

**EVALUATION OF UNICEF
CONTRIBUTION TO TEACHING AND
LEARNING**

Case Study: Lebanon

May 2023

unite for
children



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Evaluation of UNICEF contribution to teaching and learning Case Study: Lebanon

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Acronyms

CERD	Center for Educational Research and Development
EiE	Education in emergencies
GIGA	Global Innovation Gateway for All
ICT	Information and communication technology
LeaRA	Learning Readiness Rapid Assessment
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PPE	Personal protective equipment
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Introduction

This case study is one of seven case studies conducted within the global evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning. The overall objective of the global evaluation was to determine to what extent and how successfully UNICEF activities and outputs at the global, regional and country levels contributed to the following outcomes: (1) strong evidence and resource base provided for the education sector's response to COVID-19; (2) education solutions are evidence-based, cross-sectoral and partnership-based; (3) children continue to learn while schools are closed; (4) marginalized children are reached, and their needs are addressed; (5) children are safe and protected during school reopening; and (6) in-school learning is reinstated. The global evaluation was carried out between February 2022 and March 2023, covering UNICEF activities and documents generated between March 2020 and December 2021.

The main purpose of the case study was to produce in-depth analysis to further inform the global evaluation, as well as to derive lessons learned to advise the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office about possible activities and to better position the organization to improve its performance in support of teaching and learning efforts.

The Lebanon case study was guided by questions from the global evaluation, based on three specific objectives: Objective 1: to examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic; Objective 2: to examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and Objective 3: to examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams used the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale. Conducted over the same time period, the case study follows the same utilization-focused evaluation approach and methodology as the one used in the global evaluation and a similar in-depth data collection method to assess the evidence.

A total of 16 people participated in remote interviews with key country informants in August 2022 (11 UNICEF Lebanon Country Office staff, 3 government officials and 2 representatives of implementing partners). Over 60 internal documents were reviewed. Evidence was triangulated using information from a global online survey administered between September and October 2022 to contextualize the analysis. Active participation of reference group members and UNICEF Lebanon Country Office staff gave the triangulation process an additional layer of validity. The conclusions and lessons are summarized below.

Conclusions

Objective 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Conclusion 1: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office contributed to evidence generation to inform government action on learning continuity and supporting the psychosocial and mental well-being of children and teachers during the COVID-19 response. Building on existing work, significant efforts were made to support non-formal education (NFE) programmes adapted to the realities of the pandemic.

Conclusion 2: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's position as a trusted, long-term government partner was key to mobilizing a network of implementing partners to develop the national COVID-19 education response plan, using a multisectoral and comprehensive approach and providing options to enable access to education for the most marginalized and refugee children.

Objective 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning

Conclusion 3: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office successfully adapted programmes and repurposed resources to adapt to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, to support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) agenda of providing education through digital platforms to all children. However, limitations in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, access to technological equipment, and familiarity with digital platforms among students and teachers restricted the reach of these initiatives.

Conclusion 4: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the MEHE's efforts by adapting tools to the new reality of the COVID-19 pandemic; procuring and distributing personal protective equipment; supporting the development of guidance and safety protocols for a safe return to school; developing advocacy and communication campaigns on child safety and well-being; and training teachers and other school personnel on safety standards and practices. However, resources, guidance and a comprehensive training package for teachers on remedial learning losses were limited.

Conclusion 5: Through its strong engagement with an existing network of implementing partners, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office rapidly adapted and supported the government's existing NFE programmes, targeting the most marginalized children, including those with disabilities. These efforts built on existing comprehensive, multisectoral plans and strategies to support children and teachers. However, limited evidence was found on efforts to monitor or measure the impact of such strategies and initiatives.

Objective 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks and readiness to handle similar future crises

Conclusion 6: Building on its existing education in emergencies (EiE) programme and many years of experience of emergency response, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office and its partners adapted global emergency frameworks and guidance for safe school reopening to the Lebanese context and adjusted them to the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts directly informed the government's response to the disruptions to the education sector caused by COVID-19 and helped prepare the government for future emergencies.

Lessons learned

Lesson 1: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's education response to the COVID-19 pandemic and adaptations of existing EiE tools were agile and generated important evidence to inform the government's decision-making. However, limited monitoring and impact evidence has been collected to assess the different options of NFE offered during the pandemic.

Lesson 2: In line with the government's priorities, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office used its trusted partnerships with government and other implementing partners to use digital tools as emerging solutions to promote access to and participation in education during crises and in both emergency and non-emergency contexts.

1.0 Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

Even before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, a global learning crisis was in effect, due to the limited progress made towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, caused the largest disruption to education in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries. School closures, which recurred with successive waves of COVID-19, affected 19 in every 20 students.

During the COVID-19 emergency, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) worked to support the priorities of national governments in close coordination with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Global Team and country teams, humanitarian agencies and civil society partners. Its objectives were to protect children, their families and teachers from exposure to COVID-19, to minimize the impacts of public health measures, to address the immediate socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, and to increase access to and the provision of basic social services.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, had guided UNICEF work on education as a priority, as described in Goal Area 2. Its theory of change was developed assuming that the economic, political and social environment would remain stable. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this key assumption ceased to hold true. Although a revised theory of change was not developed explicitly for the UNICEF response to COVID-19, the overarching goal of UNICEF, and the goals of its education programme, remained relevant. The three key change strategies of Goal Area 2’s theory of change included in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 – namely, global partnerships and public goods, systems-strengthening and service delivery – remained relevant following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This case study presents in-depth analysis of the work done by the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office during the period from March 2020 to December 2021, assessing the UNICEF education response to COVID-19. This exercise was designed to gather in-depth evidence to inform the global evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning. Guided by its mandate to provide inclusive and equitable education and learning opportunities to girls and boys, including the most marginalized, this evaluation aimed to determine to what extent and how successfully UNICEF activities and outputs at the global, regional and country levels contributed to the following outcomes:

- Strong evidence and resource base provided for the education response
- Education solutions are evidence-based, cross-sectoral and partnership-based
- Children continue to learn while schools are closed
- Marginalized children are reached, and their needs are addressed
- Children are safe and protected during school reopening
- In-school learning is reinstated.

1.2 Lebanon country context

Lebanon's recent history is marked by economic crisis and social unrest caused by multiple factors, including a fragile political environment, civil unrest, the Syrian conflict and a refugee crisis resulting in the highest per capita ratio of refugees in the world, and associated humanitarian challenges.¹ The most recent economic crisis emerged in 2019 and has worsened since then. The country's currency depreciated to new lows in 2020, with inflation increasing to 137 per cent, and food prices increasing by approximately 441 per cent.

The ensuing macroeconomic outlook caused the government to reduce or remove subsidies on basic goods, significantly reducing the purchasing power of the majority of the population.² Unemployment affected one third of the population, and poverty rates increased from 28 per cent in 2019 to 55 per cent in 2020.³ The severe economic crisis has impacted social development and progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for children. The economic crisis means an increasing burden on the already stretched public social protection system, decreasing access to basic social services, increases in child poverty, and a decline in child well-being.

An estimated 3.5 million people were living below the poverty line in Lebanon in 2020, and around three quarters of the Lebanese population are income-vulnerable. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that Lebanon was hosting approximately 1.7 million refugees in 2020 (1.5 million Syrians and 200,000 Palestinians), with over 91 per cent of Syrian refugees living below the poverty line.⁴

The explosions at the port of Beirut in August 2020 caused another humanitarian disaster, with adverse ripple effects in addition to the losses of lives and property. An estimated 160 schools were damaged, as well as 6 major hospitals, many clinics and health care centres. The resignation of the government following the blast, and the failure to form a new government immediately, meant that the country – already struggling with multiple challenges – did not have a robust action plan to implement necessary reforms.⁵

1.3 COVID-19 and the education sector in Lebanon

The first case of COVID-19 confirmed in Lebanon was registered on 21 February 2020, when the country was already facing extreme social and economic strains. The government established a response plan for COVID-19 and began implementation, enforcing strict measures to limit the spread of the virus. The closure of nurseries, schools, high schools and universities was mandated on 29 February 2020 and remained in force for the next 18 months.

School closures due to COVID-19 and the destruction of schools in the Beirut port explosions interrupted the education of over 1.2 million school-age children. Some children only had one or two months of regular classes in the 2019/20 school year. The economic crisis also led to Lebanese students moving from paid private or semi-private schools into public schools. This represented a significant problem, as the public education system was already facing

1 United Nations Children's Fund, Lebanon, 'Country Office Annual Report 2020: Lebanon', UNICEF, Beirut, 2021.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

overcrowding and other challenges. This also affected access to the public education system for Syrian refugee children.⁶

COVID-19 and the measures to contain it added social, economic and health burdens to already struggling families. These led in turn to increased rates of child labour and children living on the streets, and an increase in sea departures to Cyprus.⁷ The pandemic caused severe impacts on the enrolment of students in formal and non-formal education, and on children's learning.

1.4 UNICEF Lebanon's response to COVID-19 in education

The education system in Lebanon was ill-equipped to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As was the case in many other countries, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office faced unprecedented circumstances of mass school closures and community lockdowns, and assumed a leading role in coordinating key aspects of the response. This included being a strategic player in the national crisis response and a lead for education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); supporting non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to assess child and youth needs and tailoring learning responses; and championing integrated services for child well-being.

Specific examples of support provided to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) include generating high-level guidance documents, such as the Health Guidelines for Education Institutions, the National Learning Recovery Plan and the National Plan for Remote Learning. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office also provided training and financing to conduct day-to-day operations of the MEHE's Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD). Activities included rolling out teacher training modules on new aspects of remote digital learning delivery; investing in the MEHE's quality assurance unit to deploy its staff in second-shift schools; and continuing services for children with disabilities.

UNICEF Lebanon supported the switch to online and digital learning through non-formal education (NFE) programmes implemented by NGO partners. This encompassed: (1) a Learning Readiness Rapid Assessment (LeaRA) to analyse the needs of children and youth during the pandemic, redesigning existing programmes to cater for the material and pedagogical requirements; and (2) the introduction of the Learning Passport through the global partnership.⁸ Although it only became available in the later stages of the pandemic, the Learning Passport delivered a personalized, web-based digital platform of interactive learning materials to students. Initiatives such as this offered the MEHE new options for remote digital learning, which led to discussions with UNICEF Lebanon about implementing the Global Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA) initiative in Lebanon, to map internet connectivity across all schools and assess the viability of introducing or maintaining connectivity.⁹

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 This personalized, web-based digital platform delivers an interactive NFE curriculum to students. It includes adaptive lessons, as well as supplementary learning and assessment material for teachers. Additionally, it provides support to caregivers through a parenting programme. See United Nations Children's Fund, 'The Learning Passport and non-formal education for vulnerable children and youth (Lebanon)', Education Case Study, UNICEF, New York, 17 February 2022, <[www.unicef.org/media/115706/file/The_Learning_Passport_and_non-formal_education_for_vulnerable_children_and_youth_\(Lebanon\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/115706/file/The_Learning_Passport_and_non-formal_education_for_vulnerable_children_and_youth_(Lebanon).pdf)>, accessed 1 September 2023.

9 The GIGA school project focuses mainly on low- and middle-income countries and works with national governments to map connectivity in schools before devising a plan for improving connectivity and digital readiness. At the time of reporting, UNICEF Lebanon was in the final stages of agreeing the initial mapping phase with GIGA, awaiting sign-off from the MEHE to commence.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office responded rapidly to the need to monitor data by tailoring Activity Info (a global, free resource for data collection) to the Lebanese context. The Country Office also introduced an internal UNICEF platform for visualizing data (Neuro-DB) to gather data through NGO partners and ensure strong feedback loops into national-level information-sharing platforms.

An additional component of the response included integrated services for children. This included working with the MoPH on the distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) in educational institutions and the delivery of messages on health and well-being to NGO partners to support parents and caregivers on education issues using community engagement approaches. Additional services involved providing training to government and NGO partners on psychosocial first aid and child protection to support referrals of children, including remote delivery modes.

2.0 Purpose, objectives and scope

2.1 Purpose of the case study

The overall purpose of this case study is to provide in-depth analysis to build a robust evidence base for the global evaluation¹⁰ and to derive lessons that can inform new programme activities by the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office. The case study also aims to inform necessary adjustments in the education strategic planning process and bring about alignment and coherence with any changes in national priorities and needs. This will help better position UNICEF to improve its performance in support of teaching and learning efforts in Lebanon.

2.2 Objectives of the case study

This case study follows the same three objectives as the global evaluation, namely:

- Objective 1: To examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams used the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale.

2.3 Scope of the case study

The case study for the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office covers the period from March 2020 until the end of 2021, while its thematic focus is aligned with the three themes described in the objectives. Stakeholders included individuals and institutions who contributed to, collaborated with or supported UNICEF efforts in the education sector in Lebanon, including UNICEF Lebanon Country Office staff, and government and non-government local partners.

¹⁰ The global evaluation serves two main purposes: to enhance organizational learning and to strengthen organizational accountability. The evaluation is situated in the context of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and Every Child Learns: UNICEF Education Strategy 2019–2030. The implementation period for the education strategy began less than 12 months before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to an immediate and significant change of direction for UNICEF in much of its work to support children's learning. The three key change strategies (global partnerships and public goods, systems-strengthening and service delivery) included in the theory of change for Goal Area 2 of the strategic plan remained relevant, however.

3.0 Case study approach and methodology

3.1 Case study approach and methods

This case study follows a methodological design consistent with the one used for the global evaluation, using the same evaluation questions and evaluation criteria for the data collection and data analysis processes. As in the associated global evaluation, this case study adopts a utilization-focused and participatory approach, involving key users throughout the evaluation.

Primary stakeholders from the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office were engaged in validating findings and recommendations. This design allowed stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning, to increase learning, ownership and the likelihood of using evidence to inform future decisions. This section presents the questions guiding this case study (see Table 1) and a summary of the approach and methodology. A detailed description of the evaluation questions, approach and methodology deployed in the global evaluation is presented as Annex A.

Table 1. Questions guiding the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office case study

Objective 1: To examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic
1.1 What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?
1.2 To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?
1.3 To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?
Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic
2.1 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?
2.2 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, well-being and protection during the reopening of schools?
2.3 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?
2.4 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?
2.5 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?
2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams used the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale
3.1 In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing education in emergencies (EiE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
3.2 In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the education in emergencies (EiE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?

A mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis was used. A total of 16 people participated in remote interviews with key country informants in August 2022 (11 UNICEF Lebanon Country Office staff, 3 government officials and 2 representatives of implementing partners). Over 60 internal documents were reviewed. Evidence was triangulated using information from a global online survey administered between September and October 2022 to contextualize the analysis. Active participation of reference group members and UNICEF Lebanon Country Office staff gave the triangulation process an additional layer of validity.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office case study was one of seven case studies used to inform the global evaluation report, to compare which strategies, processes and activities worked well, why, how, for whom and in what type of geographical contexts, to tackle the type of problems that target groups faced. All country case studies were designed to leverage both contextual and institutional knowledge from within each of the countries. These studies produced comparative evidence and in-depth insights into strategies and activities adopted to respond to COVID-19 in diverse contexts. Although the country sample selection was designed to capture the diversity of countries where UNICEF works, it was not designed to be representative of all UNICEF education programmes, hence the discrete findings are not necessarily generalizable beyond the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office.

4.0 Findings and conclusions

4.1 Theme 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Conclusion 1: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office contributed to evidence generation to inform government action on learning continuity and supporting the psychosocial and mental well-being of children and teachers during the COVID-19 response. Building on existing work, significant efforts were made to support NFE programmes adapted to the realities of the pandemic.

Conclusion 2: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's position as a trusted, long-term government partner was key to mobilizing a network of implementing partners to develop the national COVID-19 education response plan, using a multisectoral and comprehensive approach and providing options to enable access to education for the most marginalized and refugee children.

Question 1.1: What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector (within case study country, plus any contributions to regional and global levels)?

Finding 1.1.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office, alongside the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office and government partners from the MEHE and the MoPH, successfully contributed to significant investment in building data, knowledge, evidence and tools. These resources informed government plans for ensuring learning continuity and the psychosocial and mental well-being of children and teachers during the COVID-19 response.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic by conducting primary assessments and producing guidance and planning documents, including collating content from regional and global sources and adapting existing guidance and tools to the Lebanese context. Examples of interventions and programmes that UNICEF Lebanon supported during this period include the following:

- A youth-focused rapid assessment, interviewing around 900 youth and adolescents
- A Changing Childhood poll of young people about their mental health in the wake of the pandemic
- An education mapping project to generate information on the situation of the country's 157 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. The mapping found that 90 per cent of TVET institutions had no internet access, and described the type of job opportunities realistically available for youth and adolescents in Lebanon.
- The LeaRA, conducted in collaboration with implementing partners as a sector-wide exercise to collect information about the situation of the most vulnerable families, monitoring their capacity to support their children's learning during the COVID-19 lockdown and engage in a remote learning. This exercise reached approximately 10,000 households across Lebanon whose children were enrolled in NFE and retention support programmes in formal education.

- Based on the evidence from the LeaRA, guidelines for remote learning and adaptation of assessment were developed, anecdotally reportedly used by the NGOs operating in the education sector in Lebanon.
- Preparation of comprehensive visual and instructional information to produce a guide for educational institutions to prepare MoPH staff on children's return to face-to-face learning
- School reopening guidance, including comprehensive coverage of personal protective equipment, borrowing heavily from the EiE safe school opening guidelines developed in partnership between UNICEF Headquarters, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme. This was translated into Arabic for the Lebanese context.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's Education team adapted exiting programmes, particularly NFE programmes, to the realities imposed by the pandemic, based on evidence from the LeaRA, a child-focused rapid assessment (conducted in April 2021), and external publications such as 'Children's Future on the Line' (published in June 2021), a vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and child-targeted monitoring tools developed for NGO partners. These adjustments led to the subsequent development and introduction of the Learning Passport in Lebanon, which is now being explored for its potential application in the public sector.

Question 1.2: To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?

Finding 1.2.1 There was strong evidence of the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's cross-sectoral approach to child protection, youth and adolescent programming; NFE, including for marginalized and refugee children; and health awareness services, building on pre-existing collaborative internal holistic practices.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office conducted a multisectoral needs assessment and secondary data review on the impact of the economic crisis and COVID-19 on education in Lebanon. Using evidence from the exercise, the Country Office supported government stakeholders by: (1) improving systems for child-level monitoring in education using a tool designed in-house; (2) emphasizing the importance on a multisectoral focus through its role in the education sector and the Child Protection Committee's Joint Taskforce; and (3) conveying consistent well-being messages to children and parents/caregivers around COVID-19 pandemic safeguards.

In addition, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's Education and Youth teams worked with the Supply team to ensure the distribution of PPE across all public schools, including TVET institutions. The Country Office's multisectoral efforts also included outreach efforts and distribution of child well-being packages to ensure distance learning opportunities and referrals to intersectoral services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic response, UNICEF Lebanon also accelerated and adapted pre-pandemic plans to improve cross-sectoral integration of its programming. For example, it reached over 20,000 children and over 9,000 caregivers with a range of interventions, including case management, psychosocial support and community-based awareness-raising. Support for youth in learning new skills and gaining employment during the pandemic was also adapted to include cooking classes to prepare meals for low-income families, and classes for making cloth face masks to be delivered to public institutions.

Question 1.3: To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?

Finding 1.3.1 Building on its position as a trusted, long-term government partner, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office successfully mobilized its networks to lead and support the response to COVID-19 under the education, WASH and child protection pillars of the national response plan.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office led the education crisis response as a long-term partner of the MEHE, using its prior experience in humanitarian responses. The response used combined mechanisms from the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017–2023) and the Emergency Response Plan for Lebanon 2021–2022, led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Under these frameworks, UNICEF Lebanon played a pivotal role in leading the WASH, education and child protection pillars, as well as the government’s fundraising agenda and the implementation of national education plans.

The collaboration with external partners remained strong, with regular opportunities for engagement. For example, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office coordinated with partners training for 40 staff from 13 implementing partners on the implementation of the national social and behaviour change communication plan. This training, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, provided tools and guidance on school closures. Another important activity was the global Blueprint for Refugees partnership in coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, supporting joint planning with WASH, education and child protection services.

In addition, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office mobilized external partners to reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19 on NFE services, including the implementation of the LeaRA. Based on the findings of this assessment, the Country Office initiated various changes to its programming to support households in refugee settlements to increase access to remote learning. These included provision of internet data bundles and equipment, distribution of educational materials, the creation of online training courses, and regular monthly meetings with NGO partners to monitor progress and share learning. Although the outputs of this partnership were clear (i.e., production of guidelines, technical support and strong coordination), there was no evidence on children’s learning outcomes by the time this evaluation was conducted.

Finding 1.3.2 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office repurposed its established NFE programmes to support the government in providing options to enable access to education for the most marginalized children during extended school closures.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office was instrumental in leading the response to improve refugee and marginalized children’s access to education. A key pillar of this response was access to digital learning, which proved essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, guidelines created for remote learning, adaptation of assessment and the hosting of all-partner meetings for sharing ideas and experiences became activities that exhibited best practice in the context of COVID-19. Two elements of this response that are already going forward are the Learning Passport and the partnership with the GIGA initiative.

The success of UNICEF Lebanon’s NFE programmes during the pandemic, and the timely and effective switch to expanding learning continuity models, is most likely due to the fact that the partnerships with local organizations were already in place, and they were familiar with working together. The Country Office also had resources in place for the programme, and the scale of the programme was manageable.

4.2 Theme 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning

Conclusion 3: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office successfully adapted programmes and repurposed resources to adapt to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, to support the MEHE's agenda of providing education through digital platforms to all children. However, limitations in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, access to technological equipment, and familiarity with digital platforms among students and teachers restricted the reach of these initiatives.

Conclusion 4: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the MEHE's efforts by adapting tools to the new reality of the COVID-19 pandemic; procuring and distributing personal protective equipment; supporting the development of guidance and safety protocols for a safe return to school; developing advocacy and communication campaigns on child safety and well-being; and training teachers and other school personnel on safety standards and practices. However, resources, guidance and a comprehensive training package for teachers on remedial learning losses were limited.

Conclusion 5: Through its strong engagement with an existing network of implementing partners, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office rapidly adapted and supported the government's existing NFE programmes, targeting the most marginalized children, including those with disabilities. These efforts built on existing comprehensive, multisectoral plans and strategies to support children and teachers. However, limited evidence was found on efforts to monitor or measure the impact of such strategies and initiatives.

Question 2.1: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?

Finding 2.1.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office successfully adapted its ongoing support to NFE programmes to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and was able to support the MEHE's agenda to reach the most vulnerable children and work towards reducing the digital divide as a result. However, only a small target group of children were reached, whereas the needs were much greater during the pandemic.

Considering findings from the LeaRA, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office modified its programming to ensure continued provision of learning to children in NFE programmes throughout the pandemic. The LeaRA found that over 25,400 children out of the 47,282 living in the households surveyed would benefit from remote learning support. Moreover, around 95 per cent of households had access to a smart device (predominantly telephones), albeit with limited internet connectivity. In addition, most parents (95 per cent) indicated a high level of interest in supporting their children's learning and giving them access to the smart device, even though only 60 per cent had the capacity to provide such support (21 per cent of caregivers are illiterate, and 19 per cent are only literate in Arabic). Adjustment to the programming also included partnering with NGOs to provide education supplies, internet data bundles, psychosocial support and COVID-19 awareness-raising.

The assistance to NFE programmes had already been planned prior to the pandemic; however, it was reprogrammed to meet the new demands created by the crisis. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office worked with its partners to generate guidelines for remote learning, to adapt assessment tools, to provide technical support and to coordinate monthly all-partner meetings to share ideas and experience. Ultimately, the engagement of NGO partners improved UNICEF Lebanon's capacity to respond flexibly to the effects of the pandemic, as well as enabling it to

continue supporting children's education during the pandemic – albeit for a small proportion of the overall population of school-aged children.

UNICEF support for home-based learning for very vulnerable children through NFE programming was instrumental in highlighting key issues around the provision of remote education, especially in the context of marginalization. Children enrolled in NFE programmes were retained during the pandemic, with the effect that a large number of vulnerable children were kept on a learning path. These efforts went beyond learning and included attention to psychosocial well-being and referrals to intersectoral services. Furthermore, the development of a Learning Passport emerged from the successful implementation of NFE programmes and evolved into an initiative with far-reaching potential that could result in using the Learning Passport in formal education settings if MEHE plans come to fruition.

Some limitations of these activities were highlighted, more specifically in terms of the education sector's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic: (1) the beneficiaries of NFE programmes were a small subset of the overall population of school-aged children; and (2) children enrolled in public/formal education did not receive any such support for remote learning. Therefore, there was limited success in delivering digital education and reaching all children with remote education.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office was able to adapt well to provide education during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to existing relationships with partners, allowing the Country Office to work directly with target populations. However, at the system level, there was a lack of resources and guidelines available to meet the huge requirements for remote delivery, and it was not possible to rapidly establish or significantly scale up partnerships in the formal education system. The NFE programmes helped show what is possible when resources are available, and demonstrated that many different solutions are required, both digital and non-digital, to accommodate children's diverse learning needs and ensure that all children can access learning in some way.

Finding 2.1.2 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported government plans for digital learning when schools were closed and reopened by subsidizing access to technology and the internet, and developing plans to equip schools with ICT infrastructure. However, the digital divide in Lebanon continues to pose a challenge for students and teachers due to poor infrastructure and unfamiliarity with digital platforms.

From July 2021, schools reopened, and teaching and learning began to be delivered through a combination of remote and face-to-face modalities. This was welcomed by teachers and children alike because of the challenges of remote learning only – more specifically, because of the lack of devices (smartphones or tablets, for example), poor internet connectivity, power cuts and the inability of parents to support their children's learning at home.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the government during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure children's access to online learning, especially for the most vulnerable, including by subsidizing technology and providing internet bundles, although this activity was limited to children enrolled in NFE programmes. Anecdotal information indicates a change in focus to digital platforms for learning; however, this was outside the scope of this evaluation.

UNICEF Lebanon also supported the government with the development of a plan to establish connectivity hubs across 580 public schools. The plan aims to service schools with ICT equipment to support children's access to online educational resources and to develop their

digital skills, while enabling teachers to deliver hybrid and distance learning.¹¹ However, challenges to a hybrid approach remain, as the infrastructure of public schools is inadequate to implement system-wide remote education, as the whole sector still needs support to adapt to distance learning.

Question 2.2: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children’s safety, well-being and protection during the reopening of schools?

Finding 2.2.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office gave extensive assistance to the MEHE in the procurement and distribution of PPE and other hygiene materials to schools and their staff and students, relying on its established supplier and distribution networks and trusted procurement processes.

Building on its established presence in the country and trusted processes, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the government in the procurement of PPE materials. The Country Office has a proven track record of procuring and distributing supplies to schools in emergency contexts in Lebanon. Its activities during the COVID-19 pandemic included:

- Distribution of PPE to 588,517 children (out of a total of 1.8 million children aged 3–18 years in 2022) and 53,500 school personnel over a six-month period across all public schools
- Provision of PPE materials and fuel for the winter to 687 schools based on their altitude
- Training youth to make cloth masks that were distributed across all public health and public education institutions
- Supporting the sensitization of teachers in public education on the need for vaccination against COVID-19.

Finding 2.2.2 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the MEHE with guidance, strategies and training for government officials and teachers to manage children’s well-being and their safe return to school.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office played a role in supporting ministries with the development of standard operating procedures, in readiness for the return to school.¹² It supported the MEHE in finalizing the Back to School Strategy based on the Global Framework for Reopening Schools.¹³ In line with this framework, UNICEF Lebanon collaborated with the MoPH to develop a guide for educational institutions, which gave comprehensive advice to schools and their staff on making all aspects of the environment and transport safer for children.

In addition to developing guidelines to support government planning and implementation in schools, UNICEF also delivered training that has ensured greater capacity to manage children’s well-being and safe return to school. Examples of the relevant training and coaching that UNICEF supported include the following:

11 United Nations Children’s Fund, Lebanon, ‘Country Office Annual Report 2021: Lebanon’, UNICEF, Beirut, 2022.

12 United Nations Children’s Fund, Lebanon, ‘Country Office Annual Report 2020: Lebanon’, UNICEF, Beirut, 2021.

13 United Nations Children’s Fund, Middle East and North Africa, ‘UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Situation’, Issue 5, UNICEF, Amman, 2020.

- UNICEF trained 50 counsellors from the MEHE on psychological first aid to provide remote support to caregivers and children participating in online learning.¹⁴
- The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office invested heavily in the MEHE's quality assurance unit to deploy academic, health and psychosocial support staff to the second-shift schools in which most refugee children are enrolled. This enabled 310 roving and 2,000 fixed in-school counsellors to provide psychosocial well-being support and coaching to teachers and children in first- and second-shift schools.
- Around 6,000 teachers were trained on CERD's Mawaridy platform, which offers a variety of two-hour synchronous training sessions for teachers along specific axes that are selected every year. For the 2020/21 academic year, these axes were: (1) well-being: psychosocial support, social and emotional learning, child protection, respect for diversity, self-esteem, adaptation, etc.; (2) distance learning: digital tools, resources (Classera, Mawaridy), platforms, assessment, planning, implementation, etc.; (3) curriculum: annual distribution of content, etc.; and (4) safe school return: hygiene and safety measures, and physical education.¹⁵

Data on the impact of training provided to counsellors or teachers were not available within the time scope of the evaluation. However, anecdotal information suggested positive feedback from these training opportunities, especially on the modality of flexible, online delivery (in the case of teacher training).

Finding 2.2.3 Children's safety, well-being and protection have been enhanced through advocacy and communications activities supported by the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office.

One of the pillars of the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was awareness-raising and communications outreach with a focus on child protection and well-being. This included:

- Support for the Ministry of Social Affairs to roll out its national social and behaviour change communication plan during school closures
- A joint task force between the education sector and the Child Protection Committee to convey COVID-19 well-being messages
- Running ongoing COVID-19 awareness sessions and mental health campaigns through social media, including for children with disabilities
- A regional plan of action for a Back to School campaign, focusing on guidelines, training and community awareness-raising campaigns.^{16,17}

Question 2.3: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?

Finding 2.3.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office played a key role in supporting the government with a safe return to school through the development and provision of school

14 United Nations Children's Fund, Middle East and North Africa, 'UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Situation', Issue 3, UNICEF, Amman, 2020.

15 United Nations Children's Fund, Lebanon, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Lebanon', UNICEF, Beirut, 2022.

16 United Nations Children's Fund, Middle East and North Africa, 'UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Situation', Issue 2, UNICEF, Amman, 2020.

17 United Nations Children's Fund, Middle East and North Africa, 'UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office Situation', Issue 5, UNICEF, Amman, 2020.

reopening guidelines and advocating for children to return to school. However, resourcing and coherent training guidance on remedial learning for teachers were lacking.

Following the lockdown in March 2020, which also led to the closure of schools, the government asked teachers to shift to working from home and providing children with education through remote learning. Thus, CERD developed online training modules to equip teachers with the skills to deliver online and blended learning modalities for students. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office was instrumental in working with CERD to roll out online training modules through its Mawaridy platform – reaching over 40,000 public school teachers.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office invested in the MEHE's quality assurance unit to train and deploy staff to work with teachers and students on issues such as coaching, psychosocial well-being and general health. This included 310 roving counsellors and 2,000 fixed in-school counsellors in first- and second-shift schools. Furthermore, the lessons learned from the deployment of training and support during the COVID-19 pandemic may remain relevant in Lebanon's immediate future.

Anecdotal information indicates a recent deployment of the Back to Learning Strategy, which falls under the EiE framework. However, in addition to falling outside the time scope of the evaluation, there was limited information on its operations and impact. Furthermore, remedial learning and associated training of teachers, as well as activities related to the subsidization of school costs and cash grants to children, have not been identified as clear elements of UNICEF Lebanon's education response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's main success during the reinstatement of in-school learning was in supporting the MEHE to develop its Back to School Strategy based on the Global Framework for Reopening Schools and lending its own advocacy to the government's strong stance on the need to reinstate face-to-face learning.

Question 2.4: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?

Finding 2.4.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office provided significant support to the MEHE (including CERD and DG-TVET) in mobilizing outreach support and providing training for teachers in the public sector to enable remote learning to continue during the pandemic. However, issues of digital access remain a significant barrier for most intended beneficiaries.

Following the closure of schools in 2020, the government asked teachers to shift to working from home and providing children with education through remote learning. In its February 2022 Progress Report, UNICEF Lebanon outlined various ways in which it supported teaching and learning reforms. They included:

- Mapping of digital content to the Lebanese curriculum (which also occurred in the TVET sector, albeit with challenges around how to manage practical content)
- Development of a national learning recovery plan, under which 6,000 teachers were trained using the interactive Mawaridy platform – which provided synchronous training of teachers in well-being, distance learning approaches, curriculum delivery and safe school return
- Training of trainers on how to transform face-to-face training into self-paced online courses, using online platforms for teaching and learning, and preparing a blended lesson. CERD developed online training modules to equip teachers with the skills to deliver online and

blended learning modalities for students and roll out online training modules through its Mawaridy platform – reaching over 40,000 public school teachers.

- Training 923 instructors on COVID-19 identification and prevention
- Preparation of an interactive self-learning tutorial guide for teachers with videos for the use of Google Classroom for teaching and learning
- Supporting the MEHE's quality assurance unit in the training and deployment of staff to work with teachers and students on issues such as coaching, psychosocial well-being and general health. This included 310 roving counsellors and 2,000 fixed in-school counsellors in first- and second-shift schools.
- Setting up 15 'digital schools' to transmit Learning Passport courses and support teachers with digital teaching. These schools provided a physical location that teachers could attend to access infrastructure. This obviously does not remove the barriers faced by teachers (and students) with accessing digital teaching and learning but goes some way towards mitigating the issue.

Evidence suggests that the shift to digital curricula and the use of digital platforms for learning were not necessarily able to realize their full potential. Indeed, a great majority of children in the public education sector cannot access the internet, let alone then be supported to maximize their learning with the content provided.

Finding 2.4.2 The COVID-19 pandemic required the MEHE, to change its approach to the delivery of training and communications. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the MEHE to make this change.

Evidence shows that the COVID-19 pandemic initiated a change of approach in Lebanon's education sector in terms of how training is delivered. The emergence of the Mawaridy platform, which the government has promoted post-pandemic as a solution with a strong future, enabled the delivery of synchronous and asynchronous online training. CERD is apparently now equipped to track teachers' progress, while teachers themselves can develop electronic professional profiles and report their coaching needs to counsellors.

In addition, CERD trainers themselves are able to develop new training modules in a more responsive way. The switch to digital learning also encompassed the youth sector, with the Generation of Innovation Leaders programme adapting its curricula to delivery through YouTube, WhatsApp and other platforms. However, limitations to the use of these digital delivery mechanisms have been recognized, given most teachers' lack of internet access.

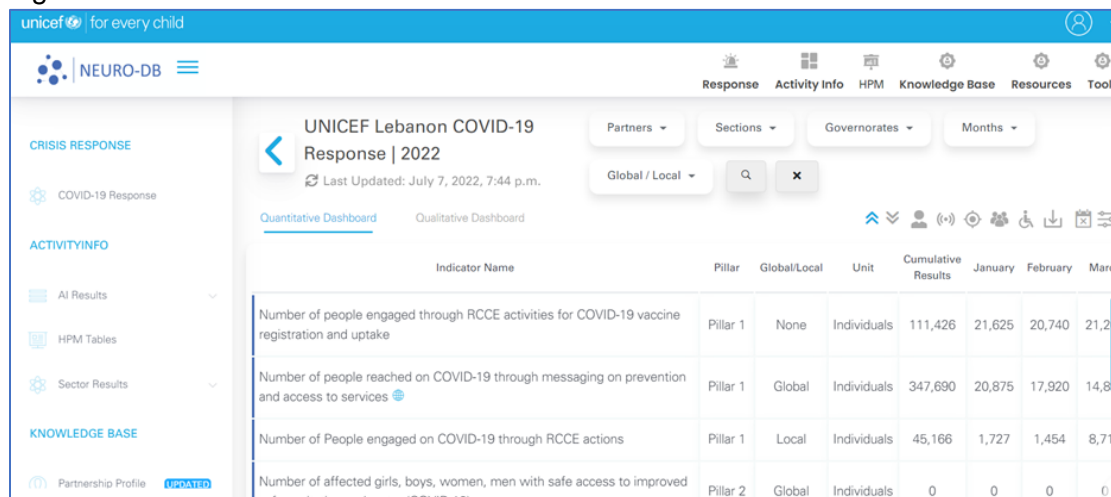
Finding 2.4.3 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the development of monitoring tools that enabled effective adaptation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a variety of ways, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported innovations that enabled better tracking and monitoring, which in turn have been linked to changes in teaching and learning approaches. Examples of this include:

- A child-level monitoring tool for use in NFE programmes – collecting a wealth of monitoring data on the profiles of children and evidence on the outcomes of the NFE services provided
- The Activity Info database – a free platform used globally and in the education sector in Lebanon
- A database of COVID-19 indicators that generates direct reports, to be used by implementing partners to enhance efficiency
- An internal data platform – Neuro-DB – which allows staff to analyse and navigate data in a more user-friendly way (see Figure 1)

- Academic screening tools for students' return to school, incorporating an assessment of their levels of required remedial learning.

Figure 1. The Neuro-DB dashboard



More recently but outside the scope of the case study, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office was working on an assessment of school capacity for digital learning to ensure the sustainability of innovations beyond the pandemic response, to be incorporated under the GIGA initiative, a new programme that UNICEF will implement to enhance connectivity.

Question 2.5: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?

Finding 2.5.1 Through strong engagement with its network of NGO implementing partners, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office rapidly adapted its existing NFE programmes to reduce the COVID-19 pandemic's negative impact on the educational attainment and emotional well-being of marginalized children, including those with disabilities.

In 2020, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office responded rapidly to the pandemic by calling for partners to support the delivery of NFE programmes to the most marginalized children, including children with disabilities. The Country Office partnered with 15 NGOs, 5 of which had expertise in working with children with disabilities, to reach 181 NFE centres across Lebanon. Between March and July 2020, UNICEF continued to support over 17,000 children, including 923 with disabilities.

By 2021, UNICEF Lebanon had supported close to 47,857 children with remote NFE, educational supplies, internet access, and psychosocial support and well-being activities. It also reached 109,208 children and caregivers with COVID-19 awareness messages.¹⁸ There was also success in including children with special educational needs in 30 public schools in support of MEHE's Inclusive Schools pilot project.

18 United Nations Children's Fund, Lebanon, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Lebanon', UNICEF, Beirut, 2022.

Finding 2.5.2 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office built on existing programmes to support the Integrated Child Well-being Package and the National Social Protection Strategy, and to provide education subsidies to avoid dropout.

Building on existing activities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office implemented measures to support government school retention initiatives that targeted groups of marginalized children in school and ensured their well-being. Measures included subsidized school fees for 272,515 Lebanese children aged 3–14 years in public schools (18 per cent more than the previous year) and 191,398 refugee children, representing 47 per cent of this age cohort.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office partnered with other programmes to deliver a holistic approach to vulnerable children, aligned with the holistic support of the Integrated Child Well-being Package. These efforts reached 4,854 children with specialized services, 20,222 children with psychosocial support activities, and 21,388 children and 9,688 caregivers with community-based psychosocial support. Also supporting the Integrated Child Well-being Package, UNICEF Lebanon backed the development of the National Social Protection Strategy and provided cash transfers to refugees.

Question 2.6: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Finding 2.6.1 While the impact of these initiatives has not yet been ascertained, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office played an important role in advocating for and co-funding teacher training and the distribution of supplies, as well as supporting the National Learning Recovery Initiative in coordination with the MEHE.

The National Learning Recovery Initiative aims to bring children back to school and to learning, recover their learning loss over almost two years, and keep them learning for longer. The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office advocated for the development of this initiative and its associated National Action Plan for Remote Learning. As part of its support, the Country Office co-funded teacher training in public schools on a CERD module. This training targeted children returning to school and delivered remedial catch-up teaching. Over 6,000 teachers were trained, and teachers of languages, mathematics and special educational needs were also provided with printed learning recovery guidance and materials. By the time of this evaluation, no evidence had been found on the success of this initiative in terms of children's learning outcomes.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office also supported the MEHE's summer school programmes, an integral part of the Lebanese response to learning loss. In 2021, over 50,000 primary school students and 2,000 secondary school students were enrolled in these programmes. UNICEF Lebanon supported the MEHE by managing donor funding to cover the fees for teaching hours, as well as observations and visits from health supervisors.

4.3 Objective 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks and readiness to handle similar future crises

Conclusion 6: Building on its existing EiE programme and many years of experience of emergency response, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office and its partners adapted global emergency frameworks and guidance for safe school reopening to the Lebanese context and adjusted them to the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts directly informed the

government's response to the disruptions to the education sector caused by COVID-19 and helped prepare the government for future emergencies.

Question 3.1: In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF deploy the existing EiE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Finding 3.1.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's existing experience of emergency response informed decisions in the adaptation of the Global Framework for Reopening Schools, and subsequent investments, given the unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office has previous experience of preparations for emergency response, as shown by its reaction to the Beirut port explosions in August 2020. It engaged with the MEHE at the policy level and in strategic planning (e.g., the development of the Back to School Strategy, the Learning Recovery Initiative, the five-year general education plan for the MEHE, and the National Action Plan for Remote Learning).

These activities signalled strong coordination with the government to deal with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and positioned UNICEF for a more effective response. However, the unprecedented scale of the pandemic limited the use of existing EiE tools and guidance and prompted UNICEF Lebanon to use its experience to adapt and adjust new guidance and frameworks, including the Global Framework for Reopening Schools, to the Lebanon context.

Question 3.2: In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the EiE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?

Finding 3.2.1 The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office has been working in several ways to prepare for future emergencies, through its work on remote learning, learning recovery, social protection and the well-being of children and adolescents.

The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office has focused on supporting the government to redress the digital divide, tackle learning loss and focus more attention on social protection and the well-being of children and youth. These initiatives have emerged in response to the effects of three successive crises: the Beirut port explosions, the COVID-19 pandemic and the socioeconomic crisis. They were intended to provide resilience in the face of current and future emergencies.

The emergence of Lebanon's National Action Plan for Remote Learning attests to the commitment of the MEHE and partners to ensure that children and teachers are better equipped to learn through digital options, for their future resilience in emergency settings. In support of this effort, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office plans to position digital solutions as an integral part of education. Working with the MEHE, the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Qitabi (United States Agency for International Development), the organizations have agreed to map all activities related to digital learning – both past and planned – and to establish a working group to guide the preparation of public schools for digital teaching and learning.

In line with the MEHE's priority to improve learning outcomes for the most vulnerable children and eradicate the digital divide, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office supported the establishment of connectivity hubs in 580 public schools. These efforts aimed to equip 47 per cent of public schools with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable digital learning by the end of 2023, and to ensure that at least 80 per cent of public schools demonstrate improved use

of education technology. One of the underpinning activities is the proposal to conduct a national assessment of the quality of connectivity and digital equipment across public schools and a school mapping under the GIGA initiative.¹⁹

Recognizing the need to prioritize existing initiatives to assist children with learning recovery, UNICEF Lebanon mobilized efforts to support learning recovery plans. This activity was designed to address the impacts of Lebanon's multiple crises, considering that learning losses can happen in a myriad of ways, affecting vulnerable children the most.

¹⁹ At the time of finalizing this report, field data were being collected for this school mapping exercise.

5.0 Lessons learned and possible actions

Lesson 1: The UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's education response to the COVID-19 pandemic and adaptations of existing EiE tools were agile and generated important evidence to inform the government's decision-making. However, limited monitoring and impact evidence has been collected to assess the different options of NFE offered during the pandemic.

To ensure preparedness for future emergencies, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office should consider the following actions:

- Collating lessons emerging from the implementation of NFE programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic and assessing them for their scalability in the public education sector
- Examining lessons from the pandemic around psychosocial well-being, to enhance the intersectoral services offered and ensure they can continue during school closures and times of emergency
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Integrated Child Well-being Package and the impact of subsidizing school fees and delivering holistic case management and specialized services (including assessing the extent to which these holistic measures continued successfully during the pandemic or were adapted to meet the unique challenges of the pandemic)
- Assessing the impact of the pandemic on the public education sector, and the ways in which the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office's support to the government could have been redirected or enhanced, and what measures need to be taken to ensure improved public sector response to future crises.

Lesson 2: In line with the government's priorities, the UNICEF Lebanon Country Office has used its trusted partnerships with government and other implementing partners to use digital tools as emerging solutions to promote access to and participation in education during crises and in both emergency and non-emergency contexts.

UNICEF Lebanon should maintain its support for the digitization agenda through GIGA, extend the mapping of school internet and infrastructure access, roll out the Learning Passport and expand existing platforms such as Mawaridy. Simultaneously, equity issues related to the limitations of digital delivery must be considered, to assess its application in the Lebanese context.

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Annex A: Evaluation questions, approach, and methodology

A.1. Evaluation questions

<p>Objective 1: To examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research, and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>Theme 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>OECD-DAC criteria: coherence and efficiency</p>	
ToR Evaluation Questions	Final Evaluation Questions
1.1 What is the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the knowledge and tools for combating COVID-19 in the education sector?	1.1 What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?
1.2 To what extent did UNICEF Education teams work coherently and efficiently across different sectors to develop evidence-based education solutions to combat COVID-19 disruptions?	1.2 To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?
1.3 To what extent did UNICEF mobilize and work coherently and efficiently with external partners to develop evidence-based education solutions to combat COVID-19 disruptions?	1.3 To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?
<p>Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during in the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>Theme 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning</p> <p>OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness</p>	
ToR Evaluation Questions	Final Evaluation Questions
2.1 How successful were UNICEF-supported education strategies to promote home-based learning and to address the needs of children in a range of contexts?	2.1 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?
2.2 How successful were UNICEF-supported education strategies in enhancing children's safety and protection during re-opening of schools?	2.2 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, wellbeing and protection during the re-opening of schools?
2.3 How successful were UNICEF-supported education strategies in reinstating in-school learning and reforming teaching, learning and assessment practices in the context of COVID-19?	2.3 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?
2.4 How successful were UNICEF-supported strategies in targeting and reaching the different groups of marginalized children and tailoring programmes to their learning needs?	2.4 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?
2.5 What are the key defining characteristics of countries schools that were successful in keep schools open and recovering lost learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic?	2.5 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?
2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?	2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?
<p>Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams utilized the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities ,and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale</p> <p>Theme 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks, readiness to handle similar future crises</p> <p>OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness</p>	
ToR Evaluation Questions	Final Evaluation Questions
3.1 How successful were Education teams in deploying the existing EIE infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to COVID-19?	3.1 In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
3.2 Are the necessary adjustments being made to the education in emergency frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?	3.2 In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?

The evaluation assessed against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence. Each of these is defined below:

- **Relevance:** assess whether the intervention did the right things. It is the extent to which the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries' global, country and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continued to do so as circumstances changed.
- **Efficiency:** how well the resources were used. It is the extent to which the intervention delivered results in an economic and timely way. This evaluation only focused on timeliness.
- **Effectiveness:** extent to which the intervention achieved its objectives and results, including any differential results across groups.
- **Coherence:** compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution and the extent to which other interventions supported or undermined the intervention. Internal coherence addressed the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by UNICEF, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which UNICEF adhered. External coherence considered the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This included complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention added value while avoiding duplication of effort.

A.2. Evaluation approach

The evaluation used a utilisation-focused and participatory approach, involving key users throughout the evaluation. In particular, primary stakeholders were engaged in validating the findings and recommendations. This approach allowed stakeholders to gain a better understanding of UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning thereby increasing ownership and the probability of using the evaluation findings and recommendations to inform their future decisions.

The evaluation adopted a theory-based design, combined with comparative case studies. It was non-experimental and used mixed methods. With an overarching theory-based evaluation design the evaluation predominantly used qualitative research to assess the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency of UNICEF COVID response in the education sector.

Using case studies, via selection of specific countries as cases, we were able to compare and contrast which types of strategies, and activities worked well, why, how, for whom, in what type of geographical contexts and in tackling the type of problems that target groups faced. By developing country-based case studies, the evaluation was able to obtain in-depth insights into strategies and activities adopted for responding to the COVID crisis in “natural real-life [and diverse] contexts”. Country-based case studies were designed to leverage both contextual and institutional knowledge from within each of the countries. The case studies provided in-depth analyses of each country and helped to understand the extent to which interventions were aligned to needs of target groups, and the effects of the support, under specific conditions.

The evaluation developed seven unique case studies, using specifically designed selection criteria. In selecting the countries, the evaluation used “literal replication” as a method of case selection which means that the same type of results was predicted for each of the cases,

although using diverse interventions in differing contexts. The case study countries varied in terms of contexts, barriers, interventions, structures and geographical location. Variation along these dimensions provided the greatest coverage and best chance of identifying patterns of difference or similarity, in terms of the extent to which UNICEF strategies and interventions were effective and contributed to delivering results. Due to the low number of case studies conducted, as compared to the scale of the COVID response globally, it is unlikely that the findings can be generalized more broadly. For this reason, they were supplemented by data collected via online survey, desk review, interviews, and analysis of secondary data to incorporate evidence from around the globe.

Whilst each of the geographic case studies differed in terms of context and partners, they enabled similar themes to be explored across the selected contexts. This means the case studies had both geographic and thematic focus. Efforts were made to select themes that allowed a specific topic to be explored in more depth across number of contexts. While geographic case studies functioned as stand-alone studies for each country, the thematic aspects focused on a topic, which enabled analysis and comparison across countries.

A.2.1. Case study countries sampling selection

The sample selection design for the seven country case studies is presented in table A.1, using three essential and nine additional criteria. The specific characteristics for each of the select seven countries is presented in table A.2. The selected case studies provided a broad and diverse profile of countries where UNICEF works on education programming.

Table A1: Case study country selection criteria

Country Selection Criteria	Assessment Method	Sources
Essential criteria		
Availability and interest of UNICEF CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High: high interest and availability to take an active part sharing secondary documentation and identifying and engaging stakeholders for all primary data collection methods: include in sample - Medium: moderate interest and availability to take part sharing secondary documentation and identifying and engaging stakeholders for partial primary data collection methods: include in sample - Low: no indication of interest nor availability to spend time on either document sharing or stakeholder engagement or both: exclude from sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with UNICEF HQ Education team and Reference Group Follow-up consultation with UNICEF country office
Availability of quality data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (include in sample) - No (exclude from sample) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with UNICEF HQ and country offices
Within the top 20 countries in UNICEF expenditure on education programming in 2020 and/or 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (include in sample) - No (exclude from sample) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Annual Results Report – Goal Area 2 for 2020 and 2019
Additional criteria		
Country within a UNICEF regional classification	Countries from a diverse range of UNICEF regions but not necessarily all	UNICEF website
Economic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low income - lower-middle income - higher-middle income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank classification on website
Population size	Diverse range of countries from large to small population sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank data from 2020
Fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank classification on website
GPE funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE website
Progress towards SDG 4.1.1 (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most recent UIS data
UNICEF spending on education programming in country (in millions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF 2020 Annual Results Report
Human Development Index Ranking (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP website
Information on school closure and reopening durations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Global Education Recovery Tracker

Table A2: Selected case study countries

Country	Compulsory criteria			Additional criteria								
	Interest	Data quality	Top 20 expenditure	RO	Econ. status	Pop. size (2020 millions)	FCAS	GPE funded	Progress SDG 4.1.1(b)	Educ spending (in mill.)	HDI ranking	School closure source:
Bangladesh	TBC	TBC	Y	SA	lower-middle	164	N	Y	Maths: 47.3%, Reading: 52.6%	43	133	all schools closed on March 18, 2019 Hybrid model began for all grades except pre-primary in November 2021 Current status unknown
Jordan	Y	Y	Y	MENA	upper-middle	29	Y	Y	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	27	102	Frequent school closures and reopening in 2021. No data after Sep 2021
Lebanon	TBC	TBC	Y	MENA	upper-middle	6	Y	N	Maths: 26.8%, Reading: N/A	172	92	No data for 2019 or 2020 Feb - March 2021 school closure April - Jun 2021 hybrid Jun - Nov 2021 open
Nigeria	TBC	TBC	Y	WCA	lower-middle	206	Y	Y	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	43	161	Feb - Aug 2021 hybrid Sep - Oct 2021 closed Nov 2021 Hybrid
South Sudan	TBC	TBC	Y	ESA	low	11	Y	Y	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	31	185	Feb - May 2021 hybrid Jun - Nov 2021 open
Mongolia	Y	Y	N	EAP	lower-middle	3.27	N	Y	Maths: N/A Reading: N/A	tbc	99	Apr - Aug 2021 closed Sep 2021 – Jan 2022 hybrid Feb 2022 Open
Venezuela	TBC	TBC	Y	LAC	upper-middle	28.00	N	N	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	14	113	Mar – Sep 2021 remote Nov – Dec 2021 open Dec – Jan 22 closed Jan – Feb 22 open

A.3. Data collection methods and sampling

This evaluation used a mixed-method approach to address the evaluation questions. Both primary and secondary data were collected to address the evaluation questions.

Primary data collection included individual and group interviews as well as an online survey. Interviews were carried out with UNICEF staff and key informants from strategic partners at the regional and global levels (69 key informant interviews conducted July–October 2022). The online survey was used to gather data from UNICEF Chiefs of Education from UNICEF country offices (74 country offices responded to the survey, which was conducted September–October 2022, signaling a 56 per cent response rate). A sample of seven countries was selected for in-depth data collection and in-depth comparative analyses: Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nigeria, South Sudan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Secondary data collection included a desk review of relevant documentation and data sets from all levels at which UNICEF operates (global, regional and country) and, in particular, from the seven countries selected from in-depth analyses. A total of 338 documents were reviewed, 52 per cent of which were country-level documents, with regional-level documents (related to all seven regions where UNICEF works) and global-level documents accounting for 20 per cent each.

A.3.1 Primary data collection

Primary data collection for the global evaluation was conducted between end July to beginning October 2022. Primary data collection was used to follow up specific areas of enquiry identified through the analysis of the secondary data and documentation. The list of key informants interviewed for this case study are listed in table A3. Interviews were conducted between August 11 and 30, 2022.

Table A3: List of key informants, Lebanon case study

Organisation / institution	Key Respondent Information	
	Position	Name
UNICEF CO	Chief of Education	Atif Rafique
UNICEF CO	Education Officer	Mirella Chekrallah
UNICEF CO	Education Specialist	Olena Sakovych
UNICEF CO	Education Specialist	Fayza Mehanna
UNICEF CO	Adolescents Development Specialist (OIC)	Amal Obeid
UNICEF CO	Adolescents Development Specialist	Abeer Abou Zaki
UNICEF CO	Adolescent Development Officer	Ralph Badaan
UNICEF CO	Planning and Monitoring Officer	Hania El Saket
UNICEF CO	Chief Field Operations	Maulid Warfa
UNICEF CO	Programme Assistant	Mahasen Al-Sayed
UNICEF CO	Information Management Officer	Souad Al Sarraf
AVSI – Civil Society Organization	Education Project Coordinator, AVSI	Oumnia Arab
LOST– Civil Society Organization	Education Programme Manager, LOST	Omar Bayan
Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Directorate Office, TVET programme	Mr Houssam Hajj
Education Development Trust (EDT)	Head of PITB at CERD	Rania Ghssoub

A global online survey was administered for completion by UNICEF Chiefs of Education from across UNICEF network of country offices. These were particularly valuable for certain evaluation questions that required information from many country contexts to be adequately addressed. This included evaluation questions related to, for example, interventions deployed for home-based learning, recovering learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic and where Education teams deployed the existing EIE infrastructure, capacities, and tools in the education sector response to COVID-19.

A.3.2. Secondary data collection

The secondary data was collected predominantly from online sources (organization websites and online libraries) that were authentic and verifiable. Two members of the evaluation team had access to the UNICEF intranet and scanned the database for any relevant documentation that may not have been in the public domain. The evaluation team also made direct requests to people within UNICEF and key stakeholder organizations to share relevant documentation and data sets. UNICEF Education Team also compiled a set of relevant data and documentation for review. The list of secondary data sources is included in table A4.

Table A4: Secondary data sources

Level	Source
Global & Regional	UNICEF publications – strategies, reports, case studies, evaluations, and data sets UNICEF internal monitoring data sets Publications and data sets from technical and delivery partners such as UNESCO, UIS, WHO etc. Publications, webinars, and data sets from global initiatives UNICEF is a part of such as the Global Education Coalition, and GEC Publications and data sets from donors such as World Bank, GPE, ECW, FCDO etc.
Country	In addition to the above sources that may have had information on the seven target case study countries, secondary data was also collected from the following sources: Government documents, publications, and data sets in the public domain Publications and data sets from UNICEF in-country partners such as NGOs/ INGOs, other Donors and UN agencies and the private sector

The following criteria was applied to the process of collecting documents:

- Documents in English, French or Spanish
- Documents and data sets published between March 2020 and December 2021
- Documents with the focus on UNICEF Goal Area 2 – education teaching and learning

A.4. Data analysis

As the primary and secondary data analyses were undertaken, the evaluation team generated a set of robust evaluation statements that answered each evaluation question based on the evidence collected. These statements were tested, elaborated on, and refined through an iterative process as the analysis progressed. The statements also included assessments of the quality of the evidence base. Once the data analysis was completed in full, the evaluation statements were developed into evaluation narratives that provided nuanced answers to each evaluation question. These narratives also included assessments of the overall strength of evidence available for each evaluation question.

The analytical framework used to guide the analysis process was based on the evaluation questions. The methods of analysis included:

- Thematic analysis: A coding framework based on the evaluation questions was developed and data collected from the document review, interviews, group interviews and survey were coded and analysed. Developing and using a coding framework helped to ensure consistency across the Evaluation Team, therefore providing greater reliability of results.
- The evaluation team used Dedoose, an online and cross-platform app for analysing qualitative data, whether text-based or other data including photos, audio, and videos. All qualitative data collected was uploaded on Dedoose and entire documents or sections were tagged as per pre-defined categorisations linked to the evaluation questions. This allowed for real time collaboration within the evaluation team. It also helped to identify where gaps existed in evidence. It was used directly to write the evaluation report and maintain proximity to the evidence base as evaluation questions were addressed.
- Triangulation, using multiple data sources, was used to corroborate findings and deepen understanding to construct a rich, rigorous, and comprehensive account against the evaluation questions being addressed. In addition, triangulation was used to check for consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods.

A.5. Ethical considerations

The evaluation adheres to the required international norms and standards for evaluations. These include the 'UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' (as updated by the United Nations Evaluation Group in June 2020), which encompass four guiding principles: integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence. The required norms and standards also include the 2021 'UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis'.⁷ The following were ethical considerations guiding the evaluation:

- Respect for the command and operational capability - remained committed to respect the terms of reference; the additional instructions made at the start of the mission as well as advice received during the performance of the contract.
- Confidentiality: Beyond the transparency that was required in all participatory processes of consultation and communication of results with all stakeholders, the confidentiality of strategic, technical and financial data collected was secured.
- Close collaboration and communication: A highly participatory approach was critical to the success of this evaluation. Regular remote communication via email and the Microsoft Teams platform was scheduled, with the team of external consultants who worked under the supervision of the Evaluation Office evaluation manager.
- Efficient and dynamic management: Among the team of external consultants, the evaluation education experts were attentive to establishing a precise and rigorous management framework, together with a flexible timetable.
- Ethical behaviour: The team of external consultants, interviewed staff, and implementing partners, including government and civil society organization partners, were required to always comply with the highest standards of ethical behaviour in all respects and as reflected in UNICEF mandatory ethics policy and training. A zero-tolerance policy was executed around issues of fraud, bribery, corruption, child and adult safeguarding, and abuse, exploitation and harassment.

A.6. Evaluation users and uses

The primary audience for the evaluation included UNICEF Lebanon country office staff responsible for the design and implementation of education programmes, the coordination of education responses in emergencies and monitoring of learning; and staff from other sections who collaborate and coordinate with education programme teams. Findings and lessons learned from the evaluation should be used to inform changes in UNICEF education sector programmatic plans; approaches to support government partners and work with other implementing partners ; and to ensure preparedness for future emergencies.

The secondary audiences of the evaluation included government officials as duty bearers; children as right holders and beneficiaries of education programmes, their parents/guardians and school communities. Additional users of this evaluation are key country-level implementing partners; and whenever relevant, other donor agencies such as the World Bank, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNESCO, Inter-Agency for Education in Emergencies (INEE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and other strategic education sector partners.

Annex B. Evaluation framework

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
Objective 1: To examine role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research, and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic				
Theme 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic				
OECD-DAC criteria: coherence and efficiency				
1.1 What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge, and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?	Evidence of UNICEF contribution to building the data, knowledge, and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector.	Statement of UNICEF role at global, regional, and country level #/type of evidence and tools developed by UNICEF or in collaboration with other organisations	UNICEF Staff: HQ and regional UNICEF teams with a remit for creating or communicating data, evidence, research, and tools, as well as country office teams, including education, involved in using the tools and knowledge created by HQ/RO as well as creating their own. Partners at HQ, CO (including governments), RO: that UNICEF has worked with who can speak about UNICEF role and contribution Documents: produced documenting design, response, progress, lists of data/tools/evidence produced	Document review (programme and other documents from HQ, RO and CO) Interviews (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO). At CO also includes government personnel Online Survey (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO)
1.2 To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?	Coherence: Evidence of co-working/authoring, complementarity, alignments and non-duplications between UNICEF Education teams, other sector teams within UNICEF and (at country-level only) government departments or agencies outside of education at the design stage of solutions Evidence of alignment with the wider policy	#/type of staff working on the response # of staff reporting collaborating during response Difference in timing between planned and implementation of activities	UNICEF Staff: including education teams at HQ, RO, CO, and teams from other sectors with UNICEF to develop evidence-based solutions Documents: detailing evidence-based solutions developed, workplans, human and financial resources	Document review (programme and other documents, workplans, financial and staffing information) Interviews (UNICEF Staff at HQ, RO, CO including education and other sector teams) Online survey (UNICEF staff at HQ, RO, CO including education and other sector teams)

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
	<p>frameworks and with other interventions in the same operating context, how harmonised and complementary these activities were, and if duplication of effort and activities occurred.</p> <p>Efficiency: Evidence of volume of solutions developed as well as the speed and timeliness of their development.</p>			
<p>1.3 To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?</p>	<p>Coherence: Evidence of co-working/authoring, complementarity, alignments, and non-duplications between UNICEF Education teams and relevant external (technical) partners at the design stage of solutions</p> <p>Efficiency: Evidence of volume of solutions developed as well as the speed and timeliness of their development.</p>	<p>Difference in timing between planned and implementation of activities</p> <p># of partnerships developed</p> <p># of joint working groups</p> <p>Type of collaborate solutions developed</p> <p># of countries with collaborative programmes</p>	<p>UNICEF Staff: at HQ, RO, CO who may have been involved in working with and mobilising partners to develop evidence-based solutions</p> <p>External partners: at HQ, RO, CO that UNICEF mobilised and worked with to develop evidence-based solutions</p> <p>Documents: detailing information about the partners, ways of working and work carried out by working with them.</p>	<p>Document review (MOUs/partnership agreements, progress reports)</p> <p>Interviews (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO)</p> <p>Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO)</p>
<p>Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during in the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p>Theme 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning</p> <p>OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness</p>				

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
2.1 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?	Evidence of extent to which UNICEF was instrumental (1) in home-based learning happening at all, (2) whether that support was instrumental in improving the home-based learning initiatives in terms of quantity, reach or quality.	List /type of education strategies used to promote home-based learning # of countries, schools, children using home-based learning strategies Amount/type of support to households for home learning	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within countries RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to home based learning.	Document review (design and implementation documents, strategies, plans, resourcing, progress reports for home leaning Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.2 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, wellbeing, and protection during the re-opening of schools?	Evidence of extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in strengthening the protection, wellbeing, and safety of children through the three phases of school re-opening (prior to re-opening, in the re-opening process and with schools re-opened).	List /type of education strategies used to enhance children's safety and protection during re-opening of schools # of countries with safety and protection protocols and plans	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to children's safety, wellbeing, and protection during the re-opening of schools.	Document review (protection protocols, strategies, plans, progress reports, resourcing, in relation to children's safety, wellbeing, protection) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.3 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?	Evidence of the extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in (1) schools opening sooner than would otherwise have been the case and (2) schools operating in "business as usual" ways and levels	List /type of education strategies used to re-instate in-school learning # of countries, schools, teachers using UNICEF supported education strategies to re-instate in-school learning Incidences of changes reported in teaching, learning and assessment	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to reinstating in-school learning.	Document review (strategies, plans, progress reports, resourcing, in relation to reinstating school learning) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO,

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
	quicker or more completely than would otherwise have been the case (e.g. through addressing any obstacles experienced by teachers, such as vaccinations, unpaid wages, provision of PPE or handwashing facilities).	practices after reinstatement of in school learning # of countries reporting change in teaching, learning and assessment practices after reinstatement of in school learning		CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.4 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?	Evidence of the extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in schools and teachers using reformed teaching, learning and/or assessment practices designed to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's education, such as lost learning across all children or among particular groups of children.	# of countries reporting reforming teaching, learning and assessment practices to address the negative effects of COVID-19 # of countries reporting using teaching, learning and assessment practices to address the negative effects of COVID-19	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices.	Document review (strategies, plans, progress reports, resourcing, in relation to reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices, reports of classroom/school assessments, monitoring visits) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.5 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt	Evidence of the extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in the initiatives to identify and reach (provide for learning needs) children in particular the most marginalised groups, e.g. girls,	Type of targeting strategies used by UNICEF to identify and reach marginalized children disaggregated by group #/type of needs assessments conducted # of programmes designed based on results from needs assessment	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing government entities at national/subnational level, CO/RO UNICEF staff and CO partners identifying target groups, identifying their needs and/or tailoring the approach and support provided to	Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) Document review (targeting strategies, reports of identified groups and those reached/not

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
programmes to their learning needs?	children with disabilities, refugees, minority ethnic/language groups Evidence of whether particular groups of children were omitted or not sufficiently targeted through UNICEF supported interventions.		different groups of marginalized children.	reached)
2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?	Evidence of design and implementation of initiatives to recover lost learning (including assessing the extent of learning lost and progress to recover this)		Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to initiatives to recover learning Secondary education data pre post covid (if available)	Document review (strategies, plans, design documents, progress reports, assessments) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO). U-Report Analysis of secondary education data pre post covid (if available)
<p>Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams utilized the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale</p> <p>Theme 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks, readiness to handle similar future crises</p> <p>OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness</p>				
3.1 In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools in the education	Evidence of extent to which the frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools (FICT) were 1) used in their intended way and to their full extent and 2) used in all	# of staff reporting using existing EIE infrastructure, capacities and tools	UNICEF staff: at HQ, regional and country levels Documents: detailing the education team's use of selected, key EIE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools in the COVID response work.	Document review (EIE tools, frameworks, reports) Interviews (UNICEF staff at CO, RO, HQ) Online survey (UNICEF staff HQ, RO, CO)

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?	circumstances when their use was or would have been appropriate.			
3.2 In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?	Evidence of adaptations to EIE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools informed by lessons learnt from experience of the COVID-19 pandemic / Evidence of appropriate processes and/or structures in place for the reflection and adaptations to EIE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools informed by lessons learnt from experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Examples of changes initiated in preparation of future emergency responses	UNICEF staff at HQ, regional and country levels. Documents: including plans, policies, strategies, processes, working group TORs, regarding actual or planned changes to these frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools and/or processes/structures in place for reflection and lesson learning from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Document review (revised EIE tools, frameworks, reports) Interviews (UNICEF staff at CO, RO, HQ) Online survey (UNICEF staff HQ, RO, CO)

Annex C: Primary data collection tools: Case study

C.1. UNICEF CO Chief of education and other senior education staff

1. Overall, how would you describe UNICEF role overall in regard to supporting children's education during the pandemic? What difference has UNICEF support made?
2. Which activities/initiatives would you highlight as being especially impactful or important? (Probe: why that/those? What impact?)

Joint working with the RO and HQ

3. How would you describe the support you received from HQ and the RO for constructing and delivery of the education response to COVID-19?

(Probes:

- What forms did the support take?
 - What was particularly helpful? What was less helpful? (Prompt: data, research, reports, webinars, EIE specialists, guidance, frameworks)
 - Did you feel this was timely/were there any delays and what was the effect of any delays?
 - What were the challenges and how were these overcome?
 - What did/did you not achieve as a result of working with them?
 - What worked well and what didn't and why?
4. In hindsight what would you have done differently/ What could be improved going forward in terms of working with teams at RO/CO to develop solutions in response to education emergency?
 5. Was there more or less/better or worse collaboration during the pandemic than before? And if so, why was this and what, if any, might be the long-term effects of this?

Different specialist UNICEF teams working together for COVID-19 response in the education sector.

6. Please tell me about how the Education Team worked together with other sections/teams within UNICEF for the COVID response (i.e., when preparing for the response, during the response and up till now).

(Probes:

- Which sections/teams/persons did you work with, why and when?
 - Did you feel this was timely/were there any delays and what was the effect of any delays?
 - What were the challenges in joint working and how were these overcome?
 - What did you achieve as a result of working with them/what did you not achieve?
 - What worked well whilst working across sections/team and what didn't work well and why? (e.g., ways of working, coordination, timeliness, adequate resources/expertise)?
7. In hindsight what would you have done differently/ What could be improved going forward in terms of working with other UNICEF teams/sections to develop and implement education emergency response solutions/interventions during a public health emergency?

Work with external partners

I would like to ask about how UNICEF worked with its external partners for the education response to COVID-19.

8. Which organisations (ask for specific teams/sections) did you partner with, when and what for?

(Probes:

- Were these partners already working with UNICEF (on education and prior to COVID-19) or were they new specifically mobilized for the COVID-19 response in education?
 - How did UNICEF mobilize partners (new and old) for the COVID-19 response? Who was involved in mobilizing them? Any challenges faced, how were these challenges overcome?
 - Was mobilization of partners timely? Were there any delays and if so effect of these delays?
 - Why did UNICEF partner with these external organizations/what did it want to achieve by doing so and what are the implications of having these partners for the future? (e.g. avoid duplications, achieve complementarity)
 - What were roles and responsibilities of UNICEF and partners and how did these partnerships complement UNICEF work? Did this avoid duplications/increase complementarity?
 - Can you give examples of work undertaken in partnership with external partners (e.g., solutions developed to address negative effects of COVID-19 in education)?
 - What was the value of working jointly?
9. In hindsight what would you have done differently/ What could be improved going forward in terms of working with teams at RO/CO to develop solutions in response to education emergency?
10. Was there more or less/better or worse collaboration during the pandemic than before? And if so, why was this and what, if any, might be the long-term effects of this?

To conclude

11. Finally, what are the main lessons you would take away from the past two years? Where has UNICEF been successful and why? How has UNICEF been less successful and why? How can UNICEF improve – whether at country, regional or HQ level – to respond better in future crises?

C.2. UNICEF CO Education in Emergency

[Re EQ3.1] I would like to ask about how UNICEF Education teams deployed the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and extent to which it was successful in doing this.

1. Please describe the education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools (that existed pre-COVID-19)
2. Did UNICEF Education Teams utilise existing frameworks and tools developed by UNICEF for (pre-COVID-19) EIE contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic (what, how, when, where)? Were there any delays?
3. How did UNICEF deploy existing EIE organizational, financial, delivery, and coordination infrastructures and capacities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic? Did this differ across regions, COs, at HQ?
4. To what extent was UNICEF successful in doing so? (Give examples of success)
5. How did Education teams work with EIE teams at HQ, RO, CO? What were the successes, challenges? How were these overcome? (Delays, duplication, complementarity)
6. What was achieved as a result of deploying existing EIE structures etc.? (What was HQ, RO, CO able to do as a result /or couldn't do without?)

[Re EQ 3.2] I would like to ask about how UNICEF has adapted the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to better prepare for future global public health, and how comprehensively it has done this.

7. To what extent has UNICEF, as a result of the COVID-19 response, adapted/changed/ developed more (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools? Examples, who was involved, and why these changes? Are these for global use or specific to contexts?
8. How comprehensive have these changes been? (with examples)

9. What does UNICEF aim to achieve with new/adapted EIE frameworks, tools etc.?
10. At what stage of adaptation/development is UNICEF at and what are the next steps to test/use these?
11. What challenges have there been/or are foreseen/how have these been overcome?
12. Are there lessons to be learned from having used the EIE frameworks etc.? Have these lessons been documented and shared?

C.3. UNICEF CO Other education staff

1. Before we speak about some specific examples of UNICEF initiatives and activities, how would you describe UNICEF role overall regarding supporting children's education during the pandemic? What difference has UNICEF support made?

I would like now to ask specifically about [initiative/activity].

2. This is my understanding of this initiative/activity: outline UNICEF work]. Is that also your understanding? Would you like to add to or correct anything I have said?
3. How was UNICEF support complementary to or in support of the government's strategy and work?
4. What difference did UNICEF support make? (Probe: Why was it needed? What would have happened without UNICEF? How did it lead to change, for example in strategy, direction, approach, thinking about how to respond, outcomes for children, teachers and communities (if known, and where can evidence of those outcomes be found)?)
5. Were there any challenges? If so, how were these overcome?
6. To what extent did UNICEF work with other agencies? How well (or badly) did that go?
7. To what extent did you draw on support or resources (such as data, frameworks, tools, training etc.) from other parts of UNICEF at HQ and regional level in developing or implementing this initiative/activity? (Probe: Which parts of the organisation? Which resources? What difference did it make?)
8. To what extent did the Education team work with other specialists and teams in UNICEF? (Probe: Which teams/specialists? What difference did it make?)
9. How could UNICEF support to the government have been improved? What lessons could UNICEF learn for the future?

[Repeat questions 2-9 for another of UNICEF initiatives/activities to contribute to the education response during the pandemic. Realistically you might get through 2 initiatives in one hour so pick the 2 most significant ones. Capture responses for the other initiatives in the same text boxes above by clearly titling the different initiatives for which the answer is being provided.]

10. Because of time constraints, I have selected only some of your initiatives during the pandemic. Are there any other activities or initiatives that you would want to highlight in which UNICEF has supported the government's education response during the pandemic? If so, what are they and how have they made a difference?

To conclude

11. Finally, what are the main lessons you would take away from the past two years? Where has UNICEF been successful and why? How has UNICEF been less successful and why? How can UNICEF improve – whether at country, regional or HQ level – to respond better in future crises?

C.4. UNICEF CO DAPM staff

I would like to ask about the data, knowledge and tools that were developed by UNICEF (at HQ/RO/CO) for understanding and addressing the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector.

1. What tools did UNICEF develop, for understanding and responding to COVID-19 (in relation to education)? When were these developed, what were these used for and by whom?
2. What data did UNICEF collect, or contribute towards collecting, for understanding and responding to COVID-19 (in relation to education)? When was this collected, what was it used for and by whom?
3. What other knowledge products did UNICEF develop, for understanding and responding to COVID-19 (in relation to education such as reports, webinars)? When were these developed, what were these used for and by whom?
4. Did UNICEF provide any support to other partner organisations (e.g., WB, UNESCO, OECD) for developing data, tools, knowledge products (e.g., reports, webinars etc.)? What was this support, for whom, when and for what purpose)? (i.e., provided technical support, financial support, coordination)
5. Did you experience any challenges in developing data, tools and knowledge products and how were these overcome (including for supporting/working with partners)?
6. What could have been done differently and what can be improved for the future (for building data, knowledge and tools to respond to public health emergency - in relation to education)?

C.5. Government Entities

We understand that during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 UNICEF supported the government of [country] in the following ways:

(Read out a list of these activities, as specific as possible, perhaps structured around the list of generic activities below)

- Promoting home-based learning
 - Enhancing children's safety, wellbeing and protection during the re-opening of schools
 - Reinstating in-school learning
 - Targeting and reaching different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs
 - Recovering learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Introducing reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices
 - Carrying out research, collecting data, producing reports, guidance and frameworks, running webinars and other learning opportunities
1. Before we speak about some of UNICEF specific initiatives and activities to support you, how would you describe UNICEF role overall in regard to supporting children's education during the pandemic? How important has their role been? What difference has their support made?
 2. I would like now to ask specifically about [initiative/activity].
 3. This is my understanding of UNICEF role: [outline UNICEF work]. Is that also your understanding? Would you like to add to or correct anything I have said?
 4. How was UNICEF support complementary to the government's strategy and work? Was there any duplication with what government or any other agencies were doing?
 5. What was the effect of this support? (Probe: What was achieved as a result? How successful was UNICEF in providing support in above areas?)

6. (If relevant) How well (or badly) did UNICEF work with other agencies?
7. Were you aware of UNICEF staff with different expertise working together with their education colleagues on this initiative? If so, what are your observations about this and what difference did it make, do you think?
8. What were the challenges faced and how were these overcome?
9. How could UNICEF support to the government have been improved? What lessons could UNICEF learn for the future?

[Repeat questions 2-8 for another of UNICEF initiatives/activities to contribute to the education response during the pandemic. Realistically you might get through 2 initiatives in one hour so pick the 2 most significant ones. Capture responses for the other initiatives in the same text boxes above by clearly titling the different initiatives for which the answer is being provided.]

10. Are there any other ways in which UNICEF has supported the government's education response during the pandemic? If so, what are they and how have they been helpful?
11. UNICEF, especially in the global and regional headquarters, have produced lots of data, reports, guidance, frameworks and learning opportunities for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector. Did your government use any of these? Probe: If yes, how did you use these data, reports etc.? What was the effect of this? What did you achieve?
12. Finally, UNICEF would like to learn and improve their work. Are there any examples of what did not work well and should be avoided in the future? Do you have any recommendations for UNICEF on how they work with and support governments in future crises?