

SAFE TO LEARN PROGRESS 2019-2023 – LEBANON

(UPDATED AS OF DECEMBER 2023)

SUMMARY TABLE OF BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

IMPLEMENT LAWS AND POLICIES

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.1	The national government includes prevention of violence in around schools as a specific strategy in education sector policies, plans and budgets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	The <u>5-year General Education plan 2021-2025</u> has three main pillars divided into priority areas and further into programmes. The priority areas 1 ‘Improving enrolment and retention of vulnerable groups’ includes a specific objective around ensuring the physical, mental, psychological, and social environment which is conducive for learning and focuses on child protection, psycho-social support, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response, social cohesion, and preventing violent extremism (PVE). It includes interventions using a whole-of school approach including strengthening capacities of educational personnel at all levels, prevention of child protection concerns and gender-based violence and ensuring early intervention to address violations, citizenship programmes, developing a well-costed action plan to eliminate gender-based violence.

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.2	There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and effective classroom management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>From Informal Justice Study (TFH-L, 2020) Lebanon’s Ministry of Education prohibited all forms of corporal punishment of students in public schools in 1974, and in 2001 issued a detailed circular, applicable to both public and private school staff, banning corporal punishment, as well as verbal abuse (HRW, 2019). However, corporal discipline committed by parents is not criminalized. Article 186 of the Lebanese Criminal Code and Article 25/2 of Law 422/2002 explicitly permits the use of corporal punishment by parents to discipline children, as long as they are in accordance with “common practices.” Previously, the article also included corporal punishment committed by teachers, but it was amended in 2014. In 2014, Law 286 (Art. 186) was amended to restrict the corporal punishment of children. This then takes precedence over Law 422 (Art. 25) which allows it. Despite this revision, the Penal Code does not expressly forbid corporal punishment within school settings. [1]</p>
1.3	The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>In 2018, the Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), in collaboration with UNICEF and other ministries and institutions, adopted a <u>Policy for the Protection of Students in the School Environment</u>. The policy outlines core commitments and the roles of educational staff in addressing violence in schools. It includes preventive measures, response procedures, and strategies for capacity building and evaluation. By June 2024, the policy was implemented in 956 out of 1234 public schools. The child protection policy covers institutional violence within schools and violence outside schools perpetrated by family or community members. With the support of UNICEF, MEHE have set up a child protection unit to respond to Child Protection cases identified in school settings. A child-friendly version of the policy is planned to be developed and finalized.</p>

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1.4	The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Lebanon endorsed the <u>Safe Schools Declaration</u> in June 2015.

STRENGTHEN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
2.1	Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>UNICEF in 2020 partnered with the Center for Educational Research and Development to incorporate disability-responsiveness, child protection and GBV into teacher training and classroom management and is currently rolling out the training to all school personnel.</p> <p>Lebanon also implemented systems for child level monitoring in education, and for child protection to monitor and follow-up on improvements in psychosocial wellbeing. [2]</p>

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2.2	Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	From 2018 till June 2024, the <u>child protection in school policy</u> was rolled out in 956 out of the 1,234 public schools in the country. [3]
2.3	Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Since 2018, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) appointed two officials per school (96 percent of them female), to serve as focal points for child protection and psychosocial support (PSS). These officials were capacitated on the child protection policy for schools. UNICEF and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) utilised Teacher Training Modules on Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence to train 5,800 teachers, supervisors, and school principals on the child protection policy. 45 school counselors support in addressing child protection cases with low to medium risk in schools and refer them as per the set procedures. [4]</p> <p>The Department of Guidance and Counseling (DOPS) has created an Activity Booklet of Psychosocial Support (PSS) Activities for School Counselors to enhance children's resilience across five domains in the Socio-Emotional Learning framework (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision-making).</p>

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2.4	The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the wellbeing of children in mind.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>In 2022 with UNICEF's support, <u>the design and rehabilitation of 120 public schools was initiated to improve their accessibility for children with disability.</u></p> <p>Up to date, 15 schools are being fully rehabilitated under the UNICEF rehabilitation programme. The design of 94+ schools was finalized and approved by MEHE, the tender process was launched and contracts for the rehabilitation works were awarded. Work is now in progress. The UNICEF rehabilitation programme covers the rehabilitation and improvement of physical learning environments in public schools, benefiting children enrolled in grades from KG to Grade 12. The schools to be rehabilitated have been identified by MEHE and assessed by UNICEF, in line with an equity-based approach to support the most vulnerable children. UNICEF promotes and follows accessibility and universal design with Governments and other partners.</p>

SHIFT SOCIAL NORMS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
3.1	There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>A unified curriculum to educate parents and caregivers on child rights and protection issues and promote positive parenting skills has been developed by UNICEF. They have also created an <u>edutainment package to promote inclusion for children with disabilities.</u> In 2023, UNICEF finalized the Edutainment package entitled: <u><i>Destigmatize disability. Changing Attitudes and Behaviors through Inclusive "Edutainment" in Lebanon.</i></u> Between July 2022-May 2023 and July-December 2023, 104 SBC initiatives including awareness-raising campaigns, community engagement, and parental engagement were conducted and more than 18397 stakeholders, community members, caregivers, and children (10017 females, 8380 males) were engaged to combat stigma and enhance children with disability engagement in their communities. In addition, 410340 individuals were reached through 17 social media posts that normalize the engagement of children with disabilities in daily life.</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
3.2	Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>UNICEF in 2022 launched the QUDWA program, which promotes social change and challenges norms and aims to address the root causes of harmful practices against girls, boys, and women while encouraging behaviors and norms that promote their wellbeing, dignity, and equality. <u>QUDWA has reached 16,440 children, caregivers, and community members with initiatives including community engagement, edutainment, and mobilization.</u></p> <p>In 2023, more than 70,000 individuals were reached through UNICEF Lebanon’s QUDWA strategy – a violence prevention strategy aiming to address harmful practices against children / women such as child marriage, child Labour, violent discipline and intimate partner violence.</p> <p>Through intensified efforts under the framework of QUDWA, 1000+ community members were empowered and capacitated to lead on grassroots advocacy which tackles harmful social norms that normalize and promote the prevalence of violence against women / children. This resulted in strong community networks amplifying prevention messages and UNICEF advocacy in the field. As a result of the above, a stronger narrative at the community level is rising regarding the consequences of harmful practices, with cases of child marriage and child labour being reported as prevented by community members on a daily basis. This also led to a sharp increase in reported cases, as a result of higher community awareness on referral mechanisms.</p> <p>Furthermore, the mobilization of community volunteers under QUDWA, supported UNICEF Lebanon’s emergency response to the South Lebanon crisis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.QUDWAs were mobilized & capacitated to support with the provision of recreational activities to children affected by the crisis 2.QUDWAs were capacitated to implement GBV risk mitigation interventions in IDP centres, which have become hubs for risks to women and girls <p>Finally, in partnership with ADYAN, a faith based specialized actor, UNICEF Lebanon through the QUDWA strategy launched a network of 130 Religious leaders, sensitized and capacitated to lead on grassroots advocacy regarding social norms and harmful practices during religious sermons and events. The network was launched following the adoption of a TOR with a mandate to fight violence against children in Lebanon among the different participating confessions.</p>

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3.3	Young people, parents, teachers, and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on school violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Through QUDWA activities highlighted above, which promotes social change and challenges norms and aims to address the root causes of harmful practices against girls, boys, and women while encouraging behaviors and norms that promote their wellbeing, dignity, and equality, this component is being addressed.

INVEST RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
4.1	Domestic resources allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
4.2	Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>ECW is supporting a multi-year response programme (MYRP, 2022-2024) to strengthen the resilience of the education sector, ensure that crisis affected children have access to safe, gender-equitable, and inclusive schools and build frameworks for long term investments and partnerships between the government and civil society. In 2023, ECW supported NFE schools to create a safe environment for children and teachers; 96 per cent of the enrolled children and 95 per cent of the teachers have reported that they feel safe. This is attributed to the capacity strengthening efforts the teachers underwent in protection and safeguarding. A total of 149 teachers and education personnel (135 Female, 14 Male) were trained on the safe identification and early referral practices. As a result, 398 children (189 Female, 209 Male) were referred to specialized services and were provided with the needed support that helped them stay enrolled in the programmes which lead to higher retention outcomes.</p> <p>UNICEF through its Education programme works on technical assistance on skills development. The Child Protection programme of UNICEF works on VAC prevention and response, including support services, legal and policy framework, parent/caregiver education, SBC and community engagement on VAC, evidence generation and use. UNICEF also works on social and behaviour change including cross-sectoral SBC.</p>
4.3	There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	

GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
5.1	Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	Data on reported cases is available and analysed on a yearly basis with desegregation related to gender, nationality, governorate, type of violence, source of referral, type of referral. These data pertain solely to reported incidents and may not necessarily signify prevailing trends.
5.2	There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p><u>Last GSHS is from 2017.</u> A new GSHS is ongoing, and the report is expected to be issued by the end of December 2024.</p> <p><u>MICS 6 of 2023.</u> Data collection is ongoing.</p> <p>A study on the barriers and enablers to adolescent girls' access to education services was conducted, addressing safety and protection as a barrier.</p> <p>The access to information on protection for adolescent girls is strengthened through the campaigns addressing period poverty, consisting of distribution of "Laha" hygiene kits and information and communication material on protection and well-being. Also, to address the needs of the displaced populations, focus group discussions are carried out with adolescent girls on the challenges they face in the context of internal displacement and access to continued education services, including a safe learning environment.</p>

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5.3	Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trialled models and approaches.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	UNICEF Lebanon continues to support the rolling-out of the Child Protection Policy to all school personnel.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] Corporal Punishment of children in Lebanon. Last updated December 2021

[2] UNICEF Lebanon End Year Summary Narrative and RAM reporting on year 2020

[3] UNICEF Programme Review ' Action to End VAC in Schools. Review of Programme Interventions Illustrating Actions to Address Violence against Children in and around Schools. 2018-2020'.

[4] Ibid

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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