



Ministry of Education
and Higher Education

EQUITY Action Plan

2025–2029

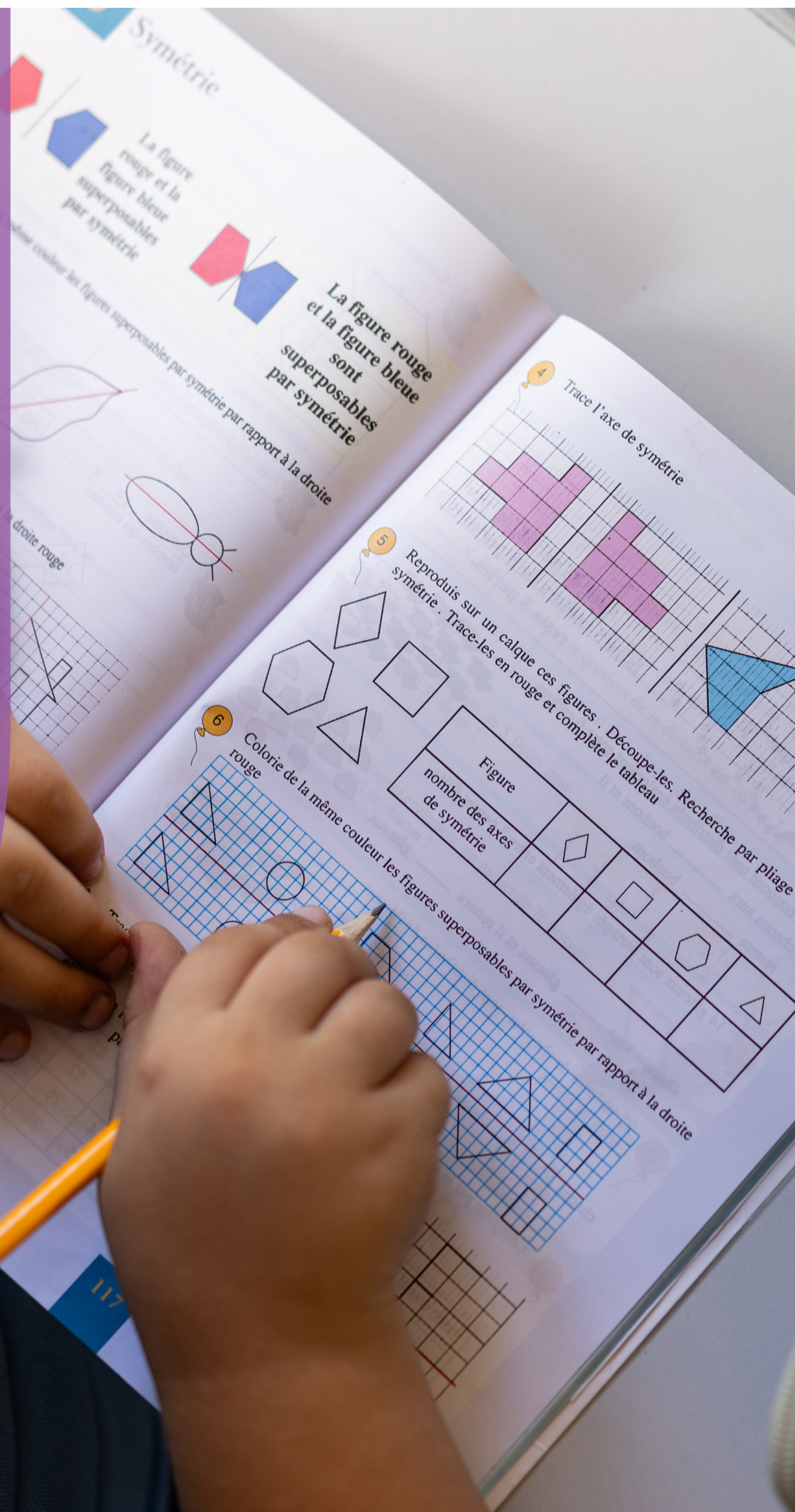
A comprehensive roadmap
towards creating an equitable
education system in Lebanon





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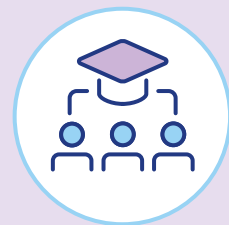
Acronyms

CERD	Center of Educational Research and Development
CP	Child Protection
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DOPS	Département d'Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GRDP	Gender-Responsive Digital Pedagogy
HR	Human Resources
IST	Implementation Support Team
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NFE	Non-Formal Education
REO	Regional Education Officer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIMS	School Information Management System
SMB	Strategic Management Board
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TREF	Transition and Resilience Education Fund
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in promoting equality by providing equal opportunities for both boys and girls to learn and grow. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) confirm and amplify the strong connection between equality between girls and boys, and education; SDG Target 4.5 specifically calls for the elimination of disparities in education and equal access for all, and the broader 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goes further to underscore the centrality and mutual dependence of education and equality. Achieving equality between girls and boys requires a rights-based approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles but are empowered equally in and through education. Girls and boys, especially the most marginalized, face different sets of challenges, including gender¹ and social norms.

The education system in Lebanon has the potential to ensure the most marginalized adolescent girls and boys are supported to transition into secondary education in a safe and empowering environment, and complete their education journey. Investing in a gender-responsive education system not only benefits girls and boys, but has a multiplier effect for nations, leading to reduced rates of poverty and increased economic growth.



SDG Target 4.5
equal access
& elimination
of disparities

2024
Gender Analysis
conducted

2030
Sustainable
Development
Agenda



TREF Mandate

The Transition and Resilience Education Fund (TREF) is an aid modality that supports the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in the implementation of its 5-Year Education Plan. TREF has 11 priority programs UNICEF has co-designed with MEHE and integrated into its Joint Annual Work Plan, the fourth one being “TREF Equity between Girls and Boys”. These 11 priority programs are organized in two funding windows: Window 1 relates to Formal Education. Funding through this window supports MEHE in its commitment to provide access to quality education for all vulnerable children in public schools, including children with disabilities and learning difficulties, ensure their retention and their learning outcomes. Window 2 relates to Multiple Flexible Pathways. Funding through this window supports the objective to open new and innovative education pathways for out-of-school children, before they transition to formal education or the world of work. UNICEF’s priority programs range from the Dirasa program that prepares Out-of- School



11
priority
programs

2-year
education plan

Children to transition to formal education through specific classes in semiprivate schools, to the Makani program that offers multi-services to out-of-school children, linking education with protection, health, and nutrition.

Equality between girls and boys is vital in realizing TREF’s mandate and principles of delivering improved quality education services for better learning outcomes for more children.

This Equity Action Plan provides a comprehensive roadmap towards creating a gender-responsive education system in Lebanon. It is part of the TREF Gender Audit, financed by KfW, and based on the findings and recommendations of the TREF Gender Analysis conducted in January 2024. This Equity Action Plan has been co-created by the TREF Gender Working Group, consisting of representatives of TREF technical and financial partners, and co-facilitated by MEHE and UNICEF.

¹ The term “gender” refers to the biological classification of girls and boys as female and male.

TREF Equity Theory of Change

Goal

TREF supports MEHE in providing a gender-responsive education system in Lebanon, designed to address and overcome the different and intersectional barriers that boys and girls face in accessing and benefiting from education, ensuring that educational policies, practices, and environments are inclusive and equitable, promoting equal learning opportunities and outcomes for all girls and boys.

Inputs

TREF mandate, including MEHE 5-Year Plan (2021-2025)

Advocacy and programming at scale

Human and financial resources
TREF stakeholders

Policies on equity and inclusion

Assumptions

- Stakeholders' engagement (teachers, communities, school personnel, caregivers)
- Internal leadership and commitment
- Sufficient allocation of financial and human resources
- Implementation and monitoring of policies

Risks

- Volatile political situation, leading to de-prioritization of the Equity Action Plan
- Competing priorities and lack of political will
- Lack of financing
- Data gaps

Outputs — programmatic results



Trained educators and school personnel

Teachers are trained on gender-responsive pedagogies and promote equality between girls and boys in their teaching practices.

Gender-responsive curriculum

Teaching and learning materials do not reproduce gender stereotypes and promote equality between men and women, girls and boys.



Increased enrollment and retention

Addressing barriers such as bias against boys or girls, discrimination, and unequal access to resources ensures that girls, as well as boys, are more likely to enroll in and complete their education, reducing sex-based disparities in access to education.



Improved participation of girls and boys in STEM

Girls and boys participate more equally in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



Improved facilities

School infrastructure caters to the different needs of girls and boys, to provide a safe learning environment.



Safe and protective learning environment

School-related gender-based violence is addressed in a comprehensive manner, from prevention, risk mitigation to robust referral mechanisms.



Engaged communities

Increased awareness and support from caregivers and community members on equity between girls and boys in education, and addressing harmful coping mechanisms leading to school drop-out for girls and boys.

Outputs — institutional results

Systematic analyses on equity

Analyses on equity between girls and boys are integrated in TREF programming and planning.

Dedicated expertise and capacity

TREF builds and retains staff capacity specifically focused on equity.

Sex parity at all levels

Parity is reflected across the education workforce and TREF decision-making bodies.

Diverse partnerships

Partnerships with civil society organisations, including women- and youth-led organisations.

Institutional accountability

TREF holds itself accountable for its commitments on equity between girls and boys, men and women.

Outcome

TREF promotes equality in education, through a robust gender-responsive education system.

Impact

Gender equality

Achieving sex parity in education, leading to broader social and economic benefits.

Economic growth

A more educated and diverse workforce contributing to the country's development.

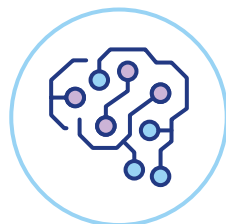
Social change

Equity in education contributes to shifts in attitudes and norms towards greater equality between girls and boys, within education and in wider society.

Key Programmatic Priorities

Promoting equality in education can be accomplished with a two-pronged approach, which combines:

- **Targeted interventions** to address the challenges, risks and disadvantages faced by girls, boys, women and men. Targeted interventions focus specifically on addressing barriers to education faced by girls or boys because of their sex. These could include quotas for girls' or boys' enrollment and attainment, the furnishing of segregated latrines and provisions for menstrual hygiene management, girls' or boys' after-school clubs that provide support and extra-curricular learning opportunities, or bursary schemes and cash transfers linked to girls' attendance and delay of marriage.
- **Integrated efforts** across all processes in the management of the education sector. It involves identifying and responding to differences and inequalities during every phase of an endeavor—from analysis, planning and design through implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



The two-pronged approach is applied to the following three pillars of MEHE's five-year plan: Equal Access to Education Services, Quality of education, and System strengthening. The programmatic and institutional priorities cover the scope of Window 1 and Window 2 of TREF, expanding through formal and non-formal education.

This section outlines key goals and strategies for the three pillars of MEHE's Five-Year Plan.



A. Equal Access to Education Services

Goal: Ensure all children, regardless of sex, have equal access to education services.

Strategies

Policy Advocacy

Advocate for policies that promote equity in education and address gender-based barriers such as child marriage, gender-based violence, child labor, and ensure these policies are effectively implemented and monitored. The National Action Plan to Prevent and Mitigate Child Marriage recommends a robust set of interventions to be carried out by the education sector, in addition to the Child Protection in Education Policy.



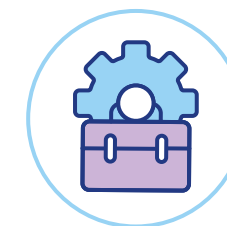
Community Engagement

Conduct a mapping of existing gender-sensitive awareness campaigns and complement with national campaigns led by national authorities such as the MEHE, to change societal attitudes towards education for all girls and boys, including children living with disabilities. This includes events and activities at the level of schools and non-formal education centers and alignment of national campaigns with international commemorations of international days related to equity and inclusion².



Infrastructure Development and supplies

Build and upgrade school and non-formal education centers' facilities to be gender-sensitive and inclusive (e.g., separate, safe, and accessible toilets for boys and girls). Ensure the supplies delivered to students consider the different needs of girls and boys, especially in situations of crises and displacement (hygiene kits for adolescent girls to address period poverty)



² These include: 8 March International Women's Day; 11 October International Day of the Girl Child; 11 February International Day of Women and Girls in Science; 28 May International Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day; 3 December International Day of Persons living with Disabilities.

B. Quality of Education

Goal: Improve the quality of education for all girls and boys, learning in an inclusive and safe environment.

Strategies

Curriculum Reform

Mainstream equity throughout the curriculum reform process, through the active participation of equity specialists in curriculum reform committees, to ensure textbook materials and teaching practices do not reinforce gender stereotypes.



Teacher Training

Mandatory training for all teachers in formal and non-formal education platforms on gender-responsive and inclusive pedagogy and classroom practices, including gender-responsive digital pedagogy³, in line with the reformed curriculum. Teachers are also receiving training on child protection policy in school settings which will also include addressing equity and gender-based violence.



Learning environment

To ensure a safer and more inclusive learning environment, ensure continuous implementation and monitoring at a national scale of the following subset of activities:

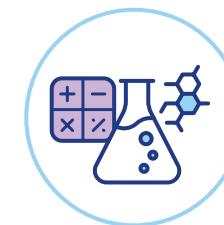
- Integration of Gender-Based Violence in the revised Child Protection Policy
- Ensure ongoing training of DOPS counsellors and school focal points on GBV prevention and response
- Conduct training on GBV risk mitigation, safe identification of cases, and appropriate referral mechanisms.
- Provide accessible support to all students and teaching staff through robust GBV referral pathway



³ The modules have already been developed, approved by CERD and made available online. These include a module on gender-responsive pedagogy, and a Gender-responsive digital pedagogy guide for educators

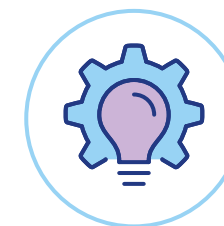
Leadership, life skills including digital and STEM⁴ skills for adolescent girls and boys

Promote STEM and digital skills for marginalized girls and boys in formal and non-formal education. Existing life skills packages targeted at adolescent girls in Makani centers to be scaled up, addressing financial literacy, safety and protection, physical health and mental well-being.



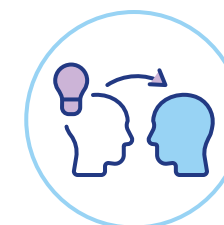
Innovation fund

Encourage educators and school personnel to implement innovative interventions in their classrooms/schools addressing inequalities between girls and boys, especially the most marginalized.



Academic support / Learning Recovery

Establish after-school tutoring and mentoring programs that provide additional academic support for the most marginalized adolescent girls and boys, at risk of dropout due to roles and norms for girls and boys manifested through child labour and child marriage.



⁴ Science, technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

C. Institutional commitment: System Strengthening

Goal: The TREF mechanism supports MEHE in providing an enabling and sustainable system that promotes equity in education in Lebanon.

Strategies

Data, research and evidence

- Systematically collect, analyze and share data on disparities between girls and boys in education to inform policy and practice. Continue collecting data on dropout through School Information Management System (SIMS) and include specific indicators in the SIMS.
- Commission independent evaluations of TREF flagship programmes from a perspective on equity between girls and boys.
- Conduct annual assessment of transition of adolescent girls and boys from non-formal to formal education



Capacity Building

Strengthen the capacity of education authorities to implement gender-responsive policies at all levels, from central MEHE to REOs and school principals. This includes the effective implementation of circular 74-2000⁵ on re-entry or married girls into education.



Leadership and accountability (within TREF governing bodies)

Build a network in education administration, with different roles and types of expertise to support the integration of equity considerations within institutions: technical experts, focal points, identify existing equity champions within TREF governing bodies (SMB, IST, technical units).



Partnerships

Cultivate strategic partnerships with local and international state and non-state actors that specialize in reducing sex disparities in education, including women and youth-led organisations.



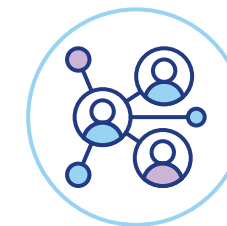
Gender-responsive Budgeting

Ensure that budgets include specific allocations for gender-responsive programs and initiatives, and track expenditure of programming on interventions with a focus on equity for all TREF proposals.



Leadership Development

Conduct an assessment of male and female employment across all levels of educational bodies (teachers, principals, Regional Education Offices, MEHE senior management) and encourage women into leadership roles within educational institutions to ensure diverse perspectives in decision-making processes. This includes mentorship programs for leadership development, ensuring job posting communication channels are accessible to men and women, as well as providing a family-friendly workplace environment.



Advocacy for family-friendly workplace policies

Explore measures for workplace policies that promote equity and work-life harmony, such as extension of paid parental leave for fathers, flexible work arrangements, and specific support for pregnant and lactating women.



Recommend these measures to the competent authorities, subject to Lebanese law.

⁵ According to the Circular of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon (74/2000), "All high school and public school principals are required to accept the registration of married girls."

Implementation Plan

Intervention Area	Activities	Indicators 6
A: ACCESS		
 Policy Advocacy and implementation	Implementation of National Action Plan to Prevent and Mitigate Child Marriage, specifically on re-integration of married girls into learning	MEHE to work on the appropriate legal and policy framework to support the reintegration into education of married girls who are of school age, in accordance with the Lebanese law and existing MEHE framework
	Implementation of Child Protection Policy in Schools	# of married girls who are re-integrated into formal education and into non-formal education classes
 Community engagement	Social and behaviour change activities to prevent child marriage and child labour	# of localized community engagement activities
	National campaigns aligned with international commemorations	# of national campaigns on equity
 Infrastructure development and Supplies	Conduct regular assessment of school and NFE center facilities	% of schools and NFE centers that have gender-responsive facilities
	School rehabilitation plans to include checklist for gender-responsive facilities	
B: QUALITY OF EDUCATION		
 Curriculum reform		% of curriculum reform committees that include equity specialists
	Participation of equity specialists in CERD curriculum committees	Classroom observation checklist that includes equity -related points on teacher practices
	Review of all teaching and learning material from an equity lens	% of teaching and learning materials reviewed and revised to ensure equity and the elimination of gender stereotypes.

 Teacher training	Inclusion of gender-responsive pedagogy module and GRDP Guide in Teacher Training Program for all teachers in formal and non-formal education	% of teachers in formal and non-formal education trained on gender-responsive pedagogies
 Learning environment	Ongoing capacity for DOPS school counsellors.	
	Roll-out of Child Protection Policy in all public schools with all school personnel.	#of schools and NFE centers that have CP focal points trained on CP Policy
	Training of school focal points and relevant school personnel on GBV referral pathway	# of school personnel trained on CP Policy
	Bi-annual refresher trainings for all formal and non-formal education focal points	
 Life skills for adolescent girls and boys	Scale-up of life skills package for adolescent girls in Makani centers	# adolescent girls participating in girls' life skills package
	Annual Tech bootcamp for adolescent girls and boys	# of girls and boys participating in digital/STEM skills programmes
 Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund	Proposal submission requirements include promoting equity between girls and boys through innovation	% of proposals that address inequalities through innovative teaching approaches
		# of funded proposals that implement innovative gender-responsive teaching and learning initiatives
 Academic support	Survey/FGD with adolescent girls and boys on preferred schedule and modality of academic support in NFE centers	# girls and boys that receive academic support through CSOs that consider their different needs (location, schedule, modality)
	Partnership with CSOs on provision of additional academic support in public schools	
C: SYSTEM STRENGTHENING		
 Data	Review and amend SIMS indicator to assess sex disparities	SIMS indicator on disparities between girls and boys
	Prepare annual report on school dropout from an equity lens to be submitted as TREF annual monitoring report	Annual TREF monitoring report includes an analysis on equity between girls and boys

6 These proposed indicators are default indicators that can be amended by MEHE and TREF partners depending on specific programme logframes

 Capacity-building	Trainings (in-person and online) for MEHE and REOs on gender-responsive education system and policies	# and % of MEHE and REOs staff members, including senior leadership, that have participated in equity trainings
 Leadership and Accountability	Identify technical experts, focal points and champions within MEHE and TREF stakeholders on equity Build a TREF equity working group	# of equity experts in decision-making bodies of MEHE and TREF Creation of an active TREF Equity working group chaired by MEHE and including different units and stakeholders
 Stakeholder engagement	Create partnerships between MEHE and local women and youth-led organisations at community level	# of local CSOs partnering with MEHE on targeted interventions for specific groups of girls or boys
 Financial resources	Capacity-building of MEHE governing structures on gender-responsive budgeting Include gender-targeted interventions in all TREF proposals, in line with TREF Equity Action Plan	# of MEHE members in governing structures trained on gender-responsive budgeting strategies % of expenditure on programming with a focus on equity
 HR Policies	Conduct an assessment of existing family-friendly HR policies at MEHE: workplace policies that promote equity and work-life harmony	Assessment findings on family-friendly HR policies at MEHE, including maternity and paternity leave and other work-life measures
 Leadership Development	Provide leadership development opportunities for female staff members at central and regional levels Conduct a rapid assessment on accessibility of communication channels for leadership opportunities and barriers for women to join decision-making bodies within MEHE	# of female staff members that participate in leadership development opportunities



Equity and Inclusion in Education in Emergency

In times of crisis, education systems are often disrupted, leaving millions of children without access to learning. Among those affected, girls, and children living with disabilities, are particularly vulnerable due to pre-existing inequalities that are exacerbated during emergencies. Ensuring that education is responsive to the different needs of girls and boys is crucial to address the unique challenges faced by them.

Changes in access to schools, safety concerns, as well as the trauma and stress experienced by girls and boys can hinder their ability to learn and thrive. Additionally, financial constraints on households often lead to difficult decisions, with girls more likely to be kept out of school to help with domestic chores or early marriage, and boys pushed into labor to support the family. A gender-responsive approach ensures that these vulnerabilities are addressed, providing safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments that cater to the specific needs of all children, thereby reducing the risk of school dropout and promoting long-term resilience and equality.



An education that is responsive to the different needs of girls and boys



Programmatic priorities

To ensure an education in emergency system that responds to the needs of all girls and boys, it is essential that equity is integrated at each stage of the humanitarian programme cycle, from preparedness to planning and design, implementation, and monitoring. This section outlines the key interventions TREF stakeholders will implement for each of these stages.

Needs assessment and analysis

- Collect and share Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data on needs, priorities, roles and capabilities relating to education.
- Conduct an analysis on equity between girls and boys as part of the education needs assessments and analyse the findings in relation to the specific threats/ barriers faced by girls, boys, women and men in relation to safe, quality education as a result of the crisis.

Strategic Planning

- Identify entry points to address specific barriers to safe and quality education for women, girls, men and boys identified utilizing the findings from the equity analysis and other preparedness data.
- Ensure a demonstrable and logical link between the specific needs identified for the education sector, project, activities and tracked outcomes.
- Resource mobilization: include information and key messages on gender-responsive education in assessment reports to influence funding, and report to donors on key gaps on sex disparities in education

Implementation

Access to education: addressing specific barriers of girls and boys to safely access learning platforms

- Address barriers such as safety concerns, cultural norms, and economic constraints that may prevent girls and boys from attending school such as transportation costs and period poverty.
- Ensure access to information on availability of services such as location of opened and functioning schools, TVET centers, community centers as well as GBV safe spaces⁷.
- Digital gap: given the digital gap (unequal access to digital devices and digital literacy), take measures to ensure equal access to remote learning and digital resources, as well as additional support for girls and boys on digital literacy, and online safety.
- Alternative education programs such as community-based learning centers and accelerated education programs are usually designed to remove barriers that prevent children and adolescents from accessing education by fitting education around their commitments and schedules (for example, holding classes outside conventional school hours). These programs are an essential part of gender-responsive education in emergency response, ensuring that girls and boys can safely continue to access education and additional services such as psychosocial support, recreational activities and academic retention support such as tutoring. Ensure these programs are inclusive such as timetables and locations, as well as having a mix of male and female staff members from these communities.

Safe learning environments

• Gender-responsive infrastructure and facilities:

Consult affected populations about gender-responsive sanitation facilities. Ensure girls, boys, women, and men have the opportunity to express their views. Separate consultation groups may be organized, where appropriate, to enable girls and boys to express their views and needs comfortably.

• Carry out an MHM needs assessment:

Ensure girls have access to sanitary materials, appropriate clothing, underwear, and soap. If they do not have these items, how can they be provided? They could be included in kits, backpacks, or non-food item provisions, and/or prepared for distribution. Partner with a local organization or other WASH actors who are already working with girls and women on MHM.

⁷ Any referral mechanism involving students, particularly minors, should be clearly linked to the MEHE Child Protection Policy, established referral procedures and the relevant Lebanese framework.

- **Child protection and GBV risk mitigation and response:**

- Provide capacity-building to education personnel on CP services and GBV safe identification and referral mechanisms.
- Community mobilization partnerships to identify, develop and disseminate messages on protection and well-being risks and services for girls and boys of different ages

Equity and Inclusion in teaching and learning

- Teacher pedagogy to be adapted and inclusive: ensure teachers are equipped with the tools to not reproduce gender stereotypes in their teaching and classroom practices and adapt their pedagogy for children with disabilities
- Curriculum review: in times of crises, curriculum review often happens. In that case, it is essential that the review is inclusive and gender responsive. Ensure equity focal points, committees and equity specialists are involved and participate in the review process.
- Given the predominance of online learning in times of crises, provide tips for gender-responsive digital pedagogy for educators and disseminate tools for online safety for all girls and boys
- Add Psychosocial support in curriculum and extra-curricular activities (sports, recreational) provided by trained individuals
- Adapted and flexible mechanisms for academic support, such as links with services offered at community-based centers, or hotline tutoring services

Community engagement

- Awareness-raising campaigns to promote continuity of learning for girls and boys and address harmful coping mechanisms
- Links between formal and non-formal platforms, to ensure learning continuity
- Targeted programming for adolescent girls: life skills, empowerment, solidarity networks

Monitoring

assessments and/or surveys (written, individual, group) to assess enrolment, attendance, retention, drop-out and pass rates, and graduation percentages of different sexes and age groups, including children with disabilities. Analyse the data gathered to identify key problems and use the findings to evaluate levels of satisfaction and flag problems

Feedback mechanisms

Develop and maintain feedback mechanisms for women, girls, men and boys on an ongoing basis to ensure all concerns are addressed and acted upon accordingly.

Conclusion

This Equity Action Plan serves as a roadmap to build an education system that is responsive to the different needs of girls and boys in Lebanon. By enabling TREF to support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), this plan seeks to ensure equitable access to quality education for all girls and boys. All TREF stakeholders are encouraged to actively implement this plan, fostering an inclusive and supportive educational environment, promoting equity and inclusion and empowering every student to reach their full potential.





