The Case Studies: Design and Purpose

In the summer of 2019, the FFA team launched a participatory process engaging Mastercard Foundation Scholars, AUB bridging program alumni, and partner institution faculty and staff in the design of the case study research. The two case studies included in this Toolkit, which informed the Scoping Tool and Design Framework, were conducted in Lebanon on AUB's blended bridging program for refugees (PADILEIA) and in Uganda on the pilot FFA program. This was then supplemented by data gathered through MERL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning) Activities on FFA.

In order to ensure that all members of this group could participate in creating the Case Studies given different levels of previous experience in research methods, research staff at the University of Edinburgh facilitated a series of online research design workshops with members of the FFA team, Mastercard Foundation Scholars and PADILEIA graduates. Designed as a hands-on space in which sub-teams working on the two case studies could begin to design their research, these virtual workshops were held on a weekly basis over 5 weeks in June and July 2020 and covered the following topics: digital and qualitative research methods, research design and research strategies.

The workshops utilized online tools such as Padlet and Google Docs to allow for maximum engagement through simultaneous verbal and written contributions. Furthermore, material was not only presented by academic faculty. For example, during one session Scholar researchers presented definitions for concepts relevant to the study (such as refugee, bridging program, psychosocial, Global South, etc.) based on literature and their own experiences. One of the major outcomes of this process was the articulation of a shared research question

for both case studies, the collective definition of key concepts, and enhanced capabilities among all team members to develop the case study methodology.

Simultaneously, the AUB team began holding additional weekly online meetings with the Scholars and PADILEIA graduates (referred to collectively as Scholar researchers from here on), all of whom were Syrian refugees, who constituted the PADILEIA case study team. During these meetings, Scholar researchers could reflect upon and ask questions about the case study design workshops – providing a space for additional processing and discussion in Arabic of the workshop content. Through engagement in the online workshops and the additional weekly PADILEIA case study team meetings, the team articulated its specific research sub-questions and began a process of detailing the research methodology. These weekly meetings continued throughout 2019 as an intensive research internship for the Scholar researchers, during which time detailed research methodology and data collection tools were developed.

To gauge the Scholars' experiences in the research process and to understand how we could further enhance their involvement, we conducted two online, open-ended, reflective surveys with Scholar researchers. Written reflections shared by the Mastercard Foundation Scholars following the conclusion of the Lebanon field work and capacity building in Summer 2019 revealed some common themes about their experiences despite the diversity represented in terms of home institution, nationality, field of study, and stage of study. All of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars, even senior master's students with significant research experience, were appreciative of the variety of research skills gained through actual practice with senior researchers in the field. Most of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars also commented on the positive and new experience of working in such a large and diverse research team. Furthermore, many Mastercard Foundation Scholars mentioned that they gained confidence in research and public speaking through their experiences.

The PADILEIA Bridging Programme: overview

Higher Education plays a critical role in providing refugees with essential tools for sustainable development and helps them to make strategic choices about their futures. The Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access (PADILEIA) was formed to increase access to higher education for refugees and disadvantaged host communities in Jordan and Lebanon. The project developed a three-pronged approach to achieve this by providing the following pathways:

1. Foundational programme: 8-month blended classroom-based learning. These are delivered by Al al-Bayt University, Jordan (at the university, Mafraq, Jordan) and AUB (in Bekka Valley, Lebanon)
2. Study tracks: 6-12 months of online study offered with student support leading to the transfer of student's previous credits into University programmes in Lebanon
3. Bespoke short courses: Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in subjects highlighted within the project's needs assessment.

PADILEIA's target population is primarily refugees displaced by the Syrian crisis, and PADILEIA aims to include a 75% participation rate of this group. 25% of PADILEIA participants

are disadvantaged members of the local host communities in Lebanon and Jordan, serving to provide an element of social and community integration of the two groups of students.

For the purpose of this document, any references to PADILEIA will only be discussing the AUB bridging program (sometimes referred to as the AUB Foundation Programme) as this was the most relevant model to the development of the Foundations for All programme in Uganda.

History of PADILEIA

Higher Education institutions act as global agents for change. One of the objectives of PADILEIA has been to open paths of learning that will provide Syrian refugees with the skills to contribute to future leadership, good governance, and economic and institutional rebuilding initially in their host countries, and then later in post-civil war societal reconstruction in Syria. By widening access to higher education learning opportunities and providing transferable skills that enhance future employability, PADILEIA aims to address the crisis in higher education provision in host countries through the development and implementation of a scalable, sustainable and adaptable digital learning model.

The concept behind the PADILEIA model evolved from existing partner relationships. King's College London conducted a field trip to Lebanon in May 2016 aimed at identifying where intervention would be most effective and at solidifying existing partnerships. PADILEIA identified a gap in the provision of education currently offered to Syrian refugees: the skill set most secondary school graduates have does not match the skill set and qualifications they need to enter into a HE institution or the skilled workforce. English language skills and reinforcement in other foundational subjects (maths, sciences, and humanities) are required for HE entry and success. IT Skills are in demand by students and employers, and constitute a key area for developing the next generation's economic and societal contributions. Simultaneously, disadvantaged youth in host communities have been negatively impacted by the Syrian crisis with unemployment skyrocketing and poverty rates increasing. As a result of the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon, by 2015 an estimated 170,000 Lebanese had fallen into poverty, unemployment had doubled to around 20 percent and economic losses of some US$7.5 billion had been incurred. At the same time, only around half of Syrian refugees are economically active and one-third have access to overwhelmingly informal and low-skilled employment.

Policy Context

This policy briefing was written by Fadi Salahedin and Carina Radler-Sokolowski, two students at the American University of Beirut who have been involved in research throughout the FFA project.

The Lebanese government's approach to the approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees that have arrived since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis (HRW, 2021) can be described as complex

to say the least. While the Lebanese constitution[1] and international law[2] as well as international customary law with regards to the principle of non-refoulement (Janmyr 2016; 10) bind the Lebanese government into refugee protection, the forces on the ground make this goal far more complex. There are various justifications for why Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, among them uncertainty about the Convention's obligations. A well-established argument is that an accession would require the permanent integration of refugees, among them Palestinians. This thought poses a threat to Lebanon's fragile demographic constituency, since the predominantly Sunni Palestinians were often blamed for adding to the outburst of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). Hence, the question of joining the 1951 Refugee Convention is a highly politicized one (Janmyr, 2017: 449f). Furthermore, the obligatory integration that the convention entails is contrary to the Palestinian right to return, thus increasing the complexity of the situation (Janmyr and Stevens, 2021: 336f).

The government's attitudes towards the Syrian refugees can only be understood by the fact that it considers Lebanon only as a country of transit and not of asylum (Janmyr, 2016: 61). This is reflected by the consensus between different players that the main aim of any refugee response plan is that eventually refugees should be repatriated to Syria (Atallah and Mahdi, 2017: 5). Furthermore, there is a strong perception (echoed by the Lebanese president in 2014) that the increasing number of Syrian refugees is an "existential threat" to the security and fabric of the nation, thereby highly politicizing this humanitarian issue (Meier 2014; cited in Janmyr, 2016: 10; Nassar, 2021: 7). This perceived threat can be explained by many factors ranging from the Lebanese trauma from the experience with the Palestinian refugees to the history of the Syrian presence in Lebanon. It is feared that large concentrations of refugees would create terrorist hotbeds (Turner, 2015; Nassar and Stel, 2021: 50) in addition to economic competition for resources and infrastructure. This has fostered a "laisser-faire" or "non-policy policy" that, according to Nassar et al. (2021), is purposefully designed to make the Syrian refugees' stay as discriminatory and administratively difficult as possible (Atallah and Mahdi, 2017: 25), which puts them in a state of vulnerability and uncertainty that would eventually drive them to leave. Additionally, Lebanon's response is highly dependent on and driven by external pressure. For example, the driving force of the crisis response in Lebanon is foreign aid (supporting refugees and easing the internal tensions that arise from their presence) and the work of UN agencies and other NGOs, shifting the responsibility from the state to foreign actors, which results in a state governed by the "politics of outsourcing" (Nassar and Stel, 2021: 52).

The "no-policy policy" of the Lebanese government's approach to the crisis has resulted in decisions being made by governmental whims instead of laws, which has allowed it to sidestep and breach bilateral agreements and national law (Oxfam, 2015). This approach or "no-policy policy" has only revolved around a "set of no's", as Nassar (2021) puts it, focusing mainly on

[1] Referring in its preamble to abide by the covenants of the United Nations and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in Article 14 refers to the right to seek asylum.

[2] Though Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention it is to other human rights covenants such as the Convention Against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

two principal goals which are "no refugees, no camps." This has led the government to avoid acknowledging the refugee status of the de facto Syrian refugees, including those recognized by the UNHCR, and denouncing camps in a delusional attempt to approach the crisis as a short-term one (Janmyr, 2016; Ghaddar, 2017; cited in Nassar and Stel, 2019: 47).[3] According to Nassar and Stel (2021) this mentality, combined with"the chaotic and overwhelming nature of the refugee crisis", the very limited resources, and the dysfunctional political system of the country, has resulted in discriminatory regulations against Syrian refugees in the country. According to Nassar (2021: 8), an advisor to the Minister of Interior actually acknowledged that one of the government's strategies is to make refugees feel that they are not living a good life; the more they are living in a deprived way, the faster they will be forced to leave.

Prior to the crisis, the 1993 bilateral agreement between Syria and Lebanon on Economic and Social Cooperation allowed Syrians to work and reside in Lebanon. Especially since 2015, however, the policies adopted by the Lebanese government have in practice led most Syrians to work illegally (Errighi and Griesse, 2016; cited in Atallah and Mahdi, 2017: 34). The extreme residency permit requirements push refugees into an illegal status that creates vulnerability in regards to residency and work (Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2016, cited in Atallah and Mahdi, 2017: 25). Most refugees cannot produce the required documents and formal lease agreements, nor do they possess sufficient financial means to cover basics or pay for rent (Amnesty International 2015; UNHCR 2015; cited in Janmyr, 2016: 17).[4] The result of this lack of documentation may be arbitrary arrest and deportation, as well as exploitation and the cornering of Syrians into the kafala-sponsorship system[5] (Atallah and Mahdi, 2017:, 24f).

The arbitrary approaches to the legal stay of refugees in the country, the absence of a national framework and this "formal informality" have resulted in municipalities and security agencies assuming de facto control over the regulations and policies related to refugees. Some of these policies include imposing discriminatory curfews that are selective against Syrian refugees. These curfews are illegal according to the Lebanese constitution and conflict with Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Atallah and Mahdi, 2017:, 31). Furthermore, there are numerous socio-economic constraints created by national policies to limit refugees' access to work opportunities and legal employment and owning their own business. This, combined with the unrealistic sums of money that are required of refugees to renew their

[3] A major document that Lebanon developed together with the UN in 2015 was the "Lebanon Crisis Response Plan", which set out three major goals: a reduction in the number of Syrian refugees, ensuring humanitarian protection, and supporting Lebanon's stability (Yassin et a, 2015; cited in Janmyr, 2016: 11)

[4] Costs of renewing residency permits amount to USD 200,00 per person, which most Syrian refugee families cannot afford. Moreover, finding sponsors for refugees is very hard due to the related burdensome bureaucracy (Janmyr, 2016: 69; Nassar, 2021: 5).

[5] The Kafala system originally ensured that a citizen or agency in the country would assume responsibility for workers and was used to socially integrate foreigners. However, it has become a legal system for the governance of foreign labor where the sponsor is responsible legally and economically for the worker (Gardner, 2011; Pande, 2012). This renders the workers more vulnerable to systemic abuse and exploitation by the sponsor as they are not protected by the 1946 Lebanese Labor Code (Human Rights Watch Report, 2010).

residency permits, compounds the active efforts by the government to drive Syrian refugees out (Attallah and Mehdi, 2017).

It is crucial to keep in mind that most practices and institutions are neither fully formal nor totally informal, thus creating a state of "institutional ambiguity" for people's situations (Ho, 2001; Nassar, 2021: 3). This term in particular refers to the condition where a state lacks the capacity or intention to govern, leading to an uncertain and shifting terrain of informal and formal rules (Nassar, 2021: 3). These policies can be described as "intentionally ambiguous," according to Nassar and Stel (2021), and can be explained through the theory of agnotology in which "feigned not-knowing by [Lebanese] authorities legitimizes the policy inaction that imposes uncertainty on refugee populations." This can be used as an excuse for the authorities to escape responsibility and accountability. Moreover, it can be reflected and experienced by the refugee population as "a paradoxical mixture of extremely stringent and changeable regulations" (ibid.). These constantly changing regulations are never communicated properly either to the general public or to humanitarian organizations, drowning them in a state of arbitrariness. For example, Syrian refugees in Lebanon are always stuck in limbo when it comes to the process of residency renewal, work-related regulations, and the repercussions of this ambiguity regarding access and success in educational institutions.

These policies of institutional ambiguity have significant repercussions on the educational sector, and particularly on refugees' access to education. The majority of educational institutions are privatized and have high fees, which poses a hurdle to accessing higher education for low-income families. Furthermore, the public educational sector is both under-funded and has a deteriorating infrastructure, and consequently does not have the capacity to accommodate the large numbers of refugees (Avery and Said, 2017; Fincham, 2020). Additionally, the educational system in Lebanon was established after the Civil War and most institutions are affiliated with particular religious or political groups (Fincham, 2020). This poses additional limitations to the accessibility to higher education for students who come from a refugee background. According to Fincham (2020) only 6% of university-age refugees are actually enrolled in higher education. Some of the further limitations include confinement to camps, restrictions on movement, limited access to basic services, lack of documentation, high costs of living, no ability to prove former study/qualifications, and institutional rigidity, which is a lack of administrative flexibility (Fincham, 2020).

The only efforts to increase access to higher education are conducted by international and some local organizations through scholarship programs, informal, and online programs (Fincham, 2020). And these organizations or programs are facing constant challenges between the volatile political situation and an elitist group that is fostering dependence on the inflow of donations (Todman and Harper, 2021: 4). These efforts have also emphasized initial access to education rather than tackling the real roots of the problem. More broadly, there is a failure in aid planning as a result of the political deadlock undermining the ability "to build sustainable systems that can serve Lebanon's longer-term interests." Furthermore, the crises Lebanon is facing have increased exponentially over the past few years, which have presented new emergency needs that the current international support cannot satisfy (Todman and

Harper, 2021: 5). This has particularly impacted refugees who are already a very fragile part of the population. All the difficulties they are faced with and the need for more reliable outcomes (e.g. earning money to support the family) forces them to steer away from pursuing higher education (Sherab and Kirk, 2016). The lack of access to higher education influences the intention of completing primary and secondary school education for younger age groups (Sherab and Kirk, 2016). Yet, receiving higher education remains a vital solution to widespread problems and vulnerabilities that refugee communities undergo.

References

Al Masri, M. (2015) Local and regional entanglements: The social stability context in Sahel Akkar. Beirut: United Nations Development Program, Peacebuilding in Lebanon project. Available to download at; https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/local-and-regional-entanglements-social-stability-context-sahel-akkar

Amnesty International (2015) Pushed to the Edge: Syrian refugees face increased restrictions in Lebanon. Available to download at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/1785/2015/en/

Atallah, S. and Mahdi, D. (2017) Law and politics of "safe zones" and forced return to Syria: Refugee politics in Lebanon. Beirut: The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. Available to download at: http://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1515749841-lcps_report_-_online.pdf

Buckner, E., Spencer, D., and Cha, J. (2018) 'Between policy and practice: The education of Syrian refugees in Lebanon', Journal of Refugee Studies, 31(4): 444-465.

Dahi, O. (2014) 'The Refugee Crisis in Lebanon and Jordan: the need for economic development spending', Forced Migration Review 47:11-13. https://daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/Resources/need-economic-development-spending_0.pdf

El-Ghali, H. A., De Knight, J., Abdel Latif, S., and Alameddine, F. (2019). Tertiary education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. American University in Beirut, Policy Brief No. 2/2019.

Errighi, L. and Greisse, J. (2016) 'The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Labour Market Implications in Jordan and Lebanon.' European Economy Discussion Paper. Accessed July 7, 2017. https://ideas.repec.org/p/euf/dispap/029.html

Fincham, K. (2020) 'Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey', Research in Comparative and International Education, 15(4): 329-356.

Gardner, A. M. (2011) 'Gulf migration and the family', Journal of Arabian Studies, 1(1): 3-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/21534764.2011.576043

Ho, P. (2001) 'Who owns China's land? Policies, property rights and deliberate institutional ambiguity', The China Quarterly, 166: 394-421.

https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/china-quarterly/article/abs/who-owns-chinas-land-policies-property-rights-and-deliberate-institutional-ambiguity/EFAEF1629B775F2A30967676B707A9AE Human Rights Watch (2021), Country Chapters Lebanon, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/lebanon

Human Rights Watch Report (2010) Walls at Every Turn: Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers through Kuwait's Sponsorship System. Available to download at: http://www.migration4development.org/content/walls-every-turn-abuse-migrant-domestic-workers-through-kuwait%E2%80%99-sponsorship-system

Janmyr, M. (2016) 'Precarity in exile: The legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon', Refugee Survey Quarterly, 35(4): 58-78.

Janmyr, M. (2017) 'No Country of asylum: 'Legitimizing' Lebanon's rejection of the 1951 refugee convention', International Journal of Refugee Law, 29(3): 438-465. https://academic.oup.com/ijrl/article-pdf/29/3/438/21735809/eex026.pdf

Janmyr, M., & Stevens, D. (2021) 'Regional Refugee Regimes: Middle Eas' in Costello, C., Foster, M. and McAdam, J. (eds) The Oxford Handbook of International Refugee Law. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Meier, D. (2014) 'Lebanon: the refugee issue and the threat of a sectarian confrontation', Oriente moderno, 94: 382-401.

Nassar, J. and Stel, N. (2019) 'Lebanon's response to the Syrian Refugee crisis–Institutional ambiguity as a governance strategy', Political Geography, 70: 44-54.

Oxfam (2015) Lebanon: Looking ahead in times of crisis. In Oxfam Discussion Papers. Available at: https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/lebanon-looking-ahead-times-crisis

Pande, A. (2012) 'From "balcony talk" and "practical prayers" to illegal collectives: Migrant domestic workers and meso-level resistances in Lebanon', Gender & society, 26(3): 382-405.

Selby, J. and Tadros, M. (2016) 'Introduction: Eight myths of conflict and development in the Middle East', IDS Bulletin: Transforming Development Knowledge, 47(3): 1-18.

Sherab D. and Kirk, K. (2016) Access to higher education for refugees in Jordan. ARDD-Legal Aid.
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/access_to_higher_education_for_refugees_in_jordan.pdf

Stel, N. (2016) 'The agnotology of eviction in South Lebanon's Palestinian gatherings: How institutional ambiguity and deliberate ignorance shape sensitive spaces', Antipode, 48(5): 1400-1419.

Todman, W. and Harper, C. (2021) Lebanon's Growing Humanitarian Crisis. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/211216_Todman_Lebanon_HumanitarianCrisis_0.pdf

Turner, L. (2015) 'Explaining the (non-)encampment of Syrian refugees: security, class and the labour market in Lebanon and Jordan', Mediterranean Politics, 20(3): 386-404.

UNHCR (2015) "Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Quarterly snapshot January - March 2015." Available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/syrian-refugees-lebanon-snapshot-january-march-2015

Educational Context in Lebanon

The on-going war in Syria, a humanitarian crisis that began in 2011, propelled more than 1.2 million Syrians to cross into Lebanon, 660,000 of which were school age children (3 to 18 years old) (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol; therefore, it does not assign refugee status to those who would otherwise qualify for it under international law.[6] This has contributed to a situation whereby thousands of Syrian refugee children are out of school, impeded by policies that require certified educational records, legal residency in Lebanon, and other official documents that many Syrians cannot attain.

Lebanon has a centralized education system, and all public-school teachers are supposed to follow the same national curriculum aligned with national exams. The experience of students attending public school in Lebanon has been documented as poor, negative and unproductive; teachers and school leaders commonly rely on outdated teacher-centered pedagogy and harsh disciplinary practices and provide limited support for students' learning (Bahou, 2017; 2019). In addition, Lebanese and international organizations have established education programs, often referred to as non-formal schools, for Syrian refugee students. Non-formal schools in Lebanon use a variety of curricula including an adapted version of the Lebanese curriculum or a curriculum from another country; they are not accredited, certified, or recognized by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and therefore, students cannot sit for national exams. In accordance with Lebanese law, public schools employ only Lebanese teachers while teachers working in non-formal schools are often Syrian (Shuayb et al., 2014). With no government oversight, teachers in these settings often have more flexibility regarding what and how they teach. The MEHE also requires Syrian children to have legal residency to enrol in secondary school, and to take the national Brevet

[6] Palestinians are the only population considered refugees, while other displaced populations, including Syrians, are referred to either as 'displaced' or 'non-Lebanese' in official discourse. Moreover, residency regulations imposed by Lebanese General Security in January 2015 require all Syrians to either be registered with UNHCR or to have a Lebanese sponsor in order to legally remain in the country. In May 2015, the Lebanese government demanded that UNHCR stop registering refugees. International and local organizations estimate that the percentage of Syrians without legal residency in Lebanon is as high as 90 per cent, although the Lebanese authorities have not released this data (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

examinations after nine years of primary education and the Baccalaureate examination at the end of secondary school. Fewer than 16% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon have legal residency, according to the 2021 UN assessment. Most Syrians in Lebanon must meet strenuous conditions to secure residency permits, such as presenting a $200 annual fee, and they are required to have proof that they have entered Lebanon legally, something which is almost impossible as a Syrian refugee.

Initially in 2012, MEHE was relatively laid-back and 'hands-off' as international and local NGOs stepped in to provide informal educational opportunities in communities around the country. However, starting in 2013, there was an abrupt policy shift when the Lebanese government decided to lead the educational response. In May 2014, MEHE launched 'Reaching All Children with Education" (RACE), an official policy framework for the Syrian refugee crisis to improve access to formal education. RACE was a three-year programme organized under three main pillars: access, quality and systems strengthening (MEHE, 2014). Primarily, RACE targeted 400,000 out-of-school Syrian refugee children, aiming to enrol 200,000 in formal schooling and targeting the other half with foreign-language, Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) or Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP) programming. RACE sought to expand the capacity of the existing school system rather than create a separate educational system for Syrians. However, it seems that it has been rendered ineffective due to a variety of reasons such as poor governance, lack of communication among different governmental agencies, etc. Lebanon then adopted a temporal model of inclusion, wherein Syrian refugee students can access public education in the afternoon through a second or double shift, while their Lebanese counterparts attend the same schools in the morning. Teachers in public schools, for both the first and second shifts, must be Lebanese nationals. In contrast, teachers and educators in NGO-run non-formal education (NFE) can be Syrian if they have permission to work in the country, and they may or may not have official teaching certificates (Buckner et al, 2018).

Prior to RACE, many civil society actors took on the initiative to provide NFE in the form of remedial and catch-up classes, homework support and language support. Some NGOs even ran fully fledged schools in communities where second-shift schools are either far away, full or will not allow Syrians to enrol due to community resistance. In 2014, however, MEHE disbanded the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), and instructed all NGOs to cease their work in the sector until new guidelines were set. It was not until 2016 that MEHE and donors developed a NFE Framework which stipulates that NFE programmes must operate only as a bridge to the formal sector and that any NGOs operating outside of this framework could be shut down. It identifies MEHE as the regulating body of NFE programmes and outlines how they will be developed, delivered and monitored by MEHE and approved service providers, and also established MEHE as the primary provider of ALPs, which were to be run in public schools.

References

Bahou, L. (2017) ''Why do they make us feel like we're nothing? They are supposed to be teaching us to be something, to even surpass them!': Student (dis)engagement and

public schooling in conflict-affected Lebanon', Cambridge Journal of Education, 47(4): 493-512.

Bahou, L. and Zakharia, Z. (2019) 'Maybe that's how they learned in the past, but we don't learn like this today': Youth perspectives on violent discipline in Lebanon's public schools. International Journal of Educational Development, 70: 102098.

Buckner, E., Spencer, D. and Cha, J. (2018) 'Between Policy and Practice: The Education of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon', Journal of Refugee Studies, 31(4): 444-465.

Human Rights Watch (2016) 'I Just Wanted to be Treated Like a Person": How Lebanon's Residency Rules Facilitate Abuse of Syrian Refugees', 12th January, Available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/01/12/i-just-wanted-be-treated-person/how-lebanons-residency-rules-facilitate-abuse

Human Rights Watch (2021) 'Lebanon: Action Needed on Syrian Refugee Education Crisis', 26th March, Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/26/lebanon-action-needed-syrian-refugee-education-crisis

Ministry of Education and Higher Education (2014) Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon (RACE). Available to download at: https://www.mehe.gov.lb/ar/Projects/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85/RACEfinalEnglish2.pdf

Shuayb, M., Makkouk, N. and Tuttunji, S. (2014) Widening access to quality education for Syrian refugees: The role of private and NGO sectors in Lebanon. Centre for Lebanese Studies, Available at: https://lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Widening-Access-to-Quality-Education-for-Syrian-Refugees-the-role-private-and-NGO-sectors-in-Lebanon-.pdf

PADILEIA Partners

PADILEIA is a five-member consortium led by King's College London that brings together Higher Education Institutions, private, and not-for-profit organisations. The partners are as follows:

1. **King's College London** (UK) is one of the oldest universities in England, and is ranked in the top 20 universities in the world with a diverse population of over 30,000 students who have demonstrated a desire to engage and volunteer in mentoring and peer support schemes with those displaced by the Syrian crisis. PADILEIA builds on King's long experience in capacity-building projects in low-income countries and in the design of tailored digital courses taught by outstanding academics.

2. **The American University of Beirut** (Lebanon), Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service

3. **Al al-Bayt University** (Jordan) is a public university in Jordan listed among the top 10 in the country. Located in Mafraq, Jordan, it is less than 10 kilometers from the Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp and the Syrian border. AABU implemented a blended learning foundation certificate that aimed to equip refugee students with transferable skills.

4. **Kiron Open Higher Education** (Germany) is an innovative social startup and service provider offering a higher education online learning platform for refugees. Established in 2015, Kiron has thousands of refugee students enrolled directly on its programmes, as well as a large network of partner universities. Kiron's offerings enabled PADILEIA students to access the Kiron Campus (online platform) and to study one of four existing study tracks accompanied by dedicated student support services.

5. **FutureLearn** (UK) is a leading social learning platform delivering high quality online courses from over 80 top universities to almost four million learners across over 200 countries and territories. King's and FutureLearn have worked together developing and delivering online content and certificates. FutureLearn hosts MOOCs developed for PADILEIA by King's College London, as well as work with Kiron to develop an integrated PADILEIA portal to access digital materials.

Design

The teaching format of PADILEIA involved two sittings of 25 students who received courses in English, Digital Skills, Maths, Sciences and Humanities over a period of 8 months or the equivalent of 32 teaching weeks (two semesters). In-person teaching occurred 4/5 days per week by part-time instructors supervised closely by AUB subject experts and faculty members. Students have access to the study hub outside of class hours and can access additional MOOCs from PADILEIA's available digital catalogue.

Students are supported by a student services coordinator who is on site daily to provide: consistency for the students and support for the instructors; support in the learning computer lab on non-class days and in inter-semester breaks; academic follow-up; psychosocial support; and guidance/support in the transition to further education or employment. Additionally, even program graduates still have access to the learning computer labs for further online education, college/scholarship applications, and vocational preparation.

Students at the end of the program earned a certificate from AUB CCECS with the aim that this would assist them in entering/re-entering University in Lebanon or moving into the digital workforce. The certificate is not credit-bearing as AUB cannot award credit for university preparation courses, even those offered on campus by AUB faculty.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) activities consisted of the following:

- An open-door policy – students and instructors know they can talk to the team anytime if they have any issues or concerns.

- A weekly meeting of program manager and student service coordinator to discuss all program operations, issues, students etc
- A weekly report is provided by instructors to faculty supervisors by email – faculty supervisors then give feedback.
- Every two weeks all instructors teaching on the same course meet online with the faculty supervisor to discuss how teaching/curriculum is going, to note successes, problem-solve, plan ahead etc.
- A monthly meeting of the program manager, relevant staff, and all instructors to discuss how classes are going, any student issues, to problem-solve, note successes etc.
- At the end of each semester, program admin, relevant staff, and all teachers meet to evaluate how the semester went – the focus is on student engagement and curriculum but it is also a space in which to note successes, problem solve, identify actions to improve the curriculum, etc.

Scalability

PADILEIA was designed from the outset to be a scalable and relatively low resource solution to the lack of opportunities for higher/tertiary education for refugee learners in varied locations. The online content was designed to be dual-purpose: as an integral part of the foundation programme but also to be usable as stand-alone online learning materials outside of the structure of PADILEIA. The entire Foundation programme is portable, with the online content, including lesson plans and assessments, available for use in other contexts, and the whole curriculum downloadable as a package. Key skills taught on the programme, such as IT skills, were oriented towards students succeeding in further education but also intended to be transferable to other occupations.

A central scalability feature of AUB's foundation certificate design and delivery is its use of the AUB-CCECS "Ghata" school structures. These low-cost structures, which can be assembled (and disassembled) in hours by unskilled volunteers using locally-sourced materials, can serve as a model replicable study hub/computer lab, which embodies (a) economic efficiency and endurance, (b) simplicity and portability, (c) adaptability and scalability, and (d) climatic responsiveness. They are located in an area of high refugee concentration in the midst of Informal Tented Settlements in the Bekaa region of Lebanon. PADILEIA Bekaa campus was built by AUB and operated by a local educational NGO partner, the Kayany Foundation, who served as a key local partner and source of participants. The Ghata Study Hubs and computer lab model was thus chosen as a low-cost and agile way to quickly build educational spaces in under-resourced environments. This was envisaged as an approach that could be replicated in other similarly space-poor contexts.

Student coordinators hired for the PADILEIA programme were also trained to both facilitate online learning for PADILEIA students and on how to train schools and NGOs to utilise the online content from the programme as reinforcement and vocational training for their students across Lebanon.

Project Aims

The PADILEIA Project has 4 main outputs, with the foundation programme falling under Output #2. This focuses on the development and delivery of blended learning pathways designed by HE experts that incorporate bespoke, reusable digital learning resources with the aim of enabling and upskilling Syrian refugee and disadvantaged host community youth, preparing them to reach their full potential and contribute to their countries' economic and social development.

The blended-learning Foundation Certificate programmes is delivered in Lebanon by AUB. The eight-month blended-learning certificate programmes are designed with the dual purpose of 1) preparing students for entry into undergraduate-level higher education as well as 2) to equip them with transferable skills that are relevant to local and international labour markets. Curricula for the Foundation Certificate are centred upon a blended-learning concept, and designed to accommodate the local refugee and higher education context relevant for each country.

Teaching materials were developed through collaborative work between AUB and King's College London. AUB provided curricula for the offline component of the certificates, and King's College London provided the digital components in the form of reusable digital learning objects (up to 25% of each individual course) and MOOCs, as appropriate. This collection of digital material can be used in other contexts, especially for use by educational and community organizations working to increase opportunities for Syrian refugee youth, with significant scope for growth and add-ons. In addition to the development and delivery of the blended learning certificate, a key focus of Output #2 is building the capacity of local universities to adopt and promote the use of digital materials to increase access to higher education.

Specifically, the AUB-PADILEIA bridging program aims to:

- Prepare students to apply for and succeed in securing scholarships and admission to university, as well as providing a foundation for academic success in university studies.
- Enable students to achieve subject-specific learning outcomes for English, Maths, Digital Skills, Science, and Humanities (according to each course syllabus).
- Enhance students' transferable skills that they can use to be successful across different situations in work and life including, but not limited to, problem solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, leadership, and character skills such as perseverance, empathy, and emotional regulation, as well as digital literacy.
- Buoying students not only through individual empowerment, but also by preparing them for development as ethical leaders committed to the betterment of their societies.
- Support positive interaction between refugees and host communities.

Main outcomes

Three main areas of success are worth noting:

a. Successful Implementation: 4 cohorts graduated from the 8-month Foundational program. 91% of these were refugee learners; 9% were from the Lebanese host community. 75% of graduates were female; 25% were male. Completion and satisfaction rates were high:

   - Average completion rates 97.8%
   - Average overall satisfaction rates 93%
   - Average of students who would recommend this program to a friend 95%

b. Contributed to global transition pathways for refugees and vulnerable Lebanese youth
   - 20% of students enrolled on the programme secured entry to tertiary education (53 students in Lebanese public and private universities including AUB and other reputable institutions abroad)
   - Guided and prepared 100% of eligible students through their different university applications, helping them to develop comprehensive CVs and professional digital skills
   - Provided tailored workshops and trainings on civic engagement and career opportunities. 89% of students reported feeling improved self-confidence following these trainings.
   - 2 female students received seed funds under the Leadership Initiatives Training by UN Women
   - 1 male student produced and filmed a project based on his experience at the study hubs and the PADILEIA program

c. Strengthening Global South Institutional Interventions and Programs
   - Positioning AUB-CCECS on the international arena as a player in Refugee higher education
   - Scaling the bridging program to Uganda through the Mastercard Foundation
   - Engaging in international efforts and bringing visibility to local efforts and voices
   - Building on the partnership with SPHEIR to secure funds from HOPES and the British Council (HEAAP, Sciences Labs, and STEP)
   - Promoting reciprocal learning and capacity building for CCECS staff members on different topics (digital and asynchronous learning, safeguarding standards, curriculum development, etc.)