

Education Cannot Wait

Annual/Final reporting - Joint Narrative report

1. General Information	
Country/region	State of Palestine
Geographical areas of implementation (by first and second level administrative divisions)	West Bank and Gaza: Hebron, Area C, East Jerusalem, and Gaza
Programme title(s)	Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) for State of Palestine 2019-2021: Access to Inclusive Quality and Safe Education Opportunities for Conflict-affected Children and Youth in the West Bank and Gaza
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Type of report (select one)	Annual report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final report <input type="checkbox"/>

2. Updated situation analysis (suggested length: 1 page)

The State of Palestine is in a protracted protection crisis characterized by the ongoing occupation, Gaza Strip closure, internal administrative divide between the Gaza Strip and Ramallah, and widespread poverty. These are largely the root causes of the development and humanitarian challenges. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and its institutions are undermined by significant economic, fiscal and sovereignty challenges. The demolition of Palestinian structures and subsequent displacement of people have increased. (As of 17 March 2021, 7541 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished resulting in displacement of 11,383 people from their homes across West Bank since 2009¹.)

The events of 2020 have weakened public services and efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19; Palestinian households are struggling through a severe economic downturn. A significant portion of the Palestine economy was already vulnerable before the COVID-19 outbreak. The World Bank projected a decline of about eight per cent in the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) in 2020, primarily due to COVID-19 related restrictions, while indicating that some 121,000 Palestinians have lost their jobs in the second quarter of the year alone². Further, the World Bank projections based on GDP per capita growth suggest that the poverty rate has been constantly increasing since 2016, reaching 28.9 percent in 2020, a significant increase of 7 percentage points in the last four years. This represents approximately 1.4 million people living in poverty in 2020.³ As per the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics labour force survey findings for the third quarter of 2020, the unemployment rate rose to 28.5 per cent in 2020, up from 24.6 per cent in the equivalent period in 2019, with a sharp divergence between the Gaza Strip, 48.6 per cent, in contrast to 18.7 per cent in the West Bank⁴.

The situation in the Gaza Strip was already compromised by de-development due to 13 years of closure, the internal Palestinian divide and recurrent escalations and violence. It is even more fragile due to deteriorating conditions, the COVID-19 virus hitting Gaza hard since late August, and limited health system resources and capacities to cope with the high increase in severe COVID-19 patients. Moreover, a serious financial crisis affecting UNRWA is likely to further deteriorate socioeconomic conditions. On 9 November, UNRWA announced that it had run out of money to pay the November salaries of its 28,000 staff across its five fields of operations in the Middle East. As a result, the Gaza Strip, with 13,000 employees, is expected to be the most affected⁵. From 17 November, the PA agreed to resume coordination with the Israeli authorities, which had been suspended since May in response to Israel's plans to formally annex parts of the West Bank. This is expected to facilitate the import of COVID-related supplies, and the movement of patients and staff within the occupied Palestinian territory.

¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/demolition>

² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/westbankandgaza/publication/economic-update-october-2020>

³ *Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (English)*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/859981613598235681/Economic-Monitoring-Report-to-the-Ad-Hoc-Liaison-Committee>

⁴ http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_8-11-2020-If-en.pdf

⁵ UNRWA needs to raise US\$70 million by the end of November to pay full salaries for November and December

As of end of September 2020, 157 Palestinian children were detained in prisons and detention centres by the Israeli authorities, mainly in Israel, according to data released by the Israeli Prison Service⁶. Many of these children have not been convicted of any offence but are being held in pre-trial detention. In the light of COVID-19 crisis in May 2020, a joint press statement from the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, UNICEF Special Representative, and Head of the UN Human Rights Office, called for an immediate moratorium and release of Palestinian children in detention.⁷

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges to the education system: since the closure of education facilities in early March, 1.43 million children needed to access distance learning and receive age-appropriate awareness-raising messages around COVID-19. In isolated and poor areas, 360,000 children without internet connections needed home-based learning materials and support, and a total of 3,037 schools cleaning and disinfecting in preparation for re-opening. Further, 402 and 134 schools required urgent latrine rehabilitation and new clean drinking water points respectively. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in the Gaza Strip required stationery and infection-control measures to safely conduct the grade 12 national exams. In addition, 215,000 children and their caregivers, and 3,000 teachers needed psychosocial support through innovative approaches, utilizing social media and phone calls. More parents may not be able to afford basic school supplies for their children, placing them at risk of dropping out of school. Since the start of the academic year, more than 170 schools were either temporarily or fully closed from one to 14 days, following confirmed COVID-19 cases among students or staff. Moreover, 125 schools in 'red areas' across the Gaza Strip are closed as of 17 November. On 11 November classes in Palestine resumed for grade one to six students, following grade seven to twelve students who returned to school on 10 and 26 October. UNRWA schools re-opened on 2 November for students in grade seven to nine, with three days of face-to-face learning and three days of distance learning. The Education Cluster is working with the MoE and UNRWA to support the delivery of distance learning, MH/PSS services, infection prevention and control (IPC) measures and the provision of hygiene kits and rehabilitation of WASH facilities⁸.

The above-mentioned changes in the context required the programme to engage in reprogramming from March 2020, to support the COVID-19 needs with focus on hygiene, school WASH, MH/PSS and distance learning. The Ministry of Education is indicating new priorities and needs, which is why more programme revisions are likely to be needed, particularly for the end of year 2 and year 3 plans.

3. Contribution to ECW Beneficiary Outcomes (suggested length: 3 pages)

Overview analysis

Up to the reporting date, ECW/MYRP targeted 580 schools (283 government, 297 UNRWA). Accordingly, 352,077 children (172,324 F; 179,753 M) of which 319,045 living in Gaza and 33,032 in the West Bank were reached with ECW/MYRP assistance. This is 63.7% of the recently updated overall programme target of 552,530 children⁹. As detailed in Figure 1 below, out of those reached, 351,720 and 357 are children in the formal and nonformal education respectively. Moreover, 307,462 are refugees and 10,673 children with disabilities.

⁶ https://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody

⁷ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/light-covid-19-crisis-un-officials-call-immediate-release-all-children-detention-including>

⁸ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/covid-19-emergency-situation-report-22>

⁹ the original Target as per the proposal was 320,000 children: 160,000 girls, 160,000 boys. Moreover, this figure ensures no double counting takes place.

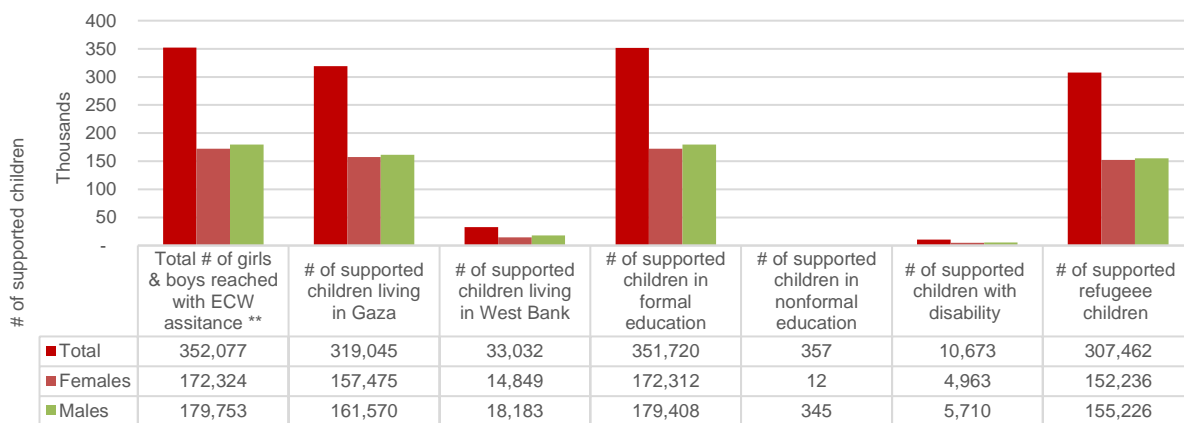


Figure 1: Number of reached children with ECW assistance¹⁰



Figure 2: No. of schools targeted

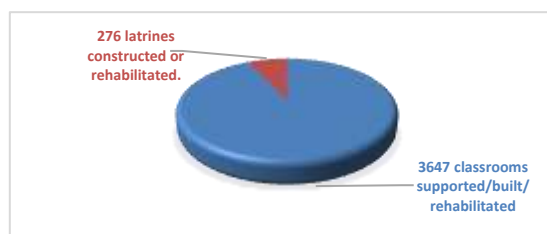


Figure 3: No. of classrooms and latrines targeted

As detailed in Figure 4 below, these children were supported through the following interventions:

- 42,966 children (20,191 F; 22,775 M) supported by UNRWA and UNDP through school WASH and infrastructure rehabilitation;
- 98,974 children (51,125 F; 47,849 M) of which 17,068 children (8,534 F; 8,534 M) were grade 12 students¹¹ reached by UNICEF through delivery of essential cleaning materials and digital thermometers for 186 centers that were used to organise the final 12th grade examinations in a safe manner. Further, 81,906 children (42,591 F; 39,315 M) were from 219 MoE schools in the most vulnerable communities in Gaza, receiving hygiene kits from UNICEF and as part of assisting operationalisation of the safe school protocols within the MoE Back to School plan.
- 5,345 children (684 F; 4,661 M) benefitted from provision of DRR equipment to schools by UNESCO and UNDP;
- 125,110 children (62,015 F; 63,095 M) benefitted from UNRWA's school level learning tool kits (science & IT/technology kits);
- 77,832 children (37,463 F; 40,369 M) benefitted from UNRWA's provision of work sheets and self-learning materials, of which 70,108 children (33,539 F; 36,569 M) were from grades 3 and 4 in Gaza, learning Arabic and Math in the second semester of the scholastic year 2019/2020, and 7,724 children (3,924 F; 3,800 M) in grades 1-9 in West Bank.

¹⁰ ** Double counting is avoided

¹¹ Also the students' markers and invigilators were covered with this support.

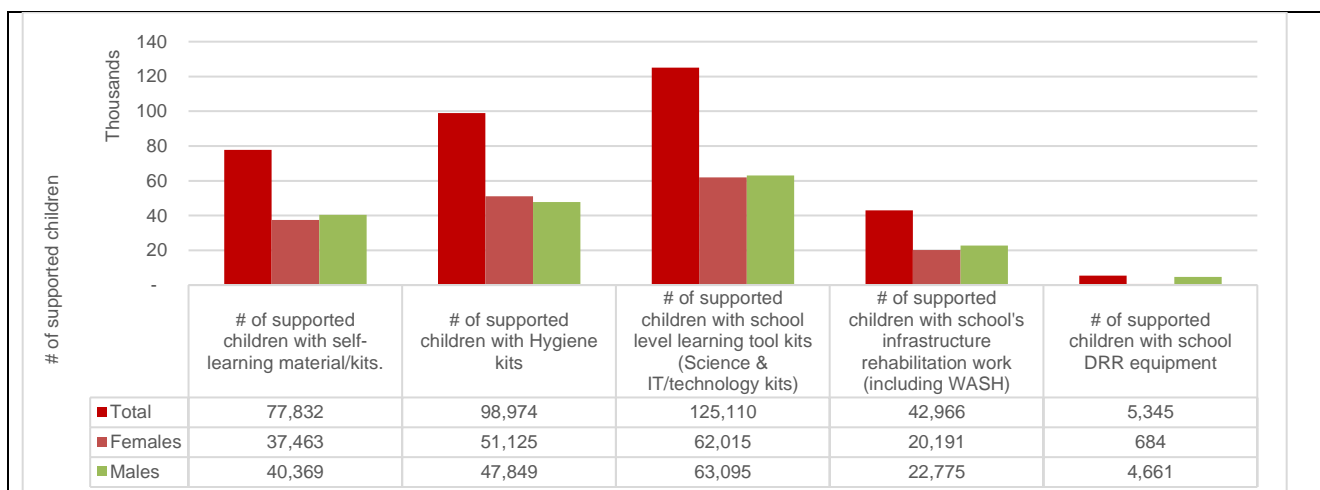


Figure 4: No. of reached out children disaggregated by sex and type of support¹²

As shown in the Figures 5 and 6 below, the other children were reached through the training of 857 teachers and education personnel (532 F, 325 M) on several topics (detailed in the following sections) and the recruitment of 491 education staff members (278 F, 213 M). More specifically, this included UNRWA's recruitment of 340 support teachers (225 F, 115 M) in Gaza, and 146 psychosocial counsellors (91 F, 55 M) of whom 127 were recruited by UNRWA Gaza and 19 by UNRWA West Bank. The recruited personnel provided Arabic and Math teaching support focusing on children with disabilities and additional learning needs, including for those with conflict and crisis-related injuries or chronic health needs. Further, Save the Children is supporting a local partner through the recruitment of 5 field data collectors (1 F, 4 M) to ensure that proper documentation of violations in and around schools is taking place in accordance with the agreed upon standards. These field data collectors have monitored and documented 138 cases of violations against students and school faculty in various locations (an increase by 31% since June 2020). This intervention ensures that proper data is available to enable efficient and rapid response and advocacy to violations against education.

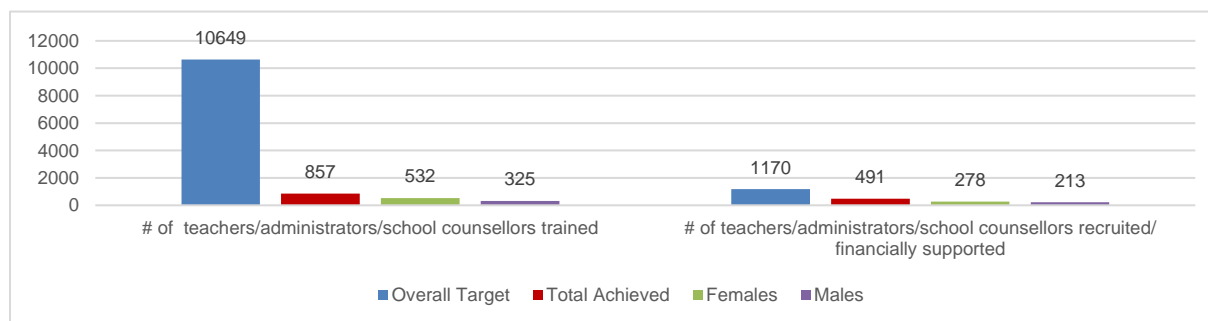


Figure 5: No. of reached out teachers & counsellors by sex and type of support

These recruitments and trainings allowed both UNRWA Gaza and UNRWA West Bank to provide psychosocial support (PSS) to 4,218 children (2,237 F, 1,981 M) and 7,724 (3924 F, 3800 M) respectively. UNRWA provided two types of PSS: recreational and group activities that provided opportunities for all students to participate and individual support based on an individual child's needs. While Save the Children supported 357 children (12 F, 345 M) in non-formal education through providing legal consultations and representation in military courts for children under detention, and PSS and remedial education for ex-detainee children and children under home arrest. To date, 97.4% of the total children who received remedial education reported satisfaction on the alternative education received. Of the 54 children who received remedial education, two (male) were reintegrated back to the educational system after dropping out of school. Moreover, of the total children targeted by SCI with PSS, 84.1% reported improvement in their ability to express their feelings and stress caused by the emergency, in comparison to 42.9% prior to the intervention, and 81.7% reported improved ability to deal with anger and stress caused by the emergency in comparison to 46% prior to the intervention.

¹² Double counting is avoided.

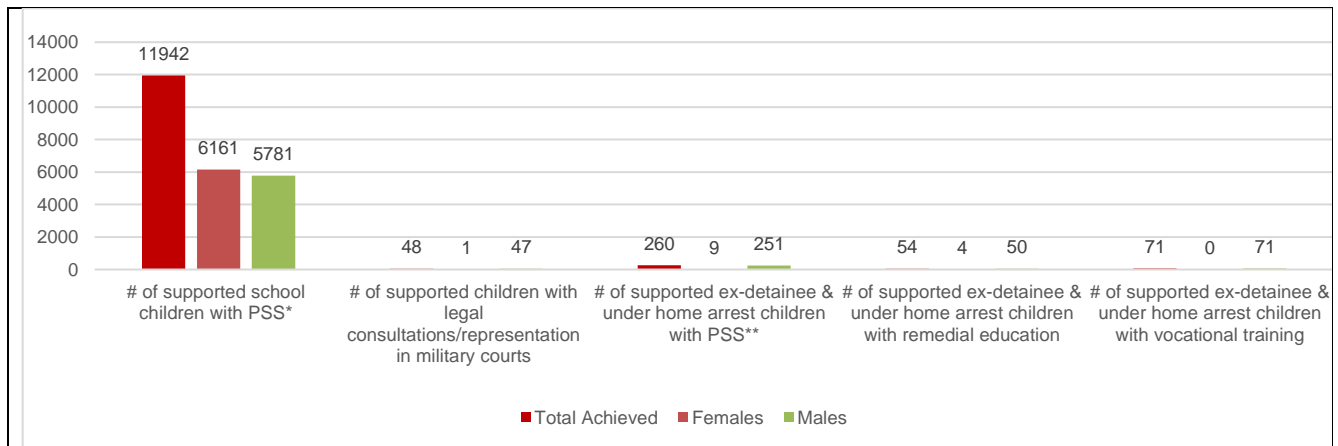


Figure 6: No. of reached out children disaggregated by sex and type of support¹³

a) Increased access to education for crisis-affected girls and boys.

- Improve infrastructure of schools.** UNDP in partnership with MoE conducted an infrastructure assessment of twenty schools in East Jerusalem and Area C¹⁴, followed by tender preparation and development of designs for eight schools. The infrastructure works were completed for four schools¹⁵, contributing in enhancing the learning environment of 734 students (597 F, 137 M). The rehabilitation works of a fifth school¹⁶ are underway, currently standing at 95% progress rate, targeting 65 students, and planned for completion by March 2021. Three of these classrooms were constructed as an expansion to an existing school, located in a very sensitive area where construction is prohibited by the Israeli authorities. Additionally, one classroom was constructed at a sixth school¹⁷, playing a significant role in increasing the enrolment of 20 additional students in the school: secondary level boys, the category which is classified as under-risk for potential dropouts. The tendering process for the construction works of two more schools, both in area C, started in November.¹⁸ The works at one of these two schools¹⁹ will be complementing contribution made by BMZ / KfW, aiming to provide access to quality education for 143 school students as well as 33 kindergarten children by construction of a co-education school and rehabilitation of an existing skeleton kindergarten. To support the MoE's COVID-19 response plan and notwithstanding the imposed lockdown in East Jerusalem, UNDP completed the technical assessment and development of WASH needs for 10 prioritized schools in East Jerusalem. However, following the validation of needs and coordination with active partners, the list was reduced to seven schools²⁰ hosting 1,804 students (1098 F, 706 M). The progress of this WASH package stands at 95% and is planned to be completed by the end of March 2021, following receipt and inspection by MoE.
- UNDP conducted technical consultations with the MoE for the development of the common standards for infrastructure improvements (general maintenance, electricity, mechanical installations, recreational spaces, labs, furniture, eco-systems) in line with the child-friendly and gender-sensitive criteria and school risk assessments including facilitation of access for children with disabilities and upgrading of WASH facilities. A set of standards was drafted, and a model of school infrastructure was identified. However, due to the focus of MoE and its partners on the urgent COVID-19 response, the initial plans on consultations to take place in July 2020 were moved to the beginning of 2021. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.3).
- 28²¹ UNRWA schools in Gaza and 4 in West Bank were identified for adaptation (rehabilitation) by UNRWA.²² The identified adaptation and maintenance works in Gaza were completed in October-November 2020 and handed over to the UNRWA Gaza schools. Facility improvements included infrastructure development to provide improved inclusive education and accessibility for students with disabilities, energy efficiency, and upgrading the WASH facilities especially for girls. The construction and maintenance works aligned to the new safety guidelines that were included in the construction and maintenance contracts as response to the COVID-19. The rehabilitation works for 4 UNRWA West Bank schools started in August (later than planned due to the Palestinian Contractors Union boycott to UNRWA) and were completed in November 2020, benefiting 2,463 children (1,214 F, 1,249 M). (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.3).
- Provide devices, equipment and learning support kits and supplies.** UNRWA West Bank conducted several online workshops on self-learning approaches to 442 teachers and education cadre (265 F, 177 M). The workshops also worked on updating the support learning materials for children in grades 5 and 9 in all UNRWA schools. UNRWA West Bank procured and delivered literacy and numeracy learning support kits for all its 19 ECW/MYRP supported schools. The materials could further benefit students who are in situations where they cannot access school and are expected to be further utilized if the schools remain closed and the COVID-19 outbreak continues. Moreover, additional materials in the form of worksheets have been provided to grades 3 and 4 in Arabic and Math in the

second semester of the scholastic year 2019/2020 for UNRWA schools in Gaza. In addition, 5 science and 3 IT and technology learning toolkit items were delivered to UNRWA Gaza schools²³. UNRWA completed a needs assessment which guided the procurement process of school furniture in the West Bank, followed by the completed tendering process and the delivery of students' seats, chairs and tables to schools. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.3).

- ***Remuneration of teachers.*** In Gaza, 340 support teachers (225 F, 115 M) were hired in the second school semester of 2019/2020. These teachers provide additional support to all grade 3 and 4 children in Arabic and Math focusing on children with disabilities and additional learning needs, including for those with conflict and crisis-related injuries or chronic health needs. These support teachers work alongside class teachers. Due to the COVID-19, all contracts of support teachers were suspended on 5 March with UNRWA Gaza resuming their contracts in November 2020 for the catch-up period, targeting the students who were quarantined and in the designated red zones after their return to schools, and in addition compensating for similarly absent and quarantined teachers in the scholastic year 2020-2021 (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.1).

b) Strengthened equity and gender equality in education in crisis.

- ***Needs Assessment for children with disabilities in need of assistive devices.*** UNDP and UNESCO started coordination with the MoE to develop the package of assistive devices for CWD. However, due to the efforts of MoE in combating the effects of COVID-19, the original resources for year 1 were re-programmed for the COVID-19 WASH response, as outlined earlier with seven MoE schools receiving support in East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, UNESCO and the MoE collected data related to students with disabilities and their needs for assistive devices. The data was handed over to UNDP to start the bidding process for the assistive devices using year 2 resources. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.3)
- ***Train teachers and education staff on inclusive and child-centered teaching and learning methods.*** After comprehensive review and consultation processes, the inclusive education teacher training manual and the online training materials were finalized by UNESCO. An online training of trainers (ToT) for a group of special education

13 *This number has double counting. # of children benefiting from both PSS and learning materials is 262 (189 girls, 73 boys). ** This number has double counting. 2 of the students receiving remedial education, also received PSS support.

14 These schools included Abu Baker, Tala Al Quds, Al Nahda, Al Aytam and Al Jaba'a in Bethlehem, Al Shabat Al Musmat, Wadi Al Joz Girls School, Al Nathamiya Shufat, Sharafat Co-education school, Huseini Al Ash-hab, Nabi Sumel

15 The four TVET schools in East Jerusalem are : Abu Baker in su Bahir, Tala Al Quds in beit Hanina, Al Nahda, Al Aytam both in the old city.

16 The Nabi Sumel Co-Ed School

17 Omar Ibn Al Khattab in Sur Baher locality

18 Al Dirat School in Hebron Governorate and Al Jab'a school respectively in Bethlehem

19 Al Dirat

20 WASH 7 Schools: Abu Baker, Al Shabat Al Musmat, Wadi Al Joz Girls School, Al Nathamiya Shufat, Sharafat Co-education school, Huseini Al Ash-hab, Nabi Sumel

21 28 school buildings hosting 49 schools

22 The number of schools identified in Gaza (28 schools) is less than the 80 planned in the ECW Programme design with the remaining schools covered through support from other donor funds. While for UNRWA West Bank Field Office (WBFO) the rehabilitation plan included 4 schools out of the 19 involved in ECW.

²³ Content of science/IT and technology toolkits by UNRWA Gaza:

	Item	Subject	Quantity	Remarks
1	Urinary system model	Science	280	Under delivery
2	Human Respiratory system model	Science	555	Under delivery
3	Atom Electron Model Box	Science	555	Under delivery
4	Periodic table module	Science	280	Under delivery
5	Human Body & Blood circulation	Science	280	Under delivery
6	Electronics kit box (grade 6)	IT and technology	140	Under procurement technical assessment
7	Electronics kit box (grade 8+9)	IT and technology	140	
8	Edison V2.0 Robot – EdPack1	IT and technology	70	
Total			2,300	

counselors and supervisors will follow in January 2021, followed by training of teachers at all ECW/MYRP targeted schools. UNESCO continued working with the local implementing partner on the inclusive education component with a workplan developed to finalize the first-year activities by February 2021 (and not by August 2020 as planned earlier) due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Several meetings were held with the partners and the MoE to agree on the common approach, which included a literature review of the training manuals of different partners such as UNESCO, UNRWA and SCI. In February 2020, the first draft of the training manual was presented to selected experts from the Inclusive Education Thematic Working Group which provided feedback requiring a fundamental change in the draft manual. In October 2020, the MoE and UNESCO organized a consultation with all experts, including university lecturers, who provided positive comments on the updated draft manual. The manual has been reviewed by more experts, including the ECW/MYRP Gender Adviser as well as inclusive education experts from UNESCO Beirut Office. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.1).

- UNESCO developed messages on healthy lifestyle and psychosocial support delivered to students and parents: 6 videos are completed, and 10 vines were finalized, to be posted on various communication sites, including the MoE website. Development of a short video game is also underway, to be finished by mid-2021. UNESCO will also provide psychosocial support to students in 20 schools in West Bank (selected with MoE) through sports, drama and storytelling activities, which will take place both inside the schools and virtually from December to spring 2021. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.1).
- Building on its existing Self Learning Programme, UNRWA worked to strengthen the capacity of its teaching staff on the use of this programme. The worksheets and self-learning materials reached 77,832 children (37,463 F; 40,369 M) of which 70,108 children (33,539 F; 36,569 M) were from grades 3 and 4 in Gaza, learning Arabic and Math in the second semester of the scholastic year 2019/2020, and 7,724 children (3,924 F, 3,800 M) in grades 1-9 in West Bank. UNRWA completed the development and delivery of printed self-learning materials based on the core concepts of the Palestinian curriculum in the core subjects of Arabic, Maths, English, and Science for all programme targeted students in grades 1-9, which are in line with the UNRWA Curriculum Framework. The implementation of the plan was put into practice by conducting several workshops for education staff, who produced wrap around self-learning materials for grades 1-9. These materials were also published online and some of them were printed to support time lost in face-to-face teaching and the most vulnerable students who could not access online resources. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.1).

c) Increased continuity and sustainability of education for crisis affected girls and boys.

- Strengthen hospital-based education for children in prolonged hospital care. UNESCO finalized the draft guide for teachers in the four determination (hospital) schools. The related teacher capacity building is planned in January 2021. The results of UNESCO's August 2020 workshop with the principals and teachers of the four determination schools emphasized the need for capacity building on how to provide PSS to students with prolonged stay at hospitals while supporting their learning to bridge the gap with their normal schooling after recovery. UNESCO also conducted several joint visits with the MoE to the hospitalized students; these visits showed how hope could lead to success and how students were able to continue learning despite their recovery pain. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.2).
- Strengthen provision of legal support for children in detention. SCI continues working with a local partner to provide legal support for school children whose rights are violated, mainly through arrests and detention. The total number of children supported with legal consultations to date is 48 children (1 F, 47 M). Out of these, 45 children (1 F, 44 M) were also provided with legal representation in the military courts. A lawyer and a legal assistant are in place to offer legal counselling and support. The local partner's field workers document violations against the right to education and inform the lawyer about any student arrest regardless of where the arrest takes place and refer the cases. In addition to the field workers, cases are referred to the lawyer directly through caregivers and family members, community-based organizations, and the police. During the consultation sessions, the lawyer informs children of their rights during interrogation and detention and eases their anxiety as they face a very stressful and aggressive interrogation and detention process. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and measures, the lawyer was not able to provide legal counselling in person and thus did so over the phone. This intervention is crucial in ensuring that children are empowered to defend themselves against the negative traumatic consequences of detention and interrogation. The aim is to mitigate the physical and psychological risks resulting from long-term detention and any consequences of longer absence from the formal education process. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.2).
- Support for children under house arrest and ex-detainee children. SCI continues working with a local partner to provide an inclusive package of rehabilitative services to children under house arrest and ex-detainee children. The total number of ex-detainee children and children under house arrest reached under this output is 309²⁴ (11

²⁴ This total does not include double counting as one child might receive multiple services at the same time. The high number of male children supported is due to the fact that the majority of children who are detained are boys.

F, 298 M)²⁵ with 164 caregivers (158 F, 6 M) respectively. The services aim at helping children to overcome the difficulties and traumatizing events they have witnessed and equipping them with coping skills to facilitate their reintegration into their families and communities. The provided comprehensive services facilitate children's access to equitable education. The different elements under this intervention, that start with legal support and extend to PSS support, remedial and vocational education, are all important aspects of SCI's integrated and comprehensive assistance which aims at enabling children to resume life after detention, reintegrate back to the educational system and fulfil their potential as citizens in the long term. Of the total ex-detainee children who received the full rehabilitative package, 86.1% reported satisfaction with the alternative education services received. Of the total children under house arrest who received the full rehabilitative package, 95.2% reported satisfaction with the alternative education services received. The main services provided are as follows:

- Providing vocational assessment, training and tools for children under house arrest and ex-detainee children: Children undergo a vocational assessment at a vocational assessment unit or through a mobile vocational assessment clinic that reaches different districts. During the reporting period, 70 children (all male) received vocational assessment. Out of them, 67 ex-detainee children (all male) were referred to receive vocational training at vocational centers/workshops across various locations. Their vocations varied from trading to construction, masonry, cooking, electrical work, mechanics and technicians. In addition, six children under house arrest (all male) in Jerusalem benefited from vocational assessment, and four of them were able to receive vocational training during this reporting period.
- Providing remedial education for children under house arrest and ex-detainee children: To date, 54 (4 F, 50 M) ex-detainee children and children under house arrest received remedial classes. The classes were offered both virtually and face-to-face in the student's home or at the centers, taking into consideration the safety and social distancing standards. In total, 4 students received virtual sessions with a total of 240 hours and 50 students received face-to-face sessions with a total of 1,548 hours. Subjects provided range from Arabic, English, math, and chemistry. Of the total number of children who received education, two (male) were reintegrated back to the educational system after dropping out of school. Interventions focus on facilitating the reintegration of children into the formal education system through the provision of remedial education classes. Face-to-face classes are arranged in close coordination with relevant tutors who have previous experience in providing this type of classes to ex-detainee children and children under house arrest. Virtual classes were introduced during COVID-19 emergency due to movement restrictions. Selected centers and teachers were informed of the students situations and their needs. Subjects and number of classes/hours are determined based on the remedial assessment conducted by counsellors, including discussions with children, their caregivers and teachers. The assessment determines the subjects that the child needs support with and takes into account the child's performance in school. Counsellors engage in regular follow up with students to ensure students are benefiting from the sessions.
- PSS sessions for children and their caregivers (individual and group): In total, 260 (9 F, 251 M) children, including 243 ex-detainees (8 F, 235 M) and 17 children under house arrest (1 F, 16 M), were assessed and have been receiving individual and group counselling.²⁶ In total, 164 caregivers of ex-detainees and children under house arrest (158 F, 6 M) received individual and group counselling. Of the total caregivers targeted in this intervention, 79.1% of reported improved awareness of their children's PSS needs and their ability to offer support, in comparison to 44% prior to the intervention. SCI's initial plan was to work with the local partner to encourage more male caregivers to be involved in the counselling sessions, as their role is important in providing both psychosocial and economic support for their children. However, this largely depended on who among the female and male caregivers were available to provide for and follow up with their children. It was easier to reach out to male caregivers who were working close to the house and/or working from home. Children with PSS needs are identified through a referral mechanism and are included in a case management system that is accessed by PSS counsellors. For children under house arrest, individual sessions are provided at home due to restriction on movement. For ex-detainees children, determining the type of sessions, whether group or individual, depends on the assessment made by the counsellors in coordination with the area supervisors. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the counsellors provided PSS virtually via phone or online communication channels. PSS services were also provided face-to-face when movement restrictions were eased, taking into consideration adherence to safety measures and social distancing. Interventions, throughout this period, focused more on addressing PSS needs associated with the COVID-19 emergency. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.2).
- Train teachers and education staff on integrating LSCE in curriculum teaching. A local NGO partner was identified by UNICEF, in coordination with MoE, to support Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) for 11,200

²⁵ House Arrest (1 F, 15 M). Ex detainees (8 F, 208 M)

²⁶ Of the total children targeted in this intervention, 84.1 % reported improvement in their ability to express their feelings and stress caused by the emergency situation in comparison to 42.9% prior to the intervention. Furthermore, 81.7% of the children reported improved ability to deal with anger and stress caused by the emergency situation in comparison to 46% prior to the intervention.

adolescent children of grades 7-9 using the Digital Entrepreneurial and Adolescent Leadership (DEAL) online platform. DEAL is an innovative platform that uses gamification for learning. Capacity development will be provided to teachers and students on how to use the platform as informal learning to assist transition of students from school to work. The MoE has been re-thinking the methodology of integration of life skills in the curriculum to chart a way to ensure that students in Palestine are taught critical life skills that increase their learning and wellbeing as well as prepare them to become socially and economically empowered members of their communities. The MoE has requested the suspension of implementation of the methodology originally proposed, i.e. life skills integration through "Learning Objects", pending a clear vision on how MoE wants to move forward with identifying a range of educational pathways and modalities for mainstreaming life skills in the school system. Discussions on innovative approaches that include interactive LSCE learning materials for both online and classroom use are in progress. The local partner is assisting the MoE integrating interactive learning materials into the online MoE platform. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.1).

d) Improved learning and skills outcomes for crisis-affected girls and boys.

Nothing to report under this beneficiary outcome.

e) Safe and protective learning environment and education ensured for all crisis-affected girls and boys.

- Provide transportation for girls and boys and their teachers. UNDP procured a 4x4 vehicle to provide transport to students including those with disabilities and teachers whose homes are either located in the remote areas or whose commute to school is unsafe due to the risk of settler harassment and violence. The vehicle was delivered and handed over to MoE in late February 2020. Guided by the ECW/MYRP baseline and needs assessment, an arrangement is in place with MoE to prioritize the utilization of the vehicle to serve locations with the most marginalized students. Over the next report period, the number of students to benefit from the transportation will be documented and reported. The funds reserved for assessing the effectiveness and scalability of the transport intervention were re-programmed for the COVID-19 response, for improvement of WASH infrastructure at schools²⁷. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.1).
- Provide protective learning environment for safe access to schools. UNICEF used funding from other sources and finalised an evaluation of the protective presence programme in March 2020, assessing effectiveness, sustainability, impact, relevance and efficiency of the protective presence intervention in adequately meeting the needs of children and teachers regarding protection from violations on their way to/from schools or around the schools. The findings emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to safe access to schools that complements protective presence with other mechanisms such as local solutions by communities, transportation and formal coordination with the Civil Administration (CA), to provide sustainable protection to students and staff. UNICEF used the findings to expand the programming, with the support of an international NGO, to provide this holistic support to protective learning environment and to respond to issues of access, equity and gender equality, increased continuity of education and protection of crisis-affected children. The implementation started with the on-line training of 10 community facilitators from 3 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) located in H2 (Hebron), Hebron Old city and Yatta (Area C), and who were identified to receive PSS training using the PSS intervention 'Little Fellow'. The nominee facilitators were selected based on comprehensive criteria²⁸ and are assessed by the trainers during the training sessions, pairing less experienced facilitators with more experienced facilitators. The topics covered in the facilitator training include child safeguarding, safe identification and referral, and PSS interventions that have been adapted for remote delivery. The community facilitators have now formed WhatsApp groups to conduct psychosocial sessions with parents and children in the targeted areas. The approach will use stories that are shared with parents of children ages 6-10 who will read the stories with their children and facilitate discussions around related topics. The ongoing work and the findings from the protective presence evaluation will be useful for reaching a consensus with MoE and other partners on a common approach to safe access to school. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 1, Output 1.1).
- Develop strengthened, innovative, harmonized and coordinated approaches for the delivery of PSS services in the education system. In both Gaza and the West Bank, UNRWA supported the deployment of 146 counsellors (127 Gaza, 19 WB) since September 2019 on part-time basis. Other non-ECW resources are used to enable these counselors to work full-time. For the scholastic year 2020-2021, 64 counsellors (40 F, 24 M) were covered on full-time basis and were selected from the same 127 counsellors that were targeted in 2019-2020. The counsellors

²⁷ Before COVID-19; ToR was prepared for the feasibility and assessment study to determine the effectiveness and scalability of the vehicle and this transport service and its impact on the access of children to schools in Area C.

²⁸ Interest, motivation, availability and demonstrated commitment to the trainings, learning and mentorship process ; experience working with children; understanding of underlying principles of PSS, active learning, child protection and safety; ability to facilitate and lead a group, ideally using creative methodology; strong communication skills; ability to create a safe physical and emotional environment.

are providing support to help deal with specific issues affecting children in conflict zones such as loss and grief, severe PSS needs and violence in schools as well as providing support to children with disabilities. The work of the counselors was not affected by the COVID-19 and new communication modalities were utilized by all counsellors as PSS continued for students through phone calls and other communication tools. A resource guide titled 'Supporting Students During COVID-19: A Guide to Learning, Health, Safety and Psychosocial Resources' was launched in late March by UNRWA HQ in support of counsellors and their work during the COVID-19 period. UNRWA West Bank developed staff capacities through conducting online trainings for 169 teachers (102 F, 67 M) on non-violence in schools focusing on the role teachers can play in addressing violence in schools. The workshops were planned at school-level but due to the sudden COVID-19 crisis they were conducted online. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.2).

- Develop the capacity of MoE PSS counsellors in providing remote consultations to support children and caregivers during COVID-19 crisis.* In response to the COVID-19 emergency, and in alignment with the MoE COVID-19 response plan, SCI re-programmed this activity to support the urgent capacity building needs of MoE school counsellors and provide online training. So far, 370 MoE school counsellors (247 F, 123 M) from all 17 West Bank Education Directorates received training on providing tele-psychosocial consultations and are in the process of completing training on self-care, case management and stress management. Trainings include topics such as tele-psychosocial consultations as a first and foremost priority, stress management to support children, caregivers and teachers on dealing with stress and emotional challenges associated with the COVID-19. It also focuses on self-care techniques for counsellors to de-brief, deal with stress and avoiding burnout, as well as transfer of these techniques to others. Counsellors also receive training on how to conduct primary psychosocial assessments and case management interventions online or via telephone²⁹. In September, in the MHPSS taskforce meeting the MoE Counselling Unit indicated the need to provide Psychosocial First Aid training (PFA) to counsellors. This was also referenced through the training sessions with counsellors, as well as in the needs assessment of school disaster management committees conducted under Output 3.3, as a critical area of support needed at the school level. As a result, the local partner, in coordination with MoE and SCI, completed the development of online training material covering psychological first aid topics. Currently, all training packages are ready to be delivered to the MoE counsellors once a timeline is confirmed by the MoE Counselling Unit. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.2).
- In addition to the trainings mentioned above, the 370 MoE counsellors received individual supervision classes to enable counsellors to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for their own practice and enhance protection and safety of care in complex situations. During the individual supervision sessions, the trained MoE counsellors reported providing 2,495 psychological consultations to 3,717 children and caregivers (2,250 F, 1,467 M). During the sessions, counsellors were encouraged to talk about challenges they face and to reflect on them. Supervision sessions also provide MoE counsellors with needed support with both management and developmental processes and to assure the quality of implementation. However, the amount of individual sessions counsellors received is based both on the counsellor's request and support needed. This technical, theoretical and practical capacity building approach supplements the trainings with professional supervision sessions as a self-care framework for the counsellors and empowers them to feel supported beyond the limited duration of training sessions. It will be a solid base for a common approach on MH/PSS interventions in emergencies in Palestine. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.2).
- Develop the supervision capacities of MoE PSS technical supervisors through training on specialized topics.* SCI, MoE and local partner are working to develop the supervision capacities of 25 MoE supervisors through an extensive training that will ultimately allow them to receive a certification/diploma on supervision. The MoE provided a list of 25 (13 F, 12 M) counsellors to enroll in the supervision training. The manual and the training materials are being finalized. MoE requested SCI to support and equip technical supervisors with the technological capacities such as laptops and internet access to prepare them to receive the necessary trainings. This support will ensure supervisors have proper access to the virtual training over eight months and enable them to provide trainings to school counsellors in the future. The procurement of 25 laptops for supervisors has been completed and will be distributed in coordination with MoE. The supervisors' trainings will include topics including introduction to supervision, theories and models in supervision, child development stages, group supervision, supervision ethics, managing supervisions and family supervision. The trainings will address PSS support and containment, assessing the supervisor's performance, practical applications and case studies, dealing with domestic violence including gender-based violence and violence against children, case management and case conference. The supervision diploma for the 25 MoE counsellors is in the final stages of being certified by the Ministry of Labour. This professional diploma is the first of its kind in Palestine and will contribute to enabling specialized supervisors within the MoE. The MoE adopted the decision that holding a certification will be a requirement for assignment to

²⁹ To facilitate the trainings, MoE originally provided the local partner with a list of 250 MoE counsellors, from all 17 West Bank's Education Directorates, to enroll them in the training targeting counsellors. Due to the increasing interest from counsellors and MoE in the trainings, additional lists were shared with SCI and local partner.

supervision duties for MoE staff. This intervention extends support beyond the school level to the system level ensuring wider reach and improved technical support. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 2, Output 2.2).

- Strengthen function of MoE Crisis Cel for emergency preparedness, response, coordination and recovery.* With UNICEF's technical support, the MoE in coordination with the partners developed the COVID-19 response plan that was used as a framework for coordinating the response and resource mobilization for the COVID-19 pandemic. Four technical task teams under the leadership of the MoE Directors were established to coordinate the response and three of these were co-led by the ECW/MYRP partners: UNICEF for the hygiene team, UNESCO for the distance learning team, and Save the Children for the psychosocial support team. UNICEF procured and delivered essential cleaning materials and digital thermometers for a total of 850 centers that were used to support MoE in holding the final 12th grade examinations in a safe manner, benefitting 78,000 students, invigilators and exam markers. 186 centers (1 hygiene kit per center) and 17,068 beneficiaries were directly supported through ECW/MYRP resources. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.1).
- UNICEF - utilising the year 1 MYRP Gaza flexible emergency funds which the partners jointly agreed to allocate - provided 219 government schools in the most vulnerable communities in the Gaza Strip with hygiene kits to support them in operationalizing the safe school protocols as part of the Back to School plan of the MoE. This benefitted 81,906 children (42,591 F, 39,315 M). The school hygiene kits were developed by the MoE and partners based on the WHO guidelines. Each hygiene kit contained cleaning and disinfecting materials adequate for at least one month. This has ensured a safe learning environment and protection from COVID-19 for students and their teachers. Implementation of the activity was coordinated by the Hygiene and WASH in Schools Task Force under the leadership of the MoE. Through this collaboration and beyond ECW/MYRP support, the required hygiene kits for all 2,234 Palestinian government schools were successfully distributed. The funds from the ECW/MYRP contributed to 9 per cent (219 schools out of 2234) of the total national needs in the government schools. The supplies provided were only adequate for one month (September) and there is a continued need for similar support. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.1).
- Strengthen capacity of MoE and partners in EiE data collection, validation and verification, coordination, harmonization, and mainstreaming.* SCI continued supporting a local partner to engage in high level coordination with different partners including MoE, schools and UN agencies to ensure that proper documentation management on violations in schools is taking place in accordance with the agreed standards. The local partner field workers have monitored and documented 179 cases of violations against students and school faculty in various locations since December 2019. This intervention ensures proper data is available to enable efficient and rapid response to violations against education. The MoE, in coordination with UN agencies, SCI, and local NGOs, came together to develop a unified system that sits in the Education Cluster and enables validated data documentation of education related violations. With ECW/MYRP support, field workers conduct field visits, in coordination with the MoE and school principals and get testimonies from eyewitnesses and school staff. To ensure community engagement and sustainability, the field workers also develop and sustain their networks of sources in the targeted communities to rapidly report incidents. All collected data undergoes a rigorous fact-checking and verification process before the information is uploaded to the Education Cluster's education-related violations database. Members of the Education Cluster have responded to four identified incidents, so far, following a cluster trigger response. SCI is supporting the MoE to renew the QLIK license with the company that created the MOE's own database for recording education violations, Ulitmit. The license (which expired in December 2020) provides access to the MoE's database and allows MoE staff to document violations against schools and access data necessary to gather information for reporting and advocacy purposes which may feed into strategies and other interventions. Further, Save the Children will be working more closely with MoE to identify training needs for MoE staff on monitoring and reporting on education-related violations. SCI supported the translation of the 2019 MoE Annual Report for Education Related Incidents from Arabic to English in September 2020 and will translate the 2020 annual report once the Arabic version is finalized and shared by the MoE. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.2).
- Strengthen capacity of government schools to respond to emergency and crisis situations and to provide and manage education services.* MoE, UNESCO and UNDP jointly identified the list and specifications of disaster risk reduction (DRR) equipment i.e. general safety equipment, first aid tools and emergency and first aid room supplies³⁰ that were needed for the 22 targeted schools. UNDP concluded the procurement process of the equipment and systems targeting 22 schools and supporting 5,345 students (684F, 4,661 M) in West Bank and East Jerusalem. In close coordination with MoE, the supply and installation of the systems were fully completed and the training on the system operation and configuration for 45 school staff members (20 F, 25 M) in the

30 Fire extinguisher, megaphone speaker with batteries, emergency ladder, water hose pipe, vests and whistles, medical privacy screen, emergency blankets, nebulizer etc.

respective directorates was completed. Like other activities under MYRP, this activity was subject to delays due to the COVID-19 lockdown³¹. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.3).

- Since UNDP included the training on DRR equipment within its bidding, UNESCO reprogrammed the savings made under this output to provide more assistance to distance learning, which is one of the main priorities of the MoE to complement face-to-face education. More specifically, UNESCO will assist with technical solutions to establishing the MoE's educational TV channel which will better ensure that no student is left behind, especially students from low-income backgrounds, who cannot afford home ICT equipment and have no internet connection for online learning. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.3).
- It was previously indicated that SCI will be working with MoE to set up an Emergency Unit within the MoE in alignment with MoE's contingency plan for the Education in Emergency (EiE) sector. However, MoE has officially informed ECW/MYRP and SCI that this is no longer a priority, indicating that COVID-19 has shifted priorities for MoE and its approach to system strengthening. Upon request of alternative areas of support to schools' emergency response capacity, MoE provided a list of needs of which SCI will be providing school-level support for general safety and first aid equipment and tools³². This is in line with the needs highlighted in the baseline and needs assessment, which identifies needy schools in this area and indicates that only 16% of schools report that they do not need any DRR equipment. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.3).
- SCI, in collaboration with a local partner and MoE's Field Follow-up Unit, has engaged in regular coordination meetings to discuss strengthening the emergency response capacities of vulnerable schools. The conduct of a needs assessment of existing school disaster management committees in 30 most vulnerable schools was agreed on (this was supported through other funds by SCI). A final draft of the assessment report was shared with MoE and key findings presented to the ECW/MYRP Technical Committee in November. The needs assessment addresses the disaster management committees' roles during the current emergency, challenges and obstacles they face in resuming their roles, their capacity building needs and recommendations for further support. The results clearly highlight areas of support necessary for committees to enable them to contribute to the needed response. Some of the areas were crisis management and the recovery phase, planning and contingency planning, psychological first aid (PFA) and PSS support for students and families, PSS and stress release for teachers and effective remote communication for the school disaster management committees (SDMCs).
- Various meetings took place between SCI and MoE to discuss the training plan for the SDMCs based on the needs highlighted in the needs assessment report to guide school emergency preparedness support. MoE identified PFA as an initial important need for SDMCs but then indicated it would no longer require support from SCI or any other NGO on the SDMC capacity building. MoE indicated that there is a change in needed areas of assistance and highlighted school-level safety needs in terms of first aid, safety supplies and medical emergency rooms instead. SCI is coordinating with MoE on how to best move forward. As part of supporting the 30 SDMCs, SCI and local partner agreed to provide the 30 schools with the necessary equipment to operate during emergencies and lockdowns, including provision of 30 laptops. The procurement of 30 laptops was finalized during the reporting period and will be disseminated in coordination with MoE to the targeted educational governorates. SCI and local partner will also distribute hygiene materials, stationary and recreational kits for the 30 MoE schools targeting most vulnerable families and children to support them during the COVID-19 emergency. The procurement process of 1,140 kits, along with the preparation of guidance sheets has been completed. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.3).
- *Strengthen capacity of UNRWA schools to respond to emergency and crisis situations and to provide and manage education services.* An assessment was completed on the infrastructure of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in the West Bank to enable UNRWA schools to better manage their data needs. The tendering process for improvement of EMIS system has been completed, hardware (4 laptops) to support EMIS are in place benefiting 4 staff (2 F, 2 M). Further, UNRWA developed school contingency plans and conducted specific training of school staff on safety, security, contingency planning and first aid skills in the UNRWA schools³³. (SoP ECW/MYRP Outcome 3, Output 3.3).

³¹ The available budget for this activity was enough to cover 22 schools (less than what was reported in the December 2019 ECW progress report i.e. 30-35 schools instead of 135 schools as originally planned). The original estimates were not based on actual needs assessment and were hence limited to light DRR interventions per school. Further technical assessments informed the preparation of bill of quantities per school and revealed that each school needs much more reliable DRR equipment to meet minimum standards for safety and risk reduction.

³² E.g. fire extinguisher, vests, whistles, emergency posters, megaphone, emergency ladder and first aid bag with supplies such as gauze pads, thermometer, ice packs, bandages, antiseptic solution, ointments, etc.

³³ Details on # of female and male trainees and the results in terms of skills, knowledge, attitudes and satisfaction are not yet provided by UNRWA WB.

4. Contribution to ECW Systemic Outcomes (suggested length: 3 pages)

a) **Strengthened policies and domestic leadership.**

The Ministry of Education's Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2017-2022 and Joint Advocacy and Protection Strategy, the UNRWA Mid-Term Strategy (and its Education in Emergencies (EiE) component) and the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) all consolidate the support to the education agenda in Palestine with emphasis on the most marginalized girls and boys. The ultimate objective is to ensure an efficient and effective response, prioritizing needs, stimulating additional funding and resilience initiatives. The ECW/MYRP programme is fully aligned to these key strategies, supporting the MoE ESSP, bringing together the three other strategies under the overarching MYRP framework, and bridging the gap between the humanitarian and development work.

The MYRP partners support policy development through the common approaches, although there are delays due to the COVID-19 response being prioritised in 2020, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) indicating that it will be sharing its changed needs and priorities with all development partners. The discussion with MoE on any changes and on the possibility of re-initiating the work on the common approaches will follow. The aim of the common approaches is, in line with the MoE adapted methodologies and tools, to identify lessons learnt and best practices and to develop policy guidelines for the benefit of MoE and the Education sector beyond ECW/MYRP. Five thematic groups were formed to lead the common approach discussions and the development of policy guidelines on: i) infrastructure and renovation, led by UNDP and UNRWA; ii) inclusive education, led by UNESCO with co-chairs of DFID and MoE; iii) psychosocial support, alternative/remedial education & reintegration and school-based emergency preparedness & response, led by Save the Children; iv) safe access, led by UNICEF with UNDP; and v) life skills education, led by UNICEF. These common approaches are believed to avoid fragmentation, contribute to ensuring sustainability after the completion of the programme and seek to transform the delivery of Education in Emergencies, by coordinating government's, humanitarian actors' and development partners' efforts to deliver a more collaborative and rapid response to the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises. As such, the work of ECW/MYRP in this context is an example of how a focus on education in the humanitarian-development nexus can contribute to longer term resilience building in the face of long-term fragility and conflict.

In terms of domestic leadership, the MoE has clearly expressed its commitment to and the importance of the ECW/MYRP programme to the Education sector. MoE has a leading role in ECW/MYRP including in the governance structure, where the Minister of Education is the co-chair of the Steering Committee (SC) and a senior MoE official from the MoE's ECW Core team is the co-chair of the Technical Committee (TC). MoE has since December 2019 strengthened its role in the governance of ECW/MYRP by: 1. Creating a Core team of 6 officials within MoE, replacing a single MoE ECW focal point and putting the MoE International and Public Relations Directorate in lead for all communication, coordination and management issues with PMU, and 2. Bringing 6 senior MoE officials to the SC, and 11 MoE officials representing all relevant Directorate Generals to the TC. This ensures better buy-in, solid technical discussions and better information flow within the Ministry and with the ECW partners. In the end of 2020, MoE expressed its intent to make further changes to its focal points and coordination for ECW/MYRP. In addition, UNICEF is working with MoE to establish a functional EiE technical working group in Palestine (within the broader Education Sector Working Group) to have a forum for strategic EiE discussions, to be chaired by a senior MoE official to ensure strong leadership from the Ministry.

From the UNRWA side, UNRWA has delivered education to Palestine refugees for almost 70 years. Recent efforts to systematically strengthen its education delivery through the Education Reform 2011-15 and the subsequent Education in Emergencies (EiE) approach have shown success in retaining students in school and reducing student dropout. The Education Reform aimed to ensure that all children could reach their full potential, and the inclusive education component specifically aimed to ensure equal access to quality education. Through the reform, policies, strategies and related frameworks and capacity development tools were developed to identify and respond to the diverse needs of children, including those with disabilities, learning difficulties, health and psychosocial needs. These strategies included an inclusive education policy, strategy and teacher toolkit, and conceptual framework on psychosocial support in UNRWA schools.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MoE, supported by the Education Cluster, prepared a National Response Plan where four key focus areas were identified: distance learning, hygiene, provision of mental health and psychosocial support, and renovation of schools WASH facilities. Accordingly, four thematic task teams were established to support the MoE in implementing these four objectives and ensure that the MoE has the technical capacity and the financial means to implement the priority interventions identified. The ECW/MYRP partners have been integral in providing COVID-19 response support as three of the technical task teams are co-led by a MYRP partner, jointly with the MoE: UNESCO for distance learning, UNICEF for school hygiene, and Save the Children for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). UNDP strengthened the leadership role of MoE in carrying out WASH and infrastructure needs assessments for 127 schools (Awqaf and private schools) located in East Jerusalem and provided technical assistance to the national response through participation in the school WASH task team. Moreover, UNDP supported MoE in the development of East Jerusalem Back to School plan that is adopted for addressing the immediate needs of the schools to retain the education process and provide safe learning environment within the COVID-19 crisis. Another example, on the Distance learning task team UNESCO and the MoE have been coordinating interventions and resources by the task team members and supporting

organisations as well as providing technical advice to the MoE, to identify needs and provide required support, especially for the school reopening.

SCI leads the MHPSS task force and has provided concrete support to the WASH and Hygiene task teams. Leading the MHPSS Taskforce is critical for SCI to support the common approach under ECW/MYRP which is why it leveraged its position and built more connections with almost every PSS-related partner and especially MoE. SCI and MoE Counselling and Special Education Units have led four meetings with MHPSS task team members³⁴ (5 INGOs, 7 national NGOs). Through these meetings and with the guided technical support by SCI, the process yielded a one consolidated activity plan directed towards MoE needs for response phase (during pandemic). Furthermore, in congruence with the Back to School Plan, the taskforce focused its discussions on psychological approach, the need to provide school counsellors and staff with Psychosocial First Aid, crisis interventions, rehabilitation, and referral to specialized services (expressive art, CBT, and psychiatric services). The various approaches discussed are holistic and aim to minimize the trauma effect and isolation and social separation effect due to COVID-19 emergency and ensure that the interventions address the needs of children, particularly children with special mental health needs. With ensured proper coordination and material exchange, the task team succeeded in reaching out for students, parents and counsellors and achieving results³⁵.

For SCI, different discussions were initiated with local partners who deliver remedial education and equivalently with SCI's technical regional advisors on remedial education matter. The aim for this is to better understand the modality of delivery of remedial education for vulnerable groups such as ex-detainee children, outline best practices and address gaps. Next steps will include discussion with UNESCO on the alternative education that is provided to hospitalized children. This will support and feed into the discussions on common approaches under ECW/MYRP.

b) Increased, more timely and predictable funding.

All stakeholders and partners including the MoE have shown willingness to collaborate in mobilizing resources, which is a key area of support and leadership by both Steering Committee and Partners Group/Heads of Partner Agencies as per the programme's governance structure. With their and ECW Secretariat's support, PMU and the ECW partners will be able to develop a 'business case' for resource mobilisation. The Minister of Education had earlier proposed the organization of a major event or semi-conference in 2020 that will bring together experts from the region and beyond to raise awareness about the Palestinian ECW/MYRP and its progress and which could be a platform for increased visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization. This is on hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions. In February/March 2020 PMU also coordinated collection of inputs to the ECW Secretariat's global resource mobilisation mapping tool from the ECW partners, MoE and key education donors and partners in Palestine. Supported by ECW Secretariat, PMU led the ToR development and recruitment of the advocacy and resource mobilization (RM) consultant to provide technical assistance to developing an advocacy and RM strategy, a 'business case' and advocacy products. The assignment began in early 2021.

Outside of MYRP but aligned to it and to the MoE's COVID-19 response plan, UNICEF and SCI directly received USD 850,000 for ECW/FER to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were used towards an education system-wide approach to ensure that children are kept safe and continue learning, namely, supporting a sustainable distance learning system and planning and implementing safe school operations. All 836,084 children enrolled in the Palestinian public schools were expected to benefit from the FER COVID-19 funds. Moreover, UNRWA mobilized additional funds from ECW/FER of a total of one million US\$ against the UNRWA COVID-19 Flash Appeal to support Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan. The share of the West Bank was US\$80,000 and US\$ 480,000 is for Gaza, with the project period of 6 months starting 6 April, to mostly support self-learning study and PSS.

c) Joint planning and coordination.

In line with the ECW global holistic 'whole-of-system' approach to joint programming, the ECW/MYRP in SoP adopted a context-specific approach to education, where a revised consolidated work plan was developed jointly by MoE and the five partners to position the MYRP strategically within the humanitarian/development nexus. The entire MYRP funding modality structure of lead grantee, sub-grantees and their partners entails closely working together for improved coordination to ensure more impact for children. The work planning and development of key documents such as the governance structure

³⁴ NRC, WV, YMCA, PCC, TCC, TDH, HI, UNESCO, Tamer, MAAN Development Center, Warchild and UNICEF

³⁵ The process and the activities were gender sensitive, age related and inclusive for students with special needs and mental health needs. Guidelines of child safeguarding, parental involvement, child friendly materials and Referral of children/families in emerging psychosocial needs/risks were followed and warranted. The following are results that MoE has fully recognized and endorsed: Consider and meet all MoE requests needed to support students, parents and counsellors at this stage.

Reach a great harmony in integrating all efforts, effective and efficient collaboration among members and MOE, and facilitated with leadership and commitment by all task force members who were very active at every meeting and extremely responsive to MoE needs.

Fortify the relationship between partners and MoE.

Implement interventions with children, parents and counsellors and fulfilling wide spectrum of needs due to organization's coordination of resources.

Reach higher capacity of counsellors to respond and reach out for students in need by maintain their own well-being.

Present a directory of hotlines available for referral posted on MOE website.

has been done in collaboration with the relevant partners and stakeholders and linkages between the MYRP, MoE Education Sector Strategic Plan and Humanitarian Response Plan, among other things, and ensuring presentation of ECW guidance on the integration of gender, disability and inclusion. This strengthens the added value of the programme and supports delivery of collective outcomes and creates the possibility for models and systems that can be mainstreamed and scaled up where no single agency can deliver the totality of the education response required.

ECW/MYRP programme management is well-established for effective and efficient joint coordination, in terms of planning, MEAL, risk and financial management; donor relations and reporting; communication/visibility, and governance. Advocacy and resource mobilization work was also initiated. The new Programme Management Unit (PMU) became fully operational in 2020 and led setting up of management systems/tools and finalization of guidance documents. PMU in collaboration with MoE manages ECW/MYRP, spearheading joint planning, implementation and M&E. It successfully coordinated joint reprogramming for COVID-19 and contributed to UNICEF Priority on Humanitarian Development Nexus (HDN), engaging in strategic discussions and documenting initial HDN learning from ECW/MYRP. PMU maintained management and oversight of ECW/MYRP, including coordination of meetings, information sharing, follow-up on pending actions, engagement with Education Cluster, ESWG, donors and other programmes, and COVID-19 assistance. Guidance documents such as Consolidated Workplan, governance structure/ToRs and partner agreements were finalized, and the M&E, financial, risk management and communication/visibility tools developed. PMU with MoE and all five MYRP partners delivered the following:

- Finalized the baseline/needs assessment and ensured quarterly updates of the M&E system for joint performance management, which included one-on-one consultations with partners, M&E training for partners' IPs, supporting effective implementation and provision of evidence-based data on results. PMU, when possible, ensured triangulation of data resources, proper responsibility, frequency of reporting and disaggregation of data collection and documentation of the MoVs and adherence to safe/ethical data management procedures. PMU strengthened joint programming and M&E knowledge sharing by sharing with MoE and partners three courses on results-based management, education sector analysis and data literacy; MEAL resources and knowledge products, and by encouraging partners to share them further. In consultation with ECW Secretariat, PMU developed and shared the ToR of the final evaluation with all stakeholders, with the evaluation expected to start by early 2021.
- Quarterly updates of the risk management matrix included revisiting specific risk areas and managerial/programmatic mitigation actions, and analysing the high emerging risks, mainly the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the possible Israeli annexation of certain West Bank areas to Israel. 2019 and 2020 MYRP Qualitative Country Level Risk Analysis Reports were submitted to ECW Secretariat. PMU provided fraud training to all partners and their sub-partners, promoting the ECW Anti-Fraud Policy and fraud reporting channel. After guidance and a training on child safeguarding by ECW Secretariat, PMU began follow-up on safeguarding with partners and communicated the new reporting address. PMU also followed up with due diligence activities such as analysing partners' sub-partner selection processes and documents to see that best practices were applied and ensured HACT assurance activities.
- Year 2 funds were requested and disbursed to all partners. To ensure efficient financial monitoring, PMU used the financial monitoring tool to track actual expenditures against the planned budget on quarterly basis, which helps the partners to complete the financial information in donor reports. With support of the UNICEF Communications team, communication products such communication guidelines, English and Arabic programme brochures and ECW-branded visibility items were produced and distributed, to be used in programme activities.

ECW/MYRP in Palestine continues efforts on joint planning for the common approaches, in close collaboration with MoE with the thematic groups to lead the common approaches discussions and the development of policy guidelines. Further, during the monthly technical committee meetings, the partners focus of discussion is on progress reporting and on joint planning and coordination needs in issues such as the COVID-19 effect and response, the ECW/MYRP Gaza emergency funds, the ECW/MYRP communication and advocacy strategy, M&E, the common approaches and the agreement on a common understanding and definition of what constitutes a Common Approach³⁶. The partners also collaborate on specific joint interventions. For instance, UNDP worked closely with the MoE to identify the list of needed DRR equipment and specifications and conducted a joint need assessment with MoE for school renovation, and UNESCO and UNDP coordinated closely on the procurement and training regarding the use of DRR equipment. They will do the same with the assistive devices for CWD. UNICEF and UNESCO are collaborating on the inclusive and life skills citizenship education and the distance learning components, to ensure synergy and avoid overlap in the schools.

Moreover, with the support of the Education Cluster and its partners, MoE developed its COVID-19 National Response Plan that presents the MoE's planned preparedness and response measures to ensure students' safety, psychosocial wellbeing and continuity of transferring knowledge to all students both in Gaza and West Bank. This plan is considered by MoE the

³⁶ SCI proposed various definitions based on its international experience in education and protection. It was agreed amongst partners to adopt the following: developing minimum standards based on the existing work, best practices and lessons learned to guide development of policy guidelines with MoE. It was also agreed that at least within the ECW/MYRP the policy guidelines should be applied, and that the policy guidelines will be an important deliverable by ECW/MYRP to MoE and Education sector, and if adapted and used, they can support the Ministry and the sector beyond and after ECW/MYRP.

umbrella framework for all interventions related to the COVID-19 response and highlights areas where external technical and financial support from donors and partners is required. The plan's total budget is 2.5 million USD, of which 1.5 million USD are covered by ECW funds: \$921,778 as of September 2020 by the COVID-19 reprogrammed ECW/MYRP funds and the rest by ECW-FER resources received and managed directly by UNICEF and SCI. In addition, another \$45,300 was added to support the provision of hygiene kits in preparation for MoE Gaza schools' reopening and \$286,000 to support the provision of hygiene kits and learning materials for UNRWA Gaza schools from early 2021.³⁷

d) **Strengthened national and local capacities.**

Strengthening national and local capacities is an integral part and a cross cutting objective of the overall MYRP design. Outcome 3 is specifically aimed at strengthening national capacities while Outcomes 1 and 2 are focused on strengthening local capacities and building resilience through strengthening access to education and quality of learning. The ECW/MYRP contributes to strengthening the MoE's institutional capacity in emergency preparedness, response, coordination and recovery, through the work that takes place under Outcome 3. Once implementation is advanced, evidence-based information will be provided on how deliverables are contributing to strengthening existing systems such as the MoE data collection and use of emergency relevant information, emergency preparedness, response, coordination and recovery. In addition, the programme will also determine how it is strengthening capacities for inclusive education, DRR among teachers and educators, the provision of safe access to schools and whether it is contributing to student's empowerment, learning, decreasing dropout rates, enhancing children's cognitive ability, physical health and social behaviour and reducing the risk of settler harassment and violence on checkpoints. The PMU works with the five partners on strengthening capacities through regular orientation sessions on topics such as M&E, risk and financial management and gender. Joint participatory monitoring activities and reflection sessions are planned which will enhance the understanding, collection and use of evidence-based data to inform responses that are relevant, efficient, effective and more sustainable.

On the margins of the baseline and needs assessment study, the MoE expressed ownership towards strengthening its own research capacities and approached PMU to facilitate the delivery of a one-day training³⁸ for 7 (4 F, 3 M) MoE staff from the Measurement and Evaluation, National Center for Research and Development and Curriculum Departments on research methodologies and hands-on experience in conducting field research using the baseline and needs assessment tools in addition to the use and preparation of a "pilot feedback form". The training knowledge was planned to be utilized in the pilot testing of the intentional experimental schools' sample, where the research firm researchers were to conduct the tool testing on half of the sample and the MoE staff to conduct the other half. The pilot was planned to take place on 10 March 2020 but was cancelled following the declaration of the 'state of emergency' on 5 March due to the COVID-19. As a good example of resilience and rapid response to the COVID-19; the research firm, in full coordination with MoE opted to use innovative approaches to complete the baseline surveys. The new approach required an overall re-thinking of the previously developed face-to-face arrangements and swiftly moving into a virtual (yet personal) approach. It also required new skills on the part of all the research firm's senior researchers and field work team, hence much training on approaching target groups virtually, new management and coordination skills, use of technology, gauging psychosocial dimensions of working virtually with people under crisis. New online templates and programs were procured, and the research firm capacitated its team to be able to prepare surveys and online key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The reporting as well had to be adjusted where new recording methods and transcription had to be adopted. This experience not only ensured the continuation of this exercise, but also directly supported developing the local and research institution's capacities and resilience to unforeseen events.

In response to the school closures due to the COVID-19, and in line with ECW/MYRP reprogramming, the partners have provided technical capacity building and support to MoE to respond to the pandemic, from planning to technical guidance and implementation. For example, SCI is strengthening the school-level emergency preparedness and response capacity and UNDP has provided schools with DRR and safety equipment. SCI is building capacity of the MoE's PSS counsellors and technical supervisors and strengthening MoE's capacity to document education-related violations. UNICEF and UNESCO are supporting continuity of learning through provision of online learning materials and ICT support to improve the online platform infrastructure. Moreover, UNESCO is coordinating the efforts of partners in order to advise the implementation of the national school re-opening framework of Palestine, based on the global school re-opening framework and regional action plan, developed by UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP and the World Bank. In this regard, UNESCO, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Education Cluster, initiated the discussion in the Education core group

³⁷ The SoP ECW/MYRP COVID-19 response/reprogramming to support the implementation of the MoE COVID-19 response request was intensively coordinated with the MoE, Education Cluster and all MYRP partners and approved by the ECW Secretariat. This placed MYRP to support MoE immediately but also at medium and longer-term as the programme aims to build resilience of the education system and actors and builds a bridge between the humanitarian and development continuum.

meeting, as the technical advisor to the Education Sector Working Group, and is supporting the MoE and partners to initiate a working group for school re-opening.

e) Increased availability of quality data, evidence and research.

SoP being impacted by emergencies and protracted crises; the government and its partners face recurring challenges when planning for EiE. The MoE has demonstrated commitment towards protecting children's rights to educational continuity and participation in a safe learning environment. This is evident through the endorsement of international standards and protocols as well as the Inclusive Education Policy, the School Environment Policy, the Joint Advocacy and Protection Strategy (JPAS), the Education Sector Contingency Plan, and its Education Sector Strategic Plan (2017-2022). While these formal commitments are commendable, the MoE has struggled to implement a coordinated and systematic approach to monitor comprehensive vulnerabilities of the education system and inform cohesive EiE strategies. This is mostly the result of a missing institutionalized coordinated approach towards EiE that includes the phases of emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

One of the most critical challenges faced is the lack of disaggregated, reliable and up-to-date data that can serve as a baseline to build upon relevant response, preparedness and recovery strategies all the while monitoring the impact of the implemented actions. Aligning with this, the ECW/MYRP partners are advocating for evidence-based education planning and programmes that consider the causes and triggers of conflict and that reflect their impacts and evolution, reduce the effects on education, can be cost-efficient, protecting investments in infrastructure, equipment and supplies and hence bridging the gap between humanitarian and development responses; ensure more equitable, continued and protective EiE along with strengthening national capacities in analysis, programming and M&E. In doing so, SoP ECW/MYRP is strategizing the following approaches:

- 1- Systematically engaging MoE in all phases of the ECW/MYRP governance, assessments, programme development, implementation and M&E. MoE benefits from support aimed at strengthening its capacities and is a leading and active actor in the coordination mechanisms (Education Cluster, Education Sector Working Group, EiE Thematic Group and chairs the ECW/MYRP Steering Committee and Technical Committee and other sub-thematic working groups including on M&E). The baseline and needs assessment study was led by the MoE Director of the National Center for Educational Research and Development and a core team from all relevant MoE departments. On the national level the MoE is leading intensive consultation and coordination between different research partners to avoid any duplication or overloading of schools with data collection³⁹.
- 2- Strengthening Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) is a key driver for improved accountability for children affected by crises. Aligning EiE data with existing national systems can be complex, as national EMIS data is not recent enough to make planning and decision making sufficiently accurate or cost effective in emergency contexts. UNESCO, with the support of ECW and NORCAP and outside of ECW/MYRP, supports MoE in countries affected by protracted crises to strengthen and adapt their EMIS to inform EiE strategies and programmes. The assignment in Palestine highlighted gaps⁴⁰ between the information generated through the EMIS and information used by humanitarian/development actors in the country and outlined potential remedial actions⁴¹ to the identified gaps. In direct collaboration with humanitarian and development partners working in EiE, this is perceived as a valuable opportunity to strengthen the government accountability while generating more cohesive approaches by referring to common data sets for joint planning. The remedial actions developed are expected to inform the ECW/MYRP support to affected schools and the MoE in emergency preparedness. In addition, it ensures the optimization of current capacities, as well as the linkage with existing EiE information systems used by partners (UNRWA and Education Cluster). This is aligned with the shared commitment among national institutions (PCBS, MoE, MoSD, MoH) and humanitarian/developmental partners towards generating coordinated data and evidence in an environment characterized by a multitude of actors, issues, processes and funding source.
- 3- The historic gap between officially available data and the reality in schools prevented MYRP partners and education stakeholders from planning needs-based interventions and taking informed decisions in areas affected by the crisis. To counteract this fact and inform evidence-based programming, ECW/MYRP supported the MoE

³⁹ To that end, several meetings were held between the research firm, ECW team, an INGO and MoE.

⁴⁰ Main Findings: Strong Data-Driven Culture within the MoE but fragmented information systems that affect the quality and relevancy of data. Numerous DGs refer to different mechanisms that use parallel tools and processing methodologies that don't allow for the generated data to be integrated.

While this is linked to the absence of a unified Data Collection/Management Policy, and the emerging of new data needs, the multiple systems in place contribute to (i) dispersion of information and excessive clerical work, (ii) overlapping information and inconsistent indicators that cannot always be integrated, and (iii) fragmented vulnerability data and needs assessments within the MoE and incomplete understanding of the vulnerabilities of the Education System

⁴¹ Suggested Remedial Actions: The main recommendations can be categorized as such:

A. Development of a unified computerized system. By 1-Draft and validate a Data Collection/Management Policy; 2-Develop and implement an adapted computerized system (linked with systems of other ministries and organizations, such as UNRWA). 3-Ensure the sustainability and ownership of the system within the MoE- at all levels (Financial, IT, Human resources)
B. Development of a comprehensive EMIS framework – which includes specific EiE indicators. By, 1-Elaborate an EMIS Master Plan (data gaps and needs and how the information System will concretely address them) 2-Develop a Data Management Framework for Education Data (indicators, processes, roles and responsibilities) with all DGs. 3-Integrate specific EiE indicators that can inform emergency preparedness, response and recovery plans. C. Promote systematic and coordinated EiE Monitoring and Planning. 1-Formalize the EiE role of the DG of FFU and of each DG. 2-Elaborate a comprehensive EiE strategy and develop systematic joint assessments. 3-Strengthen and systemize coordination on matters related to EiE among DGs and partners – at all levels

and partners to conduct a joint baseline and needs assessment study⁴² that informed response by the MYRP partners and provided updated, reliable and sex, disability, grade, school, governorate and refugee disaggregated data that can be utilized by MoE, local and international partners, donors and the Education Cluster partners to access updated educational nation-wide data in EiE and ensure a relevant and rapid response. It provides evidence to understand the education needs and gaps through consulting communities on their needs. The results are used to ensure monitoring of the desired change through a solid results framework while meeting ECW's monitoring and reporting requirements. The findings are currently used to refine the geographical targeting, beneficiary selection as well as interventions based on the identified specific needs.

- 4- To ensure gender results, the baseline study considered qualitative data that reflects the different roles, responsibilities, perceptions, aspirations and interests of both female and male groups within and across different age groups, formal and informal education and disability status. The assessment tools were designed to ensure reliability, validity, triangulation of results, child friendliness approaches and proper engagement of all relevant individuals, groups and vulnerable communities including 180 schools⁴³ and 2,713 girls and boys, parents, caregivers, teachers, principals, counsellors, community members, medical staff and relevant support institutions that are in the most marginalized, crisis affected areas (Gaza, EJ, Area C and Hebron-H2) and facing educational vulnerabilities among others⁴⁴. Moreover, the baseline study provided data on girls' and boys' minimum acquisition of life skills. Accordingly, this will allow partners to measure change overtime in students' social and life skills. The study was finalized in September 2020.
- 5- Human resources continue to play a crucial role to ensure programming is based on timely quality data and evidence. The ECW/MYRP supports NGOs to document violations against the right to education, including student arrest. Accordingly, girls and boys are provided with legal consultations before being interrogated and legal defence before the military court. Moreover, this facilitates MoE follow up on the cases ensuring proper referrals and provision of quality educational and psychosocial support to ex-detainees to enable their return to the educational system.
- 6- The UNICEF-commissioned evaluation to assess the effectiveness, sustainability, impact, relevance and efficiency of the protective presence intervention in adequately meeting the needs of children and teachers regarding protection from violations on their way to school or around school was finalized in March 2020. The findings emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to safe access to school that complements protective presence with other mechanisms such as local solutions by communities, transportation, formal coordination with the Civil Administration (CA), to provide sustainable protection to students and staff. The findings from this study will be used to reach a consensus with MoE and other partners on a common approach to safe access to school.
- 7- UNRWA Gaza has conducted its own technical assessment of school rehabilitation needs which was implemented by Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP) in coordination with the education team in order to conclude the rehabilitation needs for next three years and focus on the 2020 plan; which is part of ECW/MYRP. UNRWA Gaza will be keen on avoiding any funding overlap with urgent works and ensuring the safety of students at school is not compromised.
- 8- As part of the COVID-19 response, UNDP provided support to the MoE in carrying out a need assessment for WASH priorities in East Jerusalem, where 127 schools were mapped and information was shared with the MoE for mobilizing the required resources towards ensuring safe return of students for the new scholastic year 2021/2022. This facilitated UNDP's and MoE's work for improving WASH facilities in the targeted schools and provided strategic support for MoE in developing the Back to School plan for the East Jerusalem schools.
- 9- SCI provided support to MoE through carrying out an assessment for school disaster management committees, to explore what they were able to offer particularly, and to identify needs and areas of support for them.

⁴² A local research firm was contracted to conduct the Baseline Survey and a Needs Assessment. The research firm recruitment process and inception phase were concluded before the recruitment of the PMU staff.

⁴³ 1- The baseline survey for the results framework indicators to ensure monitoring of the desired change and to meet ECW's monitoring and reporting requirements

2- Needs assessment/schools' profiles for 86 Government schools in WB + (desk review for 100 UNRWA WB and Gaza schools) covering the following thematic areas:

- students and teachers in need of transport assistance, safe accompaniment
- children in prolonged hospital care and/or under house-arrest
- schools receiving children released from detention, house-arrest and hospitalization
- children in need of assistive devices
- schools in need of infrastructure improvements, ICT and DRR equipment.

⁴⁴ i.e. obstacles to access or cannot participate regularly in learning activities in schools because of restrictions of movement, distance from school, military check points, harassment and sometimes violence by Israeli settlers, arbitrary detention, limited or debilitated school infrastructure, and lack of sufficient classroom space and materials. In addition to these educational related obstacles, these are the communities experiencing the highest levels of poverty, lack of employment opportunities and limited access to services and resources. As a result, these girls and boys suffer trauma and experience developmental challenges, which left unaddressed, negatively impact their educational attainment. For those students with disabilities, prolonged hospitalization, home arrest these negative impacts are compounded because of their unique need for assistive devices and customized learning supports that are largely unavailable due to financial constraints and lack of properly trained teachers. The cumulative result is a significant student population that is vulnerable, many out of school, and most without effective monitoring, psychosocial support and specific skills training relevant for their specific educational and development needs.

5. Lessons-Learned and way forward (suggested length: 1 page)

The ECW/MYRP partners acknowledge that the Palestinian people are experiencing the same shocks and uncertainties as the rest of humanity, and more so due to the COVID-19 crisis. However, the Government of Palestine has limited ability to respond to the socio-economic effects with the same agency as an independent, sovereign state. It cannot make use of the conventional monetary and fiscal tools that sovereign countries ordinarily resort to in the times of economic distress. It cannot influence interest rates, print money, devalue its currency, or access international capital markets to finance the deficit spending needed to compensate those who have lost their jobs, etc.

The COVID-19 crisis has created new needs and priorities for the MoE, which will likely have an impact on the continuation of ECW/MYRP and may require further reprogramming and adjustments to the existing plans, particularly for year 3.

COVID-19 RELATED LESSONS LEARNED:

- The ambiguity, scale and nature of the COVID-19 crisis has imposed new priorities, challenges and required new work modalities. The crisis is beyond what was anticipated in the MoE's existing preparedness plans and the capacities of MoE and Education Cluster partners. The MoE and Education Cluster partners have not been operating at full capacity due to movement restrictions and quarantine measures. In addition, the lack of platforms for distance learning prior to the emergency, and a limited consensus between MoEs in Ramallah and Gaza over the content of the e-learning platform hampered the efficient start of distance learning. This challenge has been compounded by the limited internet connectivity in certain communities and households. When schools closed on 6 March 2020, the system was not able to continue provision of education services for three months and learning was left to individual learners to find whatever learning opportunity they could. This impacted programme activities (that were either delayed/postponed or reprogrammed) particularly those that require face-to-face interactions and activities taking place in schools or other educational facilities such as trainings. Since then, there has been progressive improvement on the systems resilience to respond to similar shocks with the distance learning system being put in place. Schools have been reopened using a blended learning approach and learning continued during the intermittent school closures. However, many children remain excluded from education, particularly the most vulnerable, demonstrating the continued fragility of the education system.
- ECW/MYRP was the first and quickest 'donor' and partner to offer and reprogramme concrete assistance to the MoE's COVID-19 response. This demonstrates flexibility of the funding mechanism and the MYRP's agility to adapt to changing circumstances. The PMU and the partners were all active, coordinated well among themselves to propose COVID-19 reprogrammed activities and pulled together a consolidated plan to support MoE. In the response, the partners have been in the forefront focusing on distance education, MHPSS, school hygiene and school WASH facilities. As much as was possible, ECW/MYRP also adjusted other work during the COVID-19 crisis⁴⁵. Now that the partners have better understanding of the crisis, they are better prepared to engage in a risk analysis on how to shift activities next school year if the pandemic accelerates or a similar crisis takes place.
- During the COVID-19 outbreak, missing data about schools and a clear information management tool represented a general challenge in exploring the best options to respond to the MoE's needs. Hence, it would be important to enhance MoE's capacities in data collection and real-time information through investing in the development or strengthening of the MoE databases and education management information systems. This would provide strategic support to the MoE in planning processes and in adjusting plans based on any new developments or emerging situations like the COVID-19 crisis.
- One of the key lessons that emerged during the management of the COVID-19 response is regarding the distance learning and required teachers' skills. The teachers are not prepared to provide remote support to their learners and need this capacity. It also became obvious that the education system does not have the infrastructure for online learning nor distance learning. Such conditions have added extra layers of stress to the teachers, parents and children. Prioritising wellbeing and mental health of teachers in the face of these combined stressors is crucial. The teachers also need to be provided with resources they can use to help their students remotely and need to be supported for such engagement with children and parents during the crises. The ECW/MYRP partners⁴⁶ have played a key role in supporting MoE, including co-leading the distance education COVID-19 task team, longer term support for distance education and building life skills of the students, encouraging hybrid and blended distance learning approaches, and the development of the back to learning strategy for school reopening.

⁴⁵ For example, UNESCO's contract with the implementing partner on inclusive education was extended to match with the new dates of schools re-opening. In the meantime, UNESCO focused on improving the quality of the training manual on inclusive education using online meetings and communicating between the implementing partner, MoE and other partners. For SCI, the focus early on was to ensure that SCI staff and implementing partners' staff can continue their work virtually, are safe and are adhering to official guidelines. The focus afterwards was on working with implementing partners on how to potentially shift their activities to be implemented remotely. Opportunities were explored in this area; for instance, in continuing PSS consultations with the children who are ex-detainees/under house-arrest and their caregivers via phone or online platforms and providing PSS training to school counsellors online.

⁴⁶ Particularly UNESCO and UNICEF.

- Some partners also learnt that having the MoE lead the implementation provided both opportunities as well as bottlenecks. Coordination at MoE level created opportunities for systemic and large-scale results beyond what the ECW MYRP funding could achieve. For example, with MoE leading the COVID-19 Hygiene task force, resources were mobilized to provide school hygiene kits to all government schools. On the other hand, it was difficult to make the needed progress with the distance learning component.
- Funding is still a challenge, including for the COVID-19 response as reported by OCHA and the Education Cluster, particularly in the area of school WASH facilities. ECW/MYRP's contribution to the MoE's COVID-19 response plan to improve school WASH facilities is important and appreciated (addressing dire needs of the 7 targeted out of 10 identified schools). However, the MoE has a funding gap in this area requiring larger investments to ensure safe and quality school facilities for all students, particularly in East Jerusalem.
- Having a strong education system and the well-tested UNRWA EiE system was key in supporting a speedy and effective response to COVID-19 crisis in the UNRWA schools. The UNRWA EiE approach, developed over the last nine years in response to conflicts in Syria and Gaza, has been reconceptualised to meet the specific challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. This approach includes several key areas, all of which remain relevant in the COVID19 crisis: self-learning, PSS, health and safety, TVET, and M&E.

GENERAL, NON-COVID-19 SPECIFIC LESSONS LEARNED:

- During the preparation of the programme - and more recently during the development of the MYRP COVID-19 reprogramming plan - consultative and inclusive processes were ensured, under the leadership of the MoE and the PMU. The partners are planning together and there have been a broad range of joint planning actions undertaken and it has proven (cost-) effective with each partner leveraging their areas of technical expertise. However, joint analysis and planning requires time, coordination and management, and depth of information sharing, and collaboration could be improved.
- Active technical engagement of MoE. The MoE has identified a focal point and Core Team of five technical staff and encouraged broad participation in the technical coordination meetings. However, the COVID-19 crisis, internal challenges and information sharing within the MoE, frequent staff turnover, and communication and language issues have posed some barriers.
- ECW/MYRP is perceived as a flexible, quick and shock responsive programme that supports key needs across the sector building resilience at individual, community and systems level. But in order to foster resilience in the education system, the education partners must look beyond the 2-3 cycles of the ECW/ MYRP funding, particularly given delays in the sector reform processes. The delays faced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 have exacerbated this, where partners have focussed on the humanitarian response and less on the development priorities such as the Common Approaches and Outcome 3 (MoE/system capacity building). Hence, going forward, more focus is needed on the advocacy and resource mobilisation and on the system level capacity and resilience building, also to better strengthen the humanitarian development continuum.
- ECW/MYRP is an extension of previous and ongoing work in line with the 'new way of working' of the UN system whereby collaborating and being jointly accountable towards collective education outcomes, respecting the "whole of a child approach", i.e. access and continuity to education, protective environment, inclusion and equity, quality education and learning through building on the comparative and complementing partners' capacities to join efforts to contribute on system, community and individual levels.
- The governance structure is effective but may be too heavy, risking creation of parallel structures, and may require a revision to have the right balance of stakeholder/ decision-maker engagement. This may pose challenges to the sustainability of the ECW/MYRP model.
- Donors' agendas and political preferences (e.g. donors' 'red lines' regarding curriculum and names of schools) may risk posing equity challenges, sometimes hindering equal access to services for vulnerable groups; for example, in the cases where a school named after a 'martyr' could not receive assistance despite high needs. This could challenge the humanitarian principles, e.g. humanitarian imperative and impartiality. As a solution, the education sector partners (and ECW Secretariat and its grantees/partners) should be clear in their policy on the extent to which donors can intervene in programme design and implementation, to avoid programmes being discriminatory, increase vulnerabilities and ensure they provide services impartially to all children.
- Efficacy of methodologies and long approval and negotiation processes for specific interventions and implementing partners. A local partner was identified by UNICEF to support the MoE on integration of life skills and citizenship education into the national curriculum. Commencing of the work was challenging as the MoE raised concerns

about the efficacy of the initiative (called 'xLoBs') and requested for an evaluation before commencing the work, which took place, delaying implementation and further due to the COVID-19 priority. Many discussions with the partner and MoE took place to find the best solution and way forward, also considering the new and longer-term requirements brought forth by the COVID-19 crisis for distance and life skills education. This issue has also recently been raised by UNESCO working on the inclusive education with the MoE, where delays have been indicated due to disagreements between MoE and the implementing partner.

6. Human interest story, Advocacy and Visibility (suggested length: 1 page)

Aligned to the global ECW brand guidelines, the State of Palestine ECW/MYRP recently developed its own communication guidelines. The ECW/MYRP partners continue to ensure that funding from the ECW is correctly acknowledged and that the ECW branding guidelines are respected. The programme uses web-based digital media to showcase the programme and ECW funding, and capture visual and written narratives of programme progress, including social media coverage.

The ECW contribution to the COVID-19 response in the State of Palestine, was highlighted on **UNICEF's** social media pages. The following is a summary of posts published to highlight ECW contribution during the pandemic:

Tawjihi (12th grade) hygiene kits distribution:

<https://twitter.com/UNICEFpalestine/status/1269920428195221505>

<https://www.facebook.com/unicefpalestine/posts/2954818811221699>

Back to school hygiene kits distribution:

<https://twitter.com/UNICEFpalestine/status/1304060744556777474>

<https://www.facebook.com/unicefpalestine/posts/3222710221099222>

ECW and UNICEF providing health supplies: <https://twitter.com/UNICEFpalestine/status/1255414871753187328>

Moreover, the PMU procured and distributed to MoE and all partners ECW-branded visibility items (i.e. folders, notebooks, pens) and different size visibility stickers that the partners are using to mark items such as teaching aids. The ECW/MYRP programme brochures both in English and Arabic were also finalised and distributed to MoE and the partners. (See the photos below: Samples of ECW-branded visibility products. Photo credit: Programme Management Unit/Teija Vallandingham, 2020.)



Some examples of visibility for the school rehabilitation and science kits, by UNRWA in Gaza (Photo credit: UNRWA Gaza 2020):



Some examples of visibility for the disaster risk reduction (DRR) equipment and the related DRR training provided to schools, by UNDP (Photo credit: UNDP 2020):



Moreover, **UNESCO and UNDP** acknowledged the impact of ECW fund on education in Palestine through their social media accounts. The following has been published:

- One human interest story has been developed by **UNESCO** (*Determination Schools in Palestine: Between ambitions and challenging realities* (see link below).

<https://en.unesco.org/news/determination-schools-palestine-between-ambitions-and-challenging-realities>

- Leveraging the role of the ECW/MYRP Programme for supporting the national education system, notably, in protracted crisis settings, **UNDP** initiated social media actions on the achievements made and visibility items were placed in the targeted schools provided with DRR equipment, noting this is a joint MYRP activity between UNESCO and UNDP. (Photos below: DRR equipment provided by UNDP. Photo credit: UNDP 2020.)



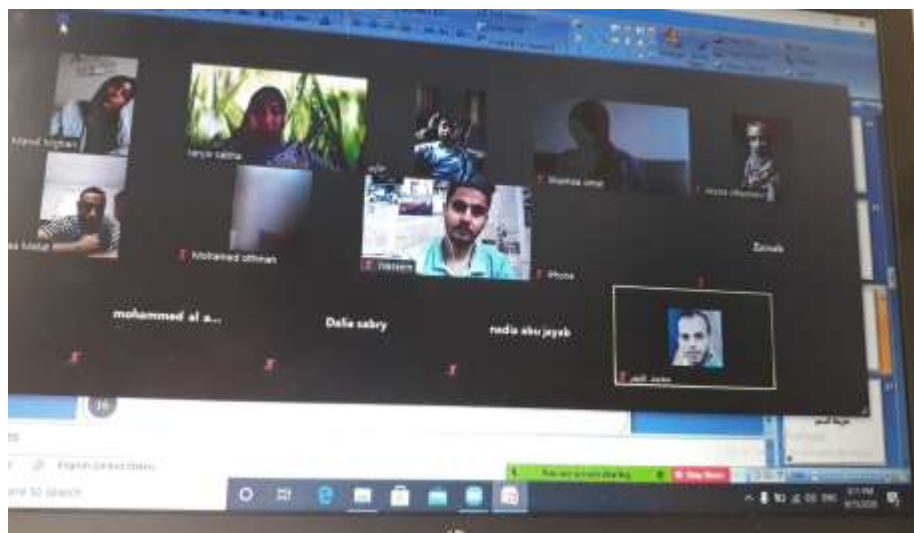
Quotes from the MoE counsellors' training on PSS, by Save the Children:

Quote from a counsellor who participated in the PSS trainings for counsellors: "Behind every ordeal there is a grant and an opportunity. I attended the three previous training courses and benefited a lot from them (the stress management/tele-psychological counselling/and self-care were great!). My commitment to these courses is supposed to be for my professional development, but to be honest, my primary commitment and motivation was advanced because these courses are available to everyone {all counsellors} without exception and I found someone who asks and cares about me after 13 years of working as a counsellor. As for me and many of my colleagues, I am very pleased that you accounted for the counsellors' needs and gave us the freedom to attend these trainings; each was based on their needs. I wish in the future when we return to our normal working conditions that such courses are announced by the MoE on social media platforms to be available for all counsellors interested."

Another counsellor reflected on the self-care training by saying: "I really needed this training, we are very relieved, we also gained skills and mechanisms to help us to help others implement them both in our personal and professional lives." The counsellor added, "thank you very much Ms. Elham for your efforts, and for providing us with the opportunity to attend these trainings. A word of truth to be said that the online training is a wonderful experience, that saves a lot of time and transportation effort and resources. While the discussions were well arranged and very rich in content and the trainers were able to manage time and give as many as possible chances to participate. Thank you, especially, for the case management course, it was one of the richest and most useful courses, but of course this (remote learning) doesn't undermine the importance of future face to face trainings."

Another counsellor explained: “The supervision session and self-care training helped me even in my personal life. I became more relaxed at home and my relationship with my children became more positive than before. At first, it was very difficult for me to separate between my work stress I brought back home and the needs of my family that I have to attend to. When I have time to disconnect at home and take care of my personal needs and responsibilities, I am more relaxed and able to provide support for students at school.”

Screenshot below: MoE school counsellors attending one of the online PSS sessions:
(Photo credit: Save the Children 2020.)



Human interest story by Save the Children:

Samir⁴⁷ is a 14-years-old ex-detainee child from Aida refugee camp, in Bethlehem. The camp is surrounded by the separation wall and a military checkpoint. As a result, the camp experiences constant Israeli raids and frequent arrests of children and youth.

Samir was arrested on 6 November 2019 and was detained for two months. He expressed to the counsellors that he went through a difficult interrogation and detention experience. He was ill-treated and his basic human rights were denied. The difficult experience he went through negatively affected his psychological wellness and resulted in him being diagnosed with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) after his release. His symptoms included sadness and depression, fluctuations in behavior and mood, sleeping disorders, and isolation. During that period, he could not easily socialize with his family and friends and was unwilling to return to school. These symptoms made it difficult to reintegrate back to his normal life.

The counsellor visited Samir's house and talked to the family about his situation and the traumatic experience that he went through. The counsellor expressed to the family the need to provide him with the psychosocial support to enable him to overcome the negative effects of detention. Samir's behaviors and isolation after detention have reflected negatively on his family and their ability to deal with this situation. Samir's mother expressed: “God, please bring Samir to how he was before his detention, our life at home has completely changed when we started to see Samir always nervous and insisting on sitting alone. If Samir was able to improve, all our lives at home would change for the better.”

A counsellor engaged Samir through a holistic intervention plan, starting with psychosocial counselling sessions to help promote his psychosocial resilience, release stress, restore his psychosocial wellbeing, and equip him with coping and life skills to help him re-integrate back into his community. In addition, the counsellor worked with Samir on the academic aspects of his reintegration to be able to return to school by providing him with educational guidance sessions and enrolling him into remedial courses to help him catch up on the classes he missed while in detention. During the psychosocial sessions, the counsellor noticed that Samir had an interest in sports, so, she encouraged him to join a fitness club and use sports as a healthy outlet for his stress.

⁴⁷ Name changed to protect identity.

Throughout the intervention period, Samir's response was noted after each session, his relationship with his family and friends improved and he went from isolating himself to becoming socially capable of dealing with others positively. His view of himself also improved and he became aware of the importance of being responsible and being able to plan his daily routine. He now sleeps better without panicking or being in constant fear during the night. At the same time, his family also noted this change in behavior and was positively impacted with the positive results of the intervention at the family level.

Samir's mother described the change in behaviour since the beginning of the intervention as follows: "Samir was a stubborn person, he did not care about what anyone had to say, and he always imposed his opinion on others. Today, Samir respects everyone who speaks to him. He has become a calmer person, completely different from what he was before. When he took the remedial courses, he was motivated to do well in school because he felt better about being able to understand the subjects." His mother added: "Samir loves sports, when you [counsellors] encouraged him to join the sports club, his mood shifted, and I finally saw a smile on his face. Sports was always his way of releasing his stress".

A group of ex-detainee children attending a group PSS session and engaging in a debriefing activity.

(Photo credit: Save the Children 2020.)

