Report Number : ICRR0024606

1. Project Data

Project ID P159470	**Program Name** LB: RACE Support Project
Country Lebanon	**Practice Area(Lead)** Education

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Program Cost (USD)
IDA-59050,TF-A3064,TF-A4753	28-Feb-2023	195,693,397.99
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
27-Sep-2016	29-Feb-2024	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	104,000,000.00	104,000,000.00
Revised Commitment	196,000,000.00	96,000,000.00
Actual	195,693,397.99	96,000,000.00

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
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2. Program Context and Development Objectives

a. Objectives

According to the Financing Agreement (Schedule 1, p. 5), and the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, p. vi), the Project Development Objective (PDO) was “to promote equitable access to education services; enhance quality of student learning; and strengthen the education systems in Lebanon's education sector in response to the protracted refugee crisis." For the purpose of this ICRR, the PDO can be unpacked as follows:

Objective 1. Promote equitable access to education services;

Objective 2. Enhance quality of student learning; and

Objective 3. Strengthen the education systems in Lebanon's education sector in response to the protracted refugee crisis.

b. Were the program objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

The Support to Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon Support Project was structured around three program Results Areas (RAs):

RA 1: Enhanced access to, and demand from, children, youth, and their caregivers; for equitable formal or regulated non-formal education (PAD, p. 5). (Original amount: US$ 90 million, Actual amount: US$ 90 million.) It was designed to address both supply-side measures—such as school rehabilitation and construction—and demand-side strategies, including reducing education costs and engaging communities.

RA 2: Enhanced quality of education services and learning environments provided, to ensure grade-appropriate learning outcomes for children and youth (PAD, p. 5). (Original amount: US$ 54.45 million, Actual amount: US$ 46.45 million.) It aimed to increase transition rates by enhancing education quality through several measures such as teacher training, performance management, student assessment, and school improvement plans. Improving education quality was also expected to increase higher demand for schooling, reinforcing the first results area (ICR, p. 4).

RA 3: Enhanced governance and managerial capacities of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) to plan, budget, deliver, monitor, and evaluate education services (PAD, p. 6). (Original amount: US$ 59.55 million, Actual amount: US$ 59.55 million.) It focused on strengthening the education system by prioritizing improvements in data systems, curriculum revision, the development of foundational policy frameworks, and the expansion of MEHE's capacity. Curriculum updates and policy framework development were also expected to enhance the overall quality of education (ICR, p. 4).

The three RAs had nine associated Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs) which triggered periodic disbursements upon their verified achievement (see Table 1).

Table 1. Results areas and associated DLIs

Results Areas	DLIs	US$ (million)	%
Equitable Access	DLI 1: Number of school-aged children (3-18) enrolled in formal education in participating schools	90	44
Enhanced Quality	DLI 2: Proportion of students transitioning grades	22.5	11

	DLI 3: Teacher performance measured and evaluated	4	2
	DLI 4: Number of participating schools that implement formative and summative assessments for students in Grade 3 in reading and math	14.95	7
	DLI 5: Proportion of participating schools with active community partnerships	13	6
Systems Strengthened	DLI 6: Timely and robust data available for evidence informed policy making and planning	12.5	6
	DLI 7: Curriculum revised to improve quality of learning	26.2	13
	DLI 8: Foundational framework and policies are developed and adopted to support teaching and learning	18	9
	DLI 9: Two internal audit reports produced by year by MEHE in compliance with standards agreed between MEHE and the Bank	2.5	1
TOTAL		203.65	

e. Comments on Program Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Cost. This project was financed by an International Development Association (IDA) Credit (IDA 59050) of US$100 million under the Program for Results (PforR) instrument, and US$104 million in World Bank–administered trust funds: a US$100 million grant from the Lebanon Syrian Crisis Multi Donor Trust Fund (LSCTF - TF A4753), financed from the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) contribution to the LSCTF, and a US$4 million grant from the Results in Education for All Children (REACH) MDTF (TF A3064). At closing, US$99.69 million was disbursed under the IDA PforR credit and US$96 million under Bank-administered trust funds (US$92 million LSCTF; US$4 million REACH). The difference from initial plans reflects LSCTF reductions/reallocations confirmed in the December 2021 restructuring (including a cut to DLI 4).

Borrower contribution. No borrower contribution was envisaged under this project.

Key dates

The project was approved on 27 September 2016 and became effective almost ten months later on 18 July 2017. The original project closing date of 28 February 2023 was extended by 12 months, with a final closing date of 29 February 2024 (ICR, p. iii).

The program underwent five restructurings:

1. In October 2019, the first restructuring extended the closing date of the REACH TF (TF0A3064) by two months, from 31 October 2019 to 31 December 2019 (ICR, p. 7). This provided additional time to complete two tasks: (i) documentation of the coaching impact evaluation study under DLI 3; and (ii) verification of the achievement of the DLI by independent verification agent (IVA).
2. In December 2019, the second restructuring extended the closing date of the LSCTF TF from 31 December 2019 to 31 March 2021, to provide enough time to complete activities and meet associated DLI targets (ICR, p. 7).

3. In April 2021, the third restructuring extended the closing date of the LSCTF TF by nine months, from 31 March 2021 to 31 December 2021, to address implementation delays due to the COVID-19 crisis (ICR, p. 7).
4. In December 2021, the fourth restructuring canceled US$8 million from the Lebanon Syrian Crisis Trust Fund (LSCTF, TF A4753) and simplified the results framework by revising three intermediate results indicators (IRIs), dropping three others, and revising one IRI target to better align with the corresponding DLI (ICR, p. 7).
5. In February 2023, the fifth restructuring extended the closing date of the program by 12 months, from 28 February 2023 to 29 February 2024, to allow MEHE and CERD time to achieve the final disbursement-linked result (DLR) (DLR 7.3: piloting of the new curriculum) (ICR, p. 7).

3. Relevance

a. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The project was highly relevant to the development challenges faced by the education sector in Lebanon, which included (1) the influx of a large number of Syrian migrants; and (2) the deteriorating quality of the education system and an under-enrollment/dropout of Lebanese children, especially at the lowest income levels. The conflict in Syria has transformed Lebanon into the country with the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, estimated at 33 percent of the country's total population. This dramatic increase in population has placed a strain on the country's public services, including its public education system (PAD, p. 1). Furthermore, the PforR addressed the supply-side constraints and demand-side barriers of the education system.

The project was aligned with the government and the Bank's strategies as well as development partners' priorities. The PDO supported the second phase of the government's Reaching all Children with Education (RACE 2, 2016-2021) strategy and its three pillars: (1) scaling up equitable access to educational opportunities in the formal public education system; (2) improving the quality and inclusiveness of the teaching and learning environment; and (3) strengthening the national education system, policies, and planning and monitoring capacity (PAD, p. 2). At appraisal, the PforR goals were closely aligned with the priorities outlined in the Bank's Systematic Country Diagnostic, which identified education as a priority area for action (PAD, p. 4). Equally, the program contributed to the Bank's Middle East/North Africa Regional (MENA) Strategy (October 2015). Specifically, the program was aligned to the MENA strategy's pillar to renew the social contract, by improving access to quality education services for the most vulnerable, and to the pillar to enhance resilience to refugee/internal displacement shocks (PAD, p. 4). It was also relevant to the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Lebanon (2017-2022) (Report no. 94768-LB). In particular, it was aligned with the CPF's Focus Area 2: Expand economic opportunities and increase human capital, and the CPF's Objective 2c: Improved delivery of education services and skills development (PAD, p. 4). The program remains relevant to the Bank's Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework for Lebanon, launched in December 2020, which includes education as a priority reform area in support of the government's education Reform Road Map (launched in 2025) and its focus on core teaching and learning, operational, and governance reforms. Finally, the program complemented efforts by other development partners such as the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees, FCDO, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which were implementing education projects in Lebanon and were also represented in the RACE Education Committee that oversaw program implementation and provided policy guidance (PAD, p. 102). At closing, the PforR remained aligned with the government's Five-Year General Education Plan (2021-2025). This plan prioritizes expanding equitable access to education, boosting participation and completion rates for all learners in Lebanon (especially the most vulnerable), and enhancing learning outcomes for children and youth through improved quality of education services, along with strengthened planning, management, and governance across the education system (ICR, p. 8).

Finally, the choice of PforR as an instrument was appropriate for the urgency of the Lebanese context. The PforR was expected to enable faster disbursement of funds compared to the investment project financing (IPF) model, a crucial factor given Lebanon's experience with previous IPF operations and the pressing needs arising from the Syrian refugee crisis. In addition, the PforR, introduced for the first time in Lebanon, aimed to shift the policy dialogue from focusing on inputs to prioritizing medium-term results in the education sector, fostering a culture of measurement and accountability. This sustained emphasis on key outcomes was expected to mobilize domestic and external resources to ensure success. Additionally, the PforR modality sought to align and coordinate national and international investments to drive result-oriented interventions. Nevertheless, and while the PforR instrument offered significant benefits, concerns were raised about financial management and procurement capacity in Lebanon during appraisal. Mitigation measures were put in place, and ultimately, the instrument was deemed the most suitable approach to addressing the sector's development challenges (PAD, p. 20 and ICR, p. 5)

Rating
High

b. Relevance of DLIs

DLI 1
DLI
DLI #1 Number of school aged children (3-18) enrolled in formal education in participating schools (US$ 90 million)

Rationale
This DLI contributed to RA 1 and Objective 1 to increase enrollment into public schools of both Lebanese and non-Lebanese children. Furthermore, the proposed age range (3-18 years) was broader than the compulsory education band for Lebanon (6-15 years), which meant to incentivize greater enrollment at the early childhood education (ECE) level (3-5 years), as well as the secondary level (15- 18 years). As this DLI was a PDO indicator, it was clearly situated with the program's theory of change (ToC). The DLI provided the right incentives to implement critical actions (e.g., interventions to decrease education costs for households, implementation of non-formal education programs to bridge access to formal education, community outreach) without which the PDO could not have been achieved. The amount allocated to the DLI incentivized MEHE to increase the enrollment of non-Lebanese children in the public education system, which was critical for achieving the PDO. The DLI was clearly defined and measurable, with a clear methodology for monitoring

and verification. However, the targeted 88 percent increase in enrollment for Syrian refugees (end target of 287,969 from baseline of 143,738) was over-ambitious.

Rating
Substantial

DLI 2

DLI
DLI #2 Proportion of students transitioning grades (US$ 22.5 million)

Rationale
This DLI contributed to achieving RA2 and Objective 2 to improve the quality of education. As this DLI was a PDO indicator, there was a clear link between the DLI and the ToC. The targeted 4-percentage-point increase in transition rates from Grades 4 to 5 and Grades 7 to 8 was reasonable, given the baseline rates of 78 percent and 76 percent, respectively. However, for Grades 10 to 11, the goal was more ambitious due to the already high 93 percent baseline. In addition, the DLI did not specify learning-related requirements for transition in order to prevent automatic transition from one grade to another. As a result, the flow of funds did not provide the appropriate incentives to improve education quality. The DLI was clearly defined and measurable, with a clear protocol and methodology for monitoring and verification.

Rating
Modest

DLI 3

DLI
DLI #3 Teacher performance measured and evaluated (US$ 4 million)

Rationale
The objective of this DLI was related to enhancing the quality of learning (RA 2 and Objective 2). It also contributed to RA3 to strengthen the education system by putting in place a teachers' performance assessment. However, the causal link between this DLI and improving quality of education was unclear, since there were no incentives associated with better performance. The DLI incentivized MEHE to adopt an evidence-based approach to education interventions, which was previously viewed as unnecessary within the sector. This DLI fed into DLI 8, which included the development of teacher standards, observation tools, and a framework of teacher professional development. The DLI was clearly defined and measurable, with a clear protocol and methodology for monitoring and verification, and was feasible to achieve. It also provided the necessary flow of funds to move implementation forward (ICR, p. 42).

Rating
Modest

DLI 4

DLI

DLI #4 Number of participating schools that implement formative and summative assessments for students in Grade 3 in reading and math (US$ 14.95 million)

Rationale

This DLI was related to enhancing the quality of learning. It also contributed to strengthening the education system by putting in place a learning assessment. The DLI measured the extent to which the quality of learning had improved in certain schools; however, it did not contribute to improving quality per se. Without linking students' assessment to other actions (such as offering remedial classes, teachers' training), education quality is not necessarily improved. The DLI incentivized MEHE to adopt formative assessment to inform classroom instruction, which was previously lacking in the sector. This DLI was linked to DLI 8, which includes the development of a long-term assessment strategy. The DLI was clearly defined and measurable, with clear protocol and methodology for monitoring and verification, and was feasible to achieve. It provided the necessary incentives for flow of funds and to move implementation forward without necessarily improving the quality of education (ICR, p. 43).

Rating

Modest

DLI 5

DLI

DLI#5: Proportion of participating schools with active community partnerships (US$ 13 million)

Rationale

In the program's RF, this DLI was related to enhancing the quality of learning (ICR, p. 39). Active engagement of community members with schools was meant to prevent dropouts and increase transparency. As such, this DLI was more closely linked to the objective of increasing enrollment and promoting equitable access. The causal link between these actions and the achievement of the PDO (i.e., that the achievement of this DLI led to increased enrollment and/or improved education quality) is unclear. The indicator did not assess the effectiveness of these partnerships, and therefore their establishment did not automatically translate to increased enrollment and/or improved quality The DLI was clearly defined and measurable, with clear protocol and methodology for monitoring and verification, and was feasible to achieve. The DLI incentivized MEHE to appoint community liaisons to respond to social tensions and child protection issues.

Rating

Modest

DLI 6

DLI
DLI #6 Timely and robust data available for evidence informed policy making and planning (US$ 12.5 million)

Rationale
As this DLI was a PDO indicator, there was a clear link between the DLI and the ToC. The DLI incentivized critical actions (particularly the hiring of monitoring and evaluation [M&E] and information technology staff) without which the PDO could not have been achieved. It specified that a framework outlining mechanisms for data collection, validation, and use would be developed, which would also assign responsibilities to MEHE and CERD units and establish system and timeline requirements. The framework would allow for a separate database for refugee student data (DLR 6.1). Disaggregated data regarding enrolment and passing - by school type, region, grade, nationality, and gender – would be stored in a central digital database and would be made available on an annual basis (DLR 6.2). Finally, **t**he DLI was critical to incentivizing MEHE and CERD to adopt a unified data framework, given the power dynamics behind data ownership within the government.

Rating
Substantial

DLI 7

DLI
DLI #7 Curriculum revised to improve quality of learning (US$ 26.62 million)

Rationale
The DLI set an ambitious goal, as curriculum revisions often extend beyond standard project timelines. While it was well defined, measurable, and had a clear verification protocol, the DLI lacked a built-in quality assurance mechanism before funds were disbursed. The DLI was based on three DLRs that specified that standard operating procedures for developing the curriculum would be approved (DLR 7.1), curriculum design would be completed (DLR 7.2), and the curriculum would be piloted in six schools (DLR 7.3). The rationale for how the DLI would contribute to system strengthening in the designated RA was well established. Given the inherently political nature of curriculum reform, the DLI played a crucial role in incentivizing the early stages of the revision process.

Rating
Substantial

DLI 8

DLI
DLI #8 Foundational framework and policies are developed and adopted to support teaching and learning (US$ 18 million)

Rationale

The DLI was well-defined and measurable, with a clear protocol and methodology for monitoring and verification, making it a feasible target. The defined targets were the following: (1) development and approval of effective teacher standards supported by operational procedures and observation tools (DLR 8.1); (2) launch of a unified teacher professional development framework and formalized coordination between CERD and MEHE/Department of School Pedagogical Observation (DOPS) (DLR 8.2); (3) creation of a comprehensive learning assessment strategy (DLR 8.3); and (4) implementation of student assessments in line with the officially approved strategy, ensuring alignment with broader educational goals (DLR 8.4). The DLI ensured a steady flow of funds to advance implementation efforts. The rationale for its role in strengthening the designated RA was clearly established. Moreover, the DLI encouraged MEHE to adopt key frameworks and policies related to teacher performance standards and evaluation, professional development, and student learning assessment.

Rating
Substantial

DLI 9
DLI
DLI #9: Two Internal audit reports produced per year by MEHE in compliance with standards agreed between MEHE and the Bank (US$ 2.5 million)

Rationale
The DLI was well-defined and measurable, supported by a clear protocol and methodology for monitoring and verification, ensuring its feasibility. It facilitated the necessary flow of funds to drive implementation forward. Its role in strengthening the designated RA was well established. Additionally, the DLI encouraged MEHE's staff capacity building to conduct internal audits.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL RELEVANCE RATING
Rationale
Given the High relevance of the program's objectives and the overall Substantial relevance of the DLIs (out of nine DLIs, five are rated Substantial and four Modest), the overall relevance of the program is rated as Substantial. In summary, the program's objectives were well-aligned with government, Bank, and development partners' strategies and addressed the development challenges faced by the education sector in Lebanon. The DLIs were mostly well aligned with the PDO, well structured, clearly defined, and measurable, with established protocols for monitoring and verification. They ensured a steady flow of funds, effectively supporting program implementation and maintaining alignment with the results framework. The allocated amounts were sufficient to drive critical actions, especially those requiring political negotiation and commitment.

Rating
Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective
Promote equitable access to education services

Rationale
The ToC held that by supporting activities to increase the supply (e.g., school rehabilitation and construction) ar d
(e.g., reducing education costs, community outreach) for education, enrollment in formal public education would inc

At appraisal, 59 percent of school-aged Syrian refugee children were not enrolled in formal schooling (ICR, p. 1 In
high dropout rates among Lebanese and non-Lebanese children led to under-enrollment for both groups (but pa tic
non-Lebanese) at the secondary level (Grades 10, 11, 12) (ICR, p. 2).

Outputs and Intermediate Results

Under this objective, the program did not fully achieve five out of eight of the IRIs associated with the DLIs (see RF,

Table 1. Indicators for Objective 1 (increased enrollment)

	IRI	Baseline	Target	Achieved	% Achieved
1	Number of school aged children (3-18) enrolled in formal education	400,530 TOTAL LEBANESE: 197,010 Prep-ECE - Pre-Primary 38,217 Cycle 1: 44,288 Cycle 2: 54,450 Cycle 3: 60,055 Secondary - technical and vocational education	500,000	462,117 (First shift: 302,099; Second shift: 160,018) 462,117 (formal education): TOTAL LEBANESE: 262,500 Prep-ECE - Pre-Primary: 40,209 Cycle 1: 46,597 Cycle 2: 57,288 Cycle 3: 63,186 Secondary - TVET	61.9% (partially ac ieved) 100% (achieved)
2	Number of children and youth whose registration fees for public formal education and accelerated learning program are partially or fully subsidized		100% of enrolled children		Registration fees are subsidized for all children enrolled in formal publ education

		training (TVET) data not available NON-LEBANESE: Not available		NON-LEBANESE: TOTAL: 287,969 Prep-ECE: 20,000 Pre-Primary: 32,617 Cycle 1: 145,129 Cycle 2: 54,669 Cycle 3: 16,701 Secondary: 3,853	
3	Number of public school buildings that meet MEHE's Effective School Profile (ESP) standards	377	884	583	40.6% (not achieved)
4	Number of public schools newly built or expanded to meet quality standards specified in government Decree 9091	41	40 built; 125 expanded	48	Exceeded
5	Number of MEHE-owned public school buildings meeting Effective School Profile (ESP) standards equipped in line with MEHE specifications	200	500	200	0% (not achieved; n change fror baseline)
6	Number of public school buildings (by MEHE owned/rented) furnished in line with MEHE specifications	417	>1,000	417	0% (not achieved; n change fror baseline)
7	Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning	400,0000	500,000	462,117	62.1% (partially achieved; same as IR #1)
8	Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning - Female	200,000	250,000	251,737	Exceeded

While the demand side (registration fees) were provided, the supply side (improving and increasing the number of s was not achieved (see Table 1 above). The program failed to achieve most of the supply-side targets. While th nu newly-built or expanded schools far exceeded the target, quality standards were not met (number of public scho ol b that meet MEHE's ESP standards; number of MEHE-owned public school buildings meeting ESP standards equ ipp with MEHE specifications; and number of public school buildings (by MEHE owned/rented) furnished in line with ME specifications) (ICR, p. 26).

The demand side reached more girls than boys, with 54.5 percent of beneficiaries being female.

Finally, the ICR states that outreach activities contributed to increased student enrollment (ICR, p. 45); however no is provided on the type or frequency of these activities and to what extent they succeeded in increasing the num ber enrolled in public schools.

When analyzing the achievement in terms of increasing enrollment per cycle, there are large differences among the cycles, with Cycle 1 (Grades 1-3) least meeting the set targets. This will most likely have an impact on future en olln other Cycles (2 and 3).

Table 2. Enrollment disaggregated by Cycle

Cycle	Completion			Target			
	First shift	*Second shift*	Total	*Lebanese*	*Non-Lebanese*	Total	Differe ce
KG	*47,013*	*27,569*	74,582	*40,209*	*32,617*	72,826	1,756
Cycle 1 (Grades 1-3)	*65,846*	*78,782*	144,628	*46,597*	*145,129*	191,726	-47,098
Cycle 2 (Grades 4-6)	*73,338*	*38,752*	112,090	*57,288*	*54,669*	111,957	133
Cycle 3 (Grades 7-9)	*61,598*	*14,915*	76,513	*63,186*	*16,701*	79,887	-3,374
Secondary	*54,304*	*NA*	54,304	*55,220*	*3,853*	59,073	-4,769

Outcomes

The program succeeded in increasing enrollment of both Lebanese and non-Lebanese students. However, and n th of recent census data, although the indicator name is "increase in the proportion of school aged Lebanese and on- children (3-18) enrolled in formal education," the indicator was measured as the total number of students enrolle d (I and p. 24). Although the target for Lebanese children was achieved by 2017-2018, the target for non-Lebanese chil not reached, most likely because the targeted 88 percent increase in enrollment for Syrian refugees was over-a nbit

In terms of “equitable access," (1) the program maintained the existing gender gaps for both Lebanese and non Leb students and did not narrow nor widen them; and (2) the increased enrollment of the most vulnerable Lebanese stu well as Syrian refugees in public schools prevented the exacerbation of inequalities between the public and priv ite (ICR, p. 13).

In addition, to respond to the public teachers' strikes in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years, MEHE used he disbursed against achieved DLIs to pay top-ups for public school teachers to address their severely devalued sa lari allowed public schools to reopen (ICR, p. 13).

Table 3. Enrollment by shift and nationality

Nationality	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	**Teacher strikes**	2021-22	2022-23	Target
Lebanese	248,805	257,378	264,364	273,634	288,239	336,388		293,334	263,687	262,500
Non-Lebanese	151,725	194,713	217,885	211,778	202,455	198,025		192,639	198,430	252,969

However, there was a substantial decrease in Lebanese students’ enrollment between 2020-2021 and 2022-20 3, v ICR attributes to a shift from the public to the private sector, with 4.5 percent of children enrolled in public schoo s in 22 school year moving to private schools in the 2022-23 school year (ICR, p. 10) (see Table 4). If this is the cas , it indication of the low quality of education and/or unpredictability of in the public school system due to the frequer pu closures, leading parents to enroll their children in much more expensive private schools, notwithstanding the d ep and financial crisis.

Table 4. Change in enrollment of Lebanese and non-Lebanese students (baseline, target, achieved)

	Baseline (2015-16) (a)	Target (b)	Achievement of DLI1 (2020-21) (c)	Achievement of DLI1 Closing (2022-23) (d)	% achieved at closing (d/b)	Change in enrollment rates between (2020-21) and (2022-23) (c-d)/(c)
PDO indicator 1: Increase in the number of school-aged Lebanese and non-Lebanese children enrolled in formal education	*400,530*	500,000	*534,413*	*462,117*	*61.9*	*13.5%*
Lebanese	248,805	262,500	336,388	263,687	108.7	21.6%
Non-Lebanese	151,725	252,969	198,025	198,430	46.1	(0.2%)

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 2
Objective
Enhance quality of student learning

Rationale
The ToC held that by providing teacher training, performance management, student assessment, and school improvement plans, quality of education would be improved (which in turn would also increase demand for education and also contribute to increased enrollment).

Outputs and Interim Results

The program partially achieved all the intended targets. Of the 15 indicators, the program achieved seven targets (e.g., implementation of formative assessments; development of teacher performance standards, conducting health checks, development of a framework for teacher professional development). It failed to achieve another seven (such as, teacher/counselors/staff of the DOPS training, and schools implementing School Improvement Plans). For one indicator (the number of children and youth with special needs who are referred by public schools), no information was available (see Table 5).

Table 5. Indicators for Objective 2 (improved quality)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Achieved	% achieved/comment

1	Proportion of students transitioning grades	Lebanese: transition from Cycle 1 to 2: 100% transition from Cycle 2 to 3: 94% transition from Cycle 3 to Secondary: 91% Non-Lebanese: 96% transition from Cycle 1 to 2: 96% transition from Cycle 2 to 3: 82% transition from Cycle 3 to Secondary: 82%	Same rates maintained	1st shift (School Year 2022-2023) C1 to C2: 93.79% C2 to C3: 93.16%	Not achieved. No information available for non-Lebanese students
2	Number of students in public schools successful in Grade 3 and Grade 6 learning assessment tests	Grade 3: 0 Grade 6: 0	Grade 3: TBD after pilot Grade 6: TBD after pilot	Grade 3: 17,971 Grade 6: 19,106	Achieved
3	Number of teachers, education personnel, and educators trained	0	Teachers: 14,500 per year Education personnel: TBD Educators: TBD	61,429	Not achieved. The total number of staff trained divided by the duration of the project (8 years) is 7,679 staff trained per year, which is 53% of the target
4	Number of public-school classrooms that have received a MEHE-endorsed package of teaching materials	0	11,570	17,837	154.2%. Achieved.

5	Number of DOPS counsellors trained	475	1,900	1,080	42.4%. Not achieved.
6	Number of public schools that implement formative and summative assessments for students in Grade 3 in reading and math	0	180	180	100%. Achieved
7	Number of schools that implement and monitor their School Improvement Plan (SIP) within the same academic year	260	780	420	30.8%. Not achieved.
8	Number of public schools that conduct 2 or more health checks per year	0	>1000	2,050	205%. Achieved.
9	Number of public schools implementing government-endorsed child protection policy, protocols and mechanisms	0	>750	1,200	160%. Achieved.
10	Percentage of cases of violence involving students that require follow-up/referral and for which referral mechanisms were followed	0	>90%	94%	Achieved.
11	Percentage of identified children and youth with special needs who are referred by public schools	0	>90%	CERD's currently sole center providing special needs education services opened in September 2023 due to high demand. It is currently following up on 90 students from the public schools. Data on the percentage is currently not available	
12	Number of public schools with Community Liaison Officers	0	430	380	88.4%. Partially achieved.
13	Percentage of cases of violence which were reported by communities for which referral	0	>75%	56.9%	75.9%. Partially achieved.

	mechanisms were followed				
14	Percentage of identified children and youth with special needs who are referred by communities for additional support	0	>75%	56%	74.7%. Partially achieved.
15	Large-scale primary/secondary learning assessments completed	2	4	4	100%. Achieved.

Outcomes

The ICR indicates that larger than envisaged increases in transition rates were achieved for Grades 4 to 5 and 7 to 8, with a slight decrease in the transition rate for Grades 10 to 11 (ICR, Table 5, p. 11). However, the DLI did not specify learning-related requirements for transition to prevent automatic transition (ICR, p. 43). Furthermore, MEHE was unable to provide transition rates for the second shift (serving Syrian refugees). Therefore, the transition rates available are only for the first shift (serving primarily Lebanese students). Finally, and though not a DLI, the percentage of trained teachers whose teaching performance meets national performance standards is an outcome indicator that is associated with RA 2. The RF indicates that fewer than 52 percent of trained teachers met the national standards (versus the target of higher than 75 percent). Based on these three points (lack of information regarding whether students' transition was based on learning, lack of data regarding non-Lebanese students, underachievement of target regarding teachers' performance), achievement of this objective is rated Modest.

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 3
Objective
Strengthen the education systems in Lebanon's education sector in response to the protracted refugee crisis

Rationale
The ToC held that by developing policy frameworks, revising the curriculum, procuring data infrastructure, and increasing the number of staff, MEHE and CERD's capacities would be improved, and timely and robust data would be available for evidence-based policy making.

Outputs and Interim Results

Similar to the other two objectives, the program partially achieved the targets under this objective.

Table 6. Indicators for Objective 3 (strengthened systems)

	Indicator	Baseline (PAD)	Target	Achieved	% achieved/comment
1	CERD Annual Statistics Yearbook is published by 01 August every year for the last academic year (inclusive of all refugee-education data)	No	Yes	No	Not achieved
2	Annual RACE II Operational and Financial Plan and Report available	No	Yes	No	Not achieved
3	Unified framework for data management, data collection protocols, and compliance systems endorsed and operational	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
4	Percentage of public schools with education data management system functioning	0	>90%	100%	Achieved. All schools have School Information and Management Systems (SIMS).
5	Percentage of schools with disaggregated data on refugee student enrolment available by 01 February of each year for current academic year	0	>90%	90	Achieved. All schools are entering disaggregated data for 2nd shift in SIMS.
6	Curriculum revised to improve quality of learning	No	Yes	No	Not achieved.
7	CERD adequately capacitated and equipped to develop interactive content and e-platform	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
8	National textbooks piloted, evaluated, and finalized for print	No	Yes	No	Not achieved.
9	Comprehensive national learning assessment strategy developed and operational	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved.
10	National Teacher Assessment Framework and teacher observation tools developed and operational	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
11	Endorsed framework for school-based management operational	No	Yes	No	Not achieved
12	Revised School Health Program operational	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
13	Policy and mechanisms to monitor violence against children in schools endorsed and operationalized by	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved

	MEHE (with Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities)				
14	Policy framework for special needs education endorsed and operational	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
15	Document on Risk Screening of Public Schools in Lebanon under the National School Safety Program (NSSP) available	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
16	Staffing review and technical assistance plan for Project Management Unit (PMU), CERD, and DOPS available	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
17	Quality control standards for planning, procurement and financial management for PMU and CERD endorsed and operational	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved

The main achievements were the development of different tools and policies, such as (1) a comprehensive national learning assessment strategy; (2) the National Teacher Assessment Framework and observation tools; (3) a revised School Health Program; (4) policies to monitor violence against children in schools; (5) a framework for special needs education; and (6) a risk screening document for public schools under the National School Safety Program (NSSP). Furthermore, staffing reviews and technical assistance plans for PMU, CERD, and DOPS were completed, and quality control standards for planning, procurement, and financial management for PMU and CERD were endorsed and put into practice.

However, other outputs were not completed, such as the publication of the CERD Annual Statistics Yearbook. The revision of the curriculum was initiated but not completed, and the national textbooks were not finalized.

Outcomes

The reconstructed ToC in the ICR mentions “an effective and accurate education management information system (EMIS) established and functional” as an outcome under this PDO (ICR, p. 3). Furthermore, the PAD states that “supporting the development and incentivizing the completion of a proper EMIS might be the greatest contribution the program” makes to the overall government’s strategy (PAD, p. 61). However, the project team interpreted the associated DLI “Unified framework for data management, data collection protocols, and compliance systems endorsed and operational” as unifying the data systems that MEHE and CERD had and considered unifying these two systems as meeting the DLI, even though an EMIS was not established (IEG meeting with project team, 20 May 2025).

The second expected outcome was improved MEHE and CERD capacity. This was achieved partially through the development of policy tools and training of staff.

Rating

Modest

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Overall Efficacy is rated as Modest, since the ratings for the achievement of the individual Objectives 1, 2 and 3 were all Modest.

Rating	Primary Reason
Modest	Low achievement

5. Outcome

The overall outcome of the program is rated Moderately Unsatisfactory, based on Substantial Relevance and Modest Efficacy.

Outcome Rating

Moderately Unsatisfactory

6. Risk to Development Outcome

The risk to development outcome is analyzed across the following dimensions: context, policy, financial, organizational, and technical capacity regarding the public education system in Lebanon.

The challenging context and external shocks (macroeconomic crises, conflicts) pose a significant threat to sustaining the achieved PDO. The declining value of public sector salaries continues to impact the quality of human resources, leading to an ongoing dependence on externally funded contractual staff. This reliance jeopardizes both the quality of education services and the overall capacity of the system.

At the policy level, the program contributed to the drafting of protection and inclusion policies. In 2018, an operational policy to monitor violence against children in schools was drafted in collaboration with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Justice, and Interior. As a follow up, DOPS, UNICEF, and the National Commission for Lebanese Women jointly developed an update that was published in 2024 (ICR, p. 30). In 2023, a new inclusion policy was developed and launched, and CERD provided training to 1,367 teachers and school principals in 60 inclusive schools (ICR, p. 30).

Heavy reliance on external funding threatens sustainability. Though both MEHE and development partners continue to mobilize domestic and international resources for ensuring equitable access to formal public education, donor fatigue and a decrease in available Overseas Development Assistance could jeopardize the maintenance of the PDO in the long term (ICR, p. 15). The PforR has helped sustain MEHE's operations, but the severe macroeconomic crisis jeopardizes the continuation of program-supported activities after funding ends. Government resources are mainly focused on recurrent costs, limiting system improvements. The Bank continues to advocate for

increased domestic funding, emphasizing key long-term investments like curriculum revision and the development of an EMIS (ICR, p. 20). Funding from development partners is expected to sustain teacher training, performance evaluation, and student assessments to maintain education quality (ICR, p. 22)

Organizational strengthening is another aspect that contributes to sustaining development outcomes. For example, CERD launched several capacity building platforms, such as the Digital Learning Platform introduced in 2020, granting free access to international online libraries for math, science, and language studies. Since 2021, academic teams have been curating local digital content to align with the curriculum. The Mawaridi platform is widely used for educational material, with teachers receiving ongoing training. Additionally, since March 2022, Classera (an online learning management system) has been providing advanced training to CERD and MEHE on effective platform utilization (ICR, p. 29). Importantly, and given its highly political nature, the PforR contributed to the initial stages of the design of a new curriculum. The program also succeeded in creating a unified framework for data management, data collection protocols, and compliance systems that were endorsed by both MEHE and CERD (ICR, p. 29). The program also enhanced SIMS by adding modules on Financial Management and Document Management. In addition, MEHE reviewed/updated the revised school specifications (e.g. safety, green, etc.) (ICR, p. 30). Going forward, it is foreseen that MEHE and its partners will prioritize system strengthening, including curriculum revision, policy integration, and data management improvements (ICR, p. 22). Finally, since MEHE was unable to establish a permanent internal audit function due to the lack of a legal framework requiring broader government consensus, it established a temporary audit unit staffed with independent consultants who trained and guided MEHE staff, ensuring some level of oversight despite institutional limitations (ICR, p. 18). However, it is uncertain whether this temporary function will be sustained after the program has ended.

At the human resources level, the program built the technical capacity of MEHE, the PMU, and CERD in core areas. Capacity was strengthened in terms of project planning, management, fiduciary functions, and M&E to effectively implement program activities and MEHE's strategy. This included the set-up of a functional procurement unit with adequate and trained staff as well as an M&E function to work on the program (ICR, p. 18). Furthermore, MEHE trained more than 60,000 teachers and educators (ICR, p. 27) and more than 1,000 DOPS counsellors (ICR, p. 28) on a variety of topics. Finally, staff from 200 schools were trained on the NSSP, which is currently being revised and will be finalized in June 2024 (ICR, p. 30).

Notwithstanding all the above aspects that contribute to sustainability, maintaining the program's achievements over the long term is jeopardized by the ongoing country context.

7. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

While the Program's design had several strong elements (e.g., its alignment to the government's strategy, t use of concessional financing, sound fiduciary assessments, and mitigation measures to address identifie risks), it overestimated the Government's capacity to implement the PforR.

A key strength of the PforR was its relevance to the government's strategy to improve access to education all children in Lebanon, which led to a strong commitment from the government and development partners (ICR,

12). The Bank's effective engagement and consultation with key stakeholders also secured ownership and ensured the feasibility of the DLIs within the program (ICR, p. 20).

Furthermore, **access to IDA credit—despite Lebanon's middle-income country status—facilitated the government's adoption of the program** and its objective to increase non-Lebanese students' enrollment into pub schools (ICR, p. 4).

The Task Team conducted comprehensive assessments—technical, fiduciary, environmental, and social—t identified key risks in implementing a PforR in Lebanon, and established risk mitigation strategies to addre them (ICR, p. 19). Based on these assessments, the Bank concluded that the benefits of the PforR outweighed the associated risks, and a Program Action Plan (PAP) was developed to mitigate the identified fiduciary risks.

The adoption of the Program Operational Manual, a key component of the PAP, was a condition of effectiveness. It established implementation procedures and DLI verification protocols and clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of MEHE, CERD, the Ministry of Finance, and the Court of Accounts, ensuring structured overs (ICR, p. 13).

Finally, though the PforR did not have a specific ToC, it was well-anchored into the government's initiative "Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon" (RACE) pillars and results chain (PAD, p. 25).

However, the ICR concludes that, in retrospect**, the suitability of the PforR as an instrument to address Lebanon's response to the Syrian refugee crisis was questionable.** The ICR highlights various challenges linke to the PforR approach, including implementation difficulties, high supervision costs, and reputational risks for the Ba (ICR, p. 19). However, the project team also highlighted that the IPFs in Lebanon were slow-disbursing and were equally not well-suited to address the politically sensitive issue of integrating non-Lebanese students into the public education system (IEG meeting with project team, 20 May 2025). Therefore, while the PforR as an instrument may have been the right choice, the Bank underestimated the Government's capacities to implement it and did not put in place adequate measures to compensate for this lack of readiness. Furthermore, there were several weaknesses related to the DLIs which are discussed in the M&E Design section.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

During the life of the program, Lebanon underwent multiple severe crises that made it more difficult for MEHE to meet its programmatic requirements, particularly related to fiduciary and safeguard aspects of the program (ICR, p. 20). This should have catalyzed greater supervision and hands-on support on the part of the Bank.

However, high turnover of Task Team Leaders (TTLs) created discontinuity in supervision. The program had four TTLs. The third and fourth were based in Beirut, which improved coordination with MEHE and overall supervision.

Nonetheless, **more early hands-on support was needed.** Given the novelty of the PforR instrument, the program would have benefitted from greater hands-on support, in particular during the early

stages of implementation (ICR, p. 20). Such support could have potentially avoided the need to extend the closing dates of the associated Trust Funds and of the program itself.

TTL in-country presence and close involvement of national staff improved implementation. Starting from 2019, when the TTL was based in-country, program implementation improved (ICR, p. 20). However, disruptions such as the pandemic, the Port of Beirut blast, and regional conflict affected TTL presence in Lebanon. The involvement of Lebanese core team members was crucial in maintaining operational stability.

Implementation support missions were not regularly carried out. During certain years (2018 and 2023), only one Implementation Support Report (ISR) was prepared (ICR, pp. iii-iv). Nonetheless, program reporting was candid in capturing implementation challenges and shortcomings in terms of programmatic requirements being met (ICR, p. 20).

On a positive note, the use of funds against achieved DLIs allowed schools to reopen following teacher strikes. This also permitted the continuity of MEHE's operations and helped to mitigate the impacts of the crises on schooling and learning outcomes.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

8. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design
While the M&E design had some strengths, it included substantial weaknesses related to the DLIs.

The M&E design's strengths included (1) an RF for the program that was strongly aligned with MEHE's Five Year Plan; (2) overall, indicators that were specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound; and (3) DLIs that were clearly defined, measurable, and aligned with the PDO.

However, M&E design also exhibited several weaknesses. The number of indicators (45) was **relatively high**. There were no **disbursement-linked targets for each year** of the program (ICR, p. 17). In a few cases, there was **no clear linkage between the indicators and results**. For example, there were some differences in the definitions of PDO indicators and relevant DLRs. PDO indicator 2 focused on maintaining the proportion of students transitioning across Cycles (Grades 3-4, 6-7, and 9-10); however, DLRs 2.1-2.3 focused on increasing transitions from Grades 4-5, 7-8, and 10-11. Another example is the indicator that tracked the percentage of children enrolled, whereas the baseline and target were defined according to number of children enrolled, and were always tracked as such. The associated DLI also focused on the number (not percentage) of children enrolled (ICR, footnote 19, p. 6).

Importantly, it was not always clear what **the causal link was between certain actions related to improving the quality of education and the achievement of the PDO** (i.e., that the achievement of this

DLI led to increased enrollment or improved transition rates). Specifically, the DLIs did not always establish learning-based criteria for transition. This meant that there were no safeguards against automatic progression without academic benchmarks, which highlights the risk of the DLI contributing to perverse incentives. Another example is the DLIs associated with PDO 2, particularly those related to education quality, which could have been more outcome-driven rather than output-focused. For instance, instead of assessing teacher coaching evaluations (DLI 3), the indicator could have prioritized measurable improvements in teacher performance, strengthening its link to higher enrollment and better transition rates. However, due to political challenges, particularly with DLIs 3 and 5, the use of targeted incentives was crucial for ensuring their successful implementation (ICR, p. 9).

Finally, there was some **confusion regarding the DLIs and to which objective they were related**. For example, DLI5: Proportion of participating schools with active community partnerships was associated with the objective of improving the quality of education (ICR, p. 39), but it was more closely linked to increasing enrollment.

b. M&E Implementation

In December 2022, as part of the fourth restructuring, the RF was simplified as follows: three IRIs were revised to better align with the relevant DLIs, and three IRIs that were not relevant to the achievement of the PDO were dropped (ICR, p. 7).

Revisions in IRIs

IRI	Original	Revised/Dropped	Rationale
7	% of children and youth aged 3-15 above the corresponding graduation age who have completed a Cycle	Dropped.	The indicator does not measure the PDO, and the value-added of this indicator is unclear.
15	Number of public schools that implement formative and summative assessments for students in Grade 3 in reading and math	Revised. Number of public schools that implement formative and summative assessments for students in Grade 3 in reading and math in Year 2 (Target 170)	Revised indicator working to align with language related to DLI 4. Indicator target revised from 180 to 170 to match the DLI target.
25	Mid-cycle and end-cycle RACE II program review completed	Dropped.	The indicator does not measure the PDO (i.e., system strengthening of the education system). Rather, it captures project-level processes such as completion of midterm review.
27	Unified framework for data management, data collection protocols, and compliance systems endorsed and operational	Revised. Data and information management framework developed and adopted by MEHE and CERD.	Changed wording to better align with related DLI 6.1

30	Curriculum revised to improve quality of learning	Revised. Curriculum design completed.	Changed wording to better align with related DLI 7.2
40	RACE II coordination platform led by PMU established and fully functional	Dropped.	The indicator does not measure the PDO (i.e., system strengthening of the education system). Rather, it captures project-level processes such coordination.

While dropping of the IRI regarding coordination was justified in that it did not measure system strengthening, this ICRR considers coordination as key element/indicator of a well-functioning system, especially in a sector that is funded by different donors. It ensures complementarity of actions and avoids duplication sector-wide of donor-funded initiatives. It also ensures greater coordination between the different government institutions such as MEHE, CERD, DOPS, etc.

M&E implementation exhibited several weaknesses, partly due to the turnover of M&E staff caused by the macroeconomic crisis, the devaluation of the Lebanese currency, and as a result the inability to attract/retain PMU staff. These shortcomings included the following:

- **Data quality of key indicators was not up to standards**. For example, the lack of aggregation by gender, nationality, and cycle for the two PDO indicators made it somewhat difficult to fully assess achievement of the program objectives (ICR, p. 17).
- **Results reported were not specifically related to the PforR**. For example, the number of schools built/renovated mentioned in the RF is "agnostic" as to source of funding, according to the project team (email to IEG, 27 May 2025). The project team mentioned that, most likely, the number of schools reported in the RF were those that were built/renovated with UNICEF funds due to the procurement challenges faced by the program (see procurement section below). Similarly, it is unclear whether the number of teachers trained is attributable to the PforR or includes training offered by other donors (e.g., USAID).
- **Unavailability of some M&E data**. According to the project team (email to IEG, 27 May 2025), MEHE and CERD were not able to provide information regarding all the indicators included in the RF (e.g., proportion of non-Lebanese students transitioning grades, or the number of cases of violence involving students that require follow-up, or the number/percentage of identified children and youth with special needs who are referred by public schools). However, this is partially contradicted in the ICR "DLI #6.2: Annual data available from participating schools on disaggregated data on student enrollment by March 1 in each year, and disaggregated data on student grade passing rates by August 31," which is reported as achieved (ICR, p. 33).

Finally, the ICR notes that the DLI verification protocol was effective, and the DLIs provided a crucial flow of grant funds to move program implementation forward, particularly in the face of the macroeconomic crisis.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E data guided program management and decision-making, influencing various restructurings. The program's M&E/RF was used as the "de facto" M&E for MEHE's implementation of its entire strategy, including activities funded under other programs. While this allowed the "unifying" of M&E, it

also created challenges in identifying which outputs were achieved by the PforR and which ones were funded by other projects (e.g., number of teachers trained, schools rehabilitated) (IEG meeting with project team, 20 May 2025).

MEHE prioritized meeting DLIs as defined in the PAD but often focused on technical completion rather than achieving their intended objectives. For instance, DLR 2.3 (improving Grade 10 to 11 transition rates) was met by automatic student promotion during COVID-19, rather than actual education quality improvements. Greater emphasis was placed on increasing student enrollment, and less attention was placed on improving quality of education. While student enrollment data helped prioritize investments in school access during the macroeconomic crisis, student learning outcome data from assessments (DLIs 4 and 8) could have been better utilized to improve education quality (ICR, p. 16). Similarly, DLI 9 was fulfilled by producing internal audit reports, but the audit function was not institutionalized, as no further audits have been conducted since (ICR, p .16)

The program's M&E activities helped the Bank team engage in discussions on data availability and quality in the education sector. Due to the lack of an EMIS, MEHE and CERD focal points manually compiled data for reporting, with the Task Team reviewing and clarifying the RF. These discussions highlighted fragmented data systems and reinforced the need for a unified framework (DLI 6), SIMS improvements, and eventually an EMIS. The Task Team also encouraged MEHE to make SIMS data more accessible, as current education reports are published in PDF format with minimal trend analysis for evidence-based policymaking (ICR, p. 16).

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

9. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

Prior to program approval, the Bank team conducted an Environmental and Social Systems Assessment and identified key actions to (i) enhance citizen engagement; (ii) strengthen community liaisons in addressing social issues; (iii) ensure funding for Child Protection Officers; (iv) improve MEHE's Complaints Hotline; (v) support community cohesion between refugees and host communities; and (vi) build oversight capacity for school construction in line with World Bank resettlement and land acquisition principles. However, due to high turnover of Bank and PMU teams and capacity constraints at MEHE, these recommendations were only partially implemented and not officially reported (ICR, p. 17).

In terms of ensuring social safeguards, the program emphasized strengthening MEHE's grievance redress mechanism (GRM), which was also a top priority under the PAP. To strengthen social management systems, MEHE aimed to enhance its complaints hotline and establish a unified GRM system. A designated GRM focal point was responsible for creating accessible GRM channels, setting up dedicated complaint-handling rooms—including specialized spaces for confidential cases and children with special needs—and developing a real-time internal dashboard for tracking requests and complaints. However, capacity constraints and administrative shifts delayed key activities, including hiring a GRM Consultant, who was only appointed in December 2023. These challenges prevented the full realization of the GRM's objectives (ICR, p. 17). As a result, the hotline was launched, along with a crisis room at MEHE to handle

complaints. However, no information is provided on number of complaints received and addressed. Two progress reports were completed, along with recommendations for strengthening the GRM (ICR, p. 35), though it was envisaged to have semi-annual assessment of operation of GRM.

During implementation, the environment risk rating was downgraded to low, as the potential risks anticipated during project preparation were not encountered. The project ensured proper exclusion of any interventions that would have negative environmental/occupational risks (ICR, p. 17). However, the ICR is silent regarding any environmental/occupational risks related to the renovation and/or construction of schools.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Since this PforR was the first designed in Lebanon and the region and OPCS had not yet developed a standard Fiduciary Assessment template, the Bank team presented its findings in a less structured format compared to later PforRs. The fiduciary team consisted of international senior procurement and financial staff supported by national staff. The team gathered data through meetings and discussions with key institutions, including the Ministry of Finance, MEHE, CERD, Court of Accounts, Central Inspection, and Central Tender Board, as well as by reviewing documents submitted by these agencies (ICR, p. 17).

The fiduciary assessment identified several financial and procurement risks. Concerns included the absence of a formal annual national budget process, weaknesses in accounting and control systems, and the lack of an internal audit function. Additionally, MEHE faced significant challenges in handling large procurement activities and managing contracts due to limited capacity. The Central Tender Board lacked sufficient resources to effectively regulate procurement, resolve complaints, standardize bidding documents, collect data, and train civil servants. Lastly, the Court of Accounts had inadequate resources to expedite prior procurement reviews, further complicating oversight and efficiency in the procurement process (ICR, p. 5 and p. 18).

To address these identified risks, the PAP was designed to enhance the oversight mechanisms at MEHE and CERD. The PAP included nine activities that were implemented (ICR, pp. 36-37). Key measures included strengthening grievance redress, introducing an internal audit function, appointing an external audit firm, and conducting a comprehensive needs assessment for capacity building. Additionally, the PAD outlined three Legal Covenants: (1) recruiting an internal audit consultant within 12 months; (2) hiring an IVA within three months; and (3) establishing a Program Steering Committee within one month of program effectiveness, to ensure continued oversight throughout implementation (ICR, pp. 12-13).

Furthermore, and to facilitate the transition from previous IPF operations to the new PforR modality and mitigate risks, funds from achieved DLIs were directed to a MEHE Designated Account rather than the central government. MEHE was responsible for developing an Annual Work Plan (AWP) to allocate these funds. Instead of tracking expenditures against government budget lines, the AWP organized them by activities that contributed to DLI achievements, ensuring a more goal-oriented financial structure (ICR, p. 13).

As a result of the efforts to improve financial management (FM) and despite the challenges faced, the ICR rated FM performance at closing as "Moderately Satisfactory" (ICR, p. 19).

Procurement was rated as Satisfactory despite challenges in implementing school rehabilitation/building. The procurement process followed national regulations with oversight from the Procurement Policy Authority to comply with the 2021 procurement law. The World Bank's Anti-Corruption Guidelines were applied, and internal audits ensured compliance. Supervision, including field visits, found no major issues. All five procurement-related PAP items were met, and transaction efficiency was monitored throughout the full cycle (ICR, p. 19). MEHE effectively managed project contracts through decentralized procurement under the 2021 public procurement law. Despite challenges such as financial instability, currency fluctuations, and staff resignations, MEHE maintained strong institutional capacity with experienced engineers and a procurement expert. The team mitigated risks by adjusting contracts and bidding estimates, ensuring stability (ICR, p. 19). However, the project team reported that the number of schools rehabilitated/built reported in the RF were most likely funded by UNICEF, since MEHE experienced difficulties in implementing this activity due to exchange rate fluctuations that led to cancellation of procurement contracts (IEG meeting with Bank team, 20 May 2025).

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ICR does not identify any unintended impacts.

d. Other

Available data indicate that the program neither narrowed nor widened gender gaps. Based on enrollment data from CERD and MEHE, there was a higher proportion of girls than boys enrolled in the first shift (53 percent F, 47 percent M at both baseline and completion), and in the second shift there was a roughly 50-50 split between girls and boys at both baseline and completion. It would have been interesting to better understand why more Lebanese girls were enrolled in public schools: was it because more boys were dropping out due to the financial crisis, or were boys systematically placed in private schools (better quality of education) and girls in public schools (less costly)? Girls outperformed boys overall in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment and 2022 Early Grade Reading Assessment (ICR, p. 13).

The ICR provides sex-disaggregated enrolment data in Annex 6 (ICR, p. 48).

	Baseline (2015-16)		Completion (2022-23)	
	Number	%	Number	%
First shift	*314,726*		*302,099*	
Boys	148,212	47.1%	142,935	47.3%
Girls	166,514	52.9%	159,164	52.7%
Second shift	*85,804*		*160,018*	
Boys	42,552	49.6%	79,358	49.6%

Girls	43,252	50.4%	80,660	50.4%

10. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Bank Performance is rated MU asbecause Quality at Entry is MU (Bank did not assess accurately Client's readiness to implement a PforR) and Quality of Supervision is rated MU because Bank did not provide sufficient implementation support to compensate for lack of readiness and external shocks (e.g., financial crisis).
Quality of M&E	Modest	Modest	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

11. Lessons

This ICRR confirms the series of lessons and recommendations emerging from the project's experience (ICR, pp. 21-22). The most relevant lessons included:

Implementing a PforR in a context that lacks institutional readiness and adequate country systems may lead to confusion in financial oversight and increase the Bank's reputational risk. Lebanon's current systems are not fully equipped for a PforR, as shown by unmet programmatic requirements and exacerbated by ongoing crises. The transition from an Investment Project Financing (IPF) approach posed challenges, including fund earmarking, the absence of a unified expenditure framework, and the need for Bank approval on Annual Work Plans (AWPs). These issues led to a lack of clarity in financial oversight, increasing reputational risks for the Bank, particularly regarding the hiring of consultants with program funds. Moving forward, a thorough evaluation of Lebanon's institutional readiness is essential before implementing another PforR.

The PforR instrument allows greater flexibility and faster disbursement rates than an IPF. Given Lebanon's history of slow-disbursing IPFs, the PforR was successful, as all DLIs were achieved and funds fully disbursed despite a challenging country context. The approach allowed MEHE to adapt to evolving needs, including reallocating funds to support teacher salary top-ups, which helped reopen schools following teacher strikes in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years. In addition, development partners, including the Bank, leveraged this process to provide technical support to MEHE in strengthening their data and monitoring systems, contributing to long-term institutional improvements.

Alignment with client and Bank strategies and priorities is crucial for PforR implementation, and choice of outcome-level DLIs ensures longer-term sustainability. The PforR's alignment with MEHE's and the Bank's priorities for the Lebanese education sector played a vital role in the achievements that were observed. However, selecting indicators that emphasized outcomes over outputs and designing metrics to ensure the sustained maintenance of achievements throughout the program would have enhanced the potential for long-term development impact.

When shifting from an IPF to a PforR, greater time is needed to ensure the client's familiarity with the instrument. More hands-on support is also required, which can be more easily provided by having the TTL be country-based and supported by national staff. Initially, implementation progressed slowly due to unfamiliarity with the PforR instrument in Lebanon. However, once TTLs were stationed in Beirut, engagement with counterparts became more frequent, allowing for more effective, hands-on support. The presence of local staff on the core task team was crucial, ensuring that Bank assistance was well informed by deep knowledge of the local context and key stakeholders. Additionally, local staff played a vital role in maintaining continuity when international staff were either absent from Lebanon or had to leave due to the COVID-19 pandemic and regional conflicts.

12. Assessment Recommended?

No

13. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR was prepared under a very challenging context and limited client capacity. Since 2019, Lebanon's education sector has faced compounding crises, including economic collapse, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut explosion, and ongoing regional conflicts, leading to massive displacement and strained resources. MEHE has struggled with severely devalued salaries and staff retention, forcing a shift in priorities and limiting capacity for non-crisis-related tasks (ICR, p. 1), including the M&E function. Despite these challenges, the ICR is clear, concise and candid.

The ICR presents a well-constructed Theory of Change (ToC) (ICR, p. 4), with plausible assumptions (ICR, p. 3).

The ICR is candid and critical of the DLIs and the extent to which they contributed to achieving the PDOs. It also provides additional data in Annexes that were not included in the Results Framework, such as sex- and nationality-disaggregated information. However, the ICR does not provide detailed information on the soundness and credibility of the verification protocol for each DLI. It limits its analysis to mentioning that the protocols were clear and included a methodology for monitoring and verification.

The ICR fails to explain how, notwithstanding several outputs not being achieved, the DLRs were met. A more critical analysis of the logical framework could have highlighted better the weaknesses in the M&E/Results Framework—for example, the linkage between the unmet target of rehabilitating schools and its

impact on both enrollment (lack of space) and/or quality of education (high student/teacher ration due to overcrowding).

Finally, the ICR offers limited elaboration on how coordination worked in practice—division of labor, complementarities, and attribution with other development partners, in particular since there were several other organizations involved in the education sector.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial