

PROMISING PRACTICES IN REFUGEE EDUCATION

CASE STUDY



NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING: An approach to increasing enrollment into the formal system

Norwegian Refugee Council

Location:	Lebanon
Target population:	Out-of-school refugee and host community children between 5 and 14 years' old
Intervention type:	Non-formal education
Date started:	January 2013
Children reached:	21,985 girls and 20,469 boys

Written by Barbara Bergamini, Racha El Daoui and Constantijn Wouters

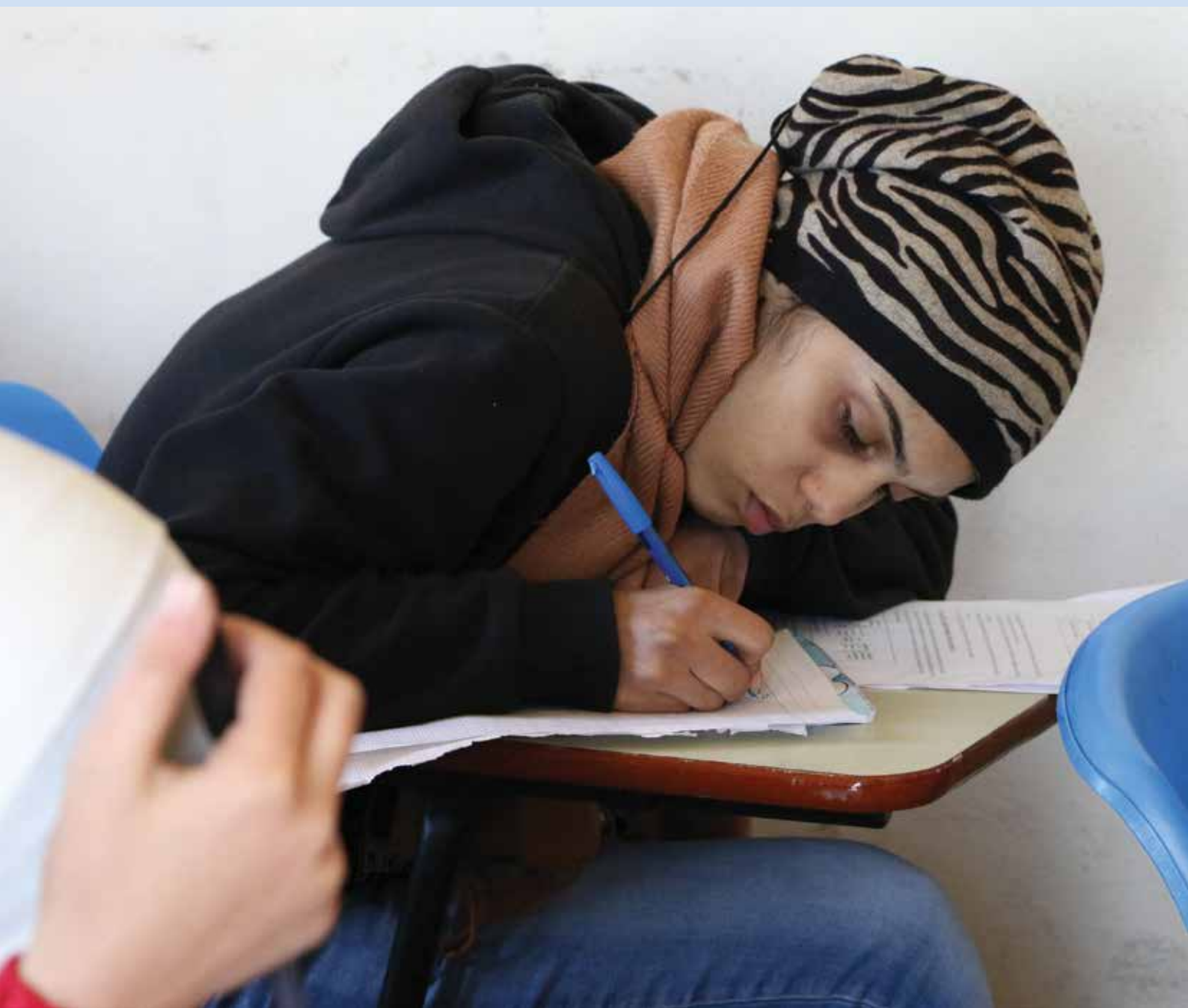


NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL

KEY FINDINGS

- From 2013 to 2016 Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) enrolled a total of 42,454 refugee and host community children in their non-formal education programs (on average 10,000 children per year). Over the years the program has adapted to the context by moving from purely emergency education implemented in a non-formal setting, to an approach aimed at facilitating enrolment into the Lebanese formal education system.
- Every refugee child is different. Refugee children have diverse educational backgrounds, diverse needs and diverse dreams which change over time. Hence the need for a varied education offer, flexible enough to adjust to changing realities, targeting different age groups at distinct levels, and offering both education, recreation as well as psycho-social support.
- Effective communication and maximum transparency towards authorities, host communities and refugee children and their parents, in combination with their participation in development, implementation and monitoring of education programs, creates an ideal environment for effective education programming.
- Long-term funding agreements with more than one donor ensures flexibility and sustainability, and allows a focus on quality implementation rather than on reaching targets.

Cover and below: A refugee girl attending NRC non-formal education classes



INTRODUCTION

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has been working in Lebanon since 2006. As NRC offices were already set up throughout the country, NRC could respond to the large influx of refugees from the onset of the civil war in Syria. This case study describes how NRC's education program developed from a purely emergency focused program, through more sustainable non-formal programming, into direct support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) by facilitating improved access to the public formal education system.

At the start of the Syrian crisis and following the large influx of refugees into Lebanon, NRC implemented their own curriculum, both inside schools and inside learning centers. The curriculum was developed in Lebanon and has a strong focus on basic literacy and numeracy, psycho-social activities and referral, and recreational activities (Child Education Pack). The Child Education Pack was later adopted by other NRC countries in the region and beyond. The purpose of such programs was to provide children with a sense of normalcy, help them cope with trauma and ensure teaching and retention of basic educational skills. Over the years NRC developed more comprehensive and in-depth curricula based on the Lebanese curriculum to ensure enrolment into public education.

Currently NRC's non-formal education modules are in line with the "Non-Formal Education Framework" (see diagram on page 10) included in the MEHE strategy "Reaching All Children through Education" and are aimed at facilitating enrolment and retention in the public formal education system. Modules included in the MEHE Non-Formal Education Framework and implemented by NRC are i) Community Based Early Childhood Education for children or pre-school age; ii) Basic Literacy and Numeracy classes of out-of-school children; and iii) Retention / Homework support classes for children at risk of dropping out of the formal public system. NRC uses a holistic approach to teaching and includes parents and teachers in decision making for purposes of improving the wider learning environment of each individual child. NRC's regional psycho-social support program, "Better Learning Program", is mainstreamed throughout each module.



Photo: Students in a non-formal education class in Lebanon. The curriculum has a strong focus on basic literacy and numeracy psycho-social activities and recreational activities

CONTEXT

Now in its seventh year, the Syrian crisis has had a significant impact on Lebanon. As of February 2017, estimates from UNHCR indicate that Lebanon now hosts 488,832 Syrian children and adolescents (between the ages 3 and 18). This number however might be considerably higher as they only include registered refugees. Access to education remains a dominating challenge for the refugee population.

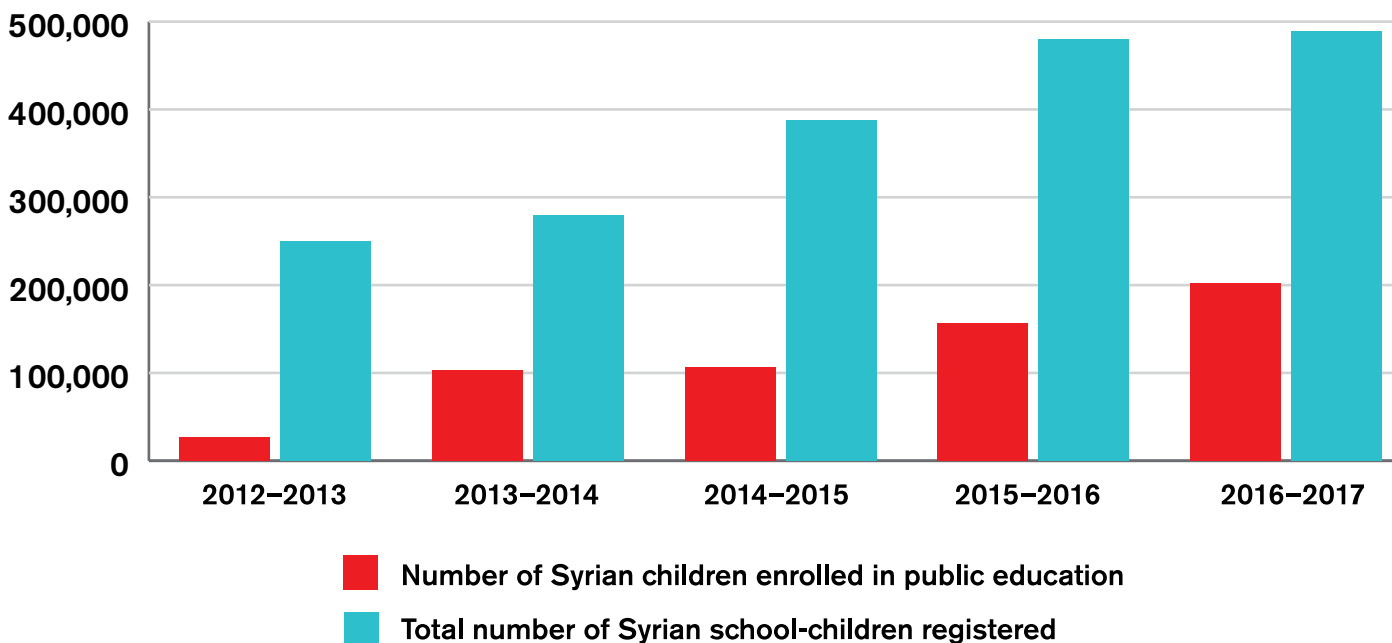
The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) responded quickly at the onset of the crisis, working with education sector partners to develop an education response plan and opening Lebanese public schools to Syrian refugee children, first accommodating them in the first shift and then opening a second (afternoon) shift to respond to the large numbers of additional children.¹

Donors recognized the urgency of the challenges posed by the Syria crisis and, in 2013, the “No Lost Generation” initiative was adopted by the United Nations, international and non-governmental organizations, and governments. The MEHE launched an education proposal in July 2014 ‘Reaching All Children with Education’ (RACE I), a three-year programme with the aim of supporting 413,000 vulnerable school age children through integration in formal and non-formal education.²

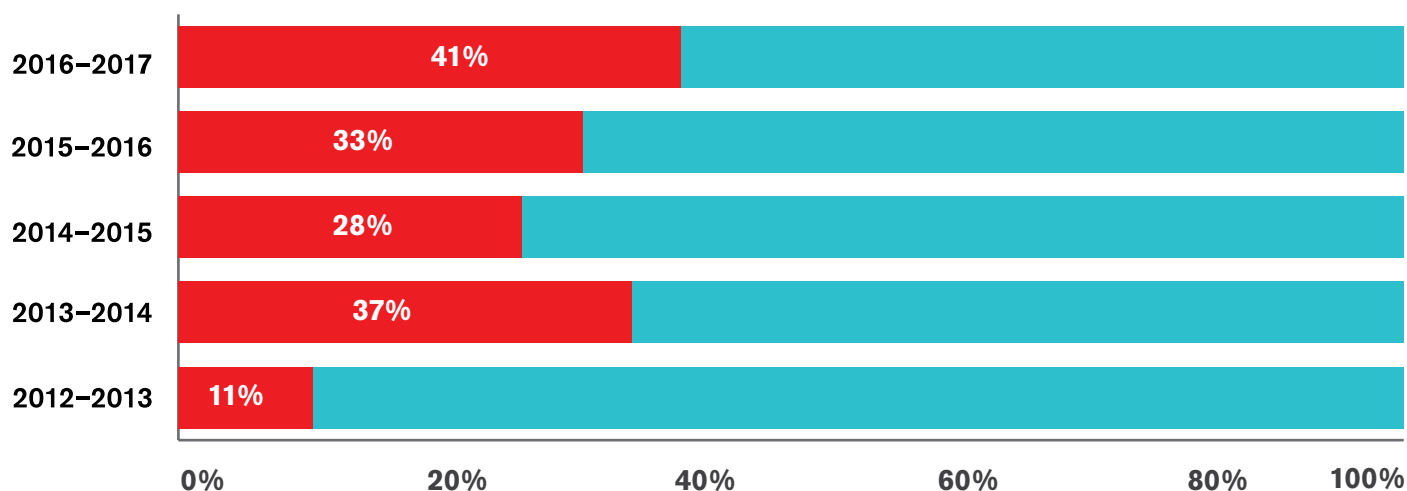
In February 2016, in its “Statement of Intent” at the Supporting Syria & the Region London Conference,³ the Government of Lebanon (GoL) laid out a plan to get all refugee children aged 3-18 into quality education through the second phase of Reaching All Children in Education (RACE II) plan, released in September 2016.⁴

Considerable progress has been made since the start of the crisis, with one contributing factor being the opening of hundreds of second shift classes for Syrian refugees throughout the country. According to RACE II 27,000 Syrian refugees were enrolled in public education in the 2012/13 school year. This number more than tripled to 103,000 registered Syrian children in the 2013/14 school year. According to the latest figures of the Program Management Unit, this number has now increased to 202,259 Syrian children (MEHE-PMU, February 2017).⁵

SYRIAN REFUGEE ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION



ENROLLMENT RATE OF SYRIAN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



However, these efforts have not been sufficient to cover the education needs of all school-age refugee children in Lebanon, with approximately 286,000 school-aged children still not attending any form of formal education.⁶ In addition, drop-out rates are quite high, although official data does not exist, due to a wide variety of challenges around both access to education as well as quality of education.

Barriers to education include the language of instruction,⁷ transportation costs, legal status⁸ and protection concerns, such as corporal punishment and bullying.⁹ Newly arrived refugees are more vulnerable because they are likely to have missed a longer period of schooling. Older children face difficulties catching-up due to language barriers, and because they are often vulnerable to child labor, early marriage and domestic chores, and therefore generally discouraged. Furthermore, the capacity and the geographic spread of the Lebanese public schools is not able to absorb all refugee children and youth.

INTERVENTION

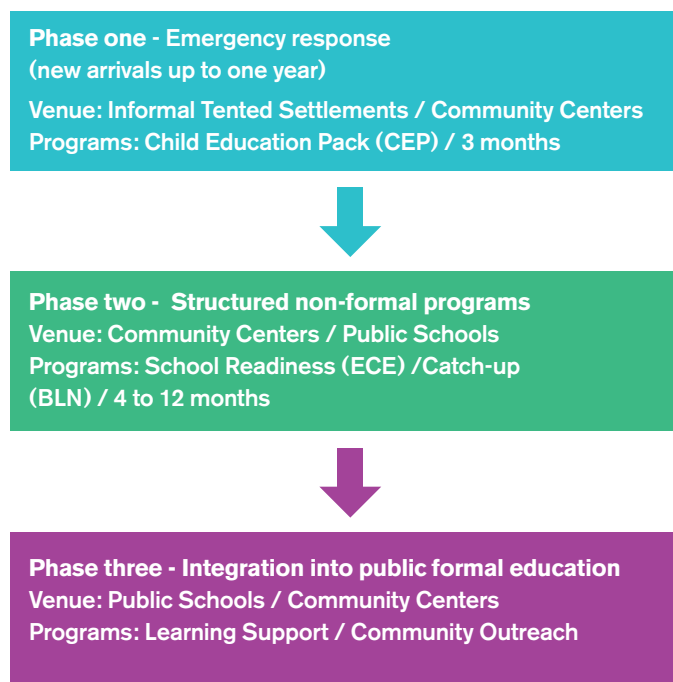
From the start of the Syrian crisis the public education system did not have the capacity to absorb the high number of Syrian refugees into their schools. As a result, and as a bridging period, several NGOs, including NRC, provided immediate emergency education support through non-formal education programming. Despite huge gains over the past few years in terms of improved access to formal public education, the MEHE estimates that only 42% of the compulsory school-age cohort (6 to 15 years of age) were enrolled in formal public education programs during the 2015/16 school year. The Lebanese formal grade 1 curriculum and the MEHE implemented an Accelerated Learning Program, both presume that children can read and write at the point of entry into the public school system. As this is often not the case, drop-out rates are high and retention is low. Therefore, despite gains in terms of capacity of and access to the public system, support to facilitate a smoother transition into formal education is still essential six years into the crisis. NRC's non-formal education programs and community outreach efforts aim to support the MEHE by facilitating both enrolment and retention in the formal education system.

In this context NRC offered a range of non-formal education programs to Syrian refugee children and children of the host-community over a four-year period (2013 – 2016) to provide a sense of normalcy, protection and self-reliance, and to establish pathways to certified formal education. While the education program and different non-formal education modules have evolved, the following three-phased approach is a continuous cycle as refugee children continue to enter the country and needs vary per geographical area (see diagram below).

This three-phased approach includes:

- 1. Education in Emergencies** for newcomers and out-of-school children through the provision of NRC's Child Education Pack. This pack helps to provide children a sense of normalcy through a light educational emergency intervention, including recreational and psycho-social activities, such as storytelling, sports and games, and breathing and relaxation exercises.
- 2. Structured non-formal education** programs for out-of-school children such as School Readiness (community based Early Childhood Education) and Catch-Up classes (Basic Literacy and Numeracy). As the conflict in Syria continued and displacement therefore became prolonged, NRC started to provide children with more structured age and level appropriate non-formal education opportunities, based on the national curriculum and as per MEHE guidelines, part of the "Non-Formal Education Framework" (see diagram page 10) included in the RACE II strategy of the MEHE. Recently NRC has made considerable progress including technology in non-formal education programming, such as a tablet based mathematical game as part of the Basic Literacy and Numeracy curriculum. All NRC's non-formal education programs are aimed at reintegrating children into the formal public education system.
- 3. Support to formal education** through outreach on behalf of the MEHE, through parent information sessions and provision of Learning Support to Syrian and host-community children at risk of dropping out of the formal system (remedial education). In addition, out-of-school children attending NRC's structured non-formal education programs are referred to the formal system as soon as they are ready to enroll at an age appropriate level or can access the MEHE implemented Accelerated Learning Program.

THREE-PHASED APPROACH TO DELIVER EDUCATION TO SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN



In all phases, NRC's holistic education approach includes:

- Facilitating the integration of **children** in school through a comprehensive approach that matches learning and academic skills with psycho-social and recreational support and life skills training;
- Involving **parents** and the wider community through awareness/ information sessions aimed at increasing engagement of parents in the learning and development of their children at school. Each learning center has a democratically elected Parent Community Group responsible for creating a conducive learning environment in and around the center. Parent Community Groups are encouraged to initiate community initiatives, such as painting a playground or renovating community gardens in cooperation and to the benefit of the Lebanese host-community;
- Supporting **teachers** and school personnel in adopting child-centered and inclusive approaches inside the classroom. NRC recruits Lebanese teachers who are trained in basic psycho-social support, multi-level teaching and positive discipline, using child centered teaching methodologies. NRC involves teachers in the development of curricula and provides them with feedback through structured lesson observations and feedback / coaching on the job; NRC Teacher training on Psycho Social Programming
- Creating a safe and conducive **learning environment** (school rehabilitations, repairs of learning spaces, distribution of age appropriate teaching and learning materials).



Photo: NRC Teacher training on Psycho-social Programming

In addition to the delivery of formal education, MEHE implements their own Accelerated Learning Program inside public schools for children between 9 and 17 years old who have been out of school for two years or more. Each cycle of the Accelerated Learning Program lasts for three months, covering one grade of the national curriculum. To show MEHE that non-formal education programs do not clash or compete with formal education or one of the Accelerated Learning Program cycles, NRC implements its non-formal education programs using the same three-month cycles. Every three months NFE programs pause and NRC staff fully dedicate time to referring children who are eligible and ready to enroll to either the formal public system or one of the cycles of the Accelerated Learning Program.

At the beginning of the crisis NRC could implement non-formal (emergency) education activities inside public schools by directly liaising with either municipalities or school directors themselves. With the Ministry centralizing and standardizing NFE programming, access to public schools is now more limited and granted only at central level. NRC therefore implements both their School Readiness and Basic Literacy and Numeracy programs inside their own learning centers, but with approval of central MEHE. The Learning Support program of NRC (remedial) targets public second shift schools, as they specifically cater for Syrian refugee children. As these specific schools are running classes in both the morning and afternoon, they do not have the capacity to provide additional seats for Learning Support classes. As a result, NRC only implements Learning Support inside the targeted schools themselves during the summer break. Headteachers refer children at risk of dropping out due to poor performance to NRC's Learning Support classes.

Monitoring of the program is conducted at different levels:

- Child-level Excel based database, including data on each child enrolled in NRC programs (monitoring attendance, retention and completion);
- Pre- and post-tests for non-formal education programs, measuring physical, emotional and cognitive development of children;
- Lesson observations to ensure quality of teaching and to monitor efficiency and relevance of teacher training packages;
- Spot-checks to ensure compliance with donor agreements, conducted by Monitoring & Evaluation staff to prevent bias;
- NRC global online database, for tracking monthly progress on output and outcome level indicators versus targets.

KEY MILESTONES AND OUTCOMES

From 2013 to 2016 NRC enrolled a total of 42,454 refugee and host community children in the non-formal education programs (on average 10,000 children per year).¹⁰ In addition to the delivery of non-formal programs, NRC has actively engaged in several outreach campaigns at the start of each academic year since 2013, referring a total of 22,390 children to formal public education. NRC staff conducted household visits, community awareness sessions and thousands of follow-up phone calls throughout the country to encourage parents of both Syrian and vulnerable Lebanese children to send their children to public schools.¹¹

Assessment data following the implementation of Basic Literacy and Numeracy in the south of Lebanon through Kavli funding in 2016, showed that 76% of the children who attended classes, successfully enrolled in formal public education.¹² This is exactly in line with the 76% children who managed to successfully enroll in the first round of the MEHE Accelerated Learning Program this year, after following NRC's Basic Literacy and Numeracy and School Readiness (Community Based Early Childhood Education) classes.¹³

To ensure retention in the public system and continue support to children formerly enrolled in non-formal education classes, NRC started providing Learning Support to children at risk of dropping out of the public education system. To measure the success of Learning Support NRC conducts a pre- and post-test to measure improved academic skills of students. Based on pre- and post-tests conducted during the 2015/16 academic year 88% showed overall improvement in the main subjects of Arabic, mathematics and foreign language. Out of these students, 28%¹⁴ improved their academic performance at the highest performance benchmark.¹⁵



Photo: Children play at a non-formal education centre. © NRC

NRC - Phone Survey Results

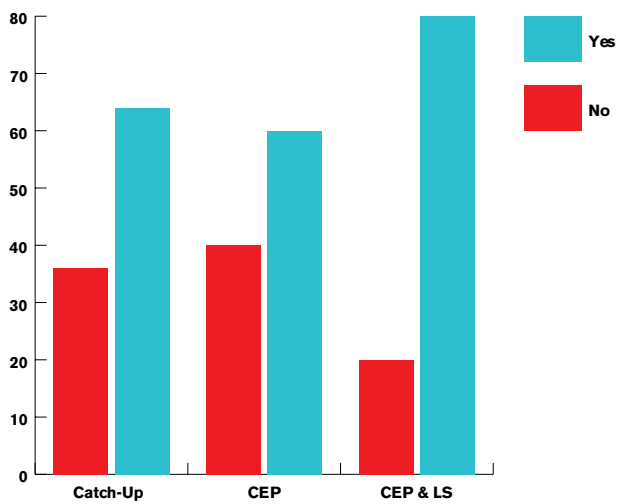
Through a structured questionnaire conducted as part of this case study, NRC conducted phone calls with a representative sample of approximately 400 children per geographical area of intervention, the North, the South and the Bekaa Valley. The parents of children who were referred to public schools at the start of the 2015/2016 academic year, after attending NRC non-formal education classes, were asked whether their children were still enrolled now, almost two years later. We looked at whether there was a difference between children who attended the more emergency focused Child Education Pack (CEP), part of phase one of NRC's three phased approach, and children who attended Catch Up / Basic Literacy and Numeracy classes, part of phase two of NRC's three phased approach (see diagram on page 6). In addition, we looked at whether children who are currently receiving Learning / Remedial Support have improved retention and transition rates.

From the below figures, one can conclude that both registration, retention and transition rates are quite similar when comparing the Child Education Pack and Basic Literacy and Numeracy programs. While registration rates are still relatively low, once registered, retention and transition rates are quite high. The real difference however, is made when children, in addition to non-formal education, attend the NRC Learning Support (LS) / Remedial classes, resulting in a combination of better enrollment, retention and transition rates. This makes the case for offering a full support package, stretching beyond non-formal education support.

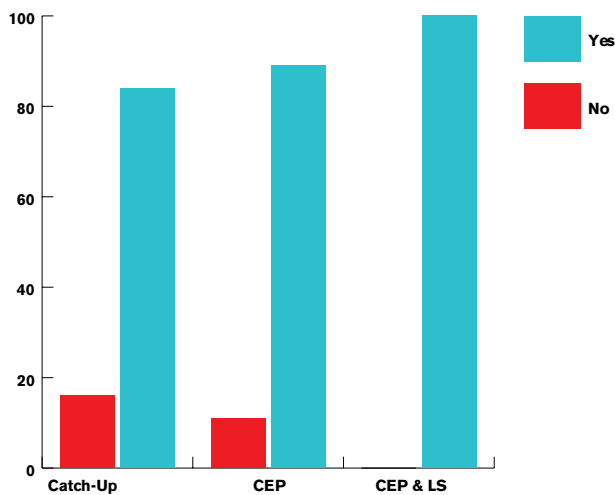
Unfortunately, we do not have comparative data from the MEHE at this stage, which would allow us to compare success rates of children who attended NRC or other NGO's non-formal education classes, to success rates of children who were not able to attend non-formal education programs.

When asked about the main reasons for not registering their children in school, parents mentioned poverty, space availability and lack of knowledge on enrollment procedures as main obstacles. While bullying and violence, language of instruction and lack of transportation were reasons for dropping out and not transitioning to the next school year.

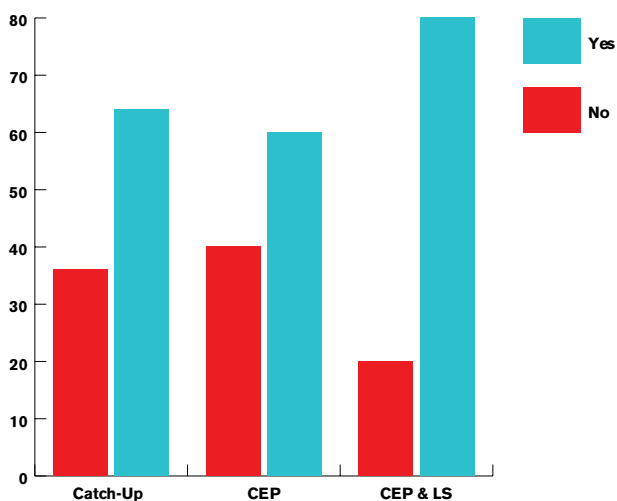
Did your child register in school this year (2016/2017)



If your child registered in school this year, did they finish the school year?(2016/2017)



Did your child manage to transition to the next grade? (2016/2017)



Involvement of parents is part of NRC's holistic approach to education, looking at both the school as well as the home environment and aimed at creating increased parental engagement. A total of 11,000 refugee and host community parents were involved through Parent Community Groups, awareness sessions on education, child rights and hygiene, and were introduced to concepts of positive parenting.¹⁶ About 15% of parents, are actively engaged in activities of the Parent Community Groups.¹⁷ Activities include amongst others, ensuring safe access to NRC Learning Centers, providing support in participatory assessments and organizing of events, promoting positive parental engagement practices in the community.

Finally, NRC managed to train a total of 1,300 teachers on child centered teaching methodologies,¹⁸ multi-level teaching, positive discipline and the integration of light psycho-social activities inside the classroom (NRC's Better Learning Program, level 1).¹⁹ The teacher training provided by NRC is not directly aimed at strengthening the public system, but as many of the teachers recruited by NRC teach in the public system, NRC teacher training indirectly contributes to capacity building of the teaching workforce in Lebanon. Through standardized quality lesson observations conducted in the 2016/17 scholastic year, NRC concluded that 83% of trained teachers could replicate key methods covered through teacher training.²⁰

Through the creation of clear pathways from non-formal education to formal education and by basing the different non-formal education modules on the Lebanese curriculum NRC aims to increase the sustainability of programming. NRC indirectly contributes to improving the capacity of the national level by creating a highly qualified teaching work force. The sustainability of the intervention is also built by actively involving parents in the education of their children through the Parent Community Groups. By empowering parents NRC contributes to a protective and encouraging learning environment, beyond the timespan of NRC's interventions.

Most refugees in Lebanon are living directly amongst the host communities, with only 20% living in informal tented settlements. NRC aims at including vulnerable Lebanese children and their parents in their non-formal education activities, noting that many children are Syrian refugees (at least 80%). Ideally Syrian children would be fully integrated into the Lebanese public formal system as well, to ensure the increased interaction and building of positive relations between the refugee and host communities. However, even though Syrian children are taught in the same schools, by the same teachers and the same curriculum, the second shift system prevents full interaction and integration between Lebanese and non-Lebanese students.

CHALLENGES

The education sector in Lebanon is very complex and volatile:

- Starting in August 2014, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) did not grant NGOs access to schools;
- The Education Working Group was dismantled in 2015;
- Non-formal education activities implemented by NGOs in Lebanon were suspended by the MEHE until the “Non-Formal Education framework” (see diagram below) was finalized and launched in early 2016.

However, NRC has been able to adjust its programming to meet the changing requirements and at the same time continued addressing the urgent needs of refugee children:

- MEHE’s refusal to approve non-formal education activities implemented in public schools, combined with the needs of the many children out-of-school, compelled NRC to develop its outreach capacity and to directly provide education to out-of-school children where they live; this includes informal tented settlements (refugee camps) in Bekaa, and community centers in the South and North, thus reaching more children.
- NRC fully applies the MEHE’s standards in its program implementation by hiring only Lebanese teachers, offering non-formal education services only in locations where children are not

able to access public schools and referring out-of-school children to formal education and the MEHE implemented Accelerated Learning Program where and when possible.

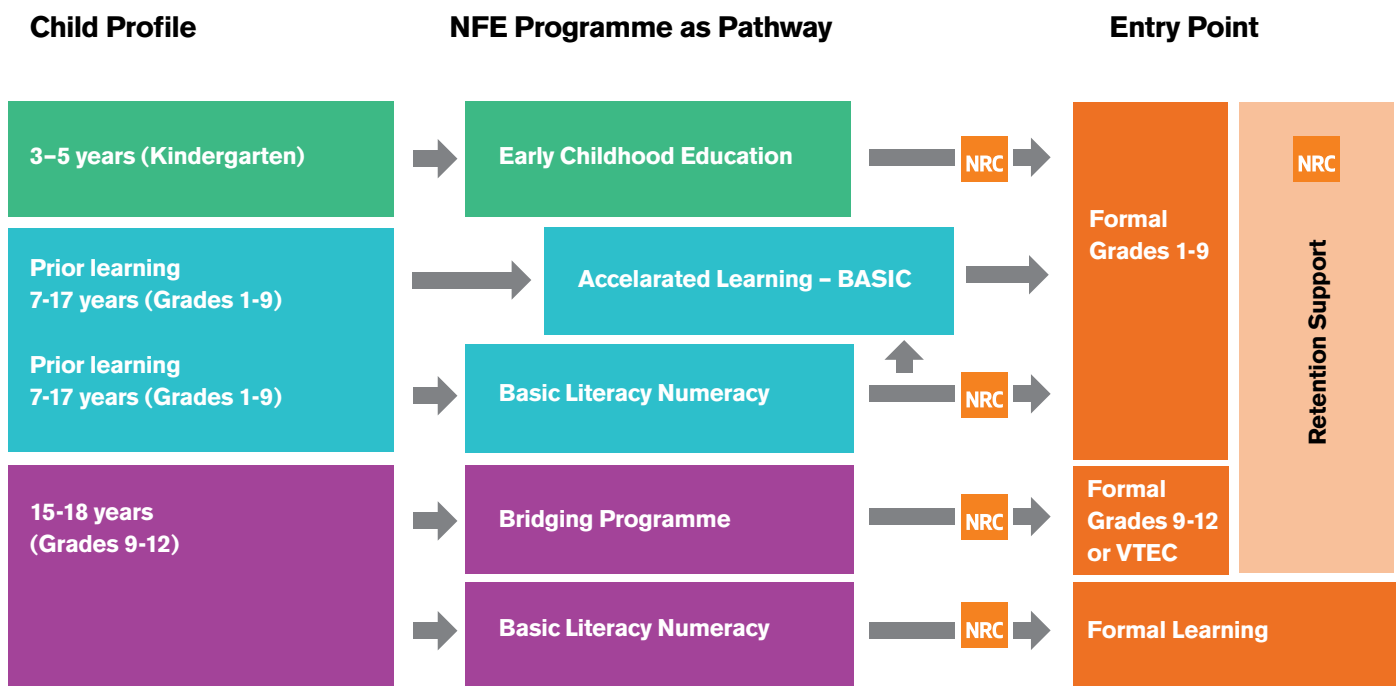
- Since the launch of the 2013 Back to School Campaign and the opening of a second shift for refugee children in public schools, NRC has been actively supporting this process in close coordination with the MEHE, UN agencies and school directors.

While conducting continuous advocacy efforts through engaging with the MEHE and the international community to promote the right of refugee children to access quality education opportunities, NRC at the same time ensured transparency, information sharing and fair coordination with the MEHE.

All these efforts have contributed to the MEHE’s recognition of the important role of NGOs as essential partners to reach out to refugee children that are unable to access formal education.

With the goal of broader standardisation and coordination of the sector response, in January 2016 the MEHE launched the “Non-Formal Education Framework” that regulates non-formal education programming. Since then, all NRC education activities have taken place within the framework coordinated by MEHE, and are based on beneficiaries’ expressed needs and priorities.

Non-Formal Education Framework and pathways into formal education



As a result of NRC’s proven quality in delivering age and level appropriate non-formal education program as well as recognizing NRC’s leading role in the education sector, in June 2016 NRC was selected as one of the **few recognized partners of the**

MEHE and member of the NGO sub-committee, established to represent education NGOs to the MEHE and advocate on their behalf, to share information and to support the MEHE in rolling out the “Non-Formal Education Framework”.

LESSONS FOR PROMISING PRACTICE

Importance of constant transparency, continuous communication and strong coordination with national authorities, particularly the Ministry of Education and Higher Education:

NRC created a strong relationship with the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) through ensuring full transparency and access to their activities. NRC has always shared the exact content and scope of their activities with the MEHE, even if not entirely in line with RACE. While this sometimes led to a temporary pause of activities upon request of the MEHE, it also led to the building of a relationship of trust. NRC has a unique position, being one of the seven elected members of the NGO sub-committee, representing the NGO community to the Program Management Unit within the MEHE.²¹

Importance of working inside host and refugee communities to better align programs to individual needs;

From the beginning of the crisis NRC worked through semi-permanent learning centers to build a strong relationship with specific communities based on refugee and host-community needs. Before opening a center NRC would contact the local authorities, both municipalities and the regional MEHE to acquire permission on both location and content of interventions. During implementation, progress on activities and results were constantly communicated to the local authorities and host community. This has resulted in building strong relationships with the host communities and in some locations NRC is now able to use learning centers provided by the municipality free of charge.

Importance of parental involvement and empowerment to create a protective learning environment outside the school premises;

Involving parents in education has been key to the success of NRC's program. Parents are represented through elected members of the Parent Committee Groups but also attend several awareness raising sessions conducted by NRC, on education opportunities, legal rights and hygiene awareness. NRC provides funding to the Parent Community Groups for community led initiatives, where the Syrian parents give back to the community hosting them, for example through upgrading a community park or painting a school building. The education awareness sessions focus on the importance of education, how to access education opportunities and how to support children in their education at home. By involving parents in their child's education and empowering them through the Parent Community Groups, NRC hopes to build a protective and encouraging learning environment in the community and at home.

Importance of strong focus on quality and content to facilitate a smooth transition into the public formal system;

NRC's education programming was quite basic at the beginning of the crisis, focusing on providing a protective space, recreational and psycho-social support. Over the years the MEHE has developed standardized non-formal education programs to ensure minimum quality standards to education provision, with inputs from NRC and other NGOs working in Lebanon. NRC built upon its early experience in Lebanon and on the guidelines of the MEHE to provide a more comprehensive quality package, including teacher training, teacher feedback loops, additional psycho-social support and recreational activities and integration of life skills training throughout their programs. A strong focus on quality has resulted in a smoother transition from non-formal education into formal education.

Importance of advocating for longer-term non-emergency funding for refugee education to build sustainable education programs, literacy programs and retention programs;

NRC managed to acquire some longer-term funding through several international donors, sometimes for up to a three-year lifespan. This has been essential in developing a longer-term phased approach to non-formal education. It gave NRC the ability to adjust planning throughout implementation, adjusting targets and content while implementing, rather than purely focusing on achieving short-term goals limited by donor requirements. It also gave NRC the time to invest in the quality of the programs and helped in reducing staff turn-over. Finally, it helped NRC in building longer terms relationships with both national level and local level authorities, which is essential to building a relationship of trust.

The need for diverse educational interventions to cater for individual needs of a wide variety of learners.

Refugee children arrived in Lebanon with diverse educational backgrounds and needs. Throughout the span of NRC programming since 2013, NRC catered for children who had never been to school prior to their arrival in Lebanon, children who dropped out of school for one or more years and were therefore behind compared to their peers of the same age, and children who somehow managed to continue their education throughout the crisis, whether through non-formal or formal education activities. As a result, NRC's education programs always included a wide variety of non-formal education interventions, catering for different profiles amongst refugee children.

PERSONAL IMPACT STORY

Flying dragons and breathing on Mars, the dream of a 10-year-old refugee girl

Flying dragons and breathing on Mars, the dream of a 10-year-old refugee girl.

"I have one question that my mom can't answer," says Linda with a curious smile. "Has anyone ever tried breathing on Mars and didn't succeed? And why haven't they found a way to live on Mars?," she asks. Linda, 10, is eagerly waiting to hear the answer as she says that she wants to become a scientist when she grows up. "She is always so curious about everything and her questions never end," says Amira*, Linda's mother.*

A year ago, Amira and her family were forced to flee to Lebanon after moving several times within Syria to find safety. Their first period in Lebanon was difficult and her young daughters were often bothered and stressed. Amira was worried about her daughters being deprived of education until she got in touch with the Norwegian Refugee Council. *"I had taken my children out to a nearby park when I saw the sign at the community center in Saadnayel and went in to ask about the summer education programme," says Amira. "They immediately enrolled my daughters Linda and Vanessa, and although classes had already started they began the next day."*

Linda and Vanessa, her 7-year-old younger sister, are two of around 1,750 children who attended non-formal education programmes for out-of-school children through NRC in 2016. Specifically, the NRC Basic Literacy and Numeracy programme provides out-of-school children with viable pathways and prepares them for government-led formal school. *"The classes at the NRC center were very good and gave them a safe space to be children. I saw how they changed, becoming happier every day. They made new friends and were having fun for the first time in a long time. Every morning they were excited to go to school where they could release all their energy. Also, the load of homework was manageable and we would use YouTube to solve things that were difficult," says Amira.*

"We learnt the alphabet by handcrafting letters with cardboard and my letter K handcraft was the best in our class," says an excited Vanessa. "I loved my teachers at NRC's center. Everyone treated me good and no one was mean to me," Linda says. "I felt relieved that they started. It was enough to see the happiness in their eyes when they came home or before going to NRC's community center. It used to make me so happy, they enjoyed education. Vanessa used to smile every day. She was always happy. I can't explain how that made me feel," says Amira.

The NRC learning center at Saadnayel teaches classes in mathematics, French and Arabic to refugee children who are not in school so they can adapt to the Lebanese curriculum once they start in government schools. The sisters loved their French and Arabic classes which helped them in their new schools. After finishing the summer classes, they were referred by NRC to a nearby government school in Saadnayel.

"In our school today it was difficult making new friends, but my friends from the NRC classes started the same school. Vanessa is popular and everyone wants to be her friend because she is the top student of her class," says Linda proudly.

Linda and Vanessa dream about Mars and flying dragons. *"My sister wants to discover dragons and fly on them," Vanessa whispers. "But I want to help mum when I grow up," she says. "I want to discover everything in the world," Linda adds. The positive energy of this young girl spreads across the room as she talks about her dreams. "Linda is often the leader and all the children in our neighbourhood in Syria used to wait for her to play with them. Vanessa is very caring and always wants to support me," says Amira.*

"I want to return to my house in Syria, to be independent and have my freedom back," says Amira. "When we left home I never thought we would become refugees. I didn't want to be away for so long. I love Syria. I was happy there and I miss everything about it. It was peaceful and safe. I always tell myself that that there is no war in Syria and we will return soon. At least that is the attitude I need to have to make it through the day. I need to have hope," Amira concludes.

* Children's names have been changed.



Photo: Linda, Vanessa and Amira © Racha El Daoi/NRC

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Norwegian Refugee Council (February 2017), Final report to the Kavli Foundation (private donor);

Norwegian Refugee Council (January 2017), NRC Lebanon's support to the 2016 Back to School Campaign;

Norwegian Refugee Council (December 2015), NRC Lebanon's support to the 2015 Back to School Campaign;

UNHCR (May 2014), Inter-Agency Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment.

APPENDIX

- ¹ The MEHE issued in 2012 a circular instructing all schools to enrol Syrian students regardless of their legal status and waive school and book fees
- ² Ministry of Education and Higher Education (July 2014), Reaching All Children with Education: Race (2015-2016);
- ³ <https://2c8kkt1ykog81j8k9p47oglb-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Supporting-Syria-the-Region-London-2016-Lebanon-Statement.pdf>
- ⁴ Ministry of Education and Higher Education (August 2016), Reaching All Children with Education: RACE II (2017-2021);
- ⁵ Latest data over 2017, presented by the Program Management Unit in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, during the February Education Partner Meeting chaired by UNICEF.
- ⁶ 2016-2017 Enrollment statistics of refugee children in Lebanese Public schools. Source: PMU, February 2017
- ⁷ Lebanese public schools use either French or English as main language of instruction, while refugee children from Syria are used to schools teaching them in Arabic
- ⁸ Due to lack of residency or registration papers, parents may be discouraged to support their children on their commute to school where they may face the risk of being arrested. Children above 15 face additional legal status concerns, as they are no longer registered under their parents, with a potential to further hamper their access to education
- ⁹ Inter- Agency Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA); May 2014. P 10
- ¹⁰ As per an NRC case study on Norwegian funding to Lebanon since 2013, prepared for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2017
- ¹¹ As per the annual reports on NRC's contribution to the Back to School Campaign, prepared for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in December 2015 and January 2017
- ¹² Based on NRC DHIS database and included in the NRC final report to the Kavli Foundation, February 2017
- ¹³ Based on NRC DHIS database data and included in the NRC progress report to KFW, April 2017
- ¹⁴ Based on NRC DHIS database data and included in the final report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 2017
- ¹⁵ Highest Performance benchmark: at least 25% progress in average in target academic skills from entry to final exams.
- ¹⁶ As per an NRC case study on Norwegian funding to Lebanon since 2013, prepared for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2017
- ¹⁷ Based on NRC DHIS database data and included in the final report to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 2017
- ¹⁸ Teachers are trained to use a range of teaching methods in the classroom to keep students engaged and to give students multiple opportunities to master new content and skills that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving: concept mapping, group discussion, demonstrations, role-play, stories, games, songs
- ¹⁹ As per an NRC case study on Norwegian funding to Lebanon since 2013, prepared for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2017
- ²⁰ Idem
- ²¹ For better coordination purposes, the Minister of Education and Higher Education decided to create an NGO subcommittee. The committee includes representatives of 2 international NGOs, 4 national NGOs and one academic institution

Promising Practices in Refugee Education is a joint initiative of Save the Children, the world's largest independent children's rights organisation, UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, and Pearson, the world's learning company.

Launched in March 2017, the initiative set out to identify, document and promote innovative ways to effectively reach refugee children and young people with quality educational opportunities.

This case study is one of more than twenty promising practices that were selected as part of the initiative.

The practices have been grouped under one or more of six themes.



The practices and the experience of implementing partners have been used to identify ten recommendations, grouped under three overarching pillars, aimed at improving refugee education policy and practice. They are:

Approaching the immediate crisis with a long-term perspective:

1. Strengthen inclusive national systems
2. Commit to predictable multi-year funding for education in refugee responses
3. Improve collaboration and develop innovative partnerships

Understanding different contexts and meeting distinct needs

4. Adopt user-centred design and empowering approaches
5. Establish diverse pathways that meet distinct needs
6. Use space and infrastructure creatively

Improving outcomes for all

7. Support teachers to help ensure quality
8. Prioritise both learning and well-being
9. Use technology as an enabling tool in pursuit of education outcomes
10. Build a robust evidence base

Our reflections on all of the promising practices that we identified and documented and their implications for policy and practice are available in a separate Synthesis Report.

More information including case studies, the Synthesis Report and a series of articles from thought leaders in the field can be found at

www.promisingpractices.online

