-appropriate distance learning, as well as to equip teachers/ facilitators with accessible and relevant materials. This was done through three complementary domains:



Distance Learning Support

Providing learning material and resources that support core components of literacy, numeracy, science, and life skills to keep children engaged intellectually until they resume the normal learning activities in NFE centres.



Child wellbeing

Providing Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) activities for learners and caregivers of young children to develop skills that support their wellbeing and help them get through these difficult times.



Health Awareness

Providing activities for children and their parents/ caregivers to raise their awareness of COVID-19 so they understand the threats and protective actions they need to take to prevent its spread in their community.



Learning Environment

Based on the analysis of documents reviewed for this study, many households struggled to provide a conducive learning environment for their children to participate in remote settings – for example, some houses are overcrowded with limited private space so it is hard for children to focus. The stresses and strains of the household situation often lead to tensions, abuse and even violence towards the children. On another hand, reports highlighted how parents used common household items to replace educational tools that were not available, for example using dry lentils for counting.



Caregiver Support

Caregivers had various levels of involvement in the education of the children. This included providing a space for study, answering any questions children may have, and interacting with the teachers. Parental engagement was particularly critical for early childhood education. The success of the programme relied heavily on parental availability, literacy and buy-in.

Some organisations reported a positive change in parents/caregivers' perceptions of education due to their engagement in the remote learning programmes. Nine reports reviewed highlighted the satisfaction of caregivers with the remote learning approach. In these reports the satisfaction was rated above 80%. The engagement of the caregivers was critical to the success of the remote learning modalities. One organisation's report presented how the parent's literacy and digital literacy levels influenced their ability to facilitate access to educational content, as well as to assist their children with learning.

Another organisation undertook a series of monitoring exercises with caregivers across their programmes. One of these reports shows that 55% of the caregivers were satisfied with the remote learning approach. 33% of caregivers faced challenges, including technological barriers, delivery of learning kits and the availability of their time. Another similar report indicates how all caregivers were engaged in their children's learning.

Other challenges faced by caregivers faced, and underlined in the reviewed reports include the amount of time they need to spend with the children, particularly when they are busy with other chores; not knowing how to teach foreign languages; and environmental challenges (including providing a quiet place to study for the children, as houses are crowded and full of distractions). Some caregivers are illiterate and therefore cannot give the support required.



Communication Channels

Overall, communication channels between education staff and households/caregivers were reported to be positive across the documents reviewed. These communication channels included phone calls, text messages and WhatsApp messages.

Some reports highlighted how parents praised the teachers' engagement with the students, and their tireless efforts to support their learning. Teachers called caregivers/parents at least once a week across all reviewed programmes. One organisation's monitoring reports mention that 99-100% of caregivers were satisfied with the support and behaviour of the teachers.

The communications between parents and teachers enabled close follow-up on children who dropped out or were at risk of dropping out across programmes. The communications also had an impact on strengthening the relationship between teachers and caregivers.

6.5. Learning Content & Outcomes

All learning content in the remote modality was developed from adaptation of the content delivered in the face-to-face modality and was therefore very relevant to the key learning objectives of NFE programmes and MEHE NFE policy. The content of NFE Programs included social, emotional and wellbeing activities. Reports highlighted how teachers shared social and emotional learning (SEL) activities across all programmes from one to three times a week. Additionally, the majority of reports documented how COVID-19 information was circulated to all caregivers and students regularly.

Despite the effectiveness of the online learning, several reports highlighted how the remote learning modality could never replace face-to-face learning completely, but perhaps in some cases hybrid approaches may be considered. Reasons reported for why remote learning will not replace face-to-face learning include:

- ◆ The coverage and quality of learning content (further work is needed to enable the coherence of learning resources and activities).
- ◆ Students need active engagement and support when learning which cannot always be provided through remote learning.
- ◆ Inequality across the student population in accessing devices, internet, power etc.
- ◆ Technological skills amongst the teachers vary, which affects the quality of remote learning.
- ◆ The increased demands on parents/caregivers to support remote learning may not always be sustainable. Parents/caregivers have competing priorities.
- ◆ Some home environments are not conducive to learning.

No comparative data was available in the documents reviewed to compare the outputs and achievements during remote learning to the previous in-person learning modalities. This is possibly due to the emergency setting of the intervention, and also the timing, with some; such reports might not yet having been issued by organisations.

One organisation provided feedback that highlighted how remote learning was linked to poorer performance on academic ability assessments, as well as adverse effects on social, emotional, physical, and mental health which affect the academic performance. Due to the absence of interpersonal interaction during remote learning, many students who inevitably spent a lot of time online began to exhibit signs of social isolation. In fact, some children reported being sad as they missed the interaction with their friends and teachers. The lack of communication and social isolation frequently result in mental health problems such as increased stress, anxiety, and negative thinking. The same organisation reported that described how students who lack strong self-motivation and time management skills, struggle to keep up with regular deadlines while studying online which affected their achievements. The organisation also documented that students taking online tests tend to allow another person to take the test in place of themselves and therefore it is important to have an effective assessment process in place that allows identity verification.



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

In all cases, children were given the opportunity to continue their education despite the pandemic. Several NGOs reported achievement of learning outcomes across remote learning programmes despite the abovementioned challenges. Some NGOs also reported how children's confidence grew during the remote learning sessions, as they were more open to talking with their teachers.

Transition to the formal education system is seen as one of the biggest challenges of NFE in Lebanon due to government regulations and documentation requirements. However, several reports from one organisation document the transition of boys and girls to formal education during the pandemic.

The social and emotional wellbeing sessions for both learners and caregivers were included across the remote learning documents reviewed. Caregivers reported how children enjoyed the SEL sessions provided through remote learning, and how they contributed to stress relief.

One report highlighted how school closures and distance learning measures in Lebanon have had an adverse impact on children's mental health and wellbeing, triggering their distress and anxiety and negatively affecting their learning outcomes. Children suffered increased stress levels when they could not return to school. Children who engaged in the survey highlighted in that report said that the negative feelings they had due to not returning to school affected their ability to concentrate, motivation to learn, their energy levels and ability to sleep, and their appetite. The same report documents how one organisation's study conducted at the height of the lockdown found that 58% of girls were likely to be homebound, compared to 40% of boys, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

SEL lessons and messages were shared with students across all programmes throughout the pandemic. One evaluation report details parents reporting how their children have achieved many of the targeted SEL outcomes, including hygiene, independence, empathy, a sense of responsibility, helpfulness, initiative-taking, cooperativeness with siblings, sense of family, expressing emotions, and seeking help.

6.6. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Tools

The monitoring and evaluation tools used varied across the remote learning programmes. The tools used in the face-to-face approach were used with slight adaptations to fit the remote modality. The tools used aimed to assess the academic performance of learners, measure the satisfaction of teachers and caregivers with the programme delivered, understand the disability status of learners, measure attendance, and measure the proficiency of learners.

All tools used were very relevant to measuring the effectiveness and impact of remote learning programmes. They assisted programme providers with data to inform the ongoing development and adjustments of the remote learning programmes, and measure the achievements of these programmes.

6.7. Other Areas

Referral of children

When it comes to referral of children to specialized service providers, reviewed reports highlighted how the majority of caregivers and teachers knew how to report child protection risks. Teachers were trained to share information and advice to caregivers through WhatsApp and via direct phone calls and to refer cases to social workers when needed.

As for the needs raised by families of learners, they were primarily around basic needs to enable their children to do their homework - internet charge cards, availability of devices, and a solution to power shortages.

6.8. Effectiveness of the remote learning programme

Several reports documented the effectiveness of the remote learning programmes. There is an increased understanding of the importance of children's education amongst caregivers and parents. Across communities', informal support networks emerged amongst parents/caregivers to support their children's learning. These networks enabled parents/caregivers to share their concerns, challenges and successes with each other.

Students were able to re-play lessons in their own time and learn at their own pace. The remote learning programmes enabled children to keep connected during a very stressful period. Organisations used several monitoring tools to assess the outcomes of their remote learning programmes. Overall, the majority of children who completed the educational cycle demonstrated an improvement in their learning outcomes and acquired the learning objectives.

The reports also document how all students who have completed the learning cycle and met the minimum proficiency level, have been referred to formal education. For example, one report evidenced how ECE children were prepared to be referred to Grade 1 in formal education. Another reported how 262 learners successfully transitioned from level 2 and level 3 to preparatory ECE classes and Grade 1 classes in public schools. In general, organisations reported very positive results.

The inter-agency coordination issued a Guiding Framework in May 2020 for the Education Sector Short Term Response to COVID-19. This document brought together all the work that partners implemented during the first few months of the pandemic and explains the thinking behind the response as well as the response domains. All programmes discussed in the documents reviewed were aligned with the MEHE National Policy for Alternative Education Pathways, the RACEII Strategy and the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan.

Conclusions

To sum up the key lessons learnt and best practices from the desk review, it is possible to conclude that some online platforms are more “user friendly” than others, and this must be considered by organisations selecting the platforms in future similar context where remote learning modality would be applied. We would recommend further research into this area to determine the most suitable platform going forward. All users require training on educational platforms before use, particularly younger children depending on their level of exposure to technology. The content of the online platform needs to be designed in a way to enable children to meet the learning objectives even if they do not have a literate parent or family member.

The distribution of devices by NGOs to households varied across organisations. It was challenging for households who only had one device suitable for online learning. Distribution of devices, internet charge cards, and other resources needs to be a consideration for future programmes. The combination of online and offline learning in future crisis should be explored – this includes the distribution of “paper” resources, and the use of platforms that can be used offline e.g. “Tabshoura in a box”. Teachers require support before the implementation of remote learning. Training is required on the platform itself, but also how to use the platform to effectively achieve the objectives of the remote learning. Teachers also require support throughout the implementation of a remote learning programme. This can include peer networks, one-to-one support, and capacity development. Teachers are primarily responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of remote learning programmes – this is an area that can be strengthened to include formative questions, tests, or exercises to closely monitor students’ learning progress.

Parents and caregivers were a core part of the remote learning programme. An investment in digital literacy programmes for parents and caregivers would strengthen the programme. Support is also needed during the implementation of the programme for parents and caregivers. This includes support with providing a learning environment, safeguarding, technology, and linking with other parents and caregivers (peer support).

Children require additional support during remote learning. This includes strengthening PSS activities balancing between academic and socioemotional skills. Children with special needs also require additional support which should also be included in future strategies.

Online safety is a core part of safeguarding, and is essential for future programmes. Organisations to include the development of guidelines, processes and procedures in any future programmes.

Coordination of remote learning responses across the sector would strengthen the efficiency of the response. A multi-sectoral information sharing and communication system is essential for efficient programming during emergencies.

There has been learnings across the sector on remote learning. These learnings will strengthen any future programming, and can feed into MEHE’s work in developing guidelines and supports for NFE in a remote setting.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on all documents reviewed in the desk review and the analysis completed by the consultants.



Support to Caregivers

- ◆ Consider including tips on management of space within each house and managing other children in the house while caregivers are working with one child.
- ◆ Consider adding advice on positive reward systems to caregiver training.
- ◆ Many caregivers reported the challenge they experienced in supporting students with foreign languages. Consider adding basic foreign language training for caregivers.
- ◆ Consider the enhancement of digital skills for caregivers to increase the engagement and the quality of learning.
- ◆ Consider conducting more PSS sessions for caregivers.
- ◆ Support teachers and caregivers in their use of digital tools: Plan brief training or orientation sessions for both teachers and caregivers. Assist teachers in preparing basic settings such as internet data solutions.
- ◆ Create communities of teachers, caregivers, and school administrators to address feelings of isolation or helplessness, as well as to facilitate the sharing of experiences and discussion of coping strategies when dealing with learning challenges.
- ◆ Consider the introduction of a caregiver support line to help them to share issues and support one another. Some caregivers felt isolated during the COVID-19 lockdown period.
- ◆ Consider adapting implementation methodologies to the time availability of the caregiver.
- ◆ Consider reviewing the maximum number of sessions per cycle of activity, and the maximum number of days per week required, given the nature of remote learning, the involvement of caregivers, the competing needs etc..



Technology

- ◆ Consider distributing additional devices in future remote learning programmes accompanied by a distribution policy and risk assessment (access to internet and electricity, sustainability, repairs, property, risk of selling, child safeguarding...).
- ◆ Consider the distribution of a hard drive/additional storage cards with learning content to address the challenges of storage on household devices.
- ◆ Consider the inclusion of digital literacy in all non-formal education programmes.
- ◆ Consider future platforms enabling translations between Arabic and foreign languages to facilitate all learners.

- ◆ Consider the distribution of power banks and solar lamps to overcome electricity outage challenges.
- ◆ Consider evaluating the multiple online platforms used during the COVID-19 period to provide recommendations for contingency planning for future crisis.



Children`s Wellbeing

- ◆ Reflect on the differences in improvement among the CB-ECE subjects within one program and between different programs and partners to identify ways to improve the results in the psychomotor, socio-emotional, and artistic domains remotely.
- ◆ Consider improving the holistic approach to the child in future programme development – balancing between academic and socioemotional skills (strengthening PSS activities).
- ◆ Conduct frequent direct individual call between teachers and children in order to allow a direct conversation with each child beyond the group, establishing a direct contact.



Ratios

- ◆ Consider (with donor support) increasing the ratio of educational staff and educators to number children for individual follow-up and increased participation and improvement. This could be strengthened through partnerships with local organisations.



Children with special needs

- ◆ Strengthen the focus on inclusion of children with special needs.
- ◆ Develop a structured strategy to boost the engagement of children with special needs. This could include regular house visits, weekly face-to-face lessons for this target group etc.



Teachers' Mentoring and Training

- ◆ Provide continuous mentoring sessions for teachers on online teaching and techniques throughout the project.
- ◆ Consider creating guidelines for the establishment of a structured peer to-peer mentoring system.
- ◆ Teachers and educators must receive an adequate professional development package to support teaching and learning in online and remote contexts.
- ◆ Consider the inclusion of blended/remote learning modalities in future teacher training.
- ◆ The impact of remote learning on teachers must be considered – many worked overtime throughout the pandemic preparing materials for students, supporting caregivers and students at home.



Monitoring and Evaluation

- ◆ Consider expanding teachers' training to ensure adequate use of monitoring tools.
- ◆ Strengthen monitoring tools to enable teachers to identify when students are at risks of drop-out and low participation.
- ◆ Develop ways to monitor learner participation, and to ensure that it is not another member of the household who is completing assignments etc. This can include working with parents/caregivers and reviewing learner practice during sessions.
- ◆ Establish ground rules for distance learning with parents/caregivers and students.
- ◆ Create formative questions, tests, or exercises to closely monitor students' learning progress.
- ◆ Use tools to help students submit feedback and avoid overloading parents by asking them to scan and send students' feedback.
- ◆ Follow up with caregivers across programmes and take their feedback into consideration in strengthening future programmes.



Child Safeguarding

- ◆ Put in place measures to ensure that child protection cases in need of referral are followed up on and provided with the needed interventions.
- ◆ Consider the strengthening of complaint and referral mechanisms – in times of emergencies they may need to absorb a higher caseload.



Blended Learning

- ◆ Consider including a combination of online and in-person classes within future programmes to promote personal contact and socialization of the children where possible.
- ◆ Consider including art classes and sports within future programmes, which focus on strengthening children's creativity through drawing, music, and painting.



Procedures and processes in emergencies

- ◆ Consider processes internally in organisations (or in sector groups) to analyse the context regularly and enhance preparedness.



Learning Materials

- ◆ Consider a combination of online and offline materials for learnings in a non-crisis mode.
- ◆ Consider the development of activities that do not require students and/or caregivers to access a printer.
- ◆ All activities should include simple, clear instructions for children and/or caregivers.

- ◆ Consider developing guidelines and supports for NFE in a remote setting based on the learning from the COVID-19 time period.

Further Research

It was not possible to answer a number of questions from the twin track framework through this research. These are outlined here. Consider further research to answer these questions.

Time Responsiveness

- ◆ How can the responsiveness challenges be addressed in future similar contexts?
- ◆ How responsive and quick were the implementing partners in responding to the emerging need of RL?
- ◆ What were the positive drivers of the timely implementation of RL?

Capacity Building and Team formulation

- ◆ How relevant were the RL capacity development processes at an organisational level?

Mode of Delivery – Technology etc.

1. How did the technology (platform) influence the learners' academic and social achievement?

Other Areas (e.g. children in need of special support, referral of children, responsiveness of other needs raised by families)

- ◆ How effective was the RL programme in responding to other needs raised by families of learners in the RL programme?
- ◆ How efficient was the RL programme in responding to other needs raised by families of learners in the RL programme?
- ◆ What impact did RL on child protection and referral systems?
- ◆ What impact did RL have on the responsiveness in addressing other needs raised by families and/or learners?
- ◆ Did RL have any impact on the psychosocial support given to learners and/or caregivers?

Additional areas that were not explored by this research can be researched furthermore to feed into future remote learning modalities. These include:

- ◆ Costs of remote learning
- ◆ Coordination of remote learning on a sector level
- ◆ Evaluation of different materials used
- ◆ Type of child safeguarding issues reported

Annexes

Annexes one: Terms of Reference

Save the Children International, Lebanon

Desk Review Terms of Reference – Impact of Remote Education in NFE

Supporting the right to quality education for vulnerable Syrian and host community children and youth

Lebanon - Beirut

Total of 30 working days between 01/07/2022 – 31/10/2022

Individual Consultant, Team of Consultants, Consultancy Firms

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVE

As a fundamental human right for all, education is especially critical for children and youth affected by conflict and displacement, creating a sense of hope for the future in deeply impacted societies. Yet, even prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Syrian refugee children and youth in Lebanon were facing great barriers to accessing and continuing their education, while those with disabilities are often experiencing exclusion and lack of access to inclusive and accessible educational services. Moreover, more and more children – both Lebanese and refugee children – are struggling to attend education. Due to the multiple crises in Lebanon, schools were closed for prolonged periods of time over the past three school years, with an increasing number of out-of-school children.

Non-formal education programmes are supporting refugee and Lebanese children to develop foundational literacy and numeracy support, and helping children to remain in education (e.g. through catch-up/retention support classes). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, learning centres were closed and non-formal education classes were provided remotely over a period of almost two years. Centres are now open again but it remains essential to be prepared for any future crisis and take stock of lessons learned and best practices that were implemented as part of remote learning. These will be compiled and analysed through a desk review of existing evaluations, monitoring tools and reports developed by education sector partners (i.e. national and international NGOs). This work is part of the Haqqi Consortium implemented by SCI, NRC, Nabad and MAPS.

II. Desk Review SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This desk review aims at compiling relevant information such as internal evaluation reports, monitoring reports and findings on the impact of remote modality learning approaches for non-formal education programs. **The purpose of the exercise is to establish sector-wide findings on the impact of remote education in NFE, as well as formulate best practices and recommendations for the provision of remote NFE in the future.** In case of any major gaps, additional findings could be retrieved from conducting Focus group discussion (FGDs) and Key information interviews (KIIs) in addition to the desk review.

III. METHODOLOGY

The desk review will include the following three steps: I) Identifying and scanning the existing literature and II) analysing secondary data, III) Formulating conclusions, best practices and recommendations. The desk review should look into key documents including previous SCI and other Haqqi consortium partners' (NRC, Nabad, MAPS) reports, findings, monitoring results and researches about the remote learning modality in non-formal education settings. It should also look into the findings/reports from other sector partners on remote education, including local and international NGOs.

In case there are major remaining gaps where no info is available through secondary data, additional info will be collected through targeted focus group discussions (FGDs) with key staff who worked on supporting remote learning, teachers who implemented remote learning modalities and if possible parents/caregivers who participated in the approach.

IV. COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE DESK REVIEW

The desk review will be led by the recruited consultant with the support of SCI Senior MEAL coordinator. The consultant can draw on the support of:

- ◆ Consortium Education Advisors and Specialists
- ◆ Consortium Technical or implementation team members as relevant
- ◆ Consortium MEAL Focal Points

A consortium steering committee, comprised of the SCI Senior MEAL Coordinator, the Chief of Party, the SCI Education Advisor and NRC Education Specialist, will oversee administration and overall coordination of the work. They will be responsible of:

- ◆ *Selection of external consultant (s) or consultancy firm;*
- ◆ *Review of the inception report and approval of the proposed Desk Review methodology;*
- ◆ *Review of the draft final report;*
- ◆ *Development of a dissemination and utilization action plan based on the final findings and recommendations.*

V. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING DEADLINES

The following deliverables will be developed by the consultant:

Inception report:

Prior to beginning of the literature review scanning and the analysis of secondary data, an inception report will be produced subject to approval by the steering committee. This report will detail a draft work plan with a summary of the primary information needs, the methodology to be used, and a work plan/schedule with major deadlines. With regard to the methodology, the inception report will include a description of how the literature review process will be performed, how the secondary data will be retrieved and analysed. It should also include the draft of the final report outline (i.e. Table of Content).

Once the report is finalized and accepted, the Consultant must submit a request for any major change in strategy, methodology or approach to the Consortium Steering Committee for approval.

Draft Desk Review Report:

A draft Desk Review report will be submitted to Consortium Steering Committee who will revise the document and provide feedback within two weeks of receipt of the draft report. Secondary data and qualitative data collected and analysis developed should be annexed to the draft report. If needed, the draft report will also include a sampling framework, data sources, and drafts of suggested data collection tools for the qualitative analysis such as tools and interview guides.

If necessary, **additional data collection** will be conducted through focus groups discussions/key informant interviews to address major information gaps, if any. The need for this data collection will be discussed and agreed up with the Steering Committee. The consultant will develop the necessary tools/interview questions and will analysis the results. The data collection will be done by MEAL staff in Lebanon.

Final report:

The Final Desk Review Report will present the main findings and should also include a two-page executive summary that summarizes the key lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations. It should also include a best practices case studies that can be shared with Consortium technical and management staff. Secondary data and qualitative data collected and analysis developed should be annexed to the draft report.

All material collected in the undertaking of the Desk Review process should be lodged by the SCI Senior MEAL Coordinator and MEAL Manager prior to the termination of the contract.

Presentation of findings:

After submission of the Final Desk Review Report, the consultant will provide a final presentation for relevant stakeholders in the education sector. A workshop for sector partners will be organised by SCI and the consultant will be asked to present the key findings and facilitate a discussion among participants.

VI. TIMEFRAME

Proposals should present a budget for a maximum of 30 working days, between the 1st of July and 31st of October 2022. In case of any additional primary data collection needed, there will be an additional 5 working days added to this consultancy, resulting in a total of 35 working days.

The Consultant is expected to provide a suggested timeline and work plan for the work in line with the scope of the Desk review process as described above.

In event of serious problems or delays, the consultant should inform the Consortium Steering Committee immediately. Any significant changes to review timetables shall be approved by the Consortium Steering Committee.

VII. REQUIRED SKILLS

For this work, the following skills/qualifications and expertise is required:

- ◆ Overall understanding of remote learning and non-formal education provision
- ◆ Sound experience in conducting research, desk reviews and (education) program evaluations
- ◆ Expertise in qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies and techniques with the focus on child-focused design and delivery of assessment tools
- ◆ Experience working with international organizations in conducting research and desk reviews
- ◆ Fluency in English (written and spoken); Arabic skills are an asset.

VIII. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Responses should be submitted no later than 17th of June 2022 at 17:00 GMT+2 Lebanon by email: Interested consultants/consultancy firms are required to submit their proposals to the following email address: juana.amine@savethechildren.org using the following subject line “PR106753 - Desk Review”.

Should you have any further technical questions please contact us.

Proposals must include the following:

- ◆ Outline of evaluation framework and methods, analysis techniques, proposed time frame and work plan
- ◆ Proposed evaluation budget and proposed payment schedule aligned with deliverables schedule
- ◆ CVs and evidence of past evaluation papers for each team member
- ◆ Example of previously conducted evaluation

Annexes Two: Documents Reviewed

#	NGO	Documents
1	AVSI	Study on Caregivers involvement in Distance Learning, June 10th, 2021
2		Evaluation of Distance Learning in Non Formal Education
3		Guidelines for Remote Learning and Blended Learning in AVSI Community Based Early Child Education and Basic Literacy and Numeracy Non Formal Education Programmes
4	NRC	Remote Learnings – Preliminary Findings – June 2022
5	Relief International	Independent Project Evaluation of Educational and Mental Health Support, November 2021
6		EMHS – Caregiver FGDs Cycle Two Major Findings
7	Save the children	Caregivers - COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring Report, Lebanon Country Office, MEAL Department, May 2020
8		COVID-19 Beirut Blast Responses – Learning Report, Lebanon Country Office, MEAL Department, January 2021
9		Education Emergency Response During COVID-19 – Remote Learning Approach in Lebanon
10		Teachers - COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring Report, Lebanon Country Office, MEAL Department, May 2020
11		Bulgari PDM Learning Material - Lebanon Country Office MEAL Department, July 2021

#	NGO	Documents
12	Save the children	Increasing access to learning and support Syrian refugee and vulnerable Lebanese children impacted by covid-19, North, Lebanon Outcome level report, February 2022
13		NMFA North and Bekaa, Lebanon Outcome level report - March 2022
14		Third phase of the Olayan foundation supported early childhood care and development programme, in Bekaa valley, Lebanon Outcome Level Report
		Caregivers Monitoring Phone Calls Reports – Various areas
15		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - SDC Report - June 2021
16		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - LDSC Report - July 2021
17		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - UNICEF Report - July 2021
18		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - ECW Report - July 2021
19		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - Bulgari Report - July 2021
20		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - NMFA Report - February 2022
		Teachers Monitoring Phone Calls Reports – Various areas
21		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - SDC Report - April 2021
22		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - Bulgari Report - July 2021
23		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - ECW Report - July 2021
24		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - LDSC Report - July 2021
25		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - UNICEF Report - July 2021
26		COVID-19 Satisfaction Monitoring - NMFA Report - February 2022
27		COVID-19: Short term emergency response – Education Guidance for teachers – Lebanon.
28	Lebanese Alternative Learning (Terres de hommes, AVSI, War Child)	Basic Literacy and Numeracy Project Impact Report
29	ANA AQRA	My Best Start Project Scaling Access to Early Childhood Education Impact Report
30		Evaluation Report Community-Based Early Childhood Education Programme. The “Just Right Start” Project Lebanon. Distance Learning Intervention; October 2020

#	NGO	Documents
31	Economic Development Policy Unit	Blended TVET & Distance Learning in Lebanon: Challenges and Lessons learned from the field.
32	UNICEF	Non-Forma Education Programmes Details and Guidelines for the Remote Learning Modality – August 2020
33		Putting the “learning” back in remote learning June 2020
34		Guidance Continuity of Learning during COVID-19 - Reaching All Children
35	Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon	Learning Readiness Assessment Analysis Report – April 2020
36	Interagency Coordination	Education Sector Short Term Response to COVID-19 - Lebanon. Guiding Framework
37	Nabad Association	Email Feedback
38	Lebanon Education Sector	Education at a tipping point
39	International Rescue Committee	Email with summary recommendations

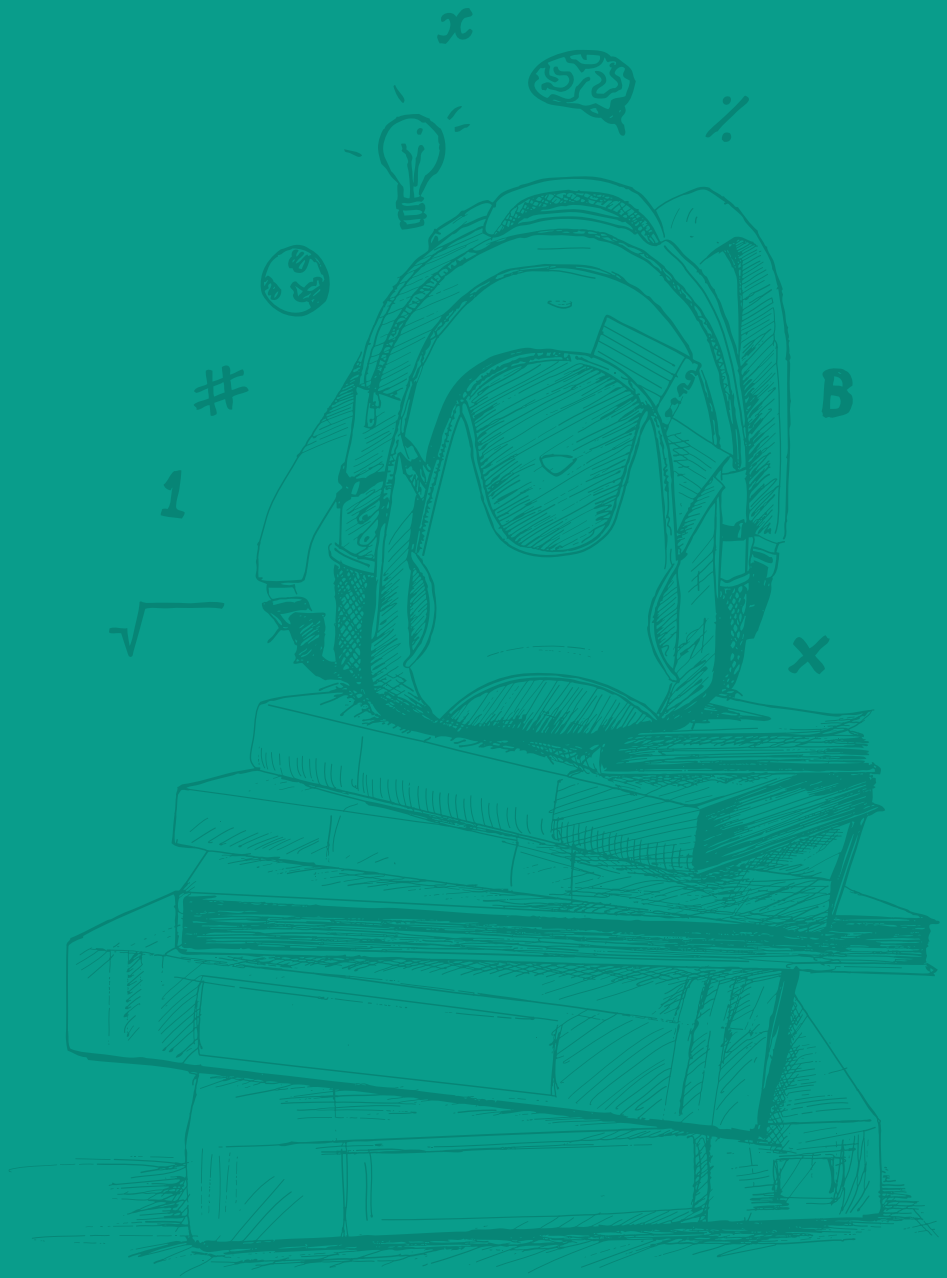
Annex Three – Twin Track Framework

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact
Time Responsiveness		1. To what extent were the objectives of the RL programme achieved in a timely manner? 2. How can the responsiveness challenges be addressed in future similar contexts?	3. How responsive and quick were the implementing partners in responding to the emerging need of RL? 4. What were the barriers to timely implementation of RL? 5. What were the positive drives to the timely implementation of RL?	6. How did the timeliness of the Remote learning response impact the children's education? 7. How did the timeliness of the Remote learning response impact the caregivers?
Capacity Building and Team formulation	8. How relevant were the RL capacity development processes at an Individual staff level? 9. How relevant were the RL capacity development processes at an organisational level?	10. How did the readiness/ lack of readiness of the implementing team shape the learners' experience? 11. How was the capacity development done? 12. What were the new skills teachers needed to acquire? 13. What were the challenges and best practices?		14. What was the impact of RL on the volunteers and staff?

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact
Mode of Delivery - Technology platforms etc.	<p>15. What were the platform used (sector wide)?</p> <p>16. To what extent were the platforms used adequate to the students, caregivers and teachers' need and capacity?</p> <p>17. How was online-safety addressed?</p> <p>18. How did the technology (platform) influence the learners' academic and social achievement?</p> <p>19. What (if any) were the technological barriers to quality implementation RL?</p> <p>20. How could internal processes be improved to address those technological barriers?</p> <p>21. What did the partners do to address the technological barriers?</p> <p>22. In what ways have the selected RL modalities effectively addressed the needs of all intended population groups, including host community, Syrian refugees, boys, girls and children with disabilities?</p>	<p>23. How were the elements of safe and inclusive programming mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the RL model?</p>	<p>24. How efficient was the mode of delivery of RL - if multiple platforms were used etc.</p> <p>25. To what extent were partners able to consult with and build on stakeholder and working group experiences when structuring their approach /models?</p>	
Supportive environment (Context, stakeholders, caregivers/ families, education sector, education partners)		<p>26. How did the learning environment contribute to/or inhibit the effectiveness of RL?</p> <p>27. How effective was the caregiver Support?</p> <p>28. How effective were the communication channels between education staff and households/caregivers?</p> <p>29. How did MEHE contribute to the effectiveness of the RL programme?</p> <p>30. Were there any cultural barriers to RL?</p>		

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact
Supportive environment (Context, stakeholders, caregivers/families, education sector, education partners)	<p>31. To what extent were families equipped to establish a learning environment at home, and how did it affect the achievement of learning outcomes?</p> <p>32. How did internet connectivity/accessibility and/or accessibility to electronic devices enable or hinder the RL?</p> <p>33. Were there any cultural barriers to RL?</p>			<p>34. What is the impact of RL on the engagement of caregivers/parents in the education of their children and on parental/caregiver perceptions towards education?</p>
Learning Content & Outcomes	<p>35. Was the learning content in Remote modality relevant to the key learning objectives of NFE programmes and MEHE NFE policy?</p> <p>36. Was the learning content in Remote modality relevant to learner's social emotional learning (SEL) requirements?</p>	<p>37. How do programme outputs and achievements during RL compare to previous in-person learning modalities?</p> <p>38. Was social and emotional wellbeing of both learners and caregivers included in the program? If so, how effective was it?</p> <p>39. Did the RL include any health education on COVID-19 etc.? If so, how effective was it?</p> <p>40. What adaptations were made to existing curricula for the RL modality?</p> <p>41. To what extent were they effective?</p> <p>42. How did the mode of content delivery (individual-led vs group-led) shape the effectiveness of learners' academic and social achievement?</p> <p>43. How did the dosage/frequency of intervention shape the effectiveness of learners' academic and social achievement?</p>	<p>44. Was the learning content delivered efficiently through RL? If yes, how?</p>	<p>45. To what extent has the RL modality generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, effects on children's' education?</p> <p>46. Did the learning content enable preparedness to transition from NFE to FE?</p> <p>47. What impact did the RL programme have on learner's SEL (Social emotional learning)? Any examples given?</p> <p>48. Did the impact on beneficiaries vary between the RL modality and previous in-person learning modality?</p>

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact
M&E Tools	49. How relevant were the M&E tools for RL programme?	50. How effective was the monitoring system (including tools) adopted during RL modality in collecting evidence-based data?		
Learning Content & Outcomes		51. How effective was the RL programme in supporting children with special needs/ disabilities 52. How effective were the referral systems during RL? 53. How effective was the RL programme in responding to other needs raised by families of learners in the RL programme?	54. How efficient was the referral of children during RL? 55. How efficient was the RL programme in responding to other needs raised by families of learners in the RL programme?	56. What impact did RL have on children in need of special support? 57. What impact did RL on child protection and referral systems? 58. What impact did RL have on the responsiveness in addressing other needs raised by families and/or learners? 59. What impact did RL have on the mental health of learners and/or caregivers? 60. Did RL have any impact on the psychosocial support given to learners and/or caregivers?



Save the Children International, Lebanon

Desk Review Terms of Reference – Impact of Remote Education in NFE
