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REFUGEE COUNCIL

Evaluation Terms of Reference

NRC Non-Formal Education Programme Evaluation in Lebanon

Country: Lebanon

Duration: November 2019 – March 2020

Reporting to: Evaluation Steering Committee

PR: 8100132

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Background on the conflict/context

With the Syrian crisis entering its ninth year, Lebanon remains the country hosting the largest number of refugees per capita, with a Government estimate of 1.5 million Syrian refugees, and a large population of Palestine refugees.

The presence of such a large refugee population, in a small country that is struggling to maintain its own demographic balance and regain its pre-crisis economic growth, is increasingly affecting inter-community relations at all levels, and the social stability in many areas. The vulnerabilities of Syrian and non-Syrian refugees remain high due to cumulative factors in this protracted situation, where refugees are still largely dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs and stay resilient against exploitation and other risks.

1.2 Education in Lebanon

The Syrian Crisis has had a significant impact on the education sector in Lebanon. In February 2016, in its Statement of Intent at the London Conference, the Government of Lebanon laid out a plan to ensure that all refugee children aged 3-18 have access to quality education. Following this commitment, MEHE developed their five-year strategy, Reaching All Children with Education, 2017-2021, also known as RACE-II. As of March 2019, estimates from UNHCR indicate that Lebanon now hosts 666,491 school-aged refugee children between the ages 3 and 18¹.

The Government of Lebanon has made considerable progress since the start of the Syrian crisis, with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) opening hundreds of second shift schools to provide afternoon classes for Syrian children. As per RACE-II figures, the number of Syrian students enrolled in public education rose from 27,000 in the 2012/13 scholastic year to 212,905 in 2018/2019, with a total of 346 second-shift schools in 2018/2019².

Despite efforts by the MEHE, an estimated 58% of the 666,491 school-aged Syrian children remain out-of-school,³ and their re-integration into formal education remains challenging. Children and families in deprived areas face several educational challenges that require systemic interventions to improve absorption capacity to accommodate for refugees' demand; to overcome protection issues,

¹ UNICEF & UNHCR, Out-of-school children mapping and profiling 18-19: Key Findings, March 2019.

² Ministry of Education and Higher Education, RACE II Fact Sheet, March 2019, <http://racepmulebanon.com/images/fact-sheet-march-2019.pdf>

³ Out-of-School Children Mapping and profiling 18-19, Key Findings, March 2019



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economic barriers and legal constraints; and to address academic difficulties and cumulative psychosocial distress.

Due to a lack of available classes, many children of pre-school age never learned how to read and write, while both the public system as well as the MEHE implemented accelerated learning programme (ALP) curriculum presume basic literacy and numeracy skills upon enrolment. Refugee children between 10 and 14 years old are particularly vulnerable as they are likely to have missed a longer period of schooling, face difficulties catching-up due to the foreign language barrier, and are often vulnerable to child labour in the case of young boys and child marriage and domestic chores in the case of young girls.

Despite efforts of the Government of Lebanon, the formal education system absorption capacity is limited – donor-funded spaces in formal school have not increased in alignment with the increase in school-aged UNHCR's persons of concern. Further, according to a recent study of Alert International (2017), the formal education system is not reaching its full potential in terms of providing quality, safe education. Teachers lack engagement and are overburdened and violence and impunity in the classroom reinforce barriers to social stability⁴. The combination of challenges around access and quality has led to high dropout rates amongst refugee children, notably amongst 15-18 year-olds. The most common reasons for school dropouts for boys aged 15-18 years old were work-related (45%), while 26% of girls cited marriage as the key reasons for dropping out of school⁵.

1.3 NRC's Presence and Activities in the Country

NRC established its programme in Lebanon in 2006 in response to the July war. The country office is in Beirut (covering Beirut and Mount Lebanon), with field offices in South (Tyre), North (Tripoli and Akkar) and Bekaa (Zahle). NRC implements programmes in four core competencies: Shelter, WASH, Information, Counselling & Legal Assistance (ICLA) and Education and has an emergency response unit.

NRC's shelter response includes transitional shelter through the Occupancy Free of Charge programme, shelter renovations and upgrades for Palestinian refugees and infrastructure support to Lebanese host communities, including schools and learning environments.

The WASH programme works to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene services for refugee and host communities in urban areas, Informal Tented Settlements and public schools.

The Education programme seeks to support refugee, displaced, and host community children and youth enjoy their right to education and achieve their full potential.

In June 2016, NRC was selected as one of few recognized partners of MEHE. The education programme includes child protection related activities; non-formal education support to in- and out-of-school children and youth; parental and community engagement, and teacher training. The education program runs through 17 community centres in Bekaa, South, and North Lebanon, assisting over 70,000 children since 2007.

The ICLA programme assists refugees through more than 40 legal clinics and conducts mobile legal clinics that travel to refugee communities throughout Lebanon. Clinics provide group information sessions as well as individual counselling, followed by direct legal assistance, as needed. The ICLA programme covers civil documentation (birth, marriage, divorce and death registration), legal residency, and housing, land and property (HLP) rights.

In December 2017, NRC Lebanon initiated the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) in the Bekaa Valley and later in the North. The ERU responds to any emergency cases or situations in our area of interventions. As such, the team assists refugees in need, both in Informal Tented Settlements and/or

⁴ Alert International, School for stability, Examining the role of education in fostering social stability in Lebanon (April 2017)

⁵ VASyR 2018



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sub-standard shelters. The support varies from provision of basic assistance (mattresses and blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, etc.) to shelter kits distribution, site improvements and implementation of WASH activities.

1.4 NRC's Education Intervention

NRC education response strategies have evolved during the years, shifting from the provision of immediate emergency education support to three education programmes: i) non-formal education to support out-of-school children's transition into MEHE formal schools, ii) system strengthening to support MEHE and UNRWA schools, teachers, and students at-risk of dropping out, and iii) youth education programmes to support out-of-school youth who will likely not transition into the formal education system. This external evaluation will focus on the non-formal education programme.

As of early 2017, NRC started working under the finalised non-formal education framework included in the second phase of the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE-II) strategy of the MEHE. The non-formal education framework outlines the educational interventions MEHE expects NGOs to support over a five-year period (2017 – 2021). NRC plans to support the ministry in reaching its goals set-out in RACE-II and the roll-out of the non-formal education framework, either through direct implementation or through support to MEHE at national level (systems strengthening).

NRC facilitates enrolment and retention in the formal public education system through provision of non-formal education such as Community Based Early Childhood Education (CB-ECE) for children between 4 and 6 years old and Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) for children between 10 and 14 years old. Children between 7 and 9 years old should theoretically be able to enrol directly in the formal education system. Both programmes are implemented through community-based NRC Learning Centres and will follow the unified curriculum and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed by MEHE. In order to support the psychosocial needs of children, NRC mainstreams Life Skills including the Better Learning Programme (BLP), which is NRC's flagship classroom-based psycho-social programme and light case management support, into NFE programming. Transportation is a consistent barrier for children's access to formal education and NFE programmes. To address this barrier, NRC also provides transportation for the majority of NFE participants, based on need.

In addition to training on the actual curricula used and BLP, NFE teachers receive training on: i) child centred teaching; ii) classroom-management; iii) multi-grade teaching; iv) positive discipline; and v) child protection principles. In addition to targeting the child, the teacher and the physical learning environment, NRC hopes to promote a home environment conducive to learning as well, by including parents in their child's learning process. Each NRC learning centre has an elected Parent Community Group (PCG) supporting implementation and parents can attend awareness sessions on: i) the importance of education and enrolment processes; ii) hygiene awareness, with support from NRC WASH colleagues; and iii) legal counselling and support, with support from NRC ICLA colleagues.

In terms of reach, between January 2017 and December 2019 the education programme will have reached more than 10,000 out of school children enrolled in non-formal education classes, more than 5,000 Syrian refugee children enrolled in second shift public schools attending NRC remedial classes and more than 5,000 parents benefitting from education awareness raising sessions, more than 240 teachers trained.

2. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION AND INTENDED USE

The main purpose of the evaluation is to support learning about the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact of the NRC Lebanon non-formal education programme and provide guidance



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for future programme direction. In addition, the evaluation should be an opportunity for NRC to be accountable to beneficiaries, partners and donors.

The programme commissioned a nationwide study on barriers to education in late 2018 that could help in informing the recommendations for future programme direction that this consultancy will formulate, but has not undertaken any recent evaluations.

NRC hopes that the many lessons learned captured in Lebanon will provide additional evidence to feed into global programme development and for education programmes in the region.

Primary users of the evaluation are NRC management team in Lebanon as well as NRC education teams who will directly utilise the evaluation findings to adjust programme implementation, improve its quality and to guide the future direction of the programme. Primary users also include the education Section in Head Office, to inform and feed ongoing global and national programme development within education work.

Secondary users include the MERO regional office and NRC education programmes in the region and globally. Tertiary users include partners, donors, and other stakeholders. The findings and conclusions of the evaluation will be shared with these actors. The evaluation will support the transference of learning; what specific lessons learned and best practices should be highlighted and continued or disseminated either within the programme or more widely within NRC.

3. SCOPE OF WORK AND LINES OF INQUIRY

The evaluation will cover the Non-Formal Education (NFE) programme in support of Syrian refugee children from January 2017 to December 2019.

Geographical scope: Akkar governorate, North governorate, Bekaa and Baalbeck-Hermel governorate and Nabatieh and South governorate .

3.1. Lines of inquiry

The evaluation will look to answer the following questions:

Relevance/Appropriateness

- How relevant and appropriate is the current programme design and implementation to the educational and life skills needs of Syrian refugee children? How can it be more relevant and appropriate?
- To what degree is the programme designed and implemented based on the opinions and the priorities of Syrian refugee children and parents? Is it perceived as relevant by them? If so, how?
- To what extent are the different needs of the various groups (females, males, out-of-school children, children with disabilities, PRS, Syrian) perceived to be considered? How can the programme better target these groups to become more inclusive?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were the objectives of the programme achieved/are likely to be achieved? Questions that follow could be for example and are not limited to: Has the non-formal education programme ensured children, both out of school and those in formal school, adequate access to quality non-formal education so that they meet the desired learning outcomes and remain in formal education if successfully transitioned? Are outreach practices effective for finding out-of-school children and informing parents about NRC non-formal education activities?
- What were the major internal (programme design, management, etc) and external factors, aside from those in the known literature, influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?



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- What programme design, implementation and monitoring elements can be added or amended to improve the effectiveness of the programme?

Efficiency

- What are the barriers to timely and quality implementation of NFE? How can those barriers be addressed?
- What are the challenges in teacher recruitment and retention (new and returning teachers)?
- Is the education programme able to use well the resources available for provision of education services? Are there potential efficiencies that present themselves?

Impact (with a focus on the theory of change outcomes)

- How has the non-formal education programme (learning space, teachers, curricula and staff) contributed directly or indirectly to the personal, social and emotional development of children as well as to their belief in the value of education?
- How has NRC education programme contributed to the improvement of access and retention of Syrian children in formal education since 2017?
- When children do not continue to formal education, how are they utilising the skills acquired in NFE?
- Were there any unintended positive or negative consequences of education interventions?
- How could all the above inform the revision of the theory of change of the programme? What could be strengthened to achieve greater impact in areas identified as important by children and their parents?

4. METHODOLOGY

To answer the evaluation questions, NRC would like the evaluator to submit a study design and methodology, which focuses on participatory, qualitative methods, to complement the quantitative data about the programme already available. In particular, we are seeking an evaluator experienced in participatory evaluations, theories of change and in interviewing 4 to 14 year old children and with demonstrable experience of qualitative evaluations.

At a minimum, the methodology could include **but not be limited to the below, as we encourage suggestions of methodologies:**

- a desk review of key documents, including analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative programme data;
- semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries and key informants, including key NRC Education staff;
- participatory methods to seek the views and perceptions of the targeted beneficiaries, their communities and key stakeholders (education partners, government, community actors, protection international and national organizations, CBOs, etc);

Also, a field validation exercise, for confirming preliminary findings with beneficiaries should be envisioned in the field part of the exercise.

5. EVALUATION FOLLOW UP AND LEARNING

NRC follows up all evaluations with a management response, and its implementation is subsequently tracked. This will include the documentation of key learning, which will be shared with the relevant head office technical advisor for circulation to NRC country offices.



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This evaluation will contribute to an annual learning review, which feeds into an annual strategic planning processes. Key findings will be reported to NRC's senior management team in Oslo.

6. EVALUATION PRINCIPALS

The views expressed in the report shall be the independent and candid professional opinion of the evaluator. The evaluation will be guided by the following ethical considerations:

- Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties
- Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this
- Broad participation - the interested parties should be involved where relevant and possible
- Reliability and independence - the evaluation should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy

7. COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

An Evaluation Steering Committee was established by NRC, with the following members: M&E Manager, Education Specialist, Head of Programmes, and Regional Programme Advisor.

The Education Specialist is responsible for facilitating access to information, data and documentation sources, via a shared online folder, including M&E data. The Evaluation Manager is responsible for managing the evaluation process. In case of any changes in the positions in the Country Office, the Steering Committee will be adjusted accordingly.

The Steering Committee will oversee administration and overall coordination, including monitoring progress. The main functions of the Steering Committee will be:

- to establish the Terms of Reference of the evaluation;
- select external evaluator(s);
- review and comment on the inception report and approve the proposed evaluation strategy and methodology;
- review and comment on the draft evaluation report;
- establish a dissemination and utilisation strategy.

In addition to the Steering Committee, there will be an Evaluation Reference group with the following members: Education Project Managers, Global Education Advisor, Regional M&E Manager and Lebanon Protection Advisor.

The main functions of the Evaluation Reference Group will be:

- to give input on the TOR;
- to facilitate the gathering of data necessary for the evaluation;
- to participate in the validation of evaluation findings, and to ensure that they are factually accurate;
- to contribute to the management response;
- to act on the relevant recommendations.

8. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING DEADLINES

The evaluator/ evaluation team will submit three reports and three presentations:

- Inception report: Following the desk review and prior to beginning fieldwork, the evaluation team will produce an inception report subject to approval by the NRC Evaluation Steering Committee. This report will detail a draft work plan with a summary of the primary information needs, the methodology to be used, and a work plan/schedule for field visits and major deadlines. With respect to methodology, the evaluation team will provide a description of



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how data will be collected and a sampling framework, data sources, and drafts of suggested data collection tools such as questionnaires and interview guides. Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluation team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the NRC Evaluation Steering Committee. **Report will be submitted by 25 November 2019.**

- **Data collection:** At least 3 weeks of field work are required to collect adequate data. Field work commences upon approval of the Inception report. **Expected start date is: 6 January 2020**
- **Validation workshop:** A validation workshop involving the key stakeholders should take place upon finalization of data collection and preliminary analysis. In addition, a presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to the NRC management and Evaluation Steering Committee should be organized while in Lebanon. **Expected date is 3 February 2020.**
- **Draft Report:** Draft evaluation report to be submitted to the Evaluation Steering Committee by **20 February 2020**, who will review the draft and provide feedback within 2 weeks from the receipt of the draft report.
- **Final report:** The Final Evaluation Report will follow NRC's standard template for evaluation reports, and is **due by 17 March 2020**. The final report will be approved by steering committee.

All material collected in the undertaking of the evaluation process shall be lodged with the Evaluation Manager prior to the termination of the contract.

9. TIMEFRAME

Proposals should present a detailed budget for the number of expected working days over the entire period.

The evaluation is scheduled to start on 8 November 2019 and is projected to end on 17 March 2020.

The evaluator/ evaluation team is expected to provide a suggested timeline and work plan for the evaluation based on these scheduling parameters and in keeping with the scope of the evaluation questions and criteria.

In event of serious problems or delays, the (lead) evaluator should inform the Steering Committee immediately. Any significant changes to review timetables shall be approved by the Steering Committee in advance.

10. EVALUATION CONSULTANT TEAM

NRC seeks expressions of interest from individuals or joint applications, ideally with the following skills/qualifications and expertise:

- Sound and proven experience in conducting evaluations, particularly utilisation and learning focused evaluations
- Extensive experience of theories of change and how they can be used to carry out evaluations
- Expertise in participatory qualitative data collection techniques, especially with children aged 4 to 14.
- Background in delivery of education programmes

Additional, desirable knowledge, includes:

- Understanding of refugee education programmes providing psychosocial well-being
- Understanding of global and regional trends and initiatives on children and youth



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Necessary Skills:

- Fluency in written and spoken English is required
- Fluency in spoken Arabic is highly desirable
- Prior experience in Middle East
- Proven experience of managing evaluations of humanitarian projects
- Experience of designing qualitative data collection methods and of managing participatory and learning focused evaluations
- Excellent team working and communication skills, flexibility and good organisation skills

11. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Application Deadline: 17 October 2019 9 AM Lebanon time.

Interview dates: 21- 25 October 2019.

To apply, send a message of interest to the email address to: lb.procurement@nrc.no to request tender documents. Once received, you will be sent the Tender Package needed to apply. The message of interest must be sent before midnight October,15 Beirut time which is the deadline to request the tender package.

Your final application is due on 17 October 2019 at 9 am Lebanon time, and should be submitted electronically to lb.procurement1@nrc.no

Bids must include the following:

- Tender package documents filled as requested by the procurement unit in NRC.
- Proposal including: outline of evaluation framework and methods, including comments on the TOR, proposed timeframe and detailed work plan with number of days per phase specified.(without the evaluation budget)
- Proposed evaluation budget, with details about all costs (visa, travel, daily rate per consultant/team member, other costs)
- Cover letter clearly summarizing experience as it pertains to this assignment (max 1 page).
- Three professional references.
- CVs and evidence of past evaluations for each team member.
- At least one example of an evaluation report most similar to that described in this TOR.