

**Action Document for EU Trust Fund to be used for the decisions of the
Operational Board**

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	The EU Regional Trust Fund’s support to public education in Lebanon in the context of the EU response to the Syria crisis
Total cost	Total estimated cost: 106,500,000 EUR Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: EUR 106,500,000
Duration	60 months
Country	Lebanon
Locations	Nationwide
Implementing Partner(s)	UNICEF/Civil Society Organisations/Service Providers
Main Stakeholder(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) • Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) • Education sector actors in Lebanon, including teachers, counsellors, trainers, school administrative staff • Other relevant Ministries of the Government of Lebanon, such as Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), Ministry of Labour (MoL) • Different UN agencies working on education, EU Member States, other donors and international financing institutions • Local and international civil society actors
Aid method / of Method implementation	<p>Project Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indirect Management - Delegation Agreement - Direct Management – Grant Agreement - Direct management – Procurement of services and/or - Direct Management – Contribution Agreement

DAC-code	110	Sector	Basic Education
Objectives	<p>The overall objective is to strengthen the public education system towards inclusive and quality education, with the ultimate goal of guaranteeing access to and retention in public education services to all children living in Lebanon in alignment with the Lebanese Strategy "Reaching All Children With Education, 2016-2021" (RACE) priorities and with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific objective 1 is improving access to and retention in public formal education as well as in Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes, for Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese for the school years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. • The specific objective 2 is enhancing the quality of education, in order to define and use child-centred teaching and learning approaches, in the period from mid-2018 to mid-2021. • The specific objective 3 is strengthening the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and more widely the public education system in Lebanon in the period from mid-2018 to mid-2021. 		
Main Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidies paid for registration fees for mainly Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese into formal education in Lebanese public schools, including related retention support measures. • Transportation provided for Syrian refugee children enrolled in formal education, where needed. • Delivery of NFE programmes (such as Early-Childhood education, Accelerated Learning Programme, Basic Numeracy and Literacy, Basic Numeracy and Literacy/Youth), mainly to Syrian refugee children out of school or out of other learning opportunities, including provision of transportation where needed. • Support given to the Ministry and other relevant public education entities (i.e. CERD) to improve the quality of public education. • Support given to Ministry's capacity (including different departments, MEHE Regional Offices, schools) and other relevant public education entities (i.e. CERD) to plan, manage resources and monitor the delivery of education services. 		

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

The Syrian conflict has caused one of the worst humanitarian crises, forcing millions of people from Syria to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and displacing millions more internally. The toll on children has been devastating and more needs to be done to secure a better future for children affected by the crisis in Syria, the region and beyond. There is a recognition that countries hosting Syrian refugees cannot cope with this massive refugee crisis in the medium to long-term without significant and continued technical and financial support from the international community. This is especially true for Lebanon. With its comparatively small population, limited capacities and resources, such a burden is posing a growing threat to the country's economic, social and political stability. The European Union attaches great importance to its relationship with Lebanon as a key partner in the European neighbourhood, and has been committed to supporting Lebanon in its response to the Syrian crisis.

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

The Action will mainly seek to build individual and institutional capacities of MEHE to deal with the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on the public education system, as well as to empower local communities socially by ensuring sufficient access to education for the most vulnerable children. It aims at strengthening the capacity of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in improving the delivery of public and quality education services, access to and retention in primary education to the most children living in Lebanon, with a focus on Syrian refugee children, in order to guarantee transition to higher cycles of education.

The EU assigns a special place for children in its internal and external policies and actions,¹ anchored in the Convention on the Rights of Child,² and affirming that “progress in the condition of children is essential if we are to prevent state fragility and ensure long-term sustainable development, social cohesion, stability and human security at national, regional and global levels”.³ The EU is engaged to promote and support more efficient and effective cooperation and coordination for more rapid, predictable and sustainable support to education in emergencies and crises.⁴

The Action is aligned to the priorities defined by the Government of Lebanon in the Lebanese Response Plan 2017-2020 (LCRP),⁵ integrated in the international response as part of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RPs),⁶ as well as to the specific national sector

¹ The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000), Article 14, URL: www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf. The Treaty on European Union (2009) expressly commits the EU to promote the protection of the rights of the child in EU internal and external action, Article 3, URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>.

A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (2016), URL: https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs_review_web_13.pdf.

EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2017), URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_rights_of_child_2017.pdf

² Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted on 20 November 1989), URL: www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

³ Commission Communication "A Special Place for Children in EU External Action", COM(2008) 55. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/special-place-children-eu-external-action_en

⁴ Commission Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises, COM (2018) 304. URL: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/news/Communication_on_Education_in_Emergencies_and_Protracted_Crises.pdf

⁵ URL: www.un.org.lb/lcrp2017-2020

⁶ URL: www.3rpsyriacrisis.org

strategy known as "Reaching all Children with Education in Lebanon, 2016-2021" (RACE 2)⁷ - MEHE adopted in 2016, also part of the "No Lost Generation" initiative,⁸ aiming at scaling up access to education and improving its quality as well as at expanding access to child protection services.

It is against this background that the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF) supports delivery of commitments the EU has made under the EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities and Compact (November 2016).⁹ The Partnership Priorities set up a renewed framework for political engagement and enhanced cooperation. They were agreed in the context of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy¹⁰ and the EU's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy.¹¹ The Compact includes the mutual commitments through which the EU and Lebanon will improve the living conditions both of refugees temporarily staying in Lebanon and of vulnerable host communities.

The EUTF also takes into account commitments and pledges that the EU has made in the education sector at the London Conference (February 2016), CEDRE 4 Conference (April 2018) and Brussels Conferences and related outcomes and partnership papers (in April 2017 and 2018). "The Government of Lebanon and its international partners reaffirm their commitment to the London Syria conference goal of every child having access to a quality education, and the objectives of RACE 2 reaching all children and youth with education, while strengthening the public education system for an improved quality of education. Both agree on a continued and renewed effort to address barriers to education, bring down the number of children outside any form of learning, and retain children who are already in the formal system".¹²

The Action identified in this document is aligned with priorities identified through structured dialogues held with several Lebanese and international civil society organisations.

In line with the Overall Objective of the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis (EUTF) *"to provide a coherent and reinforced aid response to the Syrian crisis on a regional scale, responding primarily to the needs of refugees from Syria in neighbouring countries, as well as of the communities hosting the refugees and their administrations, in particular as regards resilience and early recovery"*, the Action will contribute to the Specific Objective 1 of the current Result Framework, namely *"to guarantee quality basic education and protection for Syrian refugee children in the host countries"*.¹³

The implementation of this Action will be based on the Joint Humanitarian and Development Framework (JHDF)¹⁴ document 2018-2019 developed by the EU Delegation to Lebanon. The JHDF process is informed by key EU commitments and guidance on resilience building and humanitarian-development nexus.¹⁵ Finally, it is assumed that a Strategic Mid-Term

⁷ URL: www.mehe.gov.lb/uploads/file/2016/Oct/RACE%20II_FINAL%20Narrative_29AUG2016.pdf

⁸ URL: <http://nolostgeneration.org/>

⁹ URL: www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/11/15/eu-lebanon-partnership/

¹⁰ URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en

¹¹ URL: https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/pages/files/eugs_review_web_13.pdf

¹² URL: www.consilium.europa.eu/media/34145/lebanon-partnership-paper.pdf

¹³ URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eutf_madad_results_framework.pdf

¹⁴ JHDF aims to shape a more comprehensive EU response to the Syria crisis in Lebanon by enabling complementarity and strengthening the operational links between the humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and conflict prevention, taking the humanitarian and aid effectiveness principles into account.

¹⁵ Commission Communication the EU Approach to Resilience: Learning from Food Security Crises (2012), Conclusions on EU approach to resilience (2013), The Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries

Evaluation of the RACE 2 Strategy, an out-of-school children study, and alignment with the support to the basic education programme by UNICEF and World Bank (main channels for donors in education), are necessary benchmarks for the implementation of this Action for the mid-2018 to mid-2021 (corresponding to school years 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021).

2.2. Context

2.2.1 Country context

Lebanon has so far been the main recipient country of refugees from Syria with an arrival 1.5 million people since 2012. Refugees from Syria are in all parts of the country, with the highest concentration in the Bekaa Valley (over 30%). The protracted refugee crisis in Lebanon has impacted beyond refugee population. LCRP 2017 – 20 indicates that over 105,000 Lebanese households live below the absolute poverty line of US\$3.84 per day (calculated in 2004). 35,000 households live under the extreme poverty line of US\$2.40 per day (also calculated in 2004). A limited number of Lebanese are covered by social insurance if they are in formal employment. The poverty rate for Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR increased dramatically from 48% in 2014 to 70% in 2015.

The proportion of registered Syrian refugee households living below the poverty line (US\$ 3.84 per person per day) continues to increase, reaching 76% of the refugee households in 2017. Due to the lack of appropriate institutional and financial capacities and a non-performing fiscal system and the absence of a modern legal framework on de-centralisation, public sector governance and related quality and accessibility of public services are often quite low. Lebanon's macroeconomic situation has deteriorated as a consequence of domestic and regional events, including the Syrian conflict and the ensuing refugee crisis. The crisis has emphasised previously existing vulnerabilities and increased risks, pushing Lebanon's resilience to its limits. Indeed, even before the influx of refugees, access to resources and basic services was limited in many - especially poorer - areas. Often the refugee pressure has been the highest in the poorest communities of the country. After having hosted refugees, for many years, the resources of these communities are stretched to the limit, increasing the risk of tension and conflict.

In October 2014, the Government of Lebanon (GoL) activated a crisis cell lead by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and Ministry of Labour (MoL). It clearly defined the main objectives of the government: i) to reduce the number of refugees by promoting their return, ii) to address rising security concerns and iii) to expand the humanitarian response to include a more development and institutional approach. This led to the launch of the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan, which was seen as the first official recognition of the urgency of the crisis and of the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon to address it.

In follow up to the activation of the Crisis Cell, the GoL asked UNHCR to indefinitely suspend the registration of refugees, which was implemented as of 5 May 2015. This policy, combined with measures to impose border restrictions and a fee of 200 USD to refugees from Syria to renew their residency permits, can be considered the first significant GoL reaction to

2013-2020, Conclusions on EU's Comprehensive Approach (2014), Implementation plan of the Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2015), Global Strategy for European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (2016), Conclusions on the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), Conclusions on EU approach to forced displacement and development (2016), European Consensus on Development (2017), EU Council Conclusions on Operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus (2017), Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's external action" (2017), Joint Staff Working Document "EU resilience policy framework for cooperation with partner countries and evaluation of related implementation actions" (2017).

the crisis. These measures have created a challenging environment for refugees from Syria in obtaining legal stay and refugee protection.

Without legal documentation, access to services including education has become increasingly problematic for refugees, undermining the effectiveness of the overall response. In February 2017, the General Security put in place a waiver of the residency permit renewal fees, but only for certain categories of refugees, thus limiting the benefits of the new policy to part of the refugee caseload. While this is definitely a positive development, more needs to be done so to assure that legal protection is guaranteed to all refugees.

2.2.2 Sector context: policies and challenges

Education is a fundamental human right¹⁶ and is essential to societal development, economic growth and the realisation of individual potential.¹⁷

It is rooted in a national philosophy, culture, and legislative foundation that extend social support services, and build on active community dynamics with significant engagement of key stakeholders including parents and teachers.¹⁸ The government budgetary commitment for education was estimated at an average of US\$1.2 billion/year over the period 2013-2015. This represented 2 percent of GDP and 6.3 percent of total government expenditure.¹⁹

In Lebanon, the education system was already weak before the refugee crisis and divided into public, private, and free private schools. Currently, only 30% of Lebanese children in school age (around 200,000 students) go to public schools. With the number of Syrian refugee children arrived in Lebanon and the structural deficiencies of the system, the national education structure has faced difficulties in coping with an increased demand for education services.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) issued a memorandum instructing public schools to enrol Syrian refugees in the morning shift together with Lebanese students, regardless of their residency status.

In 2014, MEHE introduced the Strategy "Reaching all Children with Education" (RACE), a programme with the goal of enrolling 470,000 school-aged Syrian refugees and poor Lebanese into formal and non-formal learning system by 2016. MEHE also established a Project Management Unit (PMU) directly linked to the Minister, which was tasked to ensure the implementation of RACE. Furthermore, in order to accommodate a greater number of students, in 2014 the Ministry allowed afternoon shifts for Syrians and other non-Lebanese children (i.e. Iraqi refugees and migrants), reaching incrementally 25% of public schools by the school year 2016/2017 (313 schools out of the existing 1288). The 3-year plan was costed at nearly 600 million USD.

As a follow-up to the London Conference (February 2016), MEHE introduced a long-term vision under "RACE 2" Strategy 2016-2021, aimed at (i) enhancing access to formal and non-formal education (including compulsory and, secondary education, and TVET) of 250,000 Syrian children, (ii) improving the quality of education services and (iii) strengthening the

¹⁶ Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989), Article 28.

¹⁷ The right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning is the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Commission Communication on Establishing a European Pillar of Social Rights, COM(2017) 250 final.

¹⁸ World Bank, The Research for Results Program (R4R) Volume 1: Foundations of the Education System in Lebanon (2018).

¹⁹ Ibidem.

public education system (including accurate education data collection/monitoring and information management). The RACE 2 Plan has an estimated cost of around USD 350 million per year. Most of the estimated cost is allocated for enrolment of refugee children from Syria in public schools (first and second shifts). Under RACE 2, enrolment fees remain the same to those foreseen under RACE 1: at 363 USD/child for first shift and 600 USD/child for second shift. Following the WB's cost analysis, MEHE/PMU and its RACE Education Partners (UN agencies and donors) agreed that 100 USD-depreciation would have been included in the 600 USD enrolment fee for Syrian children attending the second shift.²⁰ As agreed among RACE Education Partners, the 100 USD-depreciation should cover school maintenance, running costs and furniture of schools open in the second shift, in order to compensate the extra use of the school infrastructure made in the afternoon.

RACE has been overseen by the RACE Executive Committee (REC) which is an advisory body that includes donors (Australia, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, USA, UK) and international organisations (UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, World Bank) – created in August 2014. REC oversees the overall progress of the RACE implementation, as well as provides technical and strategic guidance; decisions of the REC are taken collectively. REC should meet every 3-4 weeks and is chaired by the MEHE Minister (who normally delegates to the DG and is supported by the RACE PMU).

According to the latest available data,²¹ 631,209 (aged 3-18) refugee children from Syria live in Lebanon. In school year 2017/18, the total number of Syrian children in public schools has reached 220,842 students (3-18 years old) both in morning and afternoon school shifts.²² In addition to this, the MEHE estimates that up to 62,905 school-aged Syrian refugee children were enrolled in semi-private schools. This brings to 283,747 the number of school aged Syrian children (3-18) reached in formal education. However, it is estimated that nearly 55% are still out of school. MEHE has also accounted for 92,617 refugee children benefitting from different non-formal education programmes (close to the commitment made in London of 100,000). This will bring the percentage of refugee children out of learning to 40%.

The enrolment rates significantly drop in lower secondary and the out-of-school rates are highest among 15-to-18 year old Syrians, with less than three per cent of 15-18-years-old registered Syrian refugees enrolled in public secondary schools and around the same fraction in Technical Vocational (TVET) public schools. NFE referral pathway put in place by MEHE in August 2017 does not seem conducive to properly reach out-of-school children and drop-out children in the age 7-10.

However, there are few positive signals in the enrolment for Lebanese and Syrian children (3-14) from school year 2011/2012 to school year 2017-2018, where enrolment respectively increased by 3% and by 13%. Enrolled Lebanese and Syrian children are almost equally distributed among genders.

²⁰ 600-USD fee breaks down in: 100 USD for school fund, 60 USD for parents fund, 340 USD for covering salary of school staff working extra time in the afternoon (headmasters, teachers, administrative staff, janitors) and 100 USD for funding depreciation related to use of school facilities.

²¹ Data produced by UNHCR – December 2017. This figure includes children who are registered as refugees with UNHCR or have approached UNHCR for registration. It also includes just over 6,000 Iraqi children or other nationalities. See also the No-Lost Report "Ensuring Learning Pathways and Protection for Syrian Children and Youth (April 2018), URL: https://nolostgeneration.org/sites/default/files/webform/contribute_a_resource_to_nlg/401/brussels-conference-education-report.compressed.pdf

²² In school year 2017/2018, MEHE opened 349 schools in the afternoon. This represents an increase of 11% in relation to schools year 2016/2017 (313 schools).

The increase in enrolment over the years is partly due to the waiver of school fees for child enrolment in public schools (now covered by the International Community), the increase in the number of second shift schools (from 88 schools in 2013/2014 to 349 schools in 2017/2018) as well as more focused interventions aiming at improving education quality. Moreover, Lebanon is the only country in the MENA region that has an operational Non Formal Education (NFE) Framework (August 2017), including few certified NFE programmes, namely the ECE (Early Childhood Education; 3-5 age group), the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP; 7-9 age group), the Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN; age group 10-14, with more than two years out of school) and Basic Literacy and Numeracy Youth (BLN/Youth; age group above 14, with more than two years out of school). MEHE implements ALP in selected public schools according to the needs. The other NFE Programmes are implemented by Lebanese and International Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) according to the Standards Operating procedures released by MEHE in August 2017. In order to work in NFE, CSOs must have been positively passed an Expression of Interest that MEHE launches every year.

<i>School Year</i>	<i>Target for Syrian refugee children</i>	<i>Target for Lebanese children</i>	<i>Achievement in 1st and 2nd shifts – Primary – Syrian children</i>	<i>Cost/student</i>	<i>Cost of operation (\$)</i>	<i># schools open to Syrian children</i>
2013/2014	144,000	N/A	93,627	363\$ 1 st shift 600\$ 2 nd shift	600 M	1,278 1 st shift
2014/2015	200,000	N/A	105,958			1 st shift + 144 1 st shift + 2 nd shift
2015/2016	200,000	N/A	151,697			1 st shift + 238 2 nd shift
2016/2017	168,000 - 250,000	N/A	190,940		350 M	1 st shift + 313 2 nd shift
2017/2018	168,000 - 250,000	N/A	216,611		354,8 M	1 st shift + 349 2 nd shift
2018/2019	250,000	215,000	N/A	For Lebanese students=60 \$ For Syrian students=363\$ 1 st shift and 600\$ 2 nd shift	214 M	N/A

As the Syrian conflict persists, instability and insecurity continue to impact the daily lives of boys, girls, adolescents and their caregivers in Lebanon, exposing them increasingly to protection violations.

The large numbers of girls and boys still being out-of-school stem from a variety of causes, at community and school levels. Syrian refugees continue to face increasing access barriers to services, as they are faced with a more restrictive and coercive environment.²³ For Syrian refugee children, the main barriers imply schooling-related costs (i.e. uniforms, materials, transportation), language, curricula, limited availability of teachers and decreased teaching performance, due to overtime and increased pressure in coping with distressed classrooms, as well as discrimination and violence at schools. In addition unpredictable enrolment regulations, caused by political and administrative hurdles, restrictive residency and refugee

²³ Human Rights Watch Report 2016, "Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon", URL: www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/19/growing-without-education/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children-lebanon

policy in force since January 2015 leading to livelihood restrictions for parents, exacerbate their access to education.²⁴ As an immediate consequence, economic pressures trigger child protection issues, such as child marriage and child labour. Internal migration and agricultural work also make many Syrian families highly mobile, with children less likely to remain in education. Furthermore, there is a lack of adequate identification/diagnostic and psychosocial support for children with trauma, learning difficulties and special needs. RACE is still having a national-shaped implementation rather having a geographical/regional approach responding to the highest out-of-school children populated areas (i.e. Bekaa). Therefore, the legal status of refugees remains a critically important factor in the success of any response in the long term. Barriers to education for Syrian children are complex and multiple, and require a multi-sectorial, coherent and consistent response, grounded on a strategic partnership among different actors.

Furthermore, the sector faces significant governance and capacity challenges, especially with regard to the structure of the Ministry and the RACE PMU. The risk of creating parallel systems and structures within MEHE are substantial. In spite of the significant investments in increasing enrolment, evidence has been lacking on progress achieved in enrolment against Syrian children out of school, retention rates and barriers to school entry and attendance. Furthermore, MEHE remains critical of the NGOs' role in the education sector believing that NGOs should only work in conducting complementary activities.

To date,²⁵ when it comes to the preparation of the school year 2018-2019, MEHE has confirmed that it will give priority to the implementation of the Pillar 1 of RACE, mainly to guarantee free access to education to Lebanese and refugee children from Syria, (under Pillar 1 of RACE - Access) with a target of 250,000 refugee children to be enrolled in formal education and a target of 100,000 refugee children to be reached with non-formal education programmes, while ensuring a shift toward quality of education (Pillar 2 of RACE 2) and strengthening of Ministry's capacity to plan and manage resources (Pillar 3 of RACE 2). To do so, MEHE has informed that the Ministry is working on a long-term education plan under the Sustainable Development Goal 4 "Education for All",²⁶ in order to leave a positive legacy of the crisis to the Lebanese public education system.

Furthermore, in the RACE Executive Committee (REC) Meeting of May 2018, MEHE presented a gap of USD 7,7 M in relation to fees of refugee children attending public schools in year 2017-2018. This gap is the one left after the EU Trust Fund increased the budget of the Action Document adopted by the Operational Board in June 2017 with a top-up of EUR 12 million (within the 20% flexibility margin of the TF Manager).

This emphasizes the need to continue investing in access to education as a component of RACE 2, addressing demand and supply barriers that impede the enrolment into formal education in a timely and predictable way before the school year starts in September 2018, as requested by MEHE at the Brussels Conference on Syria 2018, while ensuring predictable and multi-year funding.

²⁴ The new regulatory policy will benefit a portion of the refugee caseload, still leaving some without valid residency permit and legal status

²⁵ Discussions at the latest RACE Executive Meeting (May 2018).

²⁶ Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

2.3. Lessons learnt

2.3.1 Strategic elements

It has been observed that the legal status for Syrian refugees living in Lebanon remains crucial. Without legal documentation, indeed, access to any form of services (including education) has become increasingly problematic for refugees, undermining the effectiveness of the overall response.

Therefore, any programmatic response must be multi-sectoral in its aim and consider the entire education value chain and relation in between different education cycles, tackling first and foremost protection and basic needs barriers to education, with the scope of mitigating the inter-relation of economic and legal causes that limit access to formal education. This should be complemented with actions to improve the supply-side of education for children thus addressing the legal, institutional, academic, psycho-social and infrastructural barriers children may face to access and be retained in the education system, across different cycles, levels and kinds of education (basic and secondary education, TVET and higher education). Non-formal education services that support children to transition (back) into the formal system should be considered as indispensable complementary measures.

Shortcomings and lessons learnt in RACE 1 and mid-term implementation of RACE 2 as well as analysis and understanding of out-of-school children and of dropouts are missing, in order to design an appropriate multi-sectorial programme that intervenes jointly and effectively at policy, political and programmatic levels (specific regional approaches might be required, i.e. in Bekaa) in a more long-term perspective.²⁷

Since September 2017, MEHE has released a quarterly fact-sheet, to present achieved targets under RACE 2 and existing needs and gaps. The quarterly fact-sheet has revealed to be a good tool to start guaranteeing accountability and transparency on donors' funding and related use in the education sector. This still needs some improvements, mainly to include clear baseline and quality indicators, primarily on targets of children to be enrolled per age group and adequate geographical distribution of public schools as well as non-formal education activities. MEHE has to maintain this effort to timely release the quarterly fact-sheet, as well as to enhance quantity and quality of its data, in order to allow for evidence-based decision-making and for effective and efficient donors' support to RACE and to the education sector more broadly.

In the framework of transparency and accountability as well as of a possible long-term and sustainable perspective, MEHE should continue reviewing RACE costing as per work of the RACE Sub-committee on financial issues (EU is member together with Germany, UK and World Bank), in order to move away from unit cost approach in favour of a total cost approach and to allow for cost-efficiency and wider impact of RACE strategy. Particularly, the costing review will allow for modification of the depreciation funding (intended to be

²⁷ To provide this needed analysis, MEHE and RACE partners shall soon launch a mid-term review of RACE 2, and UNESCO and UNICEF must in due time release the out-of-school children study, ensuring alignment between existing and pipeline programmes, in particular the World Bank's "Support to RACE" Programme (financed by different donors, including the UK) and the UNICEF Annual Work Plan (financed by different donors including the EU, Germany, etc.). UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and WB are the main channels for donors to transfer funding to the formal education sectors under RACE; while non-formal education is also open to Civil Society Organisations.

spent on maintenance, running costs and furniture of public schools open in the second shift),²⁸ which has caused different interpretation around its use among MEHE and donors.

Better integration of formal and non-formal education would lead to a wider inclusion of international and national CSOs in the response as strategic partners to reach RACE 2 targets.

Implementation of RACE 1 and 2 has shown that the education sector would benefit from an independent monitoring and evaluation mechanism integrated into the education programme, to make the sector efficient, transparent and accountable, in terms of capacities, financial resources, modalities and impact. A monitoring plan based on targets and disaggregated data by gender, population, age group and special needs will also help tracking yearly progress on retention rates and drop outs. Similarly, it will help adjusting the response in due course, taking into account challenges and lessons learnt. Without consolidated, transparent figures and sound analysis the design and implementation of a contextualized and informed response remains difficult.

All of this will encourage international community to further invest in the public education system against identified needs and gaps in the sector with the ultimate goal to guarantee free and quality education to all children living in Lebanon.

2.3.2 Ongoing cooperation

The cooperation is grounded on the long standing partnership that the EU and UNICEF have established in responding to the Syrian crisis since 2012 through ENI Special Measures and since 2015 through the EUTF. An external Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) visit, conducted through external experts in January 2017 came out with some important recommendations, which were already reflected in the programmatic framework for the funding of school year 2017/2018, in order to ensure effectiveness and impact of aid, as follows:

For Lebanon: 1) redesign project components to serve underserved at risk girls, boys and women identified by NGOs during outreach activities; 2) ensure that future programming recognizes the need to design programmes serving children at risk of early marriage or who have already been married, children living with disabilities and children working; 3) consider paying particular attention to support children with special needs and developing accessibility to children with disabilities at school.

Furthermore, in an external evaluation report (March 2018) to the ENI Special Measures (implemented in 2015-2017) in response to the Syrian crisis, evaluators pointed out that *“Lebanon’s education system requires that the entire system be adapted to meet the needs of the populations it serves. MEHE, UNICEF, UNHCR and other relevant organisations, need to develop a more coherent strategy for how to address the inter-linkages, dependencies, and*

²⁸ Following the WB's cost analysis, in 2014, MEHE/PMU and its RACE Education Partners (UN agencies and donors) agreed to use the following fees enrolment for Syrian children in school morning shift = 363 USD; and enrolment for Syrian children in school afternoon shift = 600 USD - breaking down breaks down in 100 USD for school fund, 60 USD for parents fund, 340 USD for covering salary of school staff working extra time in the afternoon (headmasters, teachers, administrative staff, janitors) and 100 USD for depreciation of school facilities. As verbally agreed among RACE Education Partners, the 100 USD-depreciation should cover school maintenance, running costs and furniture of public schools open in the second shift, in order to compensate the extra use of the school infrastructure made in the afternoon. Since 2016, MEHE/PMU has put pressure on donors to use depreciation funds to build new public schools. MEHE is currently revising this model of costing. The EU and other donors have strongly encouraged MEHE to dissociate depreciation funds from children's enrolment fees.

constraints associated with enrolment, retention, quality education, and system strengthening including data collection. While RACE I and RACE II provide a holistic approach to the formal education system, it remains largely a planning document rather than a strategy that describes with a high degree of detail how each pillar will be achieved. They have the what. They need the how. This implies that there is an appropriate level of sequencing between activities and that there is effective monitoring, evaluation and learning systems in place to assess how combinations of activities are leading to intended results”.

2.4. Complementary actions

The EU through ENI Special Measures and the Trust Fund for Syria has consistently funded RACE (around EUR 210 million since 2012 out of which EUR 47 million for the school year 2017/2018) through UN agencies and NGOs to expand access to formal and non-formal education across the country, capacity development including teachers’ training and monitoring, transportation, school supplies, raise awareness and school rehabilitation interventions. This contribution is in addition to EUR 7.2 million allocated under the bilateral cooperation’s programmes (European Neighbourhood Instrument - ENI).

The bilateral programme "School Information Management System" (SIMS) is running until December 2018. Through SIMS all the 1,288 public schools can now record data related to the morning shift (such as students' ID, attendance, teachers, training, school assets, health conditions, etc.). Under the ENI bilateral envelop, the programme "Drop-out" is analysing the drop-out of children with special needs, to produce recommendations and tools to ensure their inclusion in public and private education.

In coordination with MEHE and its Pedagogical Counselling and Guidance Department (DOPS) and Erasmus+ Office in Lebanon, EC's DG Education and Culture (DG EAC) is supporting the implementation of the Programme "eTwinning+", which meant to start for in the second semester of 2018) will be instrumental to increase competencies of teachers of 50 Lebanese public schools and 5 UNRWA schools through on-line training and exchange with teachers and classrooms in Europe.

DG ECHO addresses the fundamental causes that keep children out of school, namely the legal status and wider protection concerns, and increased socio-economic vulnerability. In 2017, within the Education in Emergencies framework ECHO maintains its tailored support to non-formal education programmes through INGOs providing integrated and multi-sectoral interventions that would assist vulnerable children through educational, legal counselling and access to documentation, protection and economic support.

Within the EU Trust Fund for Syria, this Action will continue and build on the Trust Fund’s 2017 Action Document to support children and young people affected by the Syria crisis, in education and protection sectors in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The Trust Fund and UNICEF signed the project contract in December 2017, with the title “Education and Protection Programme in support for Syrian refugees and Vulnerable Host Community School-aged Children and their care givers”. Operations should be ending by the December 2018 as per contract.

For Lebanon, under the education component, the Trust Fund-UNICEF cooperation covers enrolment costs for the school year 2017/2018 (equal to almost USD 45 M), transportation, classroom monitoring and teachers’ mentoring. This support is aligned with Pillars 1 and 2 of RACE 2 and agreed through policy dialogue with MEHE.

The EUTF has provided additional support to facilitate access and integrate Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) children into UNRWA schools and provide them with quality, comprehensive, equitable and inclusive education services for the school year 2017 – 18. A further Action is envisaged for support to the 2018 – 2019 school year.

Through the Action Document "Regional Education and Protection programme for vulnerable Syrian refugee and host community children and adolescents" (approved in April 2016 by the Second Trust Fund Board), the Trust Fund has been funding the "Back to the Future" Project in Lebanon and Jordan, which is implemented by a three-INGO Consortium (AVSI, Terre des Homme Italy, WarChildHolland). In Lebanon, the Project aims to tackle the educational gap between Syrian refugee and Lebanese children, in the North, Akkar, Mount Lebanon and South regions, with a financial support equal to EUR 13 million for 30 months (December 2016-June2019).

Synergies will be guaranteed with EUTF's operation in the sectors of TVET/Higher Education and livelihood, so that children can transit to higher cycles of education and/or training as well as can have access to decent work opportunities to live in dignified conditions.

According to information available for the moment,²⁹ main donors in Lebanon will support RACE/education sector as follows. Germany is programming to support enrolment for school year 2018-2019 with EUR 50 M (similar to school year 2017/2018). The United Kingdom has already allocated GBP 160 M for the period 2016-2020 through the WB's Programme "Support to RACE 2" (total amount equal to USD 200 M, equally divided in grants and loans), to cover support to formal education (mainly Pillars 2 and 3), non-formal education and child protection. France has allocated EUR 7.3 M as un-earmarked funding as a follow-up of the Brussels Conference 2018. Enrolment for 2018-2019 will be also covered by some contributions from Canada and Norway, while USA might pull out from supporting access to education, leaving a financial gap of around USD 15 M. With this projection, accordingly to MEHE, there is a gap of USD 61 million for enrolment of 250,000 Syrian children (equal to 15%-increase in relation to target achieved in year 2017-2018, equal to 220,000 Syrian refugees) in public schools in Lebanon.

Under the protection sector, the Trust Fund-UNICEF partnership is a continuation of EU's support to the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) to define and implement a National Plan for Safeguarding Children and Women in Lebanon 2014-2017; with a focus on developing a continuum of services related to Child Protection and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), through Social Development Centres (SDCs) and a network of civil society organisations. A recent update "National Strategic Plan for the Protection of Women and Children in Lebanon 2018-2021" focuses on strengthening MoSA's organisation, management and administration, so that it can improve the quality and availability of services needed to enhance the protection of children and women in the country, in line with Lebanon's national policy goals and international commitments, as well as to establish referral mechanisms across different ministries (MEHE, MoSA, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities).

Through collaboration with other programmes funded by the EUTF, in particular the ones implemented by Expertise France (EF), Euromed Feminist Initiative (EFI) and World Vision Programmes, female children and girls may also gain wider access to public services and unlock their potentials in cognitive and development.

The present Action is intended to build on the positive achievements already registered during the school year 2017-2018 and set the basis to guarantee education and protection for all children living in Lebanon with a focus on Syrian children during school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

The renewed support of the EU to enrolment for refugee children will be combined with support to other components of RACE 2 during 2018-2020, balancing necessary short-medium priorities (enrolment, retention, NFE, infrastructure) with longer-term achievements

²⁹ May 2018.

(capacity development and system strengthening) as well as identifying different modalities and partners to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the education response.

Thus, this action will from one side guarantee the response to immediate needs related to the continuation of school attendance and retention of mainly Syrian refugee children (6-14 years old), who are currently attending public schools for a total number of 216,000 (morning and afternoon shifts), for the new school year starting in September/October 2018. From the other side, it will enable to properly identify needs and gaps to support RACE Pillars 2 and 3 against evidence-based analysis and reviews, as mentioned above. Furthermore, it will also allow identifying alternative delivery modalities than UNICEF, if needed be. Finally, the above-mentioned support can be fungible to ensure the transition to a long-term education sector plan, which MEHE has announced to prepare in order to comply with Agenda 2030, in particular under SDG 4.

The proposed support will be implemented in close coordination with MEHE and the European Union Delegation in the targeted countries, ensuring complementarities with financial support currently provided by the EU to the national Government, through bilateral cooperation and/or through humanitarian assistance provided to Syrian refugees, as well as by other education donors.

The EU will continue its advocacy together with like-minded donors and civil society actors, in order to allow for a multi-sectorial, coherent and consistent response addressing the protection barriers to education.

2.5. Donor co-ordination

The EU Delegation to Lebanon will continue to work in coordination with the RACE Executive Committee (MEHE, international organisations and donors) and the other Sub-Committees related to RACE, in order to continue its policy dialogue and its support to structural improvements in the education sector mainly related to teaching methods, resource management, accountability, transparency, cost-efficiency and aid effectiveness.

At the same time, the EU Delegation will continue to play its leadership role within the donors' education coordination (international organisations and donors), in shaping key advocacy messages in favour of: (i) increased monitoring of data available (disaggregated by gender, nationality and region) on enrolment, retention and transition rates, quality and costing of across RACE 2 pillars; (ii) an improved planning, financing and measuring the success of RACE II, and understanding trends on drop out; (iii) a stronger education sector able to ensure linkages with other sectors such as protection and health.

EU's advocacy will be drawn from policy dialogue, evidence-based analysis provided from field visits, exchanges with beneficiaries and recommendations made by relevant education stakeholders including academia and civil society organisations. Following JHDF's vision as well as recommendations of the different monitoring and evaluation reports conducted on ENI and EUTF funding dedicated to RACE 2. In particular, the EU is dialoguing with MEHE and RACE partners (donors, CSOs, development agencies), in order to encourage the integration of an appropriate level of sequencing between activities and that there is effective monitoring, evaluation and learning systems in place to assess how combinations of activities are leading to intended results. This latter will also be one of the specific objectives under this Action (see below).

Coordination and synergies between UNHCR, UNICEF and other UN-Agencies supporting refuge protection as well as gender-based violence interventions, i.e. UN Women, UNHCR and UNFPA will be ensured through the Protection and Gender Working Groups and through other informal mechanisms operating in Lebanon. For example, careful geographic mapping and continued dialogue at technical level amongst UN-Agencies and with Lebanese

authorities help to identify where more gender gaps and needs are across the country and how to counter specific stereotypes and practices that prevent female children and girls to access education and consequently access to dignified livelihood opportunities.

Funding from the Trust Fund will also ensure continuation and scale up of the successful models and continued coordination with other actors, including other EU-initiatives (including from EU Member States), UN-Agencies, Government and civil society partners at regional and international levels.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1 Objectives

The **overall objective** is to strengthen the public education system towards inclusive and quality education, with the ultimate goal of guaranteeing access to quality public education services to all children living in Lebanon, in alignment with the "RACE" priorities as per its logical framework³⁰ and SDG4, and in synergy with the support already being provided by other partners.

EUTF support will address the removal of non-financial barriers while also increasing enrolment rates in schools, particularly for refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese.

- The **specific objective 1** is improving access to and retention in public formal primary education as well as in Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes for all children living in Lebanon with a focus on Syrian refugee children for the school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.
- The **specific objective 2** is enhancing the quality of education, in order to define and use child-centred teaching approaches, to facilitate learning and encourage child's inclusion as well as positive participation in society, in the period from mid-2018 to mid-2021.
- The **specific objective 3** is strengthening the public education system in Lebanon, in the period from mid-2018 to mid-2021.

Under the specific objective 1, in order to allocate resources early on for the preparation of school year 2018-2019, including a new back-to-school campaign, in a timely and predictable way, as advocated by MEHE at the Brussels Conference on Syria 2018, the funding is already proposed now before the summer 2018. In addition, it shall include already an allocation for the school year 2019/2020 to provide multi-annual commitments as requested by Government of Lebanon at the Brussels Conference in April 2018.

Under the specific objective 1, furthermore, the EU Delegation to Lebanon might decide to dedicate part of the funding for access to and retention in public formal education to the construction of one/two new public schools in the most vulnerable areas of Lebanon (i.e. Aarsal), according to existing needs and gaps in coordination with other donors. The decision will be based on the release of a need assessment related to the public school infrastructure in Lebanon, which is currently carried out by UNICEF.

For the enrolment costs, retention activities and transportation in formal education (Activities 1.1 and 1.2, below), the Implementing Partner of this Action will be UNICEF. In continuity with the long-standing cooperation between the EU and UNICEF in relation to the response to the Syrian crisis, UNICEF has already been working in close cooperation with the

³⁰ Should MEHE update the RACE Strategy or produce an Education Sector Plan, the Action will be consequently adapted.

Delegation of the European Union in Lebanon (through ENI Special Measures and EU Trust Fund) to provide education, learning and protection from harm to hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugee children, youth and vulnerable peers in neighbouring countries. For the school years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, following the rationale to guarantee coherence of aid and a sufficient degree of predictability of resources, the Trust Fund-UNICEF partnership remains accountable to address the provision of quality education and protection to all children living in Lebanon (Pillar 1 of RACE 2).

For the delivery of NFE programmes and provision of related transportation (Activity 1.3, below), the Implementing Partner could be a consortium of Lebanese and International Civil Society Organisations, which have gained knowledge and competencies in education/child protection in crisis situations and have satisfactorily passed the selection process under the Expression of Interest for CSOs yearly launched by MEHE (Pillar 1 of RACE 2). Upon positive outcomes of the evaluation of the on-going project "Back to Future" (refer to page 12), the EUTF might consider to renew its partnership with the implementing partners.

For specific objectives 2 and 3 (Activities 2.1 and 3.1, below), the Implementing Partner could be the Ministry for Education and Higher Education or a pillar assessed organisation knowledgeable in information management systems, information technology and education, and involved with MEHE in information management. UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank are in the lead in the support to MEHE on information management.

The multiyear nature of this Action is intended to encourage a specific set of reforms, ideally those that donors have been jointly advocating for such as efficiency and transparency, reforming the pathways from out of school to learning opportunities, as well as between formal and non-formal education,, consistent reporting of disaggregated and comparable data, and more involvement of civil society including strengthening governance between formal and non-formal education.

3.2 Expected results and main activities

Expected result 1 – According to targets set by MEHE, all children living in Lebanon have access to quality certified formal education through Lebanese public schools for the school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, and transit to higher grades and cycles of education, as well as have access to NFE Programmes for Syrian refugee children (Pillar 1 of RACE 2).

Activity 1.1 - Cover subsidies for mainly Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese for registration fees into formal primary education in Lebanese public schools, including related retention support.

The provision of registration fees for mainly Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese should be organized through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Related costs include paying teachers, school directors and supervisors, running costs of the school as well the parent council fees and depreciation costs³¹ intended to be spent on maintenance, running costs and furniture of public schools open in the second shift. Access to formal education could be also combined with support to retention programmes, to prevent drop-out (such as homework support, remedial classes).

Activity 1.2 – Provide transportation for Syrian refugee children enrolled in Formal Education for the school years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, where needed.

In Lebanon, when it comes to marginalised households who face inadequate financial resources, the decision to send children to formal education is influenced by several factors and educational systems barriers (refer to Section 2.2.2), where transportation is one of the

³¹ Refer to footnote 28, above.

major concerns to enrol in the public schools of the second shift. In order to mitigate this major obstacle for access to quality education, the Action will include the provision of school transportation for children when necessary.

Activity 1.3 - Deliver NFE programmes mainly to Syrian refugee children according to educational needs and age groups (such as Early-Childhood education, Accelerated Learning Programme, Basic Numeracy and Literacy, Basic Numeracy and Literacy/Youth), mainly to Syrian refugee children out of school or out of other learning opportunities, including provision of transportation where needed.

Expected result 2 - Quality of education is enhanced, in order to define and use child-centred teaching and learning approaches, to increase child's performance and inclusion in the school environment as well as positive participation in society and prevent drop-out, in the period from mid-2018 to mid-2021 (Pillar 2 of RACE 2), for all children living in Lebanon.

Activity 2.1 – Improve the quality of education to enhance the inclusiveness of the public education system in Lebanon by *inter alia* revising school curricula; enhancing teachers' training; classroom monitoring/counselling to be able to measure and monitor children's learning and cognitive and socio-emotional skills, also with a focus on children with special needs, in accordance with MEHE Child Protection Policy. This should also be connected with EU's support under protection (Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, CSOs), in order to strengthen the national protection system and related referral for all children living in Lebanon.

Expected result 3 - National education system, policies, and actions are strengthened through enhancing Ministry's capacity (including different departments, MEHE Regional Offices, schools) in the period from mid-2018 to mid-2021 (Pillar 3 of RACE 2), such as to monitor data available (disaggregated by gender, nationality and region) on enrolment, retention and transition rates, quality and costing of across RACE 2 pillars, to plan, finance increasing efficiency in the system and measure the impact of RACE II, and any other education sector plan, as well as to ensure coordination and cooperation with other sectors, such as protection and health, relevant to promote and protect child's rights.

Activity 3.1 - Support *inter alia* the implementation of MEHE's Information Strategy 2019-2021 and costed Action Plan ensuring that quality education data are collected, analysed, shared and used to inform evidence-based programming, strategies and policies, through *inter alia* the full operationalization and the expansion of the implementation of the SIMS to all MEHE departments, public schools opened in the afternoon (second shift) and potentially the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD), including individual (including teachers' recruitment, deployment, and management policies) and institutional capacity development..

3.3 Risks and assumptions

Risks include the following points:

- The security situation inside Syria worsens dramatically resulting in a massive influx in the number of refugees across borders. To mitigate this risk, the EU Trust Fund and UNICEF will monitor the situation inside Syria and at the borders with Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan informing on any impact a change in operating circumstances has on the achievement of programme objectives.
- Government of Lebanon decides to put in place a regulatory framework of refugees refugee policy that restrict protection space for refugees and operational space in response to refugees needs. The EU together with other like-minded partners will use advocacy and diplomatic negotiations to bring positive outcomes on the regulatory framework of refugees.

- International Community does not allocate enough funding to RACE 2 particularly for access to and retention to public education for all children living in Lebanon. RACE partners to support MEHE to raising funding among non-traditional donors to guarantee at least that students currently enrolled can continue and finalize their studies.

The assumptions for the success of the project and its implementation include:

External factors:

- Security situation inside Syria does not worsen dramatically resulting in a massive influx in the number of refugees across borders;

Internal factors:

- MEHE stays engaged in implementing RACE 2 and in moving towards a longer-term education strategy in compliance with SDG 4, while ensuring regular and timely coordination mechanisms and meetings within the RACE governance.
- UNICEF and implementing partners are able to engage effectively with all counterparts and engage in a proactive dialogue with concerned stakeholders including Government actors, avoiding any administrative and/or bureaucratic challenge which could results into hindering the planned activities.
- MEHE continues to guarantee Civil Society Organisations a role of partners in implementing education activities in Lebanon, including the delivery of Non-Formal Education.
- Willingness of beneficiaries from refugee and host communities to engage in a more sustainable and accountable manner with the project, beyond the limited perspective of an ad-hoc benefit.
- Advocacy with MEHE, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to ensure coordination on protection issues.

The release of funding for the school year 2018-2019 might be made conditional to:

- MEHE has released the evaluation of the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP - part of Non-Formal Education Activities), to understand whether ALP is creating a stable pathway from out-of-school children and formal education.
- The Out-of-school children study related to needs assessment and gap analysis has been completed and shared possibly before the beginning of school year 2018-2019.
- World Bank, UNICEF and MEHE have fully aligned donor support for school years 2018/19 and 2019/2020, through joint annual work plans.

The release of funding for the school year 2019-2020 might be made conditional to:

- MEHE and RACE partners have conducted a Strategic Mid-term Review the Strategy RACE 2 including the evaluation of NFE Programmes, possibly by first trimester 2019.
- UNICEF has released the need assessment related to the public school infrastructure.
- MEHE and education partners have agreed on a common definition of "depreciation" under the enrolment fee the International Community has paid since 2014, to guarantee the access of Syrian refugee children to Lebanese public schools in the afternoon shift.

Corrective measures will be adjusted within implementation and tailored according to the intrinsic needs; however, in order to reduce risks and to prepare for potential threats, the Contracting Authority, UNICEF and the other education implementing partners have set the basis for a responsible intervention, through the following joint steps:

- EU will monitor the situation inside Syria and at the borders with Lebanon and Jordan on any impact a change in operating circumstances has on achievement of programme objectives;
- EU is committed to maintain a close partnership and a sustained policy dialogue with all relevant Government Ministries in Lebanon to ease administrative procedures and expedite implementation of activities;
- UNICEF will continue to invest efforts on establishing a positive exchange with countries' MEHE, in order to ensure operational alignment and follow-up with ongoing national initiatives, such as the RACE 2 Programme in Lebanon, as well as MoSA' strategic Plan to protect children and women in Lebanon;
- UNICEF in cooperation with UNHCR will intensify its efforts on working with partners on community-outreach activities to raise awareness on the benefits of formal schooling to parents and community leaders.
- Civil Society Organisations will follow the NFE Framework established by MEHE and provide EU with evidence-based analysis on the roll-out of NFE programmes and their impact in order to delivery policy and programmatic recommendations to the education stakeholders.

3.4 Cross-cutting issues

Projects funded under this programme will integrate a Rights-Based Approach in each step of the project cycle from identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring to evaluation.

The following cross-cutting issues will be particularly stressed within identification of the planning framework and mainstreamed during operations:

- Protection: take into account protection linkages with out-of-school children, often related to legal stay of refugees from Syria, as well as analysis of protection issues related to access to education as well as to drop-out, with particular emphasis on hard-to-reach children and undocumented children. Access to education is a fundamental right and will provide children with positive attitudes, as well as ability to reject negative behaviours. Learning and acquisition of life skills will also help children to secure livelihoods find employment and generate income in the future, and ultimately giving them hope for a prosperous future, both socially and economically.
- Gender: Equity underpins SDG 4. GBV still affects many women and girls, specific focus will be given to challenge gender norms and stereotypes through all child protection related interventions. Targeted interventions to address gender-based violence will also be pursued, in synergy with EUTF operations targeting protection and GBV (i.e. MoSA Strategic Plan).
- Disability: Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups in the countries affected by the Syrian crisis. In the emergency context, and given the huge number of affected populations, the specific needs of refugees with disabilities have not always been addressed. Syrian refugees with disabilities are facing protection risks as a result of multiple and complex unmet needs, which cross both medical and social dimensions. Children with disabilities are often out of school, do not have access to

specialized and mainstream services, and are stigmatized in their communities. Building on EU's Programme "Drop-out" and on the Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) recommendations, the Action will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable populations, including children with special needs. The proposed Action will promote the development of inclusive education focusing in particular on the need to include more children with special needs in mainstream schools. To achieve this, the Action shall plan intervention at the level of access, quality and system strengthening, as well as establish synergies with EUTF operations in the health sector.

- Good governance, accountability and civic participation: Trust Fund-UNICEF interventions aim to empower and actively engage with civil society, particularly children and youth, enabling them to participate in policy making that affects their lives. Such measures enhance the political and social dialogue between deconcentrated and centralized governments and their constituencies, increasing ownership of the policies and making governments more accountable.
- Conflict sensitivity underpins the rationale for this Action; it will directly address perceptions about the unequal treatment and provision of benefits between refugees and host populations. While a longer-term objective, the reduction of inequality can result in greater political stability.

3.5 Stakeholders

The following stakeholders have been identified:

- Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese populations.
- Relevant Ministries and Lebanese authorities including MEHE, CERD, MoSA, MoPH, MoIM, MoF, local authorities.
- EU Member States and other donors contributing to the Trust Fund.
- Donors, IFIs, UN agencies and CSOs supporting humanitarian and long-term education in Lebanon.
- Final beneficiaries: children aged 3-18 living in Lebanon, with a focus on Syrian refugees, and their families; public education entities, school administrative staff, teachers, trainers, counsellors, etc.

All stakeholders in education activities should align with RACE 2 Strategy and its logical framework, as well as RACE governance mechanisms (RACE Executive Committee), in the context of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), and possibly with the forthcoming Education sector Plan MEHE intends to define in alignment with Agenda 2030 and SDG 4, the instrument developed and used for joint planning, coordination and resource mobilization.

In implementing the Action, the EU will continue coordinating with all the mentioned stakeholders operating in Lebanon (refer to above paragraph 2.5), in particular reinforcing existing coordination mechanisms and advocating for an enabling environment for CSOs' participation in policy and programming terms (i.e. NGO sub-committee under RACE).

Synergies and coordination will be ensured in the context of international multi-stakeholder initiatives related to education, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the "No Lost Generation" initiative (NLG), the global fund "Education cannot Wait" (EcW).

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1 Financing agreement

In order to implement part of this Action, it is not foreseen to conclude a financing agreement with the Government of the partner countries, referred to in Article 184(2)(b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

The envisaged assistance to Lebanon is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 TFEU.³²

4.2 Indicative operational implementation period

The indicative operational implementation period of this Action during which the activities described in section 3.2 will be carried out for a maximum of 60 months from adoption of this Action Document by the Operational Board.³³ Extension of the implementation period may be agreed by the relevant AOSD, which will be communicated immediately to the Operational Board.

4.3 Implementation components and modules

4.3.1 Specific Objective 1

4.3.1.1 Indirect management with UNICEF

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with UNICEF in accordance with Article 58(1)(c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. This implementation entails activities related to the enrolment costs and transportation in formal education (activities 1.1 and 1.2, above). This implementation is justified because of its relevant collaboration with and technical assistance to MEHE, schools, communities, families and children and relevant partners particularly in support to formal education. UNICEF has monopoly and exclusivity in competencies in education and child protection. Their extensive capacity has been pillar assessed by the EC. UNICEF has extensive experience in the geographic areas targeted by the EUTF Syria and a proficient expertise in providing education services in the Syria crisis context. More precisely, in Lebanon since 2012, the EU and UNICEF have identified and implemented contribution/delegation agreements together for a total amount of almost EUR 120 M in the education sector, where UNICEF has shown good track record about managing EU-funded contracts. Hence, it is best placed in view of expanding existing Actions.

4.3.1.2 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Type of implementing partner

For the delivery of NFE programmes and provision of related transportation (Activity 1.3, above), the Implementing Partner could be a consortium of Lebanese and International Civil Society Organisations, which have gained knowledge and competencies in education/child protection in crises situations and have satisfactorily passed the selection process under the Expression of Interest for CSOs yearly launched by MEHE. Subject to positive outcomes of the evaluation of current EUTF's support to Non-Formal Education in Lebanon (Programme "Back to school"), the EU might award a direct grant to current partners.

³² https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8442/consolidated-list-sanctions_en

³³ The implementation period of the contract can reach beyond the end of the TF mandate (TF projects can be completed up to 36 months after the end date).

(b) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because the country is in a crisis situation referred to in Article 190(2) RAP; the action has specific characteristics requiring a specific type of beneficiary for its technical competence, specialisation or administrative power or nature of the action with regard to Article 6(1)(c) of the CIR for the EIDHR.

(c) Eligibility conditions

Potential beneficiaries of funding should be a legal person, non-profit-making type of organisations such as civil society organisations (CSOs) or NGOs, be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary and be established in: i) a Member State of the European Union or; ii) a country that is a beneficiary of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II set up by the Council Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of 11 March 2014 or; iii) a Member State of the European Economic Area or; iii) a developing country and territory which are not members of the G-20 group or a partner country or territory covered by the European Neighbourhood Instrument Regulation No 232/2014.

(d) Essential selection and award criteria

The essential selection criteria are the financial and operational capacity of the applicant.

The essential award criteria are relevance of the proposed action to the objectives of the Activity 1.3; design, effectiveness, feasibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the proposed action.

(e) Maximum rate of co-financing

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for this grant is 80% of the eligible costs of the action.

In accordance with Articles 192 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 if full funding is essential for the action to be carried out, the maximum possible rate of co-financing may be increased up to 100 %. The essentiality of full funding has to be justified in an adequate way by the applicant and accepted by the Manager, in respect of the principles of equal treatment and sound financial management.

(f) Indicative trimester to conclude the grant agreement

III-IV trimester in 2019

4.3.2 Specific objectives 2 and 3

Grant agreement or contribution agreement

It is foreseen to deliver on specific objectives 2 and 3 through a grant agreement to the Ministry for Education and Higher Education, in the lead of the implementation of RACE II and the Information Management Strategy 2019-2021. In case of difficulties in the negotiation, it would be delivered through a contribution agreement to a pillar assessed organisation knowledgeable in information management systems, information technology and education, and already involved with MEHE in information management. UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank are in the lead in the support to MEHE on information management.

4.4 Indicative budget

Module	Amount of total budget	Third party contribution
Indirect management – Delegation Agreement with UNICEF	86,500,000 EUR	
Direct Management – Grant Agreement with CSO Consortium	10,000,000 EUR	
Direct Management – Grant Agreement with a public authority or Contribution Agreement to a pillar assessed organisation	10,000,000 EUR	
Total	EUR 106,500,000*	

* Costs for monitoring, evaluation, communication and visibility shall be included in the project's budgets for each contract.

4.5 Performance monitoring

Monitoring shall be ensured primarily through EU Delegations in-country and in particular with the assistance of specific Trust Fund field and liaison officers posted within the EU Delegations.

In addition, the EU Trust Fund has established an independent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) function to accompany all Fund programmes. The purpose of the EUTF M&E Framework is to assess, across various levels, the degree to which the Overall Objective and the Sector-specific outcomes of the Trust Fund have been achieved.

Through its M&E Framework, the EUTF measures regularly implementation progress, efficient delivery and effective use of the funds in line with the given operational targets. These regular assessments ensure that best practices and lessons learnt are incorporated into future actions and constitute also a basis for a possible decision of suspension or revision of activities, should the conditions on the ground not allow for their proper implementation.

Partners implementing this Action will comply with the reporting requirements and tools developed by the EUTF, including the submission of Quarterly Information Notes (QIN), as part of their contractual obligations.

Implementing partners are also requested to share any internal monitoring and/ or evaluation reports with the Contracting Authority. This should allow for an increased results-oriented learning process in terms of proper planning and implementation.

4.6 Evaluation and audit

Projects should carry out a final evaluation, and one external audit per year. Whenever possible, evaluations will be jointly carried out by partners. This will also contribute to harmonise EU support and to the host countries in the region, in order to make technical co-operation more effective in line with current EU guidelines³⁴.

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this Action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts.

4.7 Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. Beneficiaries, host communities and administrations in Syria's neighbouring countries, the European public, EU Members States and other stakeholders of the Trust Fund need to be informed about the EU's efforts as the leading donor in the Syria crisis response. Insufficient visibility of the EU's actions weakens the EU's political traction in the region and its standing in Europe. Unsatisfactory recognition of knowledge of EU assistance also has a potential to negatively affect the EU's political efforts to resolve the Syria crisis and its future role in a post-peace agreement transition.

Communication and visibility is an important part of all EU Trust Fund programmes and must be factored in to underline the programme's importance at all stages of the planning and implementation. Each implementer is required to draw up a comprehensive visibility, communication and outreach plan for their respective target country/community and submit a copy for approval to the EU Trust Fund's Communication and Outreach Lead. The related costs will be covered by the project budgets. The measures shall be implemented by the implementing consortium/ia, and/or contractors, and/or grant beneficiaries. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, procurement and grant contracts.

The global objective of the EU Trust Fund's communication and visibility campaigns, and hence of the implementing partner, is to improve recognition, public awareness and visibility of the comprehensive and joint EU efforts to effectively address the consequences of the Syrian and Iraqi crises. This should be done by highlighting the Action's real-life impact and results among defined target audiences in the affected region but also vis-à-vis the general public, donors and stakeholders in the EU Member States.

The Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Action together with specific requirements for the EU Trust Fund serve as a reference for the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the relevant contractual obligations. According to the EU

Trust Fund's Visibility and Communications strategy all communication and outreach campaigns must be evidence-based, people-oriented and easily understandable. Regional outreach and communication must be conflict sensitive, strategic, do no harm and mindful of the differentiation in messaging for beneficiaries and stakeholders in each country of operation of the Action. The campaigns must place the beneficiaries at the centre and thus ensure adequate ownership. Messaging should have a human face, be empathic, honest, transparent, direct, unambiguous, neutral and conducive to a highly sensitive human and political environment, in addition to being gender-sensitive and gender-balanced.

Furthermore, campaigns should also include components of participatory and engaging communication, where the beneficiary becomes a key actor. This will support the EU Trust Fund's programmes in promoting social cohesion, inclusion, dialogue and help mitigate tensions and misperceptions between refugee and host communities.