

Education Programme - Lebanon

December 2023

Lebanon remains the country hosting **the largest number of refugees per capita**, with the Government estimation of **1.5 M Syrian refugees** and **11,238** refugees of other nationalities.

With the country facing its worst socio-economic crisis in decades, **nine out of ten Syrian refugees** need **humanitarian assistance to cover their basic needs**.

The VASyR* results show that **61% of school-aged refugee children** (ages 6-17) **are out of school**, while **65% of youth** are neither in education, training, nor employed.

Working with partners

- UNHCR liaises with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) for the inclusion of refugees in the national education system ensuring equal access across all academic levels. The advocacy extends to accessing official exams, waiving documentation barriers, addressing learning recovery, and necessary system reforms.
- UNHCR collaborates with UN agencies - including UNICEF through the Strategic Collaboration Framework - and international entities to enhance access for refugee children and youth to essential services in the key areas of education.
- UNHCR partners with several local and international NGOs in the implementation of community-based education programmes and plays a pivotal role in inter-agency, inter-sector, and education sector coordination in Lebanon.
- In 2023, UNHCR has partnership agreements with six implementing partners: Caritas Lebanon, Nabad for Development, Rene Mouawad Foundation, Semeurs D'avenir (SDA), Restart, and Al Nahda Wal Adala.
- UNHCR Lebanon serves as a pilot country for the UNHCR Global 15by30 initiative¹, aiming to achieve 15% enrolment of refugees in higher education globally by 2030. The 15by30 roadmap outlines strategic actions and advocacy opportunities, fostering sustained commitment from various stakeholders to expand higher education access for refugees across five pillars.

Context

In recent years, Lebanon has faced a challenging period, affecting the education sector. The economic collapse has triggered intermittent teacher strikes, resulting in prolonged and repeated school closures during the 2022-23 academic year. These disruptions have prevented the complete delivery of the curriculum, impacting learning outcomes. The cumulative effect of these challenges has taken a toll on learners, with long-term repercussions on educational achievement expected to endure for years.

Barriers to education persist:

- Cost of transportation, lack of school materials, and administrative constraints, continue to hinder access to quality education.
- Documentation issues pose a significant hurdle at the secondary and tertiary levels, potentially impeding academic progress.

¹ In 2019, UNHCR and partners set a goal to increase enrolment in higher education of young refugee women and men globally to 15% by 2030.

* Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, VASyR 2022.

- Security unrest and situation in the South starting the last quarter of 2023 are affecting the enrollment of refugee students in displacement situations, their access to retention support, and out-of-school access to basic literacy and numeracy programs.

Main Activities

Support to Out-Of-School Children

- UNHCR implements the MEHE-recognised Basic Literacy and Numeracy Programme (BLN) to tackle the education barriers faced by out-of-school refugee children and youth without prior learning and school dropouts. As of December 2023, the BLN program has successfully supported **3,561** refugee children and **261** youth, equipping them with foundational skills in literacy and numeracy. UNHCR is equally piloting Community-Based BLN to address the needs of further vulnerable children's groups.

Retention Support and Safe Learning Programme

- UNHCR fosters a safe learning environment through dedicated retention programs and homework support to assist refugee children and youth in recovering learning losses and sustaining their participation in the educational system. Dedicated retention sessions targeted refugees and vulnerable Lebanese students sitting for national official exams. **15,012** refugee and host community children and youth were reached through these programmes.
- UNHCR deploys Education Community Liaison Volunteers (ECL) in afternoon schools to bridge communication, address challenges, identify and mitigate issues related to violence, and create a safe environment. In 2023, UNHCR supported **364** ECL in **328-afternoon** schools². The capacitated and trained ECLs follow-up on refugee absenteeism in formal education, help mediate between children, parents, and school management, and identify violence, bullying, and learning difficulties. Absenteeism trends were referred to UNICEF for their Cash for Education program, while protection incidents were referred to the MEHE Child Protection channels and child protection case management agencies.

Awareness-raising, and Capacity-building

- UNHCR relied on parental involvement in their children's education through the facilitation of 52 Parent Community Groups (PCGs). In 2023, UNHCR capacitated **2,021** parents of refugee children in afternoon schools. UNHCR increased the engagement of caregivers by promoting dialogue with schools, sensitizing them to commit to their children's education, especially during online learning periods.
- For the second year, UNHCR, alongside UNICEF and WFP, actively participated in the MEHE-led learning recovery Summer School program in 2023. UNHCR's support included providing transport allowances and incentives to **975** Physical Education and Art teachers in **369** schools, in addition to the distribution of Sport, Art, and Drama kits to **296** schools. A total of **106,560** students benefited from these sessions, with 61% being Lebanese, 38% Syrian, and 1% belonging to other nationalities. UNHCR's contribution played a crucial role in enhancing the educational experience for a diverse group of students.

Youth Education Program

- In 2023, UNHCR implemented the DAFI scholarship program, enabling **98** students (69 Females and 29 Males) to access and enrol in the Lebanese Public University (LU) and Lebanese International

² Since the start of the Syrian civil war, in 2011, Lebanon's education sector has had to contend with the influx of Syrian refugees. In 2014, a second-shift programme was established, whereby the school day was split into two shifts: one accommodating Lebanese students and some refugee students, and a second one in the afternoon dedicated to Syrians and refugees of other nationalities.

University (LIU). Among them, 14 successfully graduated with undergraduate degrees. Beyond academic achievements, students were engaged in peer-to-peer support and volunteer activities to give back to the community.

- A total of 18 refugee students resumed their Higher Education path through Education Complementary Pathways and opportunities to study in France with Bourse Elysée, Japan through the JISR program, and Canada through the WUSC/SRP opportunity.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with its expert partner, has conducted certified short vocational training sessions. 331 out-of-learning refugees and host community youth were enrolled in 22 market and competency-based vocational trainings ((60% were refugees). Trainings covered a range of fields, including electricity, Heating Ventilation, AC maintenance (HVAC), Childcare, Caregiving for elderly and sick people, Plumbing, Hospitality, Carpentry, Sewing, and installation of solar panels. Throughout 2023, UNHCR fostered strategic collaborations with key governmental entities, UN agencies, and field experts from the private sector. These partnerships played a pivotal role in ensuring impactful execution with an 87% internship and job placement rate for youth.



Women empowerment through Vocational Training, Deckwaneh, 2023.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to the Education programme as well as major donors of flexible and unearmarked funds in 2023:

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Republic of Korea | Luxembourg | Monaco | Netherlands | Norway | Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity | Private donors | Qatar | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | CERF

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