EDUCATION SECTOR SHORT-TERM RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – LEBANON

GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Outline

Annexes

1. Background

On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern. The outbreak has rapidly evolved, affecting national education systems and the delivery of Education programmes worldwide, including Lebanon. On March 2, in an effort to contain the outbreak, a decision was issued by the Government of Lebanon (GoL) to close all schools and educational institutions in the country. In line with this decision, the Education Sector recommended to all Non-Formal Education (NFE) service providers to close their centers as well to ensure the health and safety of learners.

Consequently, over 1.2 million school-aged children have been affected by school closure in Lebanon, including public, private, semi-private, and UNRWA schools. In addition to that, nearly 30,000 children and young people in NFE have had their education disrupted.

Given school closures, MEHE launched a distant learning plan for all public and private schools with general guidance on three pathways:
- o **Media**: relying mainly on television and the use of national TV for classes and awareness, with other media outlets used for awareness and psychosocial support for parents/ caregivers and learners. As a start, the focus under this pathway is on learners who have official exams, with the intention to expand to other grades;
- o **Online platforms:** one official application launched with Microsoft for public schools – Microsoft Teams, while some private schools are using their own platforms. In addition, other online platforms have been put in place by school principals in primary and secondary schools (like WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.) to enable access of children (including refugee children) to learning material;
- o **Non-ICT methods**: focusing mainly on paper-based materials.

Moreover, MEHE issued instructions for teachers to guide their work during the teleworking period and that revolved around three areas: preparing and disseminating lessons, following up with learners on homework, and grading and reporting back. MEHE also provided feedback forms for teachers, education professionals and others to provide their input on the pathways.

MEHE's response plan for COVID-19 based on distance learning is still evolving with the development of the COVID-19 situation in the country. The plan needs to address the many challenges posed by distance learning modalities, including electricity cuts in many areas across Lebanon, and the lack of a reliable internet network or access to technology to facilitate e-learning, which have been validated by the Rapid Learning Readiness Assessment (refer to Section 5). In addition to that, parents/ caregivers are now playing the teachers' role, often with more than one child to support, which adds pressures to households also affected by the economic crisis. Furthermore, movement restrictions imposed by the government to contain the spread of the disease pose an added challenge to schools using non-ICT modalities. These challenges particularly affect disadvantaged populations, including refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, who have less regular access to these facilities and tools.

2. Rationale and Guiding Principles

There is a need for coordinated support by Education Sector partners in order to minimize the negative impact of the crisis on learners and their parents/caregivers.

As previously mentioned, MEHE launched a distance learning plan, which comes with a number of challenges, including developing distance learning content, supporting teachers, providing guidance to families, and addressing access and connectivity issues. While MEHE is still working to address those challenges and emerging needs, the Ministry has not provided NFE-specific guidance to address the implementation constraints of NFE at the time of writing. The NFE sector currently supports at least 30,000 learners in Lebanon, mostly Syrian refugees, noting that there are many more children who were completely out of learning prior to the GoL General Mobilization measures[1].

In order to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and in an effort to ensure that learners remain engaged in learning and continue their education, the Education sector developed a short-term response for children whose NFE programmes were disrupted.

The Sector response is guided by the following principles:
- o Safeguarding the right of education for all and ensuring equity and equality, especially for the most vulnerable;
- o Promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of families, learners and teachers/ facilitators as a priority during the crisis period;
- o Ensuring the continuity of learning through distance learning solutions and modalities;
- o Strengthening support to, and coordination among, Education Sector partners.

The response is developed around three complementary domains for learners and their parents/caregivers: Distance Learning Support, Child Wellbeing, and Health Awareness. These domains and their respective interventions are elaborated in *Section 6*.

3. Goal and Outputs

The overall goal of this Sector Short-Term Response is to ensure the engagement of learners and the continuity of their learning, while promoting their wellbeing and health as well as their parents' / caregivers' during the GoL COVID-19 General Mobilization. The document serves as a guiding framework for Education sector partners who provide support to children and young people whose NFE has been disrupted due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It aims to guide, support and coordinate the provision of accessible, relevant and age-appropriate distance learning, as well as equip teachers/ facilitators with accessible and relevant materials. This is done through three complementary domains:

I. ***Distance Learning Support***: providing learning material and resources that support core components of literacy, numeracy, science, and life skills to keep children engaged intellectually until they resume the normal learning activities in NFE centers.

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[1] According to the Out of School Profiling 2018, the number of OOSC is 319,916 (age 3-18) and 138,459 (age 6-14).

II. ***Child Wellbeing***: providing Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) activities for learners and caregivers caring for young children to develop skills that support their wellbeing and help them get through these difficult times.

III. ***Health Awareness:*** providing activities for children and their parents/caregivers to raise their awareness on COVID-19 so they understand the threats and protective actions they need to take to prevent its spread in their community.

The Framework provides guidance to partners and aims to ensure a structured and unified approach and access to necessary resources to support learners and their parents/ caregivers during this period. It provides key competencies for learners per age group and the related resources and activities for teachers/ facilitators, parents/ caregivers and learners, which are meant to be delivered as complete package on a regular basis. The Framework also identifies appropriate implementation modalities, tools, and monitoring and follow up mechanisms.

The Framework will be regularly updated to support partners and respond to the evolving COVID-19 situation. It will produce two outputs:

1. A dynamic online database with reviewed and curated resources by competency and audience/ age group, with links to activities in a shared folder; and
2. A shared folder with the actual materials, covering the three domains, for education partners to use or adapt based on their implementation modality and their needs.

A Task Team was set up for each domain in order to collect and review relevant and age-appropriate materials and resources. Sector partners were invited to submit materials and resources based on a set of criteria (detailed in later sections). Task Team members in the three domains were responsible to identify the learning scope and sequence for each domain and review the materials, then upload them on a shared platform that can be accessed by all partners working with NFE children and youth and their families. The folder can be accessed through this link: **COVID-19 Education Sector Response**

4. Target Populations

The primary target of the Guiding Framework is Education Sector partners and practitioners who deliver NFE programmes to non-Lebanese and vulnerable Lebanese children and young people. The Framework provides partners with the scope and sequence for delivering distance learning around the three domains. The secondary beneficiaries of the short-term education sector response are the children and youth who were benefiting from NFE and retention programmes under the national RACE II plan that were ongoing (or planned) prior to the COVID-19 outbreak and GoL General Mobilization measures.

Therefore, the response targets the following population groups:
o Education actors and front-liners active in the provision of NFE and retention programmes in Education settings
o Non-Lebanese and Lebanese children and young people benefitting from NFE (including CB-ECE and BLN) and retention programmes, particularly: Children age 3-5, Children age 6-9, Children age 10-14, Adolescents and youth age 15-18

o   Non-Lebanese and Lebanese parents and caregivers of children in NFE or retention programmes.

Education Partners need to establish links with community leaders (Shawishes and others key influencers) who can play an important role in disseminating information to refugee communities, in particular to families who do not have direct access to WhatsApp or other communication platforms.

5. *Rapid Learning Readiness Assessment (LeaRA)*

In order to ensure an evidence-based response to learners' needs, it was important to understand the current situation of the most vulnerable families with regard to their capacity to engage in any kind of remote learning. As no such data was available, and in order to better inform the sector response, a Rapid Learning Readiness Assessment (LeaRA) was conducted by LCRP Education partners during March-April 2020 to collect information on:

1.   Kinds of electronic devices available in households and their connectivity to the internet;
2.   Frequency/ timeframe in which the learner can access these devices;
3.   Level of literacy of the learner's parent/caregiver or other supportive individual that the learner knows/ has access to;
4.   Parent/ caregivers' preferences regarding the frequency of communication from NGOs.

The LeaRA was implemented by 26 NGOs who communicated with parents/caregivers of learners currently enrolled and supported within NFE programmes. Participating partners reached approximately 10,000 households including over 45,000 learners, predominantly refugees, to identify their needs and existing sources of support in order to continue to support children's right to education via distance learning modalities.

The results of the assessment confirmed that there are both a need for learning support as well as a willing and enabling environment. In fact, results show that there are over 25,000 children in need of some form of learning support within NFE and retention programmes. In addition, more than 95% of these households have at least one smartphone device; 98% have access to electricity; and 92% have access to the Internet mostly to use WhatsApp or other social communication applications. In order to support their children's learning, 95% of parents/caregivers agree that NFE providers regularly communicate with their children to support their learning. Many parents/caregivers identified WhatsApp as the preferred method of communication, where NGO partners can send short instructional videos, guidance audio messages and pictures of content to support children's learning needs.

Despite the positive response from parents/caregivers and the existing enabling environment, NGOs need to identify other resources to support children's access to selected distance learning modalities. Given the current deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health crisis, families have less money to support access to Internet and electricity in their homes. This, combined with the increased Internet usage required for distance learning modalities, may require organizations to support vulnerable households with additional Internet access through recharge cards for bundles that restrict access to applications needed for learning. Furthermore, many parents/caregivers are not literate

in foreign languages needed to transition to formal school in Lebanon (19% of surveyed parents/ caregivers are only literate in Arabic), and 21% are completely illiterate. While some parents/ caregivers can identify other literate family members that can support their children's learning, this is not the case for all. Around 11% of children in need of learning support do not have a literate parent or another family member that can help them at home. Therefore, in combination with adapting the content and implementation modalities for the context, organizations will need to ensure the most vulnerable households can utilize the content to meet the learning objectives without having a literate parent or family member.

6. Response Domains

I. LEARNING SUPPORT DOMAIN

Education Sector partners are committed to ensure that children and young people remain engaged and continue their learning during this temporary interruption for a successful re-transition back to continue their education when the pandemic is controlled. During this period or interruption, it is very important to provide learners with a sense of normalcy. Daily routines and continued learning provide a sense of structure and calm, while unusual events surround children and their families.

Interventions
The proposed intervention to support children's learning will follow two main approaches: direct and indirect.
- *Direct:* NGO staff provide resources tailored to their targeted audience through the means available to them. These resources are compiled and curated by the Learning Task Team. Most field staff are communicating with their targeted audience via WhatsApp groups, SMS and direct phone calls. Through these means of contact, Education partners supply families and learners with the selected materials for the coming week, for an initial period of 8-12 weeks. If needed and when possible, some traditional materials that follow preventive measures (disinfection and lamination) will be shared through field staff and front-liners.

- *Indirect:* NGO staff remain in contact with learners on a weekly basis checking in on them and following up with their families to provide extra support, and for monitoring and evaluation of the learning process.

Families will be supported to understand key factors that enhance learning from home, including routine, discipline and taking breaks; and they will be provided with materials on how to maintain daily routines and follow daily schedules that fit their needs and their children's need, as per the below guidelines:

- **Stay organized**: field staff will support children and their families determine what each child's learning objectives are for a particular period of time. All learners will be supported according to where they are and provided with instructions or links that will serve their educational needs.
- **Individual Work**: all children, no matter how young, are capable of working independently. Field staff will support parents/caregivers and older children on how to teach or go over work with their children or oneself. They will also be provided with guidance on how to let other siblings do individual work, be it a reading or writing assignment, hands-on game or online practice.

- **Check on understanding/Feedback**: field staff will follow up directly with children and their caregivers to ensure that activities are being carried out properly and respond to any issues that may be faced. Weekly phone calls will be initiated. Parents/ caregivers will be supported with tips on how to communicate with their children to find out if they are learning, such as talk to their children and ask them how they feel things are going. Field staff will provide guidelines and stem questions that can lead to determining if children are learning, struggling to learn or are not motivated to learn.

Competencies

The core components of the key subjects' competencies under the Distance Learning Support domain will differ depending on the age group and the education programme learners participate in. The below table indicates the core components in each key subject:

Languages core components	Math core components	Science core components
- Concept of prints/features of written language - Phonological awareness - Phonics and word study - Vocabulary - Comprehension	- Number sense, counting, comparing - Basic Math operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) - Measurement and data - Geometry	- Living and non-living - Animal, plants and their habitats - Man and Health - Matter and Energy

Instructional Materials

In selecting instructional materials, the following criteria were considered:
- Are aligned with and/or support the Lebanese educational goals and objectives.
- Are appropriate for the age, emotional and social development, and ability level of the children for whom the materials are selected.
- Are diverse with respect to levels of difficulty, reader appeal, and present a variety of points of view.
- Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
- Have artistic, cultural, literary, or social value.
- Foster respect for men, women, the disabled, and refugee groups and portray a variety of roles and lifestyles and cultural diversity.
- Motivate learners to examine their own attitudes and behaviors and to comprehend their own duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges as participating citizens.
- Encourage learners to utilize higher order thinking skills and to become informed decision-makers.

Following the above criteria, Education Sector partners contributed materials, including links for online and offline access, traditional materials, and adapted materials to be shared through available means to families and learners. The selected instructional materials are flexible and fit many and different needs of children in different age groups. The materials respond to the components of the key subjects including languages (Arabic, English and French), math and science. All children attending NFE programs as well as cycle 1 and cycle 2 in first and second shift can benefit from the materials provided, which may be accessed on the online folder through the following link: **01 – Learning**

The instructional materials focus on foundational skills that all children will need to further their education. (See Annex 2: Implementation Guidelines: Using the Suggested Learning Resources)

II. CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING DOMAIN

Out-of-school children supported by NFE programmes already deal with previous trauma, harsh socio-economic conditions, and daily stressors. With COVID-19, they have additional daily stressors including isolation, interruption of daily routines, precarity, and further financial hardships given the GoL COVID-19 General Mobilization, which limit movement and financial activity nationwide.

Interventions

Drawing on evidence to support the psychosocial wellbeing of children, interventions that support children's wellbeing have two main approaches: direct and indirect.

- *Direct*: NGO staff, which can include NFE educators, provide activities that support explicit skills that enhance and support children's wellbeing. These activities come from education partners' existing materials that all partners can adapt to their own implementation modalities.

- *Indirect*: NGO staff remain in contact with NFE children on a weekly basis checking in on them and following up on activities relevant to all the other domains. Evidence shows that when children feel isolated or their learning is disrupted, the fact that a caring adult checks in on them on a regular basis supports their wellbeing. Further, NGO staff can collect M&E data on wellbeing during these interactions.

Competencies

The Education Sector collaborated with the Child Protection (CP) sector to identify a common set of competencies over the course of 8 weeks that will support children and their parents'/caregivers' resilience and wellbeing during the COVID-19 public health crisis.[2] These competencies will complement the other domains and partners should reinforce the competencies throughout the short-term response:

Week	Competency
Week 1	Understanding my emotions and coping skills
Week 2	Planning and organising my time (setting a schedule)
Week 3	Recognising others' emotions (theme: reducing stigma)
Week 4	Understanding and coping with social/physical distancing
Week 5	Positive communication
Week 6	Recognising my strengths, what I have done well (self-efficacy)
Week 7	Keeping myself safe online
Week 8	Maintaining and strengthening my motivation and determination

In a collaborative effort building on the expertise of Education and CP actors, staff from active NGOs that have technical expertise in PSS and/or SEL curate materials from organisations to serve as exemplary activities for reference for the Education and CP sector partners in alignment with the scope and sequence of the above competencies identified by the LCRP Wellbeing Task Team. This curation happens through a technical review committee[3] who ensures the activities are in alignment with identified technical

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[2] The LCRP Education sector suggests an implementation period of 8 weeks from April-May 2020, but also realizes that partners will implement a level of flexibility that is required to responding to an emergency.

[3] The Child Wellbeing Task Team technical review committee includes is composed by both LCRP Education sector and CPiEWG PSS committee members with technical experience in programming PSS and SEL in Lebanon.

guidelines (See Annex 1 for the Technical Review framework for activity selection). The Education Sector and the CP in Emergencies Working Group (CPiEWG) PSS Committee shares these curated activities on weekly basis. These may be accessed on the shared folder through this link: **02 - Wellbeing**

III. HEALTH AWARENESS DOMAIN

Amid the current crisis, a lot of information is being circulated about COVID-19 and low levels of awareness and knowledge present (to date) inside the communities. It is important that Education partners disseminate accurate information on COVID-19 with refugee and host communities in order to protect their health and wellbeing, prevent the spread of the outbreak, reduce panic and address anxieties and fears, and support the refugee and host community's ability to cope with the disease. This component serves as guidance to Education partners to raise health awareness among learners and caregivers targeted with Education programs.

Objectives

The proposed health awareness activities focus on increasing the awareness level among the most vulnerable non-Lebanese and Lebanese about this virus, its ways of infection, early detection referrals and prevention. Activities also aim to identify and address rumors or misinformation around the virus and mitigate stigma and discrimination among the refugee and host communities.

Key Considerations

Trusted and trained community members who are mobilized by education partners to conduct Health Awareness activities need to adopt the following key considerations:

- o Liaise with health professionals in their respective agencies and partner organizations to disseminate timely information on the disease and mitigation measures that can be taken, in line with national guidelines and best practices advocated by MoPH[4].
- o Remain updated with the rapidly changing information on COVID-19 and ensure that updated, accurate and adapted information reaches learners and parents/ caregivers of diverse backgrounds. This can be done by accessing trusted communication channels, such as MOPH, UNICEF, WHO and UNHCR websites or channels and continuously checking the *online folder* of material.
- o Adapt the communication channels to the current GoL/MoPH guidance; phone and other virtual communication channels are encouraged. Once the government/ agencies permits access to field- in person visits, Education partners must adhere to stringent COVID-19 protocols issued by MoPH/WHO such as social distancing, use of sanitation measures etc.
- o Promote regular communication and engagement with the community to ensure messages are understood, increase acceptance and trust in communities and address rumors and misinformation.
- o Communicate Transparently in languages, formats, and media that are contextually appropriate and accessible for children, young people and parents/ caregivers in NFE settings, including children and persons with disabilities.
- o Ensure that children receive clear, child friendly, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive communication about COVID-19.

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[4] Due to the evolving context, messages need to be continuously validated with the authorities as we progress from one phase to another

- Ensure that parents/caregivers of NFE (or other Education programmes) also receive clear messages regarding how to communicate with their children about COVID-19 to mitigate stress.

Partners should place special emphasis on the following protection considerations:

- Ensure that no one is stigmatized in relation to COVID-19, including refugee children and youth and those at risk, caregivers with disabilities and with pre-existing or underlying medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart diseases, in order to prevent stigmatization and marginalization of COVID-19 cases among the community.[5]
- Avoid using medical terminology concerning coronavirus/COVID-19 that may not be easily understandable.
- Address misinformation, prejudice and negative stereotyping
- Advise learners and parents/ caregivers to be aware of possible increases in bullying or stigmatization.

Furthermore, Education partners need to be up to date on adapted Health and WASH referral pathways shared by Inter-Agency coordination in the event that a COVID-19 case is suspected in the household.[6] They need to actively promote child protection working group referral pathways in hospitals around the country in the event that a caregiver or child is admitted for COVID-19. [7]

Competencies

The content of health awareness activities will cover the following competencies:
- Recognizing signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 disease, including early symptoms;
- Implementing protection measures to stay safe and prevent the spread of the disease, including hand washing and respiratory hygiene measures (e.g. coughing into an elbow) and healthy behaviors (e.g. avoiding smoking);
- Recognizing health referral pathways and hotline numbers;
- Identifying ways to manage and cope with distress related to COVID-19;
- Identifying risk mitigation planning for families in the event a family member falls ill with COVID.

Health awareness materials tailored to target audience and age groups are being compiled by the Sector and made accessible to partners to guide their health awareness activities. Compiled materials under the Health Awareness domain may be accessed on the online folder through this link: **03 - Health**

IV. PARENT ENGAGEMENT

With school closures and with the absence of teachers and classrooms, parents/ caregivers now hold the task to teach their kids and oversee and monitor their learning. These changes are occurring in a general context of stress, fear and worry, with parents/ caregivers being underprepared for distance learning. This applies even more to the most vulnerable families, who have unequal access to opportunities and

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[5] The CP sector will be issuing guidance note on preventing and addressing stigma - TBC
[6] Note: due to the evolving context please consult the Health working group lead for the most up to date information on the health referral pathways for each relevant target group.
[7] Note: Please use the current referral pathways unless instructed otherwise from by the Child Protection working group and the Child Protection Case Management Task Force

technologies, who may be illiterate and therefore need further support, and who are facing loss of income and very harsh economic conditions in Lebanon.

Engaging families and parents/ caregivers has long been recognized as an important factor in the learning process. Now more than ever, families must be supported to engage with their children and help them continue their learning so that when the pandemic is contained and schools and NFE centres reopen, they will be able to transition.

According to the LeaRA findings, parents/ caregivers want their children to learn and are willing to support, which means there is a strong enabling environment for the Sector. The Sector and its programmes can support families by addressing the challenges they face (illiteracy, foreign language, connectivity, etc.). Partners will collectively draw from their technical and field knowledge to support parents/ caregivers and facilitate learning from home. They will use their wide resources and materials and draw from best practices to ensure learning under the three domains.

Guidelines for Engaging Parents/ Caregivers

As families navigate these uncertain and challenging circumstances, sector partners will work very closely with them and empower them to make this period easier and provide them with the support and encouragement they need. While doing so, partners need to consider the following guidelines:

- o There are wide variations across communities and families in terms of access to devices, internet connectivity and availability of electricity. Even when families are fortunate enough to have some facilities at home, they may not have devices for children to use at the same time. Resources and tools should be flexible enough to accommodate those differences and variations and to ensure that information and learning materials are accessed by all. For example, scheduled learning times need to be spaced out to decrease pressure on parents/ caregivers/ older siblings supporting distant learning.
- o Since not all parents/ caregivers are literate and many may not have digital literacy skills to support the learning process, multiple pathways need to be considered when planning interventions, to meet each family's unique circumstances and learning readiness.
- o It is very important to stay connected with families by communicating regularly with them and following on how things are progressing. Communication and messages with families need to be supportive, positive and encouraging in order to successfully facilitate learning at home. Acknowledge families on their efforts and progress. Communication with families also needs to be done in a consistent manner and in different formats that suit the target groups.
- o Encourage families to allow time for regular breaks, relaxation and fun, especially when they feel stress and anxiety.

7. *Implementation and Delivery Modalities*

As learners cannot access NFE Learning Centres, NGOs will access them vis-à-vis distance methods, and where possible, leveraging MEHE's distance learning modalities. This can include WhatsApp Groups or other online platforms that may be available through MEHE with content that caters to the needs and lived realities of children and youth engaged in NFE programmes. Information and materials can be shared through various channels accessible to different groups with various access of technology including Phone, WhatsApp, SMS, Skype, etc. Education actors need to use different formats and channels as

needed, such as audio messages, videos, pictures, links as well as offline packets that include worksheets, leaflets in different languages (Arabic, English/French where appropriate).

Channels include (but not limited to):
- o Phone Calls
- o Voice Messages via WhatsApp
- o Videos sent over WhatsApp
- o Video Streaming platforms including Facebook, YouTube, other digital learning platforms etc.
- o Handouts, Worksheets, Leaflets, Brochures (adapted to COVID-19 health measures)
- o TV Broadcast

The Sector will pilot different modalities as the context changes and make recommendations as more information becomes available from MEHE's distance learning platforms and external NFE actors' ability to leverage them to support learners.

8. Monitoring and Follow-up

While maintaining access to learning, it is important to provide follow up sessions with families and learners, not only for formative assessments, but also to instil a sense of comfort and reassurance. Thus, weekly follow-up to monitor learning and provide feedback, for example study tips and short tutorials, will be exercised.

The Education Sector recommends collecting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data on a rolling basis from learners and parents/caregivers that is possible within the current distance learning context. Examples include:
- o Implementation: How parents/caregivers and children find the activities and implementation modality in terms of access to materials, usefulness, relevance, activity reception, and suggestions for improvement.
- o Content (including all three domains): Self-initiated feedback from parents/caregivers on the selected communication platform(s) - including read receipts, downloads, communications.
- o For the *Distance Learning Support* domain: A Feedback questionnaire will be sent to partners and collected on a regular basis for content and learning material improvement.
- o For the *Child Wellbeing* domain: three to five wellbeing questions collected as a base-line, mid-line, and end-line that can be collected over the phone without causing harm or unnecessary stress to the child
- o For the *Health Awareness* domain: A feedback reporting mechanism will be put in place to collect feedback from partners to flag misconceptions about COVID-19 among families.

9. Coordination and Partnerships

The development of the Sector Short-Term Response Plan is in collaboration with LCRP Education Sector Partners and in coordination with other sectors such as CP (in particular the PSS Committee). The plan benefits from the expertise and inputs of different partners and will be regularly revisited to respond to emerging needs and to draw from lessons learnt during implementation. Coordination will also be ensured through the already existing coordination channels and platforms (with sector and donors). Regular meetings and information sharing will be maintained, as well as monitoring and follow up on the

efficiency and effectiveness of the response. Joint partner initiatives, such as the already completed LeaRA, will be designed and implemented based on perceived and emerging needs.

The Plan is developed with the aim of ensuring that the response is coordinated and aligned among partners, while allowing for flexibility depending on the needs of target communities and given the uncertain and evolving circumstances around the COVID-19 outbreak. The online folder for resource sharing will continue to be updated based on the evolution of the response.

The Plan supports and complements MEHE's COVID-19 response and is aligned with it. Education Sector partners will ensure support to MEHE through disseminating MEHE plans and messages and sharing information to I/NGOs as well families benefitting from their services, including children enrolled in formal 2nd shift public schools and NFE regulated programmes. In addition to that, the sector will provide technical support and capacity development on available listed resources. The sector will also ensure sharing of resources with MEHE and relevant national bodies.

10. Mid-Term Response

Given the uncertainty of the immediate implementation space for NFE programmes to support out-of-school children during summer 2020, it is advised to utilize the experience of MEHE and education sector partners during to the short-term response – including this framework – to inform the mid-term response that is more resilient to future 'shocks' and possible interruptions, (for instance internal instability, protests, COVID-19 increased spread, etc.) to ensure the continuity of learning. Doing so would build on good practice and support the transition of out-of-school children to the next appropriate learning opportunity, and in particular, MEHE public school.

ANNEX 1: **Technical Review Framework**

The following serves as guidance for Education and Child Protection sector partners' submission of activities for the curation and the Technical Review Committee in the selection of activities that are exemplar.

Activities should:
- Be in Arabic
- Meet the competency and be age-appropriate to the relevant audience
- Do no harm when implemented by parents/caregivers or other family members, but also encourage parents/caregivers to engage with their children when and where appropriate relevant to the age group
- Do not require trained or supervised workers to implement (i.e., in alignment with MHPSS Intervention Pyramid Layer 2: Community and family supports)
- Use minimum resources at home – some basic stationary is acceptable
- Short in duration and include visuals to support where possible
- Do not require printing to conduct the activity
- Include simple, clear instructions for children and/or caregivers (do not require parent to deliver a "lesson plan" that is more appropriate for educators)
- If a video: less than max. 3 min, to ensure limited data consumption

ANNEX 2: **Implementation Guidelines: Using the Suggested Learning Resources**

Using the learning materials

It is crucial for partners to assess all the materials provided and allocate any gaps in the materials you plan to provide the group you are serving. If not found among the materials you create, otherwise, save time and resources and use the appropriate instructional materials here provided.

We advise you create your own tips to parents and learners in Arabic to support them navigate the ready-made materials you choose to share. Education providers should consider the fact that some parents are not literate and adapt the content in such a way to ensure the messages and activities make it to the learners (e.g. recording voice messages, etc.)

Since children learn at different pace, many partners might have reached different progress or learning outcome before COVID-19, or many more partners might be serving new group of learners recently, the materials and schedules provided should be perceived as flexible supporting materials and not as an obligatory to use as is.

All partners are advised to use the materials according to their needs and their children's learning needs and not be committed to deliver the scheduled activities as they are stated without revision.

Education partners are advised to choose the materials by the order that fits their interventions and the learners' needs. ***Thus, pick what will serve the learners best and design your interventions accordingly.***

All documents will be updated on a weekly or biweekly bases as needed. The below are guidance to distance learning for NFE. The Education sector also welcomes links, activities, tips based on experience, and materials from partners who are willing to share. You will find all materials on the following link:

1. Establish weekly/daily schedules

Expectations should be clear about when education partners share the materials with learners. Especially for families who may be sharing one device, it is important to know when to expect materials. Thus, set the days and time of that days and share the schedule with the families prior to sharing any materials. We advise you follow the schedule consistently.

Based on the needs assessment results and some partners' feedback from their pilot, families favor the following to be considered while preparing the schedules:

- 3 lessons shared per week,
- each lesson or length of instruction not to exceed 4-5 minutes (data consumed to download the materials is of concern).
- Be advised to consider the child's attention span and focus. That's the period of time for which a typical child can maintain focus on a given task.
- Consider content that is active and not passive for learning. This means that learners should be encouraged to be actively engaged in the learning process.
- Share more available resources/links with families who choose to keep their children engaged for longer time as possible.
- The amount of student study time/engagement (threshold) partners are advised to aim for is inclusive of instructional materials and assigned work. The threshold presented in the table below

is not inclusive of additional activities or enrichment opportunities, which we encourage partner and parents to provide. Advise parents as appropriate to the age group and its relevance to the grade level on the below daily study time[8]:

Grade level	Minimum	Maximum	Recommended length of sustained attention
Pre-K	20 minutes/day	60 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
K	30 minutes/ day	90 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
1-2	45 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	5-10 minutes
3-5	60 minutes/day	120 minutes/day	10-15 minutes
6-8	90 minutes/day	180 minutes/day	One subject area
9-12	120 minutes/day	270 minutes/day	One subject area

Sometimes it can be difficult to anticipate all the challenges expected throughout the day/week, thus we advise:

- Document the experiences of education staff/teachers, parents, and learners on a weekly basis to inform decision making
- Be flexible and make changes along the way as needed and reported
- Some families might struggle to make time during the 3 days per week for the instructions sent by your organization, partners should consider reducing to one to two days per week for all selected activities and materials to be shared.

We suggest a weekly follow-up call with the families to ensure:

- Materials are received on time.
- Learners are able to and attended to the materials shared
- Materials are valuable and needed
- Materials are engaging
- Learners and their parents are happy to receive more materials of that particular kind/focus
- Day, time and frequency are still acceptable

Schedule at least one follow-up calls weekly with parents and consider the following:

- A specific time of the week – a morning call or afternoon call
- Allowing families flexibility due to their availability, the availability of the device they are using to communicate with you, and
- Allowing appropriate time between receiving the materials and completion of tasks.

2. Provide robust learning

The distance learning should never be an excuse to assign busy work, but rather to address clear engaging learning objectives. To ensure an effective and productive distance learning experience, responsibility is

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shared by all stakeholders. Education staff/teachers need to focus the learning materials around solid progression and ensure proper tasks are communicated regularly with clear instructions to be followed.

Key principles to be considered:

- Break learning into smaller chunks
- Make instructions very explicit and direct
- Be clear about expectations and task completion
- Provide frequent feedback (during the follow up calls) to motivated learners and their parents
- Make social-emotional learning as important as other subjects. Refer to the Child Wellbeing resources, as well as the complementary SEL activities in the excel sheet (Annex B)
- Ensure that parents are addressed and supported by the organization with activities that will improve their wellbeing as well.

The families and their children will need time to adjust. Provide manageable and achievable goals to work on each day/week, listen to feedback, adjust as possible, and communicate frequently.

3. Design independent learning

Keep in mind that many learners might lack direct support - the LeaRA findings indicate that only 60% of households indicated their ability to support learners with their lessons. Further, 21% of parents are illiterate, very little can support in the foreign language – English (8.4%) or French (1.0%). It is important to design learning that does not require a lot of support from parents or another person than the child receiving the materials, however, for some of the activities for, particularly for CB-ECE learners, it is encouraged for parents to engage and support their children's learning.

The following are suggested:

- Providing guidance for parents on how they can be supporting their children during the distance learning
- Consider making video or audio instructions instead of text.
- Supporting students and families in having access to varied enrichment opportunities.
- Encourage students and families to support academic skills and social-emotional health through activities that extend beyond assigned distance learning work.

Suggestions for Additional Activities				
Mind	**Body**	**spirit**	**Environment**	**Family**
• Reading, e.g., independent reading, listening to someone else read, audiobooks • Puzzles, Word Searches • Write a story or in a journal • Count items/money • Draw • Building with blocks or Legos	• Take a walk • Dance • Exercise • Fine/gross motor activities • Stretch or do yoga • Play a sport	• Listen to music or sing • Playing (inside or outside) • Coloring or drawing • Imaginative play • Meditate	• Clean up your room/space • Do age appropriate chores • Gardening • Take care of pets or plants • Cook or bake	• Play board games with a family member • Tell jokes or riddles • Offer to help someone