

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

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title/Number	EUTF support to public education in Lebanon in the context of the EU response to the Syria crisis		
Total cost	Total estimated cost: 57,500,000 EUR Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund : 57,500,000 EUR		
Aid method / Method of implementation	Indirect management – Contribution agreement		
DAC-code	110	Sector	Basic Education

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1. Summary of the action and its objectives

The **Overall Objective (OO)** of the action is to strengthen the public education system in Lebanon in order to deliver inclusive and quality education for vulnerable school-aged children ensuring their full access and retention in alignment with the Lebanese Strategy "Reaching All Children with Education" phase II 2017-2021 and SDG objective 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all".

The **Specific Objectives** of the action are:

- 1) To ensure continued access to and retention in public formal education for Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese for the school year 2020-2021 (pillar I of Lebanese Strategy Reaching All Children with Education - RACE).
- 2) To strengthen the public education system in Lebanon for improved inclusivity in formal and non-formal education for the period 2020-2022 (pillars II and III of RACE).

In line with the Overall Objective of the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF Syria) 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*".¹

In complementary with the support provided by other donors, the Action aims at strengthening the capacities of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to deliver quality and accessible education for all vulnerable children in the context of the constant pressure put on the national education system by the protracted Syrian refugee crisis and by the socio-economic, financial and political crisis. It situates its intervention under the current efforts deployed by MEHE accompanied by the main education donors to

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/sites/tfsr/files/eutf_rf_2019.pdf

review the education funding model and shift from an emergency response since 2011 to a sector-based response plan.

The Action is aligned with the priorities enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child under its article 28 (right to education; primary education compulsory and available free for all; taking measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates...)². It acknowledges the special place for children in EU's internal and external policies and actions³, the EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child (2011)⁴ and the EU Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy. It also considers the reasons for action under the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2017)⁵ referring to the issue of the deprivation of quality education for a high number of out of school children, and the necessity to ensure that all refugee and migrant children receive education.

The Action is aligned with the priorities for the education sector⁶ under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017-2020) to improve access to education opportunities (outcome 1), quality of education (outcome 2) and to strengthen the capacity of the education system (outcome 3) to plan, budget, deliver, monitor and evaluate education services. The Action is reflecting the National Strategy Reaching All Children with Education (RACE)⁷ currently under its phase II for the period 2017-2021 aiming at ensuring that quality education opportunities are available for the most vulnerable children and families, non-Lebanese and Lebanese, and at implementing systemic and holistic interventions that address both the demand for and the availability of quality public education services.

Finally, the action takes into account the commitments taken at the London Conference (February 2016), CEDRE Conference (April 2018) and Brussels I, II and III Conference. During the latter (12-14 March 2019)⁸ the international community renewed and strengthened its political, humanitarian and financial commitment to support the Syrian people, the neighbouring countries and the communities most affected by the conflict. In particular the *"importance of long-term support for children affected by the conflict, including psycho-social support and access to quality education"* as well as the need for *"continued support for an integrated approach to resilience (...) including multi-year commitments to education and health..."* and to *"continue to improve and expand access to quality education, including by strengthening national education systems"* were highlighted.

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

³ 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>.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52011DC0060>

⁵ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_guidelines_rights_of_child_2017.pdf

⁶ <http://www.un.org.lb/library/assets/Education-015415.pdf>

⁷ <http://racepmulebanon.com/>

⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/03/14/brussels-iii-conference-on-supporting-the-future-of-syria-and-the-region-co-chairs-declaration/>

2.2. Context

2.2.1. Country context, if applicable

Nine years into the Syrian crisis, Lebanon remains at the forefront of one of the worst humanitarian crises of recent times. The Government of Lebanon (GoL) estimates that the country hosts 1.5 million⁹ of the 6.7 million Syrians who have fled the conflict since 2011 (including 918,974 registered with UNHCR as of 31 October 2019). The Syrian refugee population in Lebanon remains the largest concentration of refugees per capita in the world. Women and children account for 81% of the Syrian refugee population, of which 55.5% – with equal numbers of girls and boys – are under 18 years of age. In a country with a current population of approximately 6 million people, about one in five is a Syrian refugee. While the humanitarian response has been robust and some improvements have been seen in the past year, the humanitarian situation of Syrian refugees remains precarious. As the crisis persists, refugees exhaust their savings and resources. They increasingly adopt negative coping mechanisms and thus become more vulnerable. Nine out of ten Syrian refugees adopt food-related coping strategies (such as restricting consumption or borrowing food) and 97% of refugee households are adopting crisis and emergency coping strategies, including withdrawing children from school and begging.

Perceptions about Syrian refugees by the Lebanese population have been strongly influenced by the country's history, particularly related to the role of Palestinian militias in the Lebanese civil war. Consequently, the establishment of formal refugee camps has not been permitted. The majority of Syrian refugees have relocated to neighbourhoods where vulnerable host communities predominantly live¹⁰. In the early years of the crisis, refugees were seen more as victims forced to flee from war. However, after eight years of protracted crisis and in a context of deteriorating economic conditions, concerns have been voiced about the potentially destabilising effect of the refugee presence. Consequently, the 2018-2019 period has witnessed increasing political polarisation and more explicit calls for refugee return¹¹.

At the time of identifying the present action, the Lebanese context has entered into a period of turmoil. Popular uprisings have led to calls for drastic changes in Lebanese political landscape and for more accountable public authorities. Long-standing socio-economic pressures combined with a fierce public outcry against corruption, resulted in strikes breaking out across the country in an unprecedented manner since October 2019. The seriousness of the protests initially forced the Government to announce a list of 25 reform measures to address corruption and the socio-economic crisis, and subsequently resulted in the resignation of the Prime Minister. Only end January, Lebanon has formed a new government.

At the economic level, Lebanese growth plummeted compared to the last decade, oscillating between 1.8% in 2014 and 0.2% in 2018 (last data). Lebanon is currently experiencing a severe economic and financial crisis, which continues to worsen. The World Bank estimates that 25% currency devaluation could increase Lebanon's poverty rate from around 27%¹² to 50%. Given the age distribution of the Lebanese and refugee populations, increase in overall poverty would particularly affect children.

⁹ UNHCR data portal <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>.

¹⁰ The no-camp policy adopted by the GoL since the beginning of the crisis resulted in the scattering of refugees over the country. More than half of the refugees have settled in the long-neglected regions of Akkar and Bekaa

¹¹ Syrian refugees in Lebanon; Eight Years On, CARE (2018)

¹² Household Budget Survey estimation September 2011-November 2012.

According to the last estimation in 2019, 73% of registered Syrian refugees households were already living below the poverty line compared to 68% on 2018. As a consequence of the economic crisis a wider segment of the Lebanese and non-Lebanese population is at risk of failing below the poverty line. The livelihoods of those already living in poverty are expected to worsen due to inflation, a decline in employment opportunities and potential reduction in the provision of basic social services. This can further fuel tensions and social unrest between refugee and host communities. According to UNICEF, the ongoing situation will most severely affect the poor (extreme poor and poor) Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians who already live at their margin. Vulnerable households in the low middle-income class would also be affected.

Business closures, strikes, workers lay-offs and pay-checks cuts are regularly reported in a context of shrinking job market, employment dismissals, reduced confidence and expectations of financial collapse. Limited liquidity in foreign currencies significantly reduced imports of products, affecting consumption and local production, and drove up the prices of consumer products. Prices of local products, which partly depend on imported material, are expected to increase further. In the informal market, the currency has lost more than 30% of its official value, thus pushing up the inflation.

If worsening, the situation might translate in reduced means for livelihoods, exacerbated economic conditions, increased negative coping mechanism and negative decisions taken on access to education and health, with a direct impact on child wellbeing. Lower allocation to and quality of public services is also a risk.

According to UNICEF, the specific impacts on children could be multiple. Reduced access to commodities and services (nutrition and medication), coupled with negative coping strategies harmful to children (child labour, child marriage and exploitation) and negative decisions taken on education, health, nutrition, and water and sanitation would increase child poverty and affect children's wellbeing. Quality and provision of basic social services could also decrease due to a reduction in government funding to social sectors, including payments to public servants, systems (pension, social security) and institutions serving vulnerable people. The same could happen to private sector social services due to financial issues and closures. More children are expected to shift from private to public schools, putting additional pressure on the public education system.

2.2.2. Sector context: policies and challenges

Structure of the education system

Education is a right for all children, whatever their statute. It has to be seen as the entire pathway in the life of a child, from early childhood education to primary and secondary education, and transition to work life, higher education or vocational training. In Lebanon, the public education system was already considered weak before the Syrian refugee crisis. It is divided between public, subsidised private schools¹³ and private schools. The Ministry for Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) are the foremost national entities mandated by the Lebanese law to oversee the structure and work on both public and private education. MEHE handles the budget for the administration and operations of public schools. CERD is in charge of the

¹³ Segment of the private sector mainly affiliated with religious institutions which receives direct subsidies from the Government.

budget for teacher training, and conducting research and improving curriculum. In addition, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) manages the budget for school construction. All schools, whenever public or private, are required to follow the national curriculum as a basis. Only basic education from grade 1 to grade 9 for children aged 6 to 14 years is compulsory.

Expenditure analysis and structural challenges

Relative to other countries in the MENA region¹⁴, Lebanon has a low public spending share on education. According to the only figure available, total government expenditure for 2013-2015 was USD 1.2 billion (i.e. 6.3% of total government expenditure, 2.1% of the GDP – 1.8% of the GDP if excluding vocational and tertiary education). It is mainly due to high levels of private education provision and private households' out-of-pocket spending. Despite the doubling of the absolute number since 2005, the share of education expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure has nearly stayed constant. 64% of the budget goes to public schools operations, while 6% are allocated to school construction, 2% for CERD, 7% for direct subsidies to free-private schools and 21% for school allowances to civil servants¹⁵. The Lebanese public education system suffered from significant stagnation due to chronic underinvestment and allocative inefficiencies. The delivery of teaching deteriorated with children enrolled in Lebanese public schools recording lower learning outcomes in comparison to their peers in private schools. Overall student performance in Lebanon is significantly lower than the international average with a declining trend¹⁶. The low trust in the public-school system results in the private sector¹⁷ catering to 71% of the children at primary education level compared to 29% for the public sector. The public-school system is not the first choice but only option for the most vulnerable families.

Among the main challenges impeding the education system to reach its full potential are organisational efficiency; over centralization of decision-making power; multiplication of actors with contradictory interests; absence of transparent standards and procedures in several aspects of education; lack of accountability mechanisms; high fragmentation in planning, execution processes and data collection, and lack a teachers' career plan. The World Bank is pleading for a more effective "systems approach" to the education system when planning for reforms along with structured and well-institutionalized processes.

Impact of the Syrian crisis, challenges and strategies adopted

With the high number of Syrians arrived in Lebanon and the deficiencies of the system, the national education structure has faced difficulties in coping with an increased demand for education services. MEHE led commendable efforts to support children's rights to education through introducing the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) I response plan (2014-2016). Its main success led to fully subsidised enrolment of refugee children into Lebanese public pre-primary and primary schools. MEHE also established a Project Management Unit (PMU) directly linked to the Minister and tasked to ensure the implementation of RACE. In 2014 the Ministry also allowed afternoon shifts for Syrians and

¹⁴ Tunisia, with a similar GDP, spends 6% of it for education. Morocco and Yemen spend 4% of their GDP for education. If factoring in the subsidies to private schools and the parents' out-of-pocket share of expenditure for private education, the total education financing in Lebanon reaches nearly 4% of GDP, which is more in line with countries in the region.

¹⁵ Lebanon Education Research for Results (R4R), Volume 1, 2019, World Bank group.

¹⁶ Lebanese students were on average 4 years of schooling behind students in the OECD countries according to the 2015 results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). In reading, Lebanon was the worst performer among all 70 participating countries.

¹⁷ Market size estimated at USD 1.6 billion.

other non-Lebanese children, currently accommodating 70% of the total of non-Lebanese students. RACE is overseen by its RACE Executive Committee (REC), an advisory body including donors and international organisations. It is tasked to monitor the progress done and provide technical and strategic guidance.

Meanwhile, the international community stepped up its efforts to support countries affected by the Syrian crisis through regional emergency response plans (3RP) outlining multisector response strategies linking education, protection and employment, which lead to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan and its specific chapter on education¹⁸. The RACE II strategy (2017-2021) was designed to envisage a more strategic approach to the education sector response plan through 3 key pillars:

- Pillar 1 improved access to education opportunities: enhancing access to, and demand from, children, youth, and their caregivers for equitable formal or regulated non-formal education.
- Pillar 2 improved quality of education services: enhancing quality of education services and learning environments to ensure grade-appropriate learning outcomes for children and youth.
- Pillar 3 improved education systems: enhancing governance and managerial capacities of RACE II implementing institutions to plan, budget, deliver, monitor, and evaluate education services.

RACE II is a clear improvement in Lebanon's education sector plan through requiring investment in improving the quality of education, and through reform to improve the governance of the public education system. Overall costs of RACE annual plans are evaluated at USD 350 million each year¹⁹, with the access pillar absorbing the large majority of the costing due to the nature of the project (i.e. tuition fees, transportation, supplies...). Under RACE II, enrolment fees remain the same to those foreseen under RACE 1: USD 60 for Lebanese children; USD 363 per child for first shift and USD 600 per child for second shift. According to the World Bank Group²⁰, given that donor's financing for refugees represented 25% of the public education sector financing in 2018, and that the refugee population exceeded 45% of the public student population, "a significant share of the cost of Syrian refugees was absorbed by the Government of Lebanon and/or was partially onset by an increase in the efficiency of the system".

Enrolment trends and barriers to education

Despite those efforts, 48% of the 666,491 Syrian children aged 3-18 were not enrolled in any form of learning during the school year 2018-2019 and 58% were outside the formal education system²¹. Many children have never been to school or had their education interrupted for a long time. As evidenced by Human Rights Watch report (2016) and the Brussels Conference report 2018, the Out-of-School Children (OSC) needs assessment (conducted by Save the Children International in 2019) and confirmed by the OSC profiling done by UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR, the key barriers to education are the economic vulnerability (i.e. family poverty) including inability to pay for uniform and school supplies and child labour; the distance from education facilities combined with the lack of transport and/or inability to afford transportation; the lack of school capacity, schools ratios and

¹⁸ See 2.1.

¹⁹ More than 25% of the public education sector financing.

²⁰ Lebanon Education Research for Results (R4R), Volume 1, 2019, World Bank group

²¹ Out-of-School Children Mapping and Profiling 2018-2018, Key Findings, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNESCO, March 2019

minimums; low quality of education, lack of awareness of free education and negative perception of value of education; violence, bullying and harassment within the school environment; lack of sanitation facilities; difficulty of refugees to adapt to the new curriculum and new language (i.e. French); and documentation and legal issues couple with the lack of local compliance in implementing the enrolment policy. Barriers are complex and multiple, requiring a multi-sectoral, coherent and consistent response from the international community.

Analysis of trends in enrolment for Lebanese and non-Lebanese children remains a challenge given the lack of data available and/or shared by the authorities. Over the last 6 years the public education system increased its capacity by approximately 77%, with non-Lebanese children comprising approximately 45% of total students in the public system. An overall analysis demonstrates that the number of non-Lebanese children attending public primary schools increased from 2016 to 2018, before slightly decreasing to reach 205,239 children last year. The target for the school year 2019-2020 remains around 205,000 children. Given those trends, the levels of funding available from education donors, it is not expected to target an increase in the number of non-Lebanese children attending public primary school for the scholastic year 2020-2021. Moreover, the economic crisis is expected to put additional pressure on the public education system as some families transfer their children from private to public schools because of lack of financial resources, thereby increasing the number of children in public schools (not demonstrated yet as figures on Lebanese students are not available for the scholastic year 2019-2020).

The EU decided for the first time to support vulnerable Lebanese children for the school year 2018-2019 (54,755 children). RACE II targets for school year 2016-2017 (Lebanese and non-Lebanese children) were exceeded and nearly reached for school year 2017-2018. However, targets for school year 2018-2019 for non-Lebanese children were more ambitious but not reached; contrary to targets for Lebanese children, which were exceeded, cf. hereunder.

Target RACE II (2018-2019) public schools children		Initial target	Evolution
Non-Lebanese total	250,000	205,239	-18%
first shift	60,000	51,739	-13.80%
second shift	190,000	153,500	-19.21%
Lebanese children	215,000	220,178	+2.4%

According to the last available figures on enrolment for the scholastic year 2019-2020, 150,000 non-Lebanese children registered for second shift schools in the 345 operating schools, which is rather similar to last scholastic year (153,500). Among them are 40,000 newly enrolled children (i.e. 36,000 totally new and 4,000 children who dropped out for 1-2 years and are now back to schools), with 65% in preparatory-early childhood education (i.e. refugees born in Lebanon), 25% in primary education and 10% in secondary education. The total number of students enrolled in secondary classes is not available but planned around 5,500 children.

Displaying a worrying trend, 43,000 children who were in second shift schools last scholastic year did not return in 2019-2020 compared to 20,000 last year. Among them, 45% completed the school year 2018-2019 successfully. MEHE and education partners are investigating in order to reach out to those children and receive them back in school.

Perception on education

Overall, Syrian households perceive education in Lebanon to be of good or excellent quality (82%)²². Nearly half of Syrian households have the impression that the quality of education is improving in Lebanon, while 32% estimates it is stable over the time. Most Syrian households do not attribute a negative impact to the Syrian refugee crisis on the education system. On the contrary, a majority of Lebanese share the perception that the crisis had positively impacted the quality of teaching and learning, school facilities and equipment and relations among students. While largely supporting the access to education for all refugee children, Lebanese households have a preference for the provision of education services to Syrian refugees through CSO (36%), through the establishment of second shift schools (33%), and 5% only through the integration of Syrian refugees in first shift schools with Lebanese children. In comparison, Syrian households surveyed show a clear preference for morning shifts in public schools or private education. Some other studies conducted by NGOs demonstrate that some Syrian households perceived the quality of schooling and recreational activities in second shift as lower than in first shift. An analysis is currently conducted by UNICEF to assess the quality of both shifts.

Inclusive education²³ needs

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups in Lebanon. According to the data of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) Rights and Access Programme, approximately 14,000 Lebanese children (0-17) have a Disability card. There are likely to be around 20,000 children with disabilities whose incapacity is not certified for various reasons (i.e. social stigma, lack of awareness or low benefits) and who remain invisible to the social service system. In addition to disabilities, MOSA also gives a “Temporary learning disability” card (i.e. currently around 3000 holders) that makes the holders eligible to receive specialized services in NGOs. According to the last Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASYR)²⁴, 2% of Syrian children (approximately 10,000 children) have a disability. However this is not based on screenings and the real figures are likely to be higher. UNRWA has records of 958 children with disabilities who are beneficiaries of the Social Safety Net system.

Given that few schools accept students with disabilities, Lebanese children with disabilities primarily go to specialized institutions under MOSA, some of which are residential. Currently MOSA pays specialized NGOs for education and other services to 5,800 children of which 900 residential. Some children go to private school but there is no clear record on their numbers. Almost 50% of those who obtain a disability card are not in schooling (UNESCO report). According to VASYR, 72% of Syrian children with disabilities are not enrolled in school and are totally out of education.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Centre for Education Research and Development, with support of UNICEF, launched an Inclusive Education Pilot Programme in 30 public schools, aimed at enhancing access to education for all children, improving quality of education and strengthening the system. Support is needed for the operationalization,

²² Lebanon Public perception Survey, Research for Results (R4R), World Bank, 2016-2017.

²³ Inclusive education responds to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies. Inclusive education has academic, social and emotional benefits not only for children with special needs but also for all girls and boys. It leads to more cohesive societies that respect diversity and difference. It also contributes to better economic outcomes as children are taught in accountable, empowering and respectful learning environments which are important life-skills towards becoming productive citizens.

²⁴ Joint exercise UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP.

testing and scaling-up of the model. In addition, a draft National Action Plan for inclusive education in Lebanon was developed through EU-support to the project *Drop-out prevention of students* (€ 3.5 million, 2013 ended 2018) which, at the request of MEHE, took a shift to include a strong focus on children with special needs. The Plan is pending endorsement by the authorities and needs to be accompanied by a policy and operational plan.

Last developments after October's 2019 crisis

The first months of the scholastic year 2019-2020 have been hectic, impacted by the turmoil linked to the socio-economic, financial and political crisis in Lebanon, with teachers' strikes and road blockages. The start of the school year for second shift schools had to be postponed at several occasions before a solution was found to cover the arrears of teachers' salaries, unpaid for the last months of the former scholastic year. The way the salary issue has been presented (i.e. "funding gap" due to the international community) and handled by the authorities caused much discontentment from education donors. Public schools were closed for several days because of road blockages. MEHE put in place a plan to compensate lost days of education to ensure that first and second shift schools would execute the minimum required days to complete the curriculum. Registration deadline was extended for second shift schools and MEHE guaranteed that, until end of January 2020, any child coming to school for registration would be accepted. As of beginning 2020 the vast majority of schools are open and fully operating for both shifts.

A substantial influx of Lebanese children into public schools is planned as a consequence of the economic crisis. Families are expected to make rational financial choices, shifting their children from private to public schools. Estimation fluctuates, +/- 30,000 new Lebanese to join public schools for the scholastic year 2019-2020. If confirmed, this would put an additional pressure on the already overstretched public education system. Absorption capacities of the first shift schools are already limited, with a risk of pushing Syrian refugees from first to second shift, where absorption capacities are already weak. Education partners pressed MEHE to open additional second shift schools. 15 new schools were identified but not all opened, adding to other old rented schools that did not re-open for the scholastic year 2019-2020. The impact is not measurable yet as figures related to enrolment in first shift public schools are not available. As a first step, MEHE's Minister called for acceptance of all new children by school directors without paying enrolment fees if they cannot afford. However, incertitude is linked to the capacity of the system to accommodate more Lebanese in the public education, while maintaining the same number of non-Lebanese in both first and second shift schools given the current costs. A related incertitude lays in the contribution from the donor community to the education system under RACE I/pillar I for school year 2019-2020 based on the fact that the two main donors (i.e. EU and Germany) are not expected to increase their already robust support to education.

System strengthening and state of play on EU support (milestones)

The crisis in Lebanon has opened more avenues for engagement with the MEHE to advance on specific issues related to the education file following several high-level meeting which took place since end 2019.

A first important progress is the commitment taken by the Minister²⁵ to review the fiscal model for education recognizing the shift in the situation from emergency response to the current needs for a sector-based response for both Lebanese and non-Lebanese children. For this, Jordan and Turkey should serve as models for lessons learnt and exchange of expertise

²⁵ Letter to UNICEF dated 9 December 2019.

and technical assistance is to be provided by UNICEF and DFID through hiring a strategic financial advisor who would report directly to the Minister and the education donor group. Oxford Policy Management (OPM) technical assistance, funded by DFID, is supporting the development of the terms of reference (ToR). The new funding model for education could consist of three phases: a rapid costing envelope of the education sector; funding modality proposals; and budget analysis, costings models and scenarios for a future Education Sector Plan. Major progress is not expected before the school year 2020-2021. The EU and other education partners are expected to be regularly consulted on progress and solicited for technical input. Such evolution responds to education partners request in order to optimize on cost-efficiency and financial transparency, in particular for real total education expenditures. The unit cost fee-based system²⁶ for refugee children under RACE II runs in parallel and does not allow a costing approach of the entire education system per budget categories. Its cost-efficiency and allocation system along the entire education chain from MEHE to schools, as well as its financial accountability, are severely up for improvement. Moreover, a diagnosis (e.g. via the European training Foundation) of the education sector, together with a continued strong and constant policy dialogue with local authorities, would be key in order to achieve an effective and sustainable system change.

A significant step forward reached for the scholastic year 2019-2020 has been the Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) signed by the Minister on the standard practices for enrolment and attendance of children in the second shift schools. SOPs do not contain anymore the requirement for children to produce a birth certificate or a preparatory Early Childhood Education certificate to enter public primary education. A complaint mechanism managed by UNICEF was also put in place to ensure that no child is refused to school.

Progress has also been made by MEHE on the information management system. An Information Management Strategy 2019-2021 has been eventually adopted accompanied by a costed action plan.. The EU is negotiating a direct attribution to MEHE (pilot project € 10 million) to support its implementation (cf .section 2.4).

On the financial accountability of the education system in Lebanon, UNICEF launched an audit of MEHE's RACE accounts²⁷. It is expected to look at enrolment fees for Lebanese and non-Lebanese children, enrolment fees for children enrolled in the Accelerated Learning Programme, second shift monitoring, the roll-out of the child protection policy in public schools and of the inclusive school pilot project, and technical deployment and project support. School-level expenditure of a student's enrolment will also be checked in a sample of schools. The World Bank released an audit of its 2016-2018 contribution to RACE II under the Emergency Education System Stabilization Project (USD 32 M) with satisfactory results. It looked at school level procurement and financial management processes and proceeded to a special technical audit of school level expenditures (*inter alia* use of School Funds and Parents Council Funds as part of RACE enrolment fees). To get a complete and own picture of its contribution to RACE II, the EU is in the process of launching an audit early 2020.

Finally, good progress has been made towards the milestones linked to the release of EU funding under EU contribution agreement to UNICEF for the action "*Supporting access to formal education for Syrian refugee and Lebanese girls and boys in Lebanon's public schools*" (TF-MADAD/2019/T04.143) as follows:

²⁶ Refer to 2.2.2 Impact of the Syrian crisis, challenges and strategies adopted.

²⁷ Verification of USD 140 million transferred by MEHE to UNICEF in 2018. Partner's audit opinions are not shared with external parties unless explicitly authorized by partners.

- Evaluation of the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP - part of Non-Formal Education Activities): released
- Out-of-school children study: document finalized
- World Bank, UNICEF and MEHE joint annual work plans for school years 2018/19 and 2019/2020: under completion (final review) for 2019-2020 for UNICEF component.
- MEHE and RACE partners have conducted a RACE Strategic Mid-term: Terms of reference finalised, with the mission of the evaluation team expected in February 2020.
- UNICEF has released the need assessment related to the public school infrastructure: document finalised by UNICEF and submitted to MEHE.
- MEHE and education partners have agreed on a common definition of "depreciation"²⁸: discussions are ongoing. At least an understanding can be found between MEHE, UNICEF and the EU, with a more ambitious approach on school maintenance and rehabilitation.

Milestones for this Action are proposed under part 3.3 risks and assumptions.

2.3. Lessons learnt

This Action Document is aligned with the recommendations of the Evaluation of EUTF-funded programmes/projects on Basic Education through proposing to maintain the financial support to basic education at its current level, while continuing engaging with the authorities and other education donors on the sustainability of this support. After several months of advocacy from the EU and others donors, MEHE agreed to work on a new system-based fiscal model for education in Lebanon, shifting from a per-capita fee-basis to a total costs-based system, and from an emergency response to a sector-based response, seeking expertise from the models in place in Turkey and Jordan. Already some scenarios could be proposed for implementation in school year 2020-2021. Therefore, while this Action Document remains tied by the existing fee-based system for the enrolment of Lebanese and non-Lebanese children in public pre-primary and primary education, evolution towards a new fiscal model for education will be an important process underlying the action. Moreover, the results of the Mid-Term Evaluation of RACE II will provide important recommendations for the remaining years of implementation of RACE II and in the preparation of the post- RACE II by 2021.

Through proposing a component on inclusive education for vulnerable children in Lebanon, this Action Document also aims at strengthening the public education system by integrating the recommendations related to support innovative and comprehensive projects aiming at reaching out-of-school children (30% of age 6-14 in Lebanon), among them children with disabilities and learning difficulties. It will address barriers to their education; provide quality education in inclusive environments; strengthen the education systems and policies for inclusivity as well as mainstream child protection. This component also builds on efforts deployed under the EU-supported project Drop-out prevention of students (€ 3.5 million,

²⁸ EU's initial position was to use the depreciation funds for school maintenance, notably through grants directly to schools, in order to implement small maintenance works at school level (paint works, electrical works, waterproofing, playground works, window replacement/maintenance, instalment/maintenance of heating system, and minor maintenance of WASH facilities ...). Priority was to go 2nd shift school as they are "doubled" used.

2013 ended 2018) which, at the request of MEHE, took a shift to include a strong focus on children with special needs. It proposes recommendations and tools to ensure inclusion of children with special needs in the public education system in Lebanon. It took steps towards the development of a National Plan for inclusive education, which is pending endorsement by the authorities and needs to be accompanied by a policy and operational plan.

Putting in place efficient mechanisms to ensure the safe transportation of children to their schools – one of the main barrier to education – is particularly challenging. A first lesson learnt is that cash assistance to families for transportation increases cost efficiency²⁹ compared to providing buses for transport through national partners³⁰. Through the ‘reaching through’ programme, families with children enrolled in second shift receive USD 20 per child a month. Post-distribution monitoring of this programme revealed that most beneficiaries (82%) preferred the new cash assistance method³¹. A call centre was established to respond in real time to queries and complaints. In terms of management the procedure is more direct, through removing an intermediary while allowing a better control of program expenditures and accountability, reducing staff and overhead costs. However, strong follow-up mechanisms are necessary to measure and ensure attendance of school days. MEHE agreed on a conditional payment on a minimum of 70% attendance of school days. Household visits are important to understand reasons and justification for absenteeism or dropout. Some children living at a remote distance from schools had to pay additional money to cover for transportation expenses. Payment process is a challenge. During the school year 2018-2019, registration in the transportation program took place in education partners’ centres, resulting in the necessity, before issuing the first payment, to verify/cross check the data of children registered in the transportation program with the list of children enrolled in schools. This challenge can be overcome through ensuring registration in the reaching school program taking place in schools.

The transition between non-formal education and formal education remains very low in Lebanon, preventing the transition of children who completed successfully the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) to primary education. The exam is organised by MEHE under irregular cycles, depending on funding available and cohorts of children, therefore remaining unpredictable. However, this remains difficult to address in the current context, given the already high pressure on the public education system, limited absorption capacity and the financial needs for at least stabilizing the number of Lebanese and non-Lebanese children already enrolled. Quality Non Formal Education has also to be seen as a standalone education pathway, representing an opportunity to acquire education certifications for those children who will not be able to enter formal education, rather than only a bridge to formal education.

²⁹ USD 23 per month per child (USD 20 to families, USD 3 for service costs) instead of USD 35 through third party for bussing, allowing 65,000 more children to access schools.

³⁰ Impact evaluation UNICEF 2016/2017 and January 2018 UNICEF informal analysis of the cost efficiency of bussing children to school.

³¹ Feedback gathered by InfoPro Research in July 2018 after 6 months of implementation of the cash assistance modality. Positive feedback include: the new program helped resolve several issues beneficiaries faced with bus drivers in the former bus support modality; the new cash assistance method allowed in many cases extra money for families spent on stationery, clothing, daily allowance for children, food for the house etc.; although beneficiaries were not compelled to spend the cash on transportation, all indicated that school transportation fees was a priority, with any residual amount being spent otherwise; cash empowers parents to make decisions in the best interests of their children and to be more directly involved in their education.

Another important lesson learnt is that any programmatic response must be multi-sectoral and consider the entire education chain, from early childhood education to primary and secondary education, and transition to work life, higher education or vocational training. Child wellbeing should be measured all along the entire education pathway, ensuring the protection of children from all forms of violence in his various environment circles (school, family, community) as they are inter-related. First priority is to identify and tackle barriers to education, which are, as identified in 2019 by Save the Children International and a profiling done by UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR: the economic vulnerability; the distance from education facilities combined with the lack of transport and/or inability to afford transportation; the lack of school capacity and low quality of education; the lack of awareness of free education and negative perception of value of education ; and the documentation issues/legal issues. This Action Document proposes to focus more particularly on transportation through cash assistance for children meeting specific criteria³² and attending hard to reach second shift schools³³.

A study was recently conducted by Danish Refugee Council and the Lebanese Centre for Policies Studies (LCPS) under Durable Solution Platforms (DSP) funded by Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) with a specific chapter for Lebanon on education. This Action Document is aligned with the recommendations related to continuing to support and expand enrolment and retention of Syrian students in national schools; unifying existing framework for data management, strengthening data collection (i.e. EU project on National Information Management System under negotiation with MEHE); developing quality non-formal education (NFE) programmes as standalone education pathways; continuing to develop and promote innovative education programmes to meet the needs of vulnerable groups; and developing an education sector plan that addresses long-term capacity needs of the education sector.

2.4. Complementary actions

The EU has been supporting the education sector in Lebanon prior to the Syrian crisis and has been the first donor to respond to the Syrian crisis since 2011. More specifically, under the response to the Syrian crisis, so far the EU has allocated almost EUR 405 M to the education sector (ENI Special Measures and EU Regional Trust Fund - EUTF).

The Action Document will build on the action undertaken through the EU contribution agreement to UNICEF for "*Supporting access to formal education for Syrian refugee and Lebanese girls and boys in Lebanon's public schools*" (TF-MADAD/2019/T04.143)³⁴ which set a number of milestones to be met for disbursement (see 2.2.2 on progress made). The new Action proposes to adopt a similar approach for the component dedicated to support access to education for the last scholastic year (2020-2021) under RACE II (2017-2021). The Mid-Term Review of RACE II, the audit exercises as well as the current reflection of a new fiscal model for education will provide orientations for improved modalities and efficiency of international community's support to education in Lebanon.

³² Children enrolled in prep-ECE, with disabilities, in Cycle 1 in hard to reach area.

³³ Agreed per the following criteria: isolation in low populated area, on top of steep hill, across highway, difficult roads in winter....

³⁴ During the scholastic year 2018-2019 EUTF covered the enrolment fees of 54,755 Lebanese children out of the 220,178 boys and girls in public formal education (25%), as well as enrolment fees for 39% of non-Lebanese children (60,327 out of 153,500) and transportation fees for 67,538 non-Lebanese children to reach second shift schools (44% of all children in second shift).

The proposed Action is also complementary and interlinked to the EU support for a sound education information management system to improve quality of education and strengthen MEHE's capacity to collect quality data and use them to inform policies and evidence-based programming. A School Information Monitoring System (SIMS) has been put in place through EU support (€ 3.9 M) composed of 17 modules³⁵. The system is now to be fully operationalised and used, populated with quality data by end users and analysed to inform MEHE's orientations. The EU Delegation is negotiating a direct attribution to MEHE (amount of € 10 million) for the comprehensive implementation of MEHE's Information Management Strategy 2019-2021 and costed action plan. It would test MEHE's capacity to implement directly a project, as well as its financial accountability and reporting capacities. The delivery of the National Information Strategy end 2019 was considered as a prerequisite to EU support. It constitutes an important step towards an institutional shift in MEHE from "data to information", ensuring that quality education data are collected, analysed, shared and used to inform evidence-based programming, strategies and policies. It would also enable MEHE to better report on its commitments on SDG 4. A first commitment was taken by MEHE to produce an annual report on the state of play of education in Lebanon (content to be agreed upon), compiling data available and provide a dynamic analysis. A remaining issue relates to the unification of the existing information systems (FACE managed by CERD, Compiler for second shift school, SIMS as meta system notably encompassing first shift schools, NSL for private schools and GIS on localization of schools), which MEHE is committed to solve.

The Action Document is also complementary to EU support for access to and quality of non-formal education and transition and retention into formal education through the project Back to the Future implemented by a consortium of three NGOs (AVSI, Terre des Hommes, Stitching War Child). Building on the lessons learnt and main recommendations from the first programme (2016-2019 - € 12.1 million), the second phase (2020-2021 - € 10 million) focuses on certified community-based Early Childhood Education, Basic Literacy and Numeracy courses, referral from non-formal to formal education, retention through homework support programmes and remedial classes in public schools, as well as protective environment (resilience and psychosocial wellbeing of children) and strengthening of national system on NFE.

The component dedicated to inclusive education for children with disabilities under this Action Document intends to build on the programme "Drop-out prevention of students" (€3.5 million, 2013 ended 2018). At the request of MEHE, the programme has been shifted to drop-out related to special education. After a lengthy consultation process with many actors and taking into account the Minister's request, the programme has been on hold for more than a year before retaking its activities of analysis of children with special needs. It proposes recommendations and tools to ensure inclusion of children with special needs in the public education system in Lebanon.

Since 2016 the EUTF provides 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. Synergies will also be searched with the support given to Higher Education initiatives, as ERASMUS+ or EUTF programmes, to ensure transition of children in higher cycles of education and/or training as well as integration at the labour market. Complementarity will also be ensured with the action on

³⁵ School profile module, school records module; facility module; staff module, registration and admission module; student module; timetable module; student assessment module; financial module; reporting module; security module.

EUTF support to economic development and social stability in Lebanon, which includes component on vocational and skills training as well as work on tension reduction through interaction between refugee and host community women, youth and children (tailored sports, cultural and conflict resolution activities).

Complementarities and synergies will be ensured in the protection sector and more specifically in the child protection sector where the EUTF is a mayor player (support to the Ministry of Social Affairs and its National Plan for Safeguarding Children and Women in Lebanon; service provisions at Social Development Centres' level).

Finally, close coordination and complementarity is sought with DG ECHO and its support in Lebanon on education in emergencies for the most vulnerable children (€ 5 million in 2009), focusing primarily on non-formal education (Early Childhood Education, Basic Literacy and Numeracy) and protection through integrated community-based intervention, while searching for innovative projects, pilot approaches and sharing best practices.

The proposed support will be implemented in close coordination with MEHE using the channels of dialogue already existing, ensuring complementarity with the action for other donors and joint advocacy between like-minded donors (see 2.5).

2.5. Donor co-ordination

Since its onset, the EU Delegation participates to the RACE Executive Committee, gathering MEHE, international organisation and donors, and tasked to monitor the progress done and provide technical and strategic guidance under the three pillars. Where relevant, the EU also participates to the other sub-committees (financial, NGO, NFE...) related to RACE, offering spaces for dialogues on structural improvements in the education sector. Despite the functioning of these groups not being wholly participatory and not routinely functional, they reflect important steps taken by MEHE for a better coordination with implementation partners and donors in a context of high-centralized environment.

The EU Delegation plays a prominent role in the donors' education coordination meeting (international organisations and donors) taking place on a monthly basis. Such meeting help to agree on common positions and advocacy messages conveyed towards national authorities, notably ahead of high-level meeting on education or in the case of specific situations (launching of the school year, teachers' salary crisis...). They also aim at providing a sector update, sharing expertise between donors, improving planning and financing, establishing bridges between sectors (child protection, social assistance, health..) and ensuring lack of duplication but complementarity between donor's interventions, notably in fields where several donors intervene. Per agreement reached in 2019, donors agreed to lead on thematic areas, respectively Germany for finance, DFID for Non-Formal Education, the World Bank for Data Quality and the EU for data systems. However, it was commonly acknowledged that those groups need more investment from the allocated lead donors. The EU Delegation committed to revive the specific donor group dedicated to data and information management. Objectives shared for year 2020 for the education coordination meeting are 1) effective financing across the education sector and 2) building a better dialogue with the government of Lebanon. Work is also conducted around a comprehensive mapping of donors interventions organised by theme under the principle "who does what, where, when and what for" (5 Ws).

The EU Delegation is tasked in the name of other donors to lead the Mid-Term Review exercise of the RACE II 2017-2021 with MEHE Program Management Unit (PMU), from the

common agreement on the scope of the exercise to the ToR, organisation of the field visit, and quality control and validation of the report.

Donor	RACE pillars	Thematic
UK (DFID)	Pillar I	Non formal education (linking with child protection and Gender-Based Violence)
	Pillar II	Quality education and learning outcome
	Pillar III	Technical Assistance to MEHE on strategic planning, educational planning, capacity planning data, budgeting, PfM.... Research for Results examining service delivery and system-wide dynamics.
Canada	Pillar I	Access to education and retention for Lebanese and non-Lebanese
	Pillar II	Teacher training curriculum, safe learning environment (child protection policy), inclusive education policy
Germany	Pillar I	Access to education (enrolment), rehabilitation and construction of schools
	Pillar II	Quality education (notably conflict prevention in curricula)
France	Pillar I	Access to education (enrolment), infrastructure
Italy	Pillar I	Access to education (transportation, retention, equipment and rehabilitation, NFE, school meal...) linked with protection.
Netherlands	Pillar I	Access to education (enrolment) and school upgrading
	Pillar II	Curriculum, extracurricular activities
Switzerland	Pillar I	Rehabilitation, NFE
USA	Pillar II	Quality of early grade learning, social and emotional learning
	Pillar III	Technical assistance to MEHE and CERD on strategic planning, operational planning, decision-making...
World Bank	Pillar I	Equitable access to education
	Pillar II	Quality learning environment in general education and preschool
	Pillar III	Governance and managerial capacity of MEHE (financial management, procurement M&E), research for evidence and results.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives/Expected Results

The **Overall Objective** of the programme is to strengthen the public education system in Lebanon in order to deliver inclusive and quality education for vulnerable school-aged children, ensuring their full access and retention, in alignment with the Lebanese Strategy "Reaching All Children with Education" (RACE) phase II 2017-2021 and SDG objective 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all".

The **Specific Objectives** of the action are:

1) To ensure continued access to and retention in public formal education for Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese for the school year 2020-2021 (pillar I of Lebanese national strategy Reaching All Children with Education - RACE).

2) To strengthen the public education system in Lebanon for improved inclusivity in formal and non-formal education for the period 2020-2022 (pillar II and III of RACE).

An indicative logframe reflecting all of the above is included in Annex 1.

3.2. Activities

The envisaged activities (indicative) are:

- Under Specific objective 1:

Activity 1: provide registration fees for Syrian refugees and Lebanese vulnerable children for enrolment into public schools (first and second shifts, KG to grade 9).

Until the end of RACE II by 2021 and until the finalization of a new costing model for the education system, support to enrolment fees for Lebanese and non-Lebanese children for the scholastic year 2020-2021 is expected to be provided under the current unit costs. Under both RACE plans, the MEHE has costed the enrolment of those children as follow:

- Each Lebanese child enrolled in the First Shift costed at USD 60, representing a subsidy to the Parents Council Fund;
- Each refugee child enrolled in the First Shift costed at USD 363 covering Parents Council Fund (USD 60³⁶), School Fund (USD 100³⁷) and marginal increase government spending (USD 203);
- Each refugee child enrolled in the Second Shift costed at USD 600 covering Parents Council Fund (USD 60), School Fund (USD 100), extra operating school costs (USD 340³⁸) and depreciation costs (USD 100³⁹).

During the scholastic year 2020-2021, the Action could support (indicative) the access to public schools (KG to G9) for 115,000 children through covering the enrolment fees (USD 60 per child) of 55,000 Lebanese kids, as well as 60,000 Non-Lebanese kids into Second Shift (USD 600 per child)⁴⁰. Given the deepening socio-economic and financial crisis in Lebanon and its impact on public schools (more Lebanese children), the risk of tensions between

³⁶ Water, general electricity and cleaning

³⁷ Insurance, extra sports activities, heating....

³⁸ Salaries of school directors, teachers, superintendents, cleaners and janitors.

³⁹ Maintenance of school building and rehabilitation.

⁴⁰ Exact figure to be determined according to complementarity with other donors.

refugee population and vulnerable host communities and the necessity to ensure social cohesion (cf. 2.2.1 country context), it is proposed to also cover enrolment fees for Lebanese children.

Activity 2: provide transportation for Syrian refugee enrolled in formal education second shift for the school year 2020-2021.

Transportation remains a major issue in access to education for refugee children in Lebanon (see explanations in 2.2.2 and 2.3). In order to mitigate this, the Action will include the provision of school transportation for children when necessary, through searching for efficient mechanisms and modalities, with a focus on hard to reach second shift schools operating in the evenings between 2 and 6 pm.

This Action proposes to support the transportation costs for approximately 26,000 Non-Lebanese children (indicative) in Second Shift through the Reaching School Program developed by UNICEF. The current unit cost is USD 23 per month per child, including USD 20 for cash transfer to families and USD 3 for bank fees, cost of registration, call centre, SMS and monitoring costs.

On implementation and monitoring mechanism, school enrolment is done in schools where school directors are in charge of collecting families' information and informing families of registration dates and eligibility criteria. Hotlines are put in place with messages and guidance based on a Question and Answers and also responding to beneficiaries' queries and complaints. Registration takes place in schools during specific dates agreed with school directors who provide lists of eligible children including a Unique ID for each child that is transferred. This code allows for accurate verification of children's data. Moreover, verification is conducted monthly during the school year to check children's enrolment and attendance. The first payment is made to all children registered in the transportation program. The following payment is made upon results of the verification exercise on actual enrolment. Follow-up exercises are conducted on children with high rate of absenteeism and who stopped attending to understand the reasons and identify children who need to be referred to other services such as child protection and support them to return to school. A grievances and appeal mechanism is available for families through the hotline.

On the financial structure of the proposed activity, cash transfers for reaching school support are delivered through the Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards (LOUISE Red card). This joint delivery mechanism set up in 2016 by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF fosters synergies, and leverages economies of scale by delivering cash assistance through one system and one card. Aside from that, UNICEF cash MIS⁴¹ allows all payments to be traced and recorded, whether programmatic or financial.

- Under Specific objective 2:

This specific objective articulates three pillars: access to education through removing barriers for all children to attend schools; quality of education and child well being through improved learning outcomes for all children, psychosocial wellbeing, protection and safety; system-strengthening through inclusive education policy and education system capacity-building. Inclusive education responds to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies. Inclusive education has

⁴¹ Management Information System

academic, social and emotional benefits not only for children with special needs but also for all girls and boys. It leads to more cohesive societies that respect diversity and difference.

Activity 1: operationalize and test the model of inclusive formal education in Lebanon in pilot schools and scale it-up upon development of an extension strategy and roadmap.

Activity 2: extension of inclusive education in second shift schools.

Activity 3: modelling inclusive child-friendly schools.

Activity 4: supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities in non-formal education.

Description of activities

- Activities 1 and 2

In cooperation with UNICEF, MEHE and CERD⁴² launched⁴³ an inclusive education pilot programme in 30 public schools, with over 10,000 students in grades KG-grade 6, including 1,000 children with learning difficulties. Under this intervention, children with special needs would continue to be supported by a special educator - funded by the Government of Lebanon - present in each school and, according to their needs, to be offered services from speech therapist, psychologist and psychomotor therapist (twice a week). The schools receive inclusion kits (a package of tools and games for cognitive, motor and sensory development) and devices for the students with disabilities such as braille printers, hearing aid and mobility devices.

Another component would be dedicated to training. Currently, 60% of the teachers in the 30 schools are trained on inclusive education and differentiated instruction, and 30% on child protection modules developed by CERD. The extension of the regular awareness and sensitization sessions organised by Département d'Orientation et de Pédagogie Scolaire (DOPS) for school staff, parents and children on inclusive education, as well as visits to the schools, is another part of the proposed activities.

To improve the outreach and identify and refer more out of school children with disabilities to schools, MEHE is developing SOPs with an NGO in partnership with UNICEF. The support to the extension of this pilot programme on inclusive education is expected to inform the development of inclusive education policy in Lebanon and scaling-up of inclusive education to more schools in the country. The policy development plans to involve stakeholders from the government, UN agencies, civil society and organizations of persons with disability. Evidences on successful inclusions practices will be generated from the analysis of the activities aiming at building the capacity of the public school system. The Action would search at influencing positively public and professional opinion and attitudes towards the culture of inclusion.

- Activity 3:

20 schools out of the 80 targeted by activity 1 and 2 will be selected for a more in-depth approach towards all dimensions of a model inclusive child friendly schools that promote child-seeking, child-centred, gender-responsive, inclusive, parent and community-

⁴² Centre for Educational Research and Department.

⁴³ Scholastic year 2018/2019.

involved, environmentally friendly, protective⁴⁴, safe and healthy approaches to schooling (<https://www.unicef.org/cfs/>). It is proposed to look comprehensively and holistically at different dimensions of inclusive and protective school, putting schools as agents of their own transformation. MEHE will be supported to develop a checklist and criteria for child-friendly and inclusive schools. The schools will get support to make participatory self-assessment of their schools along the above-mentioned dimensions and develop and implement their school development plans. Part of the proposed activity will be to design this model for Lebanon with MEHE and schools (UNICEF guidelines and toolboxes to be customized for Lebanon).

- Activity 4:

The intervention in non-formal education will build on the comprehensive approach and package to inclusion of children with disabilities and learning difficulties in non-formal education (NFE): Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) and Community-based Early Childhood Education (CB-ECE). NGO providers will conduct outreach and community engagement activities to identify out of school children. Inclusion officer of the NFE provider will conduct needs assessment and support the development of an intervention plan for the child, as well as provide methodological support to the teachers. UNICEF would provide capacity building for the partners. Children with specific needs will have access to a package of support services like speech therapy or special need devices to meet their needs.

In order to promote positive social norms in the community and create favourable enabling environment, community events on social inclusion, discussions, meetings with local authorities and with parents of children with disabilities will be organized with an objective to empower the parents, and to raise awareness and create positive attitudes towards inclusion of persons with disabilities. In addition, multimedia communication will be created to promote positive discourse on disability inclusion in social media.

In total, it is proposed to target 90 public schools⁴⁵ under the activities of specific objective 2, for a total of 27,000 children (indicative - 25% Non-Lebanese) enrolled in Inclusive Pilot Schools and benefitting from improved learning environments and inclusive education. The percentage of children with disability and learning difficulties enrolled in the Inclusive Pilot Schools targeted by the project would be of 10% (2% with disabilities, 8% with learning difficulties). In addition the target for the number of Syrian refugee children with disability enrolled in non-formal education would be of approximately 4,000 (out-of-school children).

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Among the main risks is the worsening of the socio-economic crisis. It could deteriorate the economy of households and the protection of the refugee population, fuelling tension between host communities and refugees in a context of more competitive access to scarce economic resources. As a mitigating measure, this Action Document proposes to target both refugee and vulnerable Lebanese children from poor Lebanese households lacking resources to enrol their children in education.

The Action will also seek to operationally align with the LCRP tensions monitoring system, to ensure that mitigation measures are taken in response to tension spikes in specific localities, and to ensure monitoring of the impact of EUTF interventions; also providing examples of

⁴⁴ Protective includes positive and alternative forms of discipline as well as the roll out of the child protection policy and anti-bullying strategies

⁴⁵ Indicative. Depending on MEHE's capacity to scale-up.

positive social interactions between refugees and host communities. Moreover, the EU and the international community will continue advocating for unhindered access to education, through guaranteeing that the SOPs adopted for the scholastic year 2019-2020 keep provisions avoiding discrimination against vulnerable children (i.e. refugee lacking birth certificates, children lacking prep-ECE certificates...). Finally, the EU Delegation will continue to advocate for Lebanon to adhere to obligations for refugee protection, as per international law. Overall, continuous dialogue will take place with GoL during programme implementation, to ensure that a clear framework is established to safeguard refugee protection and livelihoods.

Another impact of the socio-economic crisis could be the deterioration of the public services, with a lower level of investment from the national authorities notably due to reduced tax collection, and with a reduced quality (i.e. dismissal of contracted teachers, cut in the salaries of permanent teachers, lower level of attendance and performance of teachers). A mitigation measure is to constantly advocate towards the authorities to ensure that public education is always considered as a priority sector and that a stable level of the national budget is allocated to it. This Action Document is dependent from the other donors support to the RACE II to ensure access to, retention and quality of education while maintaining efforts towards strengthening the system. The EU Delegation will continue in close coordination with education partners to ensure a shared support to the three pillars of RACE, while supporting MEHE to raise funding towards non-traditional donors.

Another risk is the continuation of the political crisis and the absence of formation of a new government. This could hamper strategic decision taking at various levels of MEHE in a context of incertitude and difficulty for international partners to get agreement from the authorities on support to interventions. A mitigation strategy is to continue engaging at the level of DG with permanent high-level staff able to take decisions in such a transitory context. Moreover, UNICEF is a strategic and lead partner of MEHE on education. The agency is not at risk of being impacted by a potential shrinking space for INGOs and will continue its technical support and advocacy work with MEHE, including on a new costing model for education in Lebanon.

Linked to both elements above, key opinion-makers might adopt increasing anti-Syrian rhetoric, which may lead to an upswing in anti-Syrian sentiment. This risk is already being witnessed to a large extent. A change in the narrative of international partners (including EUTF partners) that intends to focus the conversation towards a greater recognition of Lebanese concerns, resilience, burden sharing, reciprocity and the temporary nature of Syrian displacement, as well as emphasising solidarity with the refugee situation, is expected to create greater traction in terms of entry points for evidence-based policy dialogue.

The EU commitment to the education sector in Lebanon is expected to continue beyond this action and the EU Trust Fund. On specific objective 1, the current enrolment funding envelope is entirely connected to the unit-cost model. It is expected that the work of the strategic financial advisor on revamping the costing model for refugee enrolment will allow for the current (static) funding modality to be used towards more expense categories in the public-school systems and budgets, producing larger impact and results towards existing donor support. On specific objective 2, sustainability is linked to MEHE supporting the costs of the special educator positions in the schools targeted by the inclusive education programme. Teacher training is also done through CERD, the official public organization with the teacher training mandate.

The release of funding might be made conditional to⁴⁶:

- MEHE has released a new costing model of the education system (YEAR 1)
- MEHE has adopted a strategy and Action Plan on post-RACE II (interlinked with above) (YEAR 1)
- MEHE has presented and endorsed a SGD 4 Action Plan (YEAR 2);
- An assessment of the cash transportation program covering the 2019-2020 school year is conducted and released (YEAR 1);
- Lessons learnt for 2019-2020 on the Inclusive Education Pilot programme in 30 schools are completed and an Inclusive Education Policy framework/outline is developed (YEAR 1);
- Special Educator positions in schools targeted for inclusive education are funded by MEHE (YEARS 1 and 2);
- An Inclusive Education Policy and Roadmap is developed (YEAR 2);

3.4. Cross-cutting issues

This Action Document proposes to apply through its action the five working principles of a right-based approach to development: applying all rights, participation and access, non-discrimination, accountability and rule of law.

The Action puts a particular emphasis on the protection of vulnerable children through ensuring their access to quality education in protective environment, including in hard to reach and remote areas, in complement with child protection activities supported by the EU and other donors. MEHE and UNICEF have launched a National Child Protection Policy in May 2018 following a pilot of internal and external referral mechanisms in 20 schools. It was completed by the publication of Guidelines for School Counsellors on Basic Skills for Psycho-Social Support. MEHE is also unique in the region for having launched an inter-ministerial child protection policy. Better learning opportunities for children are expected to help them secure livelihoods and/or transition into higher education, vocational or skills training.

Disability is at the core of the component 2 of the Action Document, focusing on inclusive formal and non-formal education for children with disabilities and with learning difficulties. Persons with disabilities are part of the most marginalized groups in Lebanon. Among them children are at high risk of falling out of learning in the absence of sound policies and investment for their inclusion into mainstream schools. Institutionalisation of children with disabilities is not the best option for many of them. Syrian refugees with disabilities are largely overlooked and facing high protection risks as a result of multiple and complex unmet needs, which cross both medical and social dimensions. This Action Document will generate evidences on successful inclusion practices to inform policy development.

The Action will pay a specific attention to gender equality, notably ensuring education for girls and improving the collection and analysis of gender-aggregated data. Participation of children is at the centre of UNICEF approach, enabling them to participate to decisions that are affecting their lives.

⁴⁶ An agreement will be searched with the new Minister for Education and Higher Education through strategic dialogue and/or exchange of letters.

3.5. Stakeholders

The following stakeholders have been identified:

- Duty-bearers: relevant national authorities in charge of education and inclusion, including MEHE, CERD, MoSA, MoPH, regional education offices, schools, teachers and other education staff.
- Rights-holders: Syrian refugee and vulnerable Lebanese children aged 3-14 attending public schools from KG (early childhood education pre-primary) to G1-G9 (primary and intermediate/lower secondary education) as well as their families.
- 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, in alignment with RACE governance mechanisms on the context of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP).

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Financing agreement, if relevant

In order to implement this Action, it is not foreseen to conclude a Financing Agreement with the Government of the partner countries. The envisaged assistance is deemed to follow the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures pursuant to Article 215 TFEU.

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 is 36 months targeting the school year 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. A possible extension of the implementation period may be decided by the relevant AOSD, and immediately communicated to the Operational Board.

4.3. Implementation components and modules

4.3.1. Component 1 and 2– Indirect Management with UNICEF

A part of this Action may be implemented in indirect management with UNICEF in accordance with Article 62(1) FR 2018/1046. Criteria for choosing the entity are: expertise on education and inclusive education; capacity to engage with the authorities on strategic dialogue, policies and programming on education; geographic coverage on education and transportation to schools (national and subnational levels). The implementation of the action entails activities related to the enrolment costs and transportation in formal education, as well as inclusive education for all children. UNICEF is the preferred implementing partner because of its specific mandate on education, its relevant collaboration with and technical assistance to MEHE (notably in the frame of RACE strategy since its onset), schools, communities, families and children and relevant partners. UNICEF has monopoly and exclusivity in competencies in education and child protection. More particularly on inclusivity, UNICEF is currently testing an Inclusive Education Pilot Programme in 30 public schools with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Centre for Education Research and Development, aimed at enhancing access to education, improving quality of education and strengthening the system.

UNICEF extensive capacity has been pillar assessed by the EC. The agency 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 206.5 M (under ENI and EUTF) 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 leading to the end of RACE phase II (2017-2021),

4.4. Indicative budget

Component*	Amount in EUR thousands
Indirect management – contribution agreement to UNICEF ⁴⁷ : - component 1: € 44,500,000 - component 2: € 13,000,000	57,500,000
Total	57,500,000

* Communication and visibility funds will be included in the various components

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 an independent Monitoring and Evaluation exercise to accompany all Fund programmes and ensure that targets are met and lessons learnt can be incorporated into other EUTF actions.

The purpose of the EUTF Syria Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is to assess, across various levels, the degree to which the Overall Objective of the Trust Fund has been achieved. Partners implementing this Action will comply with the ad hoc Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for the EUTF Syria as well as with the reporting requirements and tools being developed by the EU Trust Fund.

The implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the Action and elaborate regular progress reports and final reports.

The European Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

The monitoring and evaluation exercises noted above will represent milestones in the implementation of the activities. These regular assessments will constitute a basis for a

⁴⁷ The share between component 1 and 2 might be subject to small adjustments according to other donors' funding for the next scholastic years.

possible decision of suspension or revision of activities, should the conditions on the ground not allow for their proper implementation.

4.6 Evaluation and audit.

Overall, evaluation of the EUTF is mandated by the Constitutive Agreement of the Fund (article 13): “The Trust Fund and the Actions financed by it will be subject to the evaluation rules applicable to EU external programmes, in order to ensure the respect of the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.” Detailed provisions for the Evaluation of EUTF-funded Actions are defined by the strategy for portfolio evaluations.

To support the fulfilment of the mandate of the EUTF reinforcing the EUTF capacity to bring a change in the cooperation area, the projects will carry out a number of evaluations.

Projects should carry out a final evaluation, and one external audit per year. A mid-term evaluation may also be considered. Whenever possible, evaluations will be jointly carried out by partners.

If necessary, ad hoc audits or expenditure verification assignments could be contracted by the European Commission for one or several contracts or agreements.

Audits and expenditure verification assignments will be carried out in conformity with the risk analysis in the frame of the yearly Audit Plan exercise conducted by the European Commission. The amount dedicated in the budget for external Evaluation and Audit purposes is EUR. Evaluation and audit assignments will be implemented through service contracts, making use of one of the Commission’s dedicated framework contracts or alternatively through the competitive negotiated procedure or the single tender procedure.

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 EUTF Syria 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 EUTF Syria 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 EUTF Syria 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 EUTF Syria serve as a reference for the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the relevant contractual obligations. According to the EUTF Syria'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 EUTF Syria's programmes in promoting social cohesion, inclusion, dialogue and help mitigate tensions and misperceptions between refugee and host communities.

ANNEX 1 - INDICATIVE LOGFRAME MATRIX (max. 2 pages)

The indicative logframe matrix will evolve during the lifetime of the action and can be revised as necessary: The activities, the expected outputs and related indicators, targets and baselines included in the logframe matrix are indicative and may be updated during the implementation of the Action, no amendment being required to the financing decision. The logframe matrix should be used for monitoring and reporting purposes: new lines will be added for including baselines / targets for each indicator at contracting or inception stage new columns may be added to set intermediary targets (milestones) for the output and outcome indicators whenever it is relevant, as well as to regularly update values (“current value”) for reporting purpose. The inception report should include the complete logframe (e.g. including baselines/targets). Progress reports should provide an updated logframe with current values for each indicator. The final report should enclose the logframe with baseline and final values for each indicator.

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result) To the maximum extend all indicators targeting individual beneficiaries will be disaggregated by sex and community of origin for refugee and host community		Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Impact (Overall objective)	A strengthened public education is put in place, able to deliver quality and inclusive education for all school-aged children in Lebanon.	1. % of children completing the school year and transitioning to next grades (first and second shift schools) 2. Status of the inclusive education policy in Lebanon.		RACE II website, CERD annual reports, SDG 4 report, MEHE SIMS, MEHE Compiler	Sustainability of the new government and commitments to policy dialogue on reforms with allocation of resources.
Outcome(s) (Specific Objective(s))	SO 1) Inclusive access to and retention in public formal education for Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese accessing for the school year 2020-2021 (pillar I of Lebanese national strategy Reaching All Children with Education - RACE) ensured.	<i>1.1 % of attendance⁴⁸ in public schools for the scholastic year 2020-2021</i> <i>1.2 % of children dropping-out between scholastic year 2020-21 and 2021-2022.</i>	<i>First shift Schools</i> <i>Second shift schools</i>	RACE II website, CERD annual reports, SDG 4 report, MEHE SIMS, MEHE Compiler	Mitigated effects of the socio-economic crisis.

⁴⁸ # of children registered, who are absent for less than 10 consecutive days during the scholastic year

	<p>SO II) 2) The public education system in Lebanon is strengthened for improved inclusivity in formal and non-formal education for the period 2020-2022 (pillar II and III of RACE).</p>	<p><i>1.3 Number of children enrolled in Inclusive Pilot Schools benefiting from improved learning environments and inclusive education (i.e., in Inclusive Pilot schools) for the scholastic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022(EU TF RF 1). Disaggregation by children with disabilities and learning difficulties.</i></p>	<p>UNICEF annual reports, MEHE data</p>	<p>Stable security in the country. No further deterioration of the legal and protection environment for refugees.</p>
<p>Other Results (Outputs and/or Short-term Outcomes)</p>	<p>Outputs under SO1</p> <p>° registration fees for Syrian refugee children and vulnerable Lebanese children in public schools (first and second shifts - KG to Grade 9) are covered</p> <p>° refugee children in second shift schools get access to transportation</p>	<p><i>1.4 Number of Syrian refugee children with disability enrolled in non-formal education for the scholastic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022(EUTF RF 1).</i></p> <p><i>Number of boys and girls whose registration fees for public formal education are subsidised for school year 2020/2021.</i></p> <p><i>Number of Syrian refugee boys and girls enrolled in public second shift schools receiving cash assistance for transportation for the school year 2020/2021.</i></p> <p><i>Number of public schools and other educational facilities rehabilitated and upgraded in standards (EUTF RF 6)</i></p>		

	<p>Outputs under SO 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the model of inclusive education in public schools is tested, operationalised and scaled-up. ◦ inclusive education is extended in second shift schools ◦ the model of inclusive child-friendly public schools is developed. ◦ Children with learning difficulties and disabilities have access to non-formal education 	<p><i>Number of pilot schools tested for inclusive education.</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers trained on inclusive education. (EUTF RF 5).</i></p> <p><i>Number of public schools proposing inclusive education (first shift and second shift).</i></p> <p><i>Number of inclusive child-friendly schools established.</i></p> <p><i>Number of non-formal education structures offering programmes for children with disability.</i></p> <p><i>Number of community members sensitized on rights of children with disabilities</i></p>	<p>UNICEF annual reports, MEHE data</p>	
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