

A Partnership between



# The Learning Passport

## Research and Recommendations Report: Summary of Findings



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# Executive Summary

## Orientation

The Learning Passport is a collaboration between UNICEF, the University of Cambridge and Microsoft which aims to tackle an intractable problem: the quality of education in contexts where learners have been displaced. As UNICEF point out in their advocacy brief ‘Education Uprooted’ (2017), the ongoing global crisis of displacement is also a crisis of education. Education is interrupted, often for long periods. The education children do receive is often ill-suited to their needs; the useful accreditation of learning is frequently absent. The result is children who are denied access to the advantages that education provides, including its role as a buffer against the stress of upheaval (UNICEF, 2017, p.13).

The Learning Passport is a response to the international crisis in education quality and learning outcomes. The project’s specific aim is to improve the quality of education for children who, for whatever reason, are unable to access national education systems satisfactorily, either temporarily or permanently. The goal is to make possible stable and effective learning pathways for these children despite the instabilities they experience; this includes helping them to enter or return smoothly into national systems.

The project’s hypothesis is that quality can be improved by making available, as a global public good, an education model for basic education for children whose education has been disrupted. This education model is the Learning Passport. Practically speaking, the education model centres around a lightweight Curriculum Framework for three core subjects (mathematics, science, literacy) as well as a major Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) aspect: SEL elements integrated throughout each of the core subjects, and a separate SEL curricular component. An approach to providing quality-assured teaching and learning materials is the second major element. The third element covers assessment and assessment tracking, including providing children with a portable record of their learning. These components are aimed at primary-level education and establishing essential competencies at the primary stage. The developers’ and researchers’ working assumption has been that users will be between 5 and 15 years of age.

In addition, there are three operative principles underpinning the research of the Learning Passport. First, all elements of the Learning Passport would be contextualised – a collaboration between international and local stakeholders. Second, a goal of the Learning Passport would be to help children transition smoothly back into national education systems. Third, and related, the Learning Passport is conceived of as a resource of which national governments should determine the use and usefulness, recognising that national ownership and leadership are key to the success of any education response, and echoing the stress placed on this by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

# The purpose of the Research and Recommendations Report

The purpose of the Report, with reference to the proposed education model, is first to anchor the project in the available evidence for quality education, as well as the evidence for quality in Education in Emergencies (EiE). Second, it is to make recommendations for how the Learning Passport should be taken forward or rethought, based on the evidence where possible.

A major consideration for the Report has been the unusual nature of EiE as a field of research. A wide variety of different sources are examined in the review, reflecting the range of organisations and stakeholders involved in EiE, the relative youth and interdisciplinarity of the academic field of EiE, and the paucity of in-depth reporting on the practice, methodology and efficacy of specific EiE interventions.

As a general rule, detailed accounts and systematic analyses of curricula and their effects, failures and successes in EiE contexts are sparse, and conclusions often have to be drawn from fragmented or anecdotal evidence. This situation is certainly partly explained by the fact that crises can be quick to develop, and frequently lack the data collection infrastructure necessary for rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

In spite of the relative absence of evidence, however, a great deal of effort has been put into establishing the criteria and scope for what might constitute successful EiE efforts, spearheaded by the minimum standards created by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), founded in 2000. Activity in this arena continues to grow, with more substantial records of what does and does not work beginning to inform new projects. The research included in the Report, and summarised in this document, aims to reflect both the limitations and strengths of this evidence base.

## What this Summary of Findings contains

The full Report consists primarily of a series of literature reviews looking at different dimensions of what the Learning Passport will aim to achieve. This Summary of Findings presents a summary of the research contained within the full Report, outlining the recommendations arrived at through the research and providing a short description of the main findings. The research covered here includes both the general and contextual insight generated through the literature reviews, as well as more specific conclusions that support the areas covered by the recommendations.

The recommendations for the Learning Passport fall into two categories. ‘Guiding Recommendations’ cover the Learning Passport as a whole, and point towards the essentials of the approach for success. These recommendations qualify and guide the subsequent more specific recommendations, and indicate the areas where a high degree of consistency and constancy in the evidence has been found. As will be seen, there is some overlap between these broader recommendations. ‘Specific Recommendations’ cover the specific areas of the Learning Passport – Curriculum, Assessment, Resources, SEL and digital support – picking out how these should be taken forward. The recommendations of the Report are captured in the tables through this Summary; a fuller narrative version of each recommendation can be found in the full Report.







# The Education in Emergencies Context

## Introduction

Displacement contexts present a distinctive set of challenges to learners, which manifest in complex ways and in different combinations. The first task of the research conducted was to contextualise EiE learner backgrounds and needs, recognising first and foremost that displaced children are not a homogeneous category, but experience diverse realities (Boyden and Zharkevich, 2018).

Many of the sources of evidence examined in the research reflected this, both in demonstrating the differences between displaced learners and their situations, and the inconsistency and incomparability of much research into EiE. There is a lack of comprehensive displacement data due to different terminologies, concepts and methodologies of data collection and presentation (Sarzin, 2017; Eurostat, 2018; IDMC, 2019). While data in many refugee camps are standardised and regularly collected, most displaced individuals live outside formal settlements or in urban areas where they are difficult to reach (UNESCO, 2019a; te Lintelo and Soye, 2018). Many refugees do not register with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): for example, according to government estimates in Lebanon, as of 2017 around half a million Syrians in the country were not UNHCR-registered (Government of Lebanon and United Nations, 2017).

The vast majority of the estimated 79 million forcibly-displaced people – according to 2018 figures from UNHCR – come from the Global South. Around half are under the age of 18, and well over half are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); of the estimated 30 million refugees and asylum seekers, around 80 percent live in neighbouring countries. Therefore, the vast majority are hosted in regions that may be the least prepared to provide protection and services (UNHCR, 2019), including education.

## Findings and recommendations

### Diversity and localisation

All of the recommendations for the Learning Passport need to recognise the heterogeneity that characterises EiE and displacement contexts; every case is distinctive. These distinctions include learners' diverse personal, family and community histories and identities within and across population groups, as well as the varied geographical, socio-economic and political contexts they have left, and those in which they find themselves (see Gaffar-Kucher, 2018).

Further differences relate to the temporality and status of the educational disruption, from relatively short periods after a natural disaster to long-term escapees from years of civil strife. Since there is a strong and dynamic relationship between the socio-cultural and political environment and EiE learners' individual and collective needs, experiences and aspirations, these multi-faceted contextual factors have major implications for the provision of education, and learners' equitable access to and experience of it.

Consequently, implementations of the Learning Passport must be able to adapt to this diversity of contexts. As described elsewhere in this Summary, a key feature of this adaptation must be the contextualisation and localisation of education content and delivery, aimed at meeting the specific needs of each displaced learner.

The Learning Passport must, however, also integrate with and strengthen existing effective education provision, and deal with the potential sparsity of existing data which should inform each implementation. Impactful and sustainable education interventions in contexts of displacement have tended to incorporate the perspectives of local stakeholders and education providers; one reason is that this kind of involvement is a powerful tool for ensuring successful adaptation.

### **Guiding Recommendation: Localisation of the Learning Passport**

- Any implementation of the Learning Passport should be preceded by a formal evaluation stage. This should include not only an evaluation of the feasibility of implementing the Learning Passport, but a quality review of any existing education provision.
- Input from local stakeholders is required for development of all localised components, and forms part of the planning pathway for implementation.
- Guidance should be provided for localisation/contextualisation of the Learning Passport.

## **Coherence**

Coherence between different components of an education system, and internally within each component, are key features of high-performing systems. In emergency and displacement contexts, establishing and maintaining coherence and consistency in education is a significant challenge, but the rewards can be crucial for quality provision.

Schmidt and Prawat's (2006) landmark study shows that alignment of the components of education – between pedagogy, assessment, textbooks, and so on – is essential. They term this 'curriculum coherence', a concept which has been taken forward in the UK by Tim Oates and Cambridge Assessment, in *A Cambridge Approach to Improving Education* (2017). Where coherence is aspired to, different elements of education provision pull in the same direction, informed by aligned goals and complementing each other.

Coherence in education research refers not only to the system as a whole, but also to the consistency and structure of subject knowledge within curricula themselves. Read (2019) points out that students will construct their own understanding of subject knowledge through experience and reflection. Such a process is facilitated if teaching activities around a particular topic are presented in a logical order which supports students in following the required learning steps. Where such structure is lacking, students may come to see the material as a jumble of isolated facts that need to be memorised, rather than a coherent discipline made up of interrelated concepts. If curriculum coherence is not achieved and the learning sequences are

not apparent, then learning is put at risk in one of two ways: first, crucial conceptual steps can be missed, which inhibits understanding and future learning; second, vital portions of knowledge can be missed, which leaves significant gaps in students' learning (Muller, 2009).

In contexts of disruption and displacement especially, learners and teachers need to be able to fit fragmentary educational experiences together, and so need a robust underpinning framework. The education model for the Learning Passport is designed to support implementers in this way, by making sure the different elements of the education system in their context are coherent with one another. Piloting of the Learning Passport should seek to determine the most effective way of providing this support.

### **Guiding Recommendation: Coherence and the Learning Passport**

- That implementation of the Learning Passport should first look at whether it can be delivered with all components, to test coherence, and that if implementation is not viable in this 'unitary' way, a different model should be developed to, if possible, test individual components and tools.
- That there are example 'deployment approaches' provided, showing how coherence can be established flexibly in different displacement contexts.

## **Learner needs and characteristics**

### **Overcoming disruption and uncertainty**

As access to education in displacement grows in priority, the lives of displaced children and youth are increasingly shaped by the kind of 'emergency' education they receive and the policies that guide it. Displaced learners themselves reflect and drive this prioritisation: a review of 16 studies covering 17 different emergencies, ranging from conflict to protracted crises and disasters, found that of 8,749 children, 99 percent saw education as a priority (Save the Children, 2015).

The lives of displaced families prior to, during and following displacement are often navigated through hardships and insecurities. Some displaced children may experience trauma as a result of exposure to violence or conflict, either in or while fleeing their home country, while many more must endure gruelling daily stressors in the context of displacement (Miller and Rasmussen, 2017). Daily stressors in displacement contexts include poverty, insecure livelihoods, food insecurity, lack of social capital, limited access to basic services and informality of tenure (te Lintelo and Soye, 2018).

The denial of basic needs undermines learning directly, but also affects engagement with education as a source of hope and fulfilment. Displaced children and youth may experience a sense of 'waithood' (Dhillon et al., 2009, p.12) and be forced to re-imagine their futures constantly as they navigate the long-term uncertainties created by displacement, often compounded by national policies on migration. The literature finds that political and economic restrictions on permanent rights, employment rights and further educational opportunities impact the aspirations and objectives of displaced learners (Chase, 2017; Bellino, 2018).

In response to these adversities, displaced learners voice specific needs, distinct from other populations. For example, in a study that examined children's views on learning in Afghanistan, in Ethiopia with Eritrean refugees, and among Liberian refugee students in Sierra Leone, Winthrop (2011) finds that children valued diverse forms of learning. While curriculum skills such as literacy were prominent in

reflections on valuable learning, students detailed the importance of other forms of learning for their self-making and aspirations. Refugee children included among their objectives a desire to fulfil social expectations, to be able to contribute positively to society, to earn money and to be able to care for their families.

In crises, education is increasingly viewed by children and young people themselves as a means for overcoming disruption and for re-establishing stability and direction in their lives. Facilitating the mediation of interruption to education is a key challenge of EiE, and should be a core aim of the Learning Passport.

## Disability and special educational needs

The challenge of access to education for children in contexts of displacement intersects with, and is exacerbated by, disability. Globally, one in 10 children have a disability (IASC, 2019, p.2), and UNHCR estimates that 10 million (out of 65 million) forcibly displaced persons in 2016 have a disability (Bešić et al., 2018). Despite the prevalence of disability in emergency settings, and its intersectionality with other factors, such as gender and poverty, in limiting children's access to learning, displaced children with disabilities continue to remain invisible in the education discourses of receiving countries as well as those of many humanitarian programmes. Studies show that access and learning for children with disabilities is limited by negative perceptions, as these children may 'face a lack of expectations not only by their parents, teachers and wider community, but also by the agencies tasked with reconstructing and developing the education sector' (Trani et al., 2011, p.1201).

Inclusivity can be embedded within all aspects of educational interventions, though learning materials are often found to be an especially important determinant of the ability of learners with disabilities or special educational needs to access learning. This extends to and intersects with other inclusivity considerations, for instance for culture and gender. Teams of curriculum developers and writers of learning materials need to be as inclusive as the books themselves, to ensure the inclusion of narratives of non-dominant/marginalised social groups and their cultures and histories (e.g. Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Herath, 2015).

## Gender

Conflict can disrupt the education of boys and girls due to the destruction of security, infrastructure and economic stability. Studies show, however, that factors which impede children's learning are often deeply rooted in socio-economic and cultural norms that existed pre-conflict, which are further exacerbated by conflict and displacement. In conflict-affected settings, gender interacts with geographic, economic and socio-cultural factors to shape young people's lives in complex and intersecting ways.

For instance, displacement-related insecurities and the lack of economic opportunities available to displaced families can have negative implications for gender roles, disrupting children's learning. Many studies have found that child marriage increases when displaced families are unable to meet their basic economic needs, are unable to envisage stable futures and are also concerned over the security of their daughters (Crivello et al., 2013; Marshall, 2015; Arab and Sagbakken, 2019). Similarly, while the Syrian refugee crisis has created a shift in gender roles with the entrance of women into the labour market, girls have become the ones who must assume responsibility for household duties (DeJong et al., 2017). The involvement of girls in domestic responsibilities can lead to school absenteeism (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017).

### Guiding Recommendation: Learner Needs

- That across all dimensions of development, education interruption is foregrounded. Where, for example, specific curriculum paths, pedagogies and remedial approaches can help counter the effects of interruption, they must be included.
- That across all dimensions of development of the Learning Passport, accessibility is prioritised, with specific areas of focus being gender, special educational needs and cultural accessibility.

### Supporting teachers

Research in many contexts of displacement shows that a teacher is often the only resource available to students (Buckland, 2004; Kirk and Winthrop, 2007; Mendenhall et al., 2018; Richardson et al., 2018). Yet the same research also frequently documents the exclusion of teachers' views and contributions to EiE provision, representing the neglect of a key stakeholder group.

Teachers in EiE are as diverse a population as the learners they teach, with their own personal educational histories, professional needs and capabilities (Mendenhall et al., 2018). Syrian refugee settings, for example, have relatively high numbers of university-qualified, experienced teachers (Deane, 2016), whereas in contexts of forced displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, teachers may have themselves had very little formal schooling and limited professional development (Moon, 2013).

### Stress management for teachers of refugees in Malaysia

O'Neal et al. (2018) developed a stress-management training intervention to improve teacher well-being and self-efficacy with refugees in Malaysia. This intervention programme began by recruiting refugee teachers who were more experienced and educated, and then trained them as peer trainers. After that, these peer trainers went back to their own schools and delivered the training to their peer trainees. As shown in their follow-up evaluation, this peer-refugee-teacher-delivered intervention has significant effects on teacher confidence, knowledge and self-care for both trainers and trainees. The study also suggests that this peer-training model may facilitate a more sustainable, culturally relevant and empowering process in which peer teachers continuously train other teachers, and thus provide constant support for emotionally vulnerable post-conflict refugee teachers.

The insufficient supply of teachers is a challenge in many contexts of displacement. The difficulty in recruiting qualified teachers in emergency contexts inevitably affects the quality of teaching and learning (Culbertson and Constant, 2015; Karam et al., 2017; Shepler, 2011; West and Ring, 2015). As is shown in West and Ring's (2015) study into the teaching force in refugee camps in Algeria and Ethiopia, low financial incentives, poor working conditions – including short-term contracts and irregular pay – and a lack of social recognition prevent the hiring of high-quality teachers. Further, teachers who are displaced themselves may also be suffering from anxieties, stresses and trauma, a situation for which they too will need support, since this will prevent them from teaching effectively (Penson et al., 2012; van Ommering, 2017).

### Guiding Recommendation: Supporting Teachers

- That efforts to support, train and engage educators to deliver the Learning Passport first formally review local teacher capacity, including skills.
- That for piloting purposes, a (pilot-specific) teacher training programme and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme are created to support the Learning Passport, or adapted from existing programmes.

## Language

In many contexts of displacement, children's learning progress is challenged by the need to adapt to a new context – a process not infrequently involving cultural tensions – and to learn one or more new languages (McFarlane et al., 2010). In addition to the challenges to their academic learning, the language barrier may also contribute to a feeling of marginalisation and rejection among displaced children, which sometimes results in their disengagement from education (Çelik and İçduygu, 2018).

However, dilemmas regarding the including or excluding dynamics of language of instruction persist. Refugees' home languages may be chosen as the medium of instruction, especially when the refugee-receiving countries are less willing to include them into the mainstream society and to instruct them in the host country languages. Typical examples can be seen in the Temporary Education Centres (TECs) in Turkey (Çelik and İçduygu, 2018) and the refugee schools in Thailand (Oh and Van Der Stouwe, 2008). It should be noted that such policies may not necessarily be resisted by displaced populations themselves. For example, TECs have been found to be well received by Syrian refugee parents, as they believe that they will return to Syria in the future and hope that their children can be educated in Arabic (Ozer, Komsuoglu and Atesok, 2017).

Furthermore, studies have substantiated that displaced children's literacy level in the language of instruction is crucial for their academic learning in the receiving countries (Aydin and Kaya, 2017; Brown et al., 2006; Save the Children, 2018). Quantitative and qualitative studies across a range of low and middle-income countries have produced a strong body of evidence that indicates that learning in a language that is not used at home is often linked to learner absenteeism, dropout, poor performance and school exclusion (Pinnock with Vijayakumar, 2009).

While the potentially isolating impact of differentiated languages of instruction for displaced learners might not be problematic if children eventually return to their origins, the future for most contemporary displaced learners is usually highly uncertain. While the attention of EiE providers in the past has often focused on children's repatriation, and their identities as citizens of their countries of origin, the prolonged character of many conflicts and situations driving displacement today make this approach less feasible (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). This increasingly

prevalent problem is reflected in the Global Compact on Refugees (United Nations, 2018), where there is a clear statement that local integration must be part of the social and political repertoire of responses to displacement crises (pp.19–20), and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’s emphasis on ‘inclusion’ (United Nations, 2019, p. 25). The question remains whether the long-recognised educational value of mother-tongue-based and multilingual education, particularly for early-years learners (Ball, 2010), can be preserved within approaches that prioritise integration into host country systems.

### Guiding Recommendation: Language

- That for the purposes of establishing foundational literacy, where possible students using the Learning Passport are taught in the same language that they use at home (mother-tongue).
- That, in multilingual contexts, the implementation evaluation phase includes an assessment of how different languages are used, in order to identify medium/s of instruction and connected issues. An ‘assessing the language environment’ tool is therefore recommended (there may be suitable existing tools).

## Engagement with stakeholders

Multiple studies of historical education reform in conflict-affected contexts show that for curricular change to be successful, development actors need to recognise that education systems are historically produced and deeply embedded in dynamic and complex socio-political contexts (Tawil and Harley, 2004; Weinstein et al., 2007; Davies, 2011; Lopes Cardozo and Hoeks, 2015). However, it is less often acknowledged how education can exacerbate tensions and help fuel conflict (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Smith and Vaux, 2003; Burde et al., 2017).

Since state education is about state-building and the production of particular kinds of citizens with particular skills, it is also often a homogenising force. Hence, formal education systems can often serve to reproduce social hierarchies and inequalities, through promoting dominant cultures and languages, while marginalising others, and through competitive and highly selective examination systems (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2004; Benson and Kosonen, 2013).

The lesson for the Learning Passport regarding engagement with local stakeholders and governments is that their input is completely crucial, but due to the inevitably politicised nature of any educational intervention, understanding the objectives of and dynamics between different actors is necessary. The Learning Passport education model should empower implementers to make the most of partners and existing education providers.

### Guiding Recommendation: Engaging with Local Stakeholders

- That an ‘assessing the stakeholder landscape’ tool is developed as part of the education model, and that this assessment takes into account the affiliations and motivations of local stakeholders.
- That community-based, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are engaged from the viewpoint of localising the Learning Passport.





# Mental Health, Psychosocial Support and Social and Emotional Learning

## Introduction

The research conducted for the Report aimed to answer the question of how a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programme might be designed to promote the resilience and wellbeing necessary for successful academic engagement, secure relationships, productive civic involvement, and increased employment opportunities among displaced learners. Our research contributes to a global and actively evolving space within EiE research and implementation, including collaborative efforts across the UN and Civil Society to align social and emotional programming in educational settings within a mental health and psychosocial support framework. UNICEF is an active contributor to these efforts.

The research conducted to inform the Learning Passport has borne out the hypothesised dependency of quality learning on learner resilience and wellbeing supported by social and emotional learning programming within a wider mental health and psychosocial support programme area. Alongside these benefits, the research has also found dilemmas within the developing field of SEL, including, for example, that there is as yet no consensus on SEL definitions, essential ingredients for change, or approaches to programme evaluation. The CASEL (Chicago-based 'Collaborative of Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning') definition is used widely: the processes by which children and adults acquire and apply core competencies to recognise and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle personal and interpersonal situations constructively (USAID, 2019; INEE, 2018; Osher et al., 2016; Elias et al., 1997; Weissberg et al., 2015; Aspen Institute, 2019). However, cultural differences can lead to factors not considered to be part of SEL in some Western and individual-focused contexts being omitted or missed during the development and evaluation of SEL processes and outcomes in non-Western and community-focused contexts (Frydenberg et al., 2017; Torrente et al., 2016). An initial way through this and the aforementioned challenges is offered by Bailey and Jones (2019), who identify self-regulation as the key underlying mechanism for all social and emotional competencies and skills. This finding has informed the research conducted for the Learning Passport.

**'Learning spaces are natural channels for delivering SEL programming, especially in crisis contexts. This is already happening around the world, even if the efforts are not called SEL.'**  
(INEE, 2016, p.14)

International investment in SEL programming is increasing, as the role that it plays in improving academic achievement, learner wellbeing, social cohesion, and

employment opportunities is supported by empirical findings (Corcoran et al., 2018; Durlak et al., 2011). The provision of SEL programming in formal and informal educational settings is also increasing, including programming for displaced learners and those in emergency or crisis contexts.

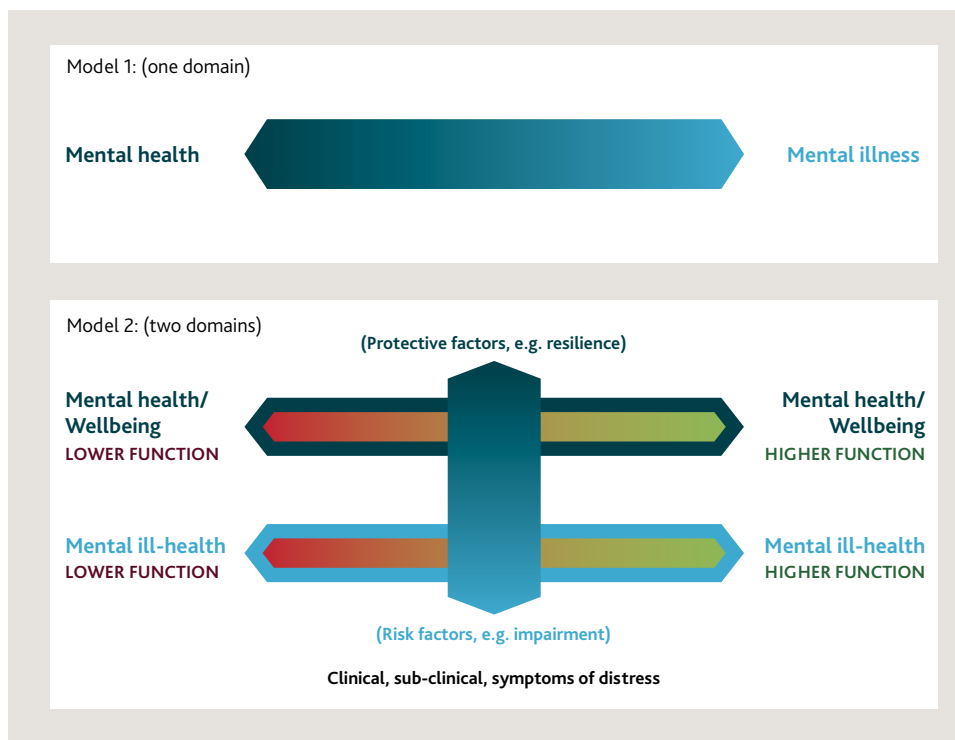
## Findings and Recommendations

### Mental Health Psychosocial Support-Social and Emotional Learning (MHPSS-SEL)

In EiE contexts, research indicates that SEL is most helpfully located within the wider Mental Health Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programme area with a public mental health-wellbeing promotion focus for educational settings. The model of mental health used in SEL programme design and delivery has wide-ranging implications for learner wellbeing and resilience, educational attainment, relationships, and future employment opportunities.

The paradigm of mental health using one continuum and featuring mental health and mental illness at opposite ends has been replaced recently by a paradigm that frames mental health as two distinct yet interacting ‘domains’ (i.e., areas of experience, depicted as two separate continuums), mental ill-health and subjective wellbeing (DeMarinis and Boyd-MacMillan, 2019; Patalay and Fitzsimons, 2016).

The two-domain model, as depicted in Figure 1, permits a more complete understanding of mental health and focuses on numerous interacting factors that can affect actual daily function, which is the area of concern for both PSS and SEL. The model is not static but fluid, and reflects the growing evidence of interaction between the two domains (Patalay and Fitzsimons, 2016 DeMarinis and Boyd-MacMillan, 2019; Kalra et al., 2012). A two-domain model, of special importance for EiE contexts, does not underestimate the important contributions to



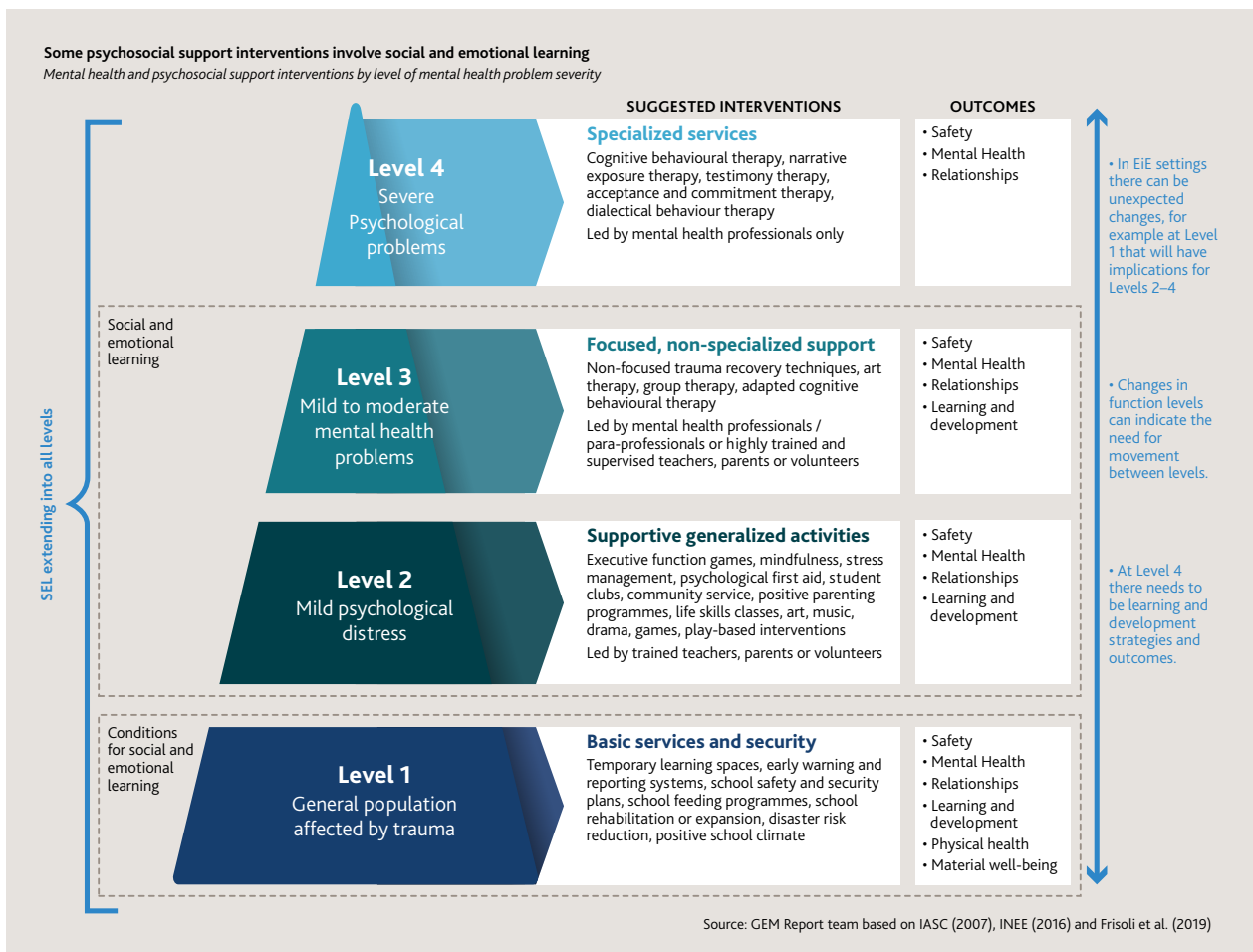
**Figure 1:** Mental Health Models (Source: Adapted from DeMarinis and Boyd-MacMillan, 2019)

understanding risk factors for negative mental health consequences of war-related violence and loss, yet raises the important critique that Betancourt and Khan (2008) identify, that the focus on trauma alone has resulted in inadequate attention to factors associated with resilient mental health outcomes.

This two-domain model for mental health can be used to support a range of SEL activities both within and outside of a curriculum structure across all four levels of the MHPSS triangle (see Figure 2). INEE (2016), INEE (2018), Frisoli et al. (2019) and UNESCO (2019b) discuss the important need for SEL programmes and activities for all levels of services, as all sectors have a role to play in meeting children and family MHPSS-SEL needs and in facilitating referrals up and down the layers of the MHPSS triangle. However, SEL is often placed at Levels 2 and 3 only. Instead of SEL being confined to Levels 2 and 3 (Community and Family Support; and Focused, Non-specialised Services, respectively; UNESCO, 2019b), the research indicates a need to extend the reach to the entire triangle, that is, also to Level 1 Basic Services and Security and to Level 4 Specialised Services. This approach will assist in optimising the mutually supportive outcomes of educational and MHPSS-SEL programming and interventions.

### Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): The MHPSS-SEL model

- That for the 'SEL programme design' for EiE contexts, developers consider:
  - Extending SEL programming for EiE contexts to all four layers of the MHPSS intervention 'pyramid' or 'triangle' to include Layer 1 Basic Services and Layer 4 Specialised Services.



**Figure 2:** The place of SEL in the MHPSS pyramid (Source: Adapted from UNESCO, 2019)

## ADAPT and Integrative Complexity

Given the dilemmas and contextual variability in SEL definitions, applications, and evaluation, the research needed to identify approaches to MHPSS-SEL for displaced populations that could offer the strongest and most effective foundations for a programme included in the Learning Passport. Two models stood out from the review: Adaptation and Development After Persecution and Torture (ADAPT) and Integrative Complexity (IC).

### Adaptation and Development After Persecution and Torture (ADAPT)

As mentioned, numerous MHPSS-SEL programming initiatives are already in action and growing. An ecosocial, multi-dimensional model – ADAPT – created with and for refugee, migrant and displaced populations was reviewed as part of the research process, and the evidence that it accurately reflects the interacting levels of displaced populations' experience was assessed. This resilience-focused model is appropriate for all learners who have experienced adversity. The ADAPT model organises psychosocial disruptions caused by mass conflict, displacement, and other adversities into five core pillars (life systems) that can be used to identify both problem and resource areas relating to: safety and security; interpersonal bonds and networks; justice; identities and roles; and existential meaning (Silove, 2013).

Based on this review, including the five pillars (life systems) from the ADAPT model as part of a framework for SEL programme design in the area of MHPSS will assist displaced and vulnerable learners in four possible ways:

- First, the five pillars (life systems) provide a conceptual framework to bring some coherence to the sense of uncertainty and disruption that many vulnerable learners experience.
- Second, identifying the pattern of distress/social dysfunction that corresponds to the undermining of the five pillars (life systems) can provide a platform for self-help and targeted interventions to assist learners in strengthening their coping skills and capacities for change and adaptation.
- Third, by focusing on resilience and adaptation, any resulting improvement may be assumed to mitigate mental health symptoms without the need for specialised services to treat complex comorbid diagnoses.
- Fourth, from a public mental health perspective, the five-pillar (life systems) ADAPT model has the potential of being applied along the lifecycle, and adaptable to the targeted needs of specific groups and circumstances, as a preventative or health promotion approach for use (with appropriate modifications) across a range of sector services and community efforts in vulnerable communities.

In these ways, the ADAPT model can contribute to SEL planning and programme design across the area of MHPSS.

## Integrative Complexity

Integrative Complexity (IC) explores how people engage cognitively, emotionally, and socially with varying environmental demands and features a cross-culturally validated empirical measurement frame (Baker-Brown et al., 1992). It is helpful to remember that the phrase ‘cognitive processing’ refers to the interplay among thinking, feeling (affect), and interacting (socialising) with other people (individuals, groups, communities, societies). IC has two inter-related unique features that are distinctive from other cognitive processing models (Suedfeld, 2010, p. 1671). The first is a focus on ‘differentiation’ and ‘integration’, which represents the developmental progression of self-regulation identified by Bailey and Jones (2019) as underlying all SEL skills. Differentiation begins as a basic skill and then becomes more specialised as a child matures. The capacity to recognise different dimensions or perspectives is an example of differentiation, e.g. three reasons I love school; or, two reasons I hate walking to school. Building on the capacity to differentiate, integration emerges first as a basic skill and then becomes more specialised and sophisticated. For example, the capacity to recognise complex connections among different dimensions or perspectives, e.g. the reasons why I love and hate school; or, you love school and I hate school but we still like to play together (see Suedfeld, 2010; Baker-Brown et al., 1992). In a meta-analysis of self-regulation research literature, including executive function and effortful control, Bailey and Jones (2019) identify self-regulation as the underlying mechanism for academic, emotional and social success across the lifespan. Focusing on the developmental progression of self-regulation, which underlies all SEL skills, differentiation and integration, the IC model offers a uniquely efficient framework to guide targeted SEL programming with vulnerable learners, whether through the review of existing, co-production of new, or integration of existing and new programmes for vulnerable learners in diverse contexts and cultures.

The second unique feature of IC also seems particularly valuable for SEL programming in diverse cultures and contexts: IC measures focus on *how* people think rather than *what* they think (Suedfeld, 2010, p. 1671). Any idea, belief, or thought can be expressed and enacted with more or less differentiation and integration, which in turn can guide whether or not we engage more or less peacefully with difference (Tetlock & Tyler, 1996; Liht et al., 2005; Suedfeld, 2010; Suedfeld et al., 2013; Boyd-MacMillan et al., 2016). The IC measurement frame (coding the absence or increasing presence of differentiation and integration) has been operationalized into a method for reviewing and co-producing self-regulation programming (see e.g. Boyd-MacMillan, 2016; Boyd-MacMillan et al., 2016).

Within the MHPSS-SEL programme area outlined above, the partnering of the IC self-regulation model with the ADAPT model represents an example of the type of SEL framework suitable for EiE contexts. An IC-ADAPT SEL framework would seem to prioritise both the underlying fundamental developmental progression of all SEL competencies and skills, differentiation and integration, while also focusing on the experiences, needs, and active involvement of those living in EiE and other challenging contexts.

### Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Integrative Complexity and ADAPT

- That for the ‘SEL programme design’ for EiE contexts, developers consider:
  - Using an ‘IC-ADAPT for EiE contexts’ framework within the programme area of MHPSS-SEL for learners on the move using Child Wellbeing (CWB) domains adapted for EiE contexts.
  - Using IC-ADAPT as an organising base for ‘SEL’ programming and delivery.

## Integration into curricula

The research demonstrates that an inclusive SEL reach (across all four levels of the MHPSS-SEL triangle) would require close consultation and collaboration among health, mental health and education sectors. School interest in social and emotional development has been in evidence for over one hundred years (Osher et al., 2016) and recent international guidelines have focused on educational settings as non-threatening contexts for addressing mental health and psycho-social needs, highlighting the potential value of SEL contributions (INEE, 2018; USAID, 2019; GEM, 2019; Frisoli et al., 2019).

Prioritising Multi-Agency Work (MAW) at the national, regional and local levels to build collaborative partnerships among the health, mental health and education sectors will enable all MHPSS-SEL activities to have a dual health promotion and risk reduction function. These partnerships will also support direct and indirect links to academic achievement along with wellbeing in educational and other settings. Similarly, within the Learning Passport education model, efforts should be made to facilitate this kind of partnership building by integrating, to as great an extent as possible the MHPSS-SEL programme and content into the wider curriculum frameworks.

### Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Integration into curricula

- That for the 'SEL programme design' for EiE contexts, developers consider:
  - Incorporating 'SEL' elements within the mathematics, science and literacy curricular components *and* a 'SEL' curricular component alongside the other curricular components.
- That MHPSS programming and considerations are integrated into components of the Learning Passport and incorporate:
  - SEL programming as a core component of all teaching.
  - An adversity-informed approach, focusing on mental health, wellbeing and both promotion and prevention.
  - A specially designed Community Readiness Assessment (CRA) Model for initial and ongoing assessment for all implementations of the Learning Passport.
  - Special attention to the mental health and wellbeing of EiE teachers and their multiple functions.
  - Integration of MHPSS-SEL programming into larger family, group and community constellations.

## Contextualisation

Alongside multi-agency partnerships, a public mental health promotion focus requires the involvement of local community voices in MHPSS-SEL programming. The Community Readiness Assessment (CRA) model (Edwards et al., 2000; Thurman et al., 2007) and an adapted version of the Cultural Formulation Interview (CFI) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Lewis-Fernández et al., 2016) were investigated as possible initial steps for the Learning Passport as a whole, to access local voices, develop community support, and initiate the intervention process.

The promotion of culturally and contextually appropriate mental health and wellbeing programme interventions, including SEL programming, requires an understanding of the social, cultural and biological factors that shape individual and collective meaning-making (Kirmayer, 2006). A specially designed CRA (see Wells et al., 2019) represents an approach that has proven valuable as a method for better engaging with a community around MHPSS-SEL service provision.

Assessment of community readiness may also help to identify available and missing resources that need to be addressed (Thurman et al., 2007). For example, people may have knowledge about the value of certain kinds of mental health care, psychosocial support or social and emotional learning opportunities, but no ability to pay for or otherwise access it. Or, such care, support and opportunities may have been unavailable in their settings and therefore never considered.

Appropriate versions of the internationally tested instrument, CFI, could be incorporated into the CRA to identify age, host culture, gender, and disability sensitivities that would then be incorporated into SEL programming and delivery. Using the person's own words, the CFI provides a means of mapping their concerns, experiences and resources in relation to:

- understanding of the problem(s)
- personal, social and general life circumstances
- accessible and empowering meaning-making resources (at all levels and of all types) and suggestions for including or connecting these resources to the therapeutic process or other intervention (such as MHPSS-SEL programming, formal and informal).

### Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Contextualisation

- That for the 'SEL programme design' for EiE contexts, developers consider:
  - Beginning all implementations of the LP with the internationally tested model, the CRA (Community Readiness Assessment) model, to engage all local stakeholders (local, regional, national, international) as the first step in adapting the full Learning Passport to each context.
  - Using the internationally tested tool, CFI (Cultural Formulation Interview), with supplementary materials developed for refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers to provide vital initial and updated information on the learner's situation in general and specifically to identify protective and risk factors.
  - That the initial assessment process for the Learning Passport as a whole (e.g. using the CRA model and CFI) is itself an intervention for promoting mental health and psychosocial wellbeing that can jumpstart the development of social and emotional skills to support academic engagement.

## Play and play-pedagogies

Finally, a recurrent feature of evidence on MHPSS-SEL interventions in EiE contexts is the presence of play as a constitutive component. The instinctual drive to play is very strong in children and they will do so when they have no real toys, when parents do not actively encourage the behaviour and even in the middle of a war zone. MHPSS-SEL-informed researchers and educators understand that playful activities benefit the development of the whole child across social, cognitive, physical and emotional domains. Indeed, play is such an instrumental component to healthy child development that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989, Article 31) recognised play as a fundamental right of every child.

Given the overall benefits of play, and its learner-centred orientation, it is vitally important to include play elements in SEL programmes and play-informed interventions for strength-based initiatives with vulnerable learners. Rigorous attention should be given to play's multiple modalities and functions. This will strengthen the design and effectiveness of MHPSS-SEL programmes and community initiatives with multi-layered benefits for children and youth (Right to Play, 2018).

### **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Play and play-pedagogies**

- That for the 'SEL programme design' for EiE contexts, developers consider:
  - Incorporating play and play-pedagogies in multiple modalities for maximum programme effectiveness and benefits for learners and youth.







## Introduction

The research into this area adopted an approach to the literature on curriculum and EiE that attempted to accomplish two things: to collate research that establishes the consensus in education around the necessary principles of curriculum design and development for quality learning, and identify material that seeks to test the applicability of these principles in contexts of displacement and emergencies. This would be the key area of the Report for informing the creation of the Learning Passport's curriculum frameworks for mathematics, science and literacy.

Within the scope of the Learning Passport, it is vital to recognise the particular usage of 'curriculum framework'. This report takes a curriculum framework to be the skeleton of a curriculum: the 'bare bones' of the concepts, principles and core knowledge. The curriculum framework is a 'boundary object' (Star and Griesemer, 1989), containing information used in different ways by different communities, but with some immutable content.

The curriculum framework is used to indicate what should be included in a curriculum, but the content of the framework needs to be interpreted by mediators such as resource authors, teachers, local communities and policy makers to create local curricula, resources and so on. Within the Learning Passport, the curriculum frameworks will be interpreted and applied in each iteration by local implementers.

## Overall recommendations for curriculum frameworks

### Contextualisation and adaptability

When identifying what curriculum refugee learners should follow, the two choices that are generally considered are the curriculum of their Country of Origin (COO) or that of the Country of First Arrival (COFA), though in reality there are often other options (Chelpi-den Hamer, 2011). When it is anticipated that the amount of time that refugees would remain in countries of first asylum will be small, there are clear pedagogic and psychosocial advantages to continue to follow the curriculum of the country of origin. Even if there are good pedagogical reasons for following this approach, however, this course of action may be impossible for physical or logistical reasons, citing the example of Somalia where the war there 'almost totally destroyed the nation's textbooks and curricula' (Bensalah, 2000, p. 9).

Furthermore, the present EiE context is a protracted 'global refugee crisis' (Esses et al., 2017, p.78), and not one where refugees can readily expect to return back

to their COO or be resettled in a third country. UNHCR (2014) estimates that a refugee spends, on average, 17 years in exile (though this figure may now be higher). IDPs, ‘the invisible majority’, face even longer – an estimated 23 years on average (Crawford et al., 2015).

Literature evaluating how COFA curricula are used to provide education for displaced learners thus points towards two preliminary conclusions. The first is the establishment of political will and practical capability; local administrative support for using COFA curricula cannot be relied upon in all instances, and as is detailed throughout this Report, the specific needs of displaced learners may not be met by the unaltered use of national curricula. The second is that the integration of displaced learners into COFA curricula requires transitional support.

As a key intervention of the Learning Passport is ensuring transitional support that can overcome interruptions in learning, the frameworks within in it must provide this kind of transitional support in as wide a range of curricular and educational contexts as possible. This may lead to a necessary ‘de-contextualisation’ of the curriculum framework or ‘context agnosticism’ from any single society’s set of cultural constructs (Pinar, 2019). At this high level of characterisation for aims within a curriculum, different priorities have been suggested. UNHCR’s Education Strategy (2012–2016) encourages curriculum frameworks for refugees that include hard and soft skills, as well as foundation skills in literacy and numeracy, while others (including Voogt and Roblin, 2012) suggest the need for inclusion of 21st-century competencies.

### **Maintaining cultural connections: Afghan Refugee Schools**

In Pakistan, the government policy and a desire for return to Afghanistan shape the education options for refugee children. Because Pakistan’s education system significantly differs from that of Afghanistan, many refugee students study the Afghan curriculum. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responded to pleas for support from Afghan refugee schools that no longer had the funds to provide programmes at an adequate standard. The IRC-supported schools now provide primary education for both refugee boys and girls, and secondary education (Grades 7–12) for refugee girls. In addition, home schools were formed in more remote and/or conservative areas where there were not enough students to establish a school or girls were not allowed to leave their neighbourhoods. These home schools followed the same curriculum as refugee schools. The IRC-supported schools use the curriculum of Afghanistan’s MOE to promote learning in the children’s first language (UNICEF, 2015, p.18).

Considering that the Learning Passport is envisioned to be applied in multiple different contexts, the frameworks (if not eventually the curricular content) should aspire to a degree to agnosticism, in order to maximise adaptability, and focus on ensuring the framework offers consistency, coherence and flexibility simultaneously.

Considering that the Learning Passport is envisioned to be applied in multiple different contexts, the frameworks (if not eventual the curricular content) should aspire to a degree to agnosticism, in order to maximise adaptability, and focus on ensuring the framework offers consistency, coherence and flexibility simultaneously..

### **Curriculum Recommendations: Contextualisation and adaptability**

- That curriculum frameworks for the Learning Passport are developed which are context-agnostic; in other words, developed at a high level to ensure they are as adaptable and flexible as possible.
- That these frameworks should adhere to the principles of good development and design identified in the Research and Recommendations Report, and include existing Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) guidance.
- That these frameworks are used in each implementation to provide structure for a contextualised curriculum and other components.
- That guidance on contextualising the frameworks covers a wide range of potential EiE scenarios.

## **Curriculum mapping and transition**

A key purpose of the Learning Passport is to facilitate learners transitioning between different curricula, so that they are able to more easily enter and integrate into education systems in their present location, and more effectively re-join an education system if they have been in a context with no formal or mainstream provision. In order to achieve this, the curriculum frameworks proposed within the Learning Passport, and its associated components for supporting learning, must have the capability to 'translate' into other curricula, a process performed through 'curriculum mapping'. This must not only be implementable for curricula being used in contexts of displacement, but also those that have been used in the past by displaced learners, and those that those learners may be expected to use in the future.

Most importantly, education responses for displaced children involve varying curricula, and sometimes a lack of an official curriculum. Thus, while a key step to beginning a mapping exercise is to identify and select the curricula, countless curricula are currently used to provide education for children in EiE contexts, which provides numerous resources and complexities for curriculum mapping methods (Elliott, 2013). Specific barriers identified in the literature include:

- **Conceptual/systemic barriers:** One initial foundational problem which may be encountered in using mapping curricula is the considerable upheaval that may result from trying to combine or transition between curricula, affecting learners, teachers and institutions. UNICEF (2015), for example, cites Kurdistan as an example of where vacillating between a revised Syrian curriculum and a Kurdish curriculum has resulted in considerable instability.
- **Political and security barriers:** When mapping multiple curricula onto each other in highly sensitive locations, and especially with highly sensitive subjects (e.g. history, human geography, religion, civic education), the risk of exacerbating conflict can rise significantly.

- Epistemological barriers: Curricula are shaped, directly or indirectly, by epistemologies (Gattegno, 1984). The epistemology which informs the design of curricula has a deep and significant impact on many aspects of educational implementation, such as how learning is defined, delivered and assessed. One of the general dangers inherent in mapping curricula is that there may be a clash of epistemologies, which could result in a messy and unclear blended curriculum.
- Language barriers: The language of instruction is clearly a central consideration in the design of any curriculum, and in multilingual contexts can present an impediment to all students accessing the curriculum.
- Resource barriers: In resource-poor EiE contexts, there is potentially a lack of capacity to ensure that the mapping process is done as effectively as is necessary.

### Curriculum Recommendations: Curriculum mapping and transition

- That 'curriculum mapping' is used to identify touchpoints between curricula, and that in collaboration with a software partner, a discrete digital curriculum mapping tool is developed for the Learning Passport to facilitate this.
- That curriculum mapping facilitates integration into national systems by allowing the easy identification of individual pathways for children between curricula, with the Learning Passport as a reference point.
- That flexibility in sequencing and pacing is therefore included so that students can move more rapidly over material they are familiar with, and focus on areas that are unfamiliar.

## Principles of quality curriculum frameworks

It is challenging to assess and collate findings from research into defining curriculum frameworks that are effective for EiE, due to the paucity of literature on the subject, and the lack of interventions that identify curriculum frameworks as one of the mechanisms to be evaluated or monitored. Consequently, the bulk of literature in this area centres on High-Performing Jurisdictions (HPJs) as defined by their successful performance in international assessment comparisons via TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS. Many of the studies reviewed in the research compare curriculum frameworks across these HPJs in order to establish good practice, and by contrasting how home and HPJ curricula have been known to influence national policy. For instance, Elliot (2016) and DfE (2012) identify jurisdictions that are high performing according to non-subject-specific metrics, but also according to subject.

Of course, care must be taken when considering HPJ curricula and performance comparisons in isolation. Results are influenced by teachers' expertise, pedagogy and ongoing CPD, expectations in the home country, the influence of assessment systems and how they use evidence to improve results. In short, it is not only the curriculum framework that influences learners' performance. However, it is reasonable to consider whether the common features of curriculum frameworks in these jurisdictions can help to identify broad principles that can help in the development of curriculum frameworks for EiE. In addition to curriculum coherence, addressed in more detail above, these include:

- Aims and organisation: Aims have been found to be a key element in the curricula of nations or regions that perform well in international comparisons and primary phase frameworks analysed across international comparisons likewise found the inclusion of aims statements to be typical (NFER, 2008).

Characteristics of a curriculum framework should include it specifying its organisation, progression within a subject, as well as the key building blocks within a subject necessary to make this progression.

- Age span and progression: When considering the curriculum as a whole (rather than making subject-specific recommendations), Oates (2010) suggests that content should be suited to age-related progression. With the caveats about HPJ specificity already mentioned, analysis of the ages and phases of schooling in HPJs indicates that a curriculum framework should span 11 years of schooling, starting from a primary phase.
- Consistency and continuity: In a key document that examines the best strategies and processes for developing curriculum frameworks, IBE-UNESCO (2017, p.48) emphasises the importance of ‘a consistent learning experience throughout’ in which ‘there is a single set of values and principles underpinning the curriculum’ and ‘a high level of sequence and continuity in the content of their learning’.

### Curriculum Recommendations: Principles of quality curriculum frameworks

- That the Learning Passport’s curriculum framework developers consider:
  - Including overall curriculum aims.
  - Organising the framework in terms of subjects.
  - Including an indication of progression within a subject.
  - Presenting the framework such that it indicates the order in which concepts need to be learnt.
  - Avoiding overcrowding the framework so that concepts can be understood in depth.
  - Including, as an integrating function, SEL content, process and presentation throughout.



# Subject-specific recommendations

## Literacy

Literacy is commonly presented as *a*, if not *the*, educational priority in EiE contexts, and as the mechanism by which people can maximise their life opportunities and decrease their vulnerability, whatever their future trajectory (Frank-Oputu and Oghenekohwo, 2017). However, on a global scale, there is no common definition for a fixed level of proficiency, no agreement on the skills or domains covered, and no global assessment or reporting framework (Hanemann, 2019). The absence of these fundamentals hints at the highly contested nature of literacy, how it is understood and what it is for, and makes it challenging in any context to create literacy curriculum frameworks that are meaningful and useful.

Despite this, commonalities in high-quality approaches do exist. For instance, one of the key documents comparing curricula from HPJs (DfE, 2012) found that although English-language instruction generated the largest differences between curriculum frameworks (across the three subjects under consideration), in general, the four domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing remained predominant.

In considering literacy curriculum frameworks more widely in EiE contexts, USAID (2014) identify several ‘good practice’ elements for such frameworks, including: ensuring there is no conscious or unconscious bias; including language-specific curricular objectives, scope and sequence of instruction; connecting students’ experiences with learning activities during the teaching of reading; and using local educators and community members to shape literacy materials, which can be designed and produced locally. The Council of Europe present another model, the ‘Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants’, the focus of which is migrants assimilating into European education systems, but which is also relevant to refugees and IDPs in an EiE context. The focus here is on the development of language competency in relevant areas such as talking to children’s teachers, speaking to neighbours and preparing a CV for a job.

These approaches provide some structure for organising and recommending approaches to the literacy curriculum framework for the Learning Passport, but as with MHPSS-SEL, this component presents particular challenges. Key among these is the requirement for functionality in a wide range of linguistic environments, including multilingual contexts, and further recommendations for the development of the literacy curriculum framework grow from these.

### Curriculum recommendations: Literacy

- That the literacy curriculum, and content of the curriculum and resources addressing language proficiency, are recognised as areas that will need greater support and are intrinsically more complex.
- That the difficulties of developing a literacy curriculum framework be further explored, and the specific challenge of literacy is appreciated.
- That, subject to feasibility, a context-agnostic, language-agnostic literacy curriculum framework is developed.



- That a literacy framework, if developed, supports learning in mathematics and science and the SEL programme, and additionally that developers consider:
  - Organising the structure in terms of skills (e.g. speaking, listening, reading and writing).
  - Allowing for encounters with a wide variety of texts and talking and listening experiences.
  - Allowing for the potentially varied and or 'non-linear' nature of literacy development.
  - Outlining the purpose of the literacy framework and providing a rationale.
  - Including oral aspects of literacy.
  - Indicating the sequence of learning.

## Mathematics and Science

### Mathematics

Mathematics underpins the sciences and major sectors of business and industry, and so its learning provides students with the key skills required for most forms of employment. But learning mathematics can impact students' lives in other ways; it has the potential to empower them on both an individual and social level (Smith, 2004), and can be used to address wider social problems (Malloy, 2002).

Niss and Hojgaard's (2011) definition of mathematical competence echoes much of the other researchers' perspectives, and they suggest that how the curriculum is sequenced should reflect the ways in which mathematical ideas intertwine. Although there is not an inflexible sequence in which topics should be learnt, the sequence cannot be arbitrary. Understanding gained from one domain is used and integrated into new knowledge domains. A curriculum framework should establish a progression of topics that build on and into the structure of mathematics, with topics in one level depending on topics learnt in a previous level (Cunningham, 2018). For instance, for several studies there was agreement that confidence, fluency and attainment in number are prerequisites for algebra. Four of the HPJs' curricula covered the majority of fractions and decimals by the end of the primary phase.

Meta-analysis of classroom-based studies (e.g. Johnson and Johnson, 2002; Slavin, 2014) repeatedly illustrate the benefits to students' mathematics learning when they collaborate with peers on problems, as opposed to working individually. There is also extensive evidence that collaborative learning can raise levels of student achievement as measured in standardised mathematics tasks (Luckin et al., 2017; Mercer et al., 2004). Likewise, studies have found that when problem solving in mathematics, there are multiple opportunities for decision making, autonomy and self-evaluation.

Finally, within this literature on the commonalities of curriculum frameworks in HPJs, and particularly in mathematics and science, the notion of 'big ideas' is widely discussed. This approach, or that of 'threshold concepts', is worth considering in the development of a curriculum framework. Land et al. (2005) describe a threshold concept as a key step in learning to be considered when developing a framework, and they go on to describe how threshold concepts can be defined as 'transformative points' in learning with the curriculum needing to be designed to support these transitions. Charles (2005) describes a 'big idea' as: 'a statement of an idea that is central to the learning of mathematics, one that links numerous mathematical understandings into a coherent whole' (2005, p. 10).

## Science

Although it is generally agreed that science education is critical to supporting an individual's ability to apply knowledge and skills to everyday decision-making (Crowell and Schunn, 2016), agreement regarding what should be included in primary and secondary science education has not been reached. This lack of consensus can be clearly seen in the results of a 2015 Delphi study (Blanco-López et al., 2015) which gathered the opinions of various science education specialists around the world and asked what aspects of science should be prioritised in science education. The results show that very little consensus could be reached. An added complexity when designing a curriculum framework for the Learning Passport is that very little empirical evidence exists relating to effective science education in EiE contexts.

Despite this, there are lessons to be drawn from the literature. Stephenson (2018) highlights the importance of ensuring that references within the science curriculum are connected to the lived realities of the students. Scaffolding must be provided in order to support their understanding and help to make the unknown or the abstract more concrete. This example also highlights the value of having local teachers in EiE contexts as they are sometimes able to more accurately interpret or anticipate potential gaps in student understanding.

Further, examples of engaging and applicable science curricula, particularly at the secondary level, can often demand significant resources, such as specialised equipment or even laboratory settings, and the teachers able to use them effectively. In many low-resource contexts this is impractical. For the Learning Passport curriculum frameworks for science, pathways with significant dependency on equipment or particular resources should be limited.



## Curriculum recommendations: Mathematics and Science

- That for the mathematics and science curriculum frameworks, developers consider:
  - Organising the framework in terms of content, concepts, principles, fundamental operations, core knowledge and associated progressions.
  - Including threshold concepts.
  - De-contextualising content, concepts, principles, fundamental operations, core knowledge and associated progressions.
  - Focusing on concepts, principles, fundamental operations, core knowledge and associated progressions rather than context and differentiation.
  - Providing guidance that emphasises the potential usefulness of, and respect for, indigenous knowledge when contextualising the curriculum framework.
  
- That for the mathematics curriculum framework, developers consider:
  - Including so-called 'big ideas'.
  - Including the majority of fractions and decimals near the end of the primary phase.
  - Including number and geometry/shape and space.
  - Focusing on count, place values, multiplicative thinking, partitioning, proportional reasoning.
  - Developing a framework that allows for problem solving to be included in many areas of teaching and learning.
  - Making provision for literacy and language which supports learning in maths.
  
- That for the science curriculum framework, developers consider:
  - Including principles and so-called 'big ideas' of science to help learners understand the scientific aspects of the world and make informed decisions about science.
  - Making provision for literacy and language that supports learning in science.
  - Ensuring that the scientific terminology used in the science curriculum framework is carefully chosen and key definitions provided.
  - The importance of not assuming availability of space and equipment for practical activities, but nevertheless the importance of integrating practical activities where possible.



# Assessment and Accreditation

## Introduction

To date, the field around the content, characteristics and conditions required for assessment and accreditation to support effective learning for displaced learners remains under-researched. Even the latest studies stress that research on education policy is 'limited, fragmented and case-specific and lacks evaluation' of how successful approaches are (Cerna, 2019). However, the limited literature on the subject does have some clear and consistent messages.

## Recommendations

First, and most important and consistent across the literature, is the need for accreditation of learning in EiE (e.g. Save the Children, 2018, p. 55). National assessments, however, are often difficult for displaced learners to access. Reasons for this range from being formally excluded by the government (Kirk, 2009), to not having documentation, and the inaccessibility and/or cost of reaching an exam site (Kirk, 2009; Chelpi-den Hamer, 2011; Bengtsson and Dyer, 2017).

**'To become a passport to a brighter future in a globalised world students' learning and achievement must be officially recognised by authorities across jurisdictions. Any formal proof or documentation or achievement must have validity beyond its particular system, otherwise children's ability to use their education human capital in the marketplace, or add to it through further study, is obstructed.'** (Kirk, 2009, p. 60)

When coordination works well between host country and country of origin, assessment by the country of origin is possible within the territory of the host country. For example, in the past, the Republic of the Congo has allowed the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to conduct assessments and certify displaced DRC primary school students at the end of their enrolment. This meant recognition of the refugees' learning and progress through the school system when they returned to DRC. However, this type of cross-border assessment is not common

Alternatively, a region-wide assessment scheme may be helpful for refugee students who study in their host country and wish to return to their home country or progress

elsewhere regionally. The West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) determines the examinations required in English-speaking West African countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Gambia), conducts the examinations and awards certificates. For example, the WAEC examination was taken by Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in the Gambia. Similarly, efforts within the European Union towards a qualifications passport for adults to collate previous certification and learning offer another model (UNHCR and UNESCO, 2018).

In addition to the need for displaced students to receive summative and cumulative assessments, which allow them to demonstrate what they have learned, EiE must also provide formative assessment, as feedback to improve learning, (Mendenhall et al., 2015; Bengtsson and Dyer, 2017). This balance is captured in Harlen and Deakin-Crick's (2003) key study on different forms of assessment, which recommends:

- Developing and implementing policy that includes formative and summative assessment, that is, assessment for learning and of learning, and ensures the purpose of assessment is clear to all involved, including parents and learners.
- Developing learners' understanding of the goals of their learning, the criteria by which it is assessed and their self-assessment abilities.
- Using the current resources (human and financial) given to test development to create assessment systems that assess all valued outcomes of education, including creativity and learning to learn.

While it has been possible through the research completed to identify these components of quality assessment and accreditation, and some examples of effective assessment in contexts of displacement, the value of a potentially global single form of accreditation provided through the Learning Passport is hard to demonstrate or provide an evidence-based rationale for. Practical and political hurdles are likewise immense. Nevertheless, the following recommendations lay out what can be achieved by assessment, and the importance of this.



## Assessment and Accreditation Recommendations

- That implementations of the Learning Passport first evaluate what forms of assessment are suitable for any given context.
- That the Learning Passport contains protocols by which the purpose and value of assessment is explained to test takers, those who administer tests and those who use the results (we recommend that these protocols be developed in subsequent phases).
- That accreditation is approached with caution, and that the following specific recommendations are followed:
  - That stakeholders should first seek to work with existing and politically non-divisive regional and supranational accreditation bodies to establish recognition and accreditation of the Learning Passport.
  - That a new high-stakes 'Learning Passport' certification is not a promising route for EiE contexts, and more flexible accreditation alternatives to formal examinations should be investigated.
  - That accreditation should prioritise alignment and equivalency with qualifications that will allow displaced students to continue their education within national education systems or find employment.
- That an expert Tracking Working Group is established to examine separately the creation and tracking of learning records that might 'move with' children across country borders (portability).
- That teacher or educator involvement and capacity are understood as essential for assessment, and in light of this:
  - That teachers (or equivalent) use assessment to convey learning progress to learners.
  - That teachers develop students' understanding of learning goals, criteria and self-assessment.
  - That teachers promote students' self-assessment skills.
  - That teachers participate in continuing professional development, provided through the Learning Passport, about formative assessment.





# Resources (Teaching and Learning Materials)

## Introduction

The evidence for the impact of the provision of learning materials on student achievement over the past 40 years is overwhelmingly positive, but materials must be available and used if they are to be effective. Researchers of EiE often highlight shortages or a lack of access to learning materials in the context of displacement and emergency (Monaghan and King, 2018), but in many cases do not venture into further analysis other than to criticise the poor quality of textbooks (Volmink and van der Elst, 2019). An overarching finding of the review conducted for this section was that many of the basic principles that apply to the provision of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) in countries where education is delivered in low-resource settings, and where there is an urgent need for improved provision, apply also in situations of displacement and emergency.

## Recommendations

### Curriculum alignment

It should be noted that textbooks are often used as a tool for disciplinary change in education practice (Johnston, 2006). Textbooks provide a means for practically establishing new agendas and can potentially operate unpredictably; consequently, what is included and what is omitted from the content, particularly in mutable and fragile contexts such as refugee camps, is a key concern (Johnston, 2006; Couper, 2017). A significant challenge in the delivery of TLMs in low-resource environments is the potential misalignment between curriculum objectives and the capabilities and expectations of designers and publishers. There are many examples (Ward et al., 2006, pp. 33–34, 40; Read, 2015, pp. 81–86) where curriculum designers increase the number of subjects without considering the implications for teachers, time in the school timetable and total costs.

### Inclusivity and Suitability

As is mentioned elsewhere in this document, inclusivity is key to all aspects of the Learning Passport. TLMs, through their design and content, are a particularly important vector through which provision of education can be made more suitable for cohorts of learners with particular needs, such as those associated with a disability, and can also support access for and representation of those marginalised on the basis of ethnicity or gender.

Suitability also extends to age appropriateness and the particular needs of displaced children. For instance, it is generally accepted (Palmer et al., 2016, pp. 35–36)

that design of books for early primary grades should have sufficient space on the page to make it easy to see the illustrations, and that print size should be stipulated depending on the age of students. For reading materials and especially those for early primary, big books for use by the teacher with class participation are often recommended (Read and Treffgarne, 2011, p. 3) as are wall charts, picture books and cards.

Design and layout can be informed by and address dimensions of learning that may be specific to, or particularly cogent for, displaced children. For instance, the challenges in continuity of schooling and access to materials and support faced by displaced learners necessitates that learning should be able to be undertaken outside of school and allow the child to work independently at home (Almasri et al., 2018, p. 446). This in turn has implications for the layout of any learning materials, in that they should allow for participation on behalf of the learner. Examples could include blank spaces for the learner to fill-in or comment boxes to allow written feedback from a supervisor, such as recognisable 'hinge points' where the teacher may want to check for understanding (Black and William, 2014).

Finally, content and illustrations can be sensitive and need to be culturally acceptable: this is of a particular concern in emergency responses where provision may rely on the fast supply of material, which can relay particular sets of inappropriate expectations and ideologies, or be conveyed using images and content that are unsuitable (Dahya, 2016, p. 27).

## Development and durability

The supply chains and networks necessary for providing TLMs are complex and often resource-intensive, and require access to stable infrastructure that is often not forthcoming in emergency contexts. Variations in manufacturing capacity have knock-on effects for quality, response time and cost. While there is a cultural case to be made for local publishing (i.e. developing and designing content itself), there is less of a case for the industrial process of printing (Read and Treffgarne, 2011, pp. 6–8; Palmer et al., 2016, p. 30). Translating decisions around design and content (and ultimately decisions around curriculum) in physical materials requires expert technical advice from printing and manufacturing specialists (Cowan, 2017, pp. 19–20, 23). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that responses in EiE frequently deploy existing textbooks and reading books, rather than seek to adapt or prepare new resources (e.g. DFID, 2015; World Bank, 2019).

Threats to TLMs' durability and re-usability can be pre-empted in the design phase: it is easier to preserve materials that have been produced so that they are durable for several years' use. Books need strong cover card and binding to resist damage and if they are properly stored and handled they may last several years. Training for teachers, students and parents in covering, using and caring for books has been a feature of many textbook projects, including handbooks designed for training in conservation techniques (Read et al., 2000; Rwanda Education Board, 2016).

One further dimension to these questions of sustainability and development is the role of digital resources. This is dealt with at length in the section on digital support for the Learning Passport, but is also included within the following general list of recommendations:

## Resources (Teaching and Learning Materials) Recommendations

- That all TLMs must fully reflect the localised Learning Passport curriculum, and the assessment approach of the Learning Passport, and include sufficient guidance for their use in displacement scenarios.
- That any *existing* TLMs be first evaluated for their appropriateness and re-used/ adapted if possible (we recommend that this process of evaluation is formalised through the development of a TLM quality assurance 'scorecard'). In general, close liaison with government and education partners is essential before decisions are made about materials production.
- That, as an aspect of contextual appropriateness, stakeholder involvement in the development of TLMs is key.
- That Learning Passport TLMs need to be culturally and displacement sensitive, while also paying attention to the need for inclusive representation.
- That TLMs used by the Learning Passport should promote self-learning.
- That TLMs accommodate the wide range of ages they may be used for.
- That choice of media and materials should also reflect durability, usage, storage and dissemination needs regarding the specific context. In general, specialist advice should be taken on all aspects of printing, publishing and distribution.
- That in the development of digital TLMs, the following specific principles are adhered to:
  - That all digital TLMs should be designed to complement facilitators rather than replace them, and all facilitators trained in their use.
  - That all digital learning materials contain appropriate scaffolding.
  - That all digital learning materials need to be designed according to specific pedagogic principles.





## Introduction

If EiE is an emerging field of study with many evidence gaps, then the subfield of digital technology and education in displacement settings is even less well served. The research approach has therefore been a blend of the following, with a strong focus on engaging with practitioners.

## Recommendations

The overwhelming consensus among educators is that, if used correctly, and supplemented with facilitator training, digital learning materials can positively impact learning outcomes (Tauson and Stannard, 2018; Al-Sharhan, 2018). A review of the existing guidance literature around EdTech makes clear that any digital intervention needs to appreciate and align itself with the following key findings:

### **Blended learning has been shown to improve effectiveness of learning with digital**

There is much evidence that suggests that blended learning (the combination of facilitator and digital learning materials working in tandem) is an effective means of delivery (McAleavy et al., 2018; Mendenhall, 2017). Even in displaced contexts, blended learning is more beneficial than learning solely through digital learning materials in isolation (McAleavy et al., 2018; Burns and Lawrie, 2015).

### **The teacher or facilitator should be at the heart of any development**

This is an adaptation of one of UNICEF's five key programme recommendations on ICT for education (see Appendix 2 of the Report) and is an underlying assumption here. Any platform should not replace the teacher, but should instead aim to enhance teaching in order to improve the quality of learning. Save the Children's 'EdTech for Learning in Emergencies and Displaced Settings' (Tauson and Stannard, 2018) covers the importance of successful engagement with the teacher in several of its recommendations. Meanwhile, UNICEF and the Aga Khan Foundation's report 'Raising Learning Outcomes: the opportunities and challenges of ICT for learning' says: 'Fundamental is the notion that "technology can amplify great teaching, but great technology cannot replace poor teaching"' (Innovation Unit, Aga Khan Education Services and the Aga Khan Foundation, 2018, p. 22).

## Infrastructure is our biggest practical challenge

Lack of power and internet connectivity often characterise educational facilities in conflict-affected contexts (Lehne et al., 2016), though where they function, they facilitate important social interactions, connecting displaced persons with family and friends in other locations (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Fischer and Yafi, 2018). Yet many regions hosting displaced persons in Africa and parts of Asia remain ‘underconnected’; as a recent UN report warned, ‘there is a yawning gap between the underconnected and the hyper-digitalised countries’, which has the potential to ‘widen further and exacerbate existing inequalities’ (UNCTAD, 2019, p. 3).

Poor digital infrastructure is the most common barrier to the publishing and distribution of digital learning materials (Tauson and Stannard, 2018; Joynes and James, 2018). Online materials can be delivered only if Wi-Fi is easily available, or if they are delivered through apps with zero rating on mobile networks (i.e. they can be used for free without using data costs). Many refugees and displaced people access the Internet through mobile telephone pay-as-you-go accounts which often have fixed download limits. It is difficult to download materials and access websites with large bandwidths (Creelman et al., 2018).

Whilst solving infrastructural challenges is outside of the remit of the Learning Passport project, they cannot be ignored. Importantly:

- Digital learning materials need to be designed alongside a strategy for sustainability, especially if the intervention is intended to yield long-term improvements in learning outcomes (Tauson and Stannard, 2018).
- Factors such as the type of hardware, cost maintenance, power, access, security, off-line storage and intended use need to be considered (Johansen et al., 2018).

### Navigating insecure routes to school: WhatsApp groups

In parts of Lebanon and Syria, child refugees and IDPs may be forced to cross insecure areas in order to reach school. In these cases, Alfarah and Bosco (2016) find that parents use WhatsApp and SMS texting to communicate with their children and stay informed about their safety; teachers also use WhatsApp to inform parents about relevant incidents or security matters. Limitations to access or affordability of mobile phones are overcome through the pooling of resources within the community. Alfarah and Bosco (2016) note that in refugee camps in Lebanon, a single device is sometimes shared among several tents. A group of parents may use one phone to keep in touch with their children, who may share another phone and travel in a group to get to their school or educational facility.

## Co-creation is a key factor in driving adoption and usage

In technology design, as in programme design, it is now standard practice to involve users in the process of developing products. This is not restricted to the design phases of any project; user feedback will be key to the evolution and development of any learning platform once it is in place and operational.

The displaced learner is much less likely to engage with digital learning materials if there is little or no relevance to their local context (Tauson and Stannard, 2018; Ale et al., 2017). Therefore, to increase uptake and effectiveness, all digital learning materials must be designed with a degree of flexibility to allow alignment with local context.

### OERs

UNICEF's T4D Design Criteria have 'Reuse and Improve' as a crucial point. Any Learning Passport platform project should first seek to utilise pre-existing content. There are already many freely available, adaptable and downloadable Open Educational Resources (OERs) (McAleavy et al., 2018; Lewis and Thacker, 2016), as well as a plethora of platforms and resources with 'OER-like' functions, of which YouTube is probably the most used.

Nevertheless, OERs need to be used with care. Existing 'generic' digital learning materials should be adapted to the learning needs of displaced learners (Tauson and Stannard, 2018). In addition, while OERs should be used as source materials for teaching and learning in displaced contexts, they need to be modified to suit the local context (Joynes and James, 2018).

One area not initially anticipated, but which came through strongly in field missions, was the potential for centralised digital support for capacity building amongst teachers and facilitators. Certification would be welcomed by teachers in this regard. This, along with wider recommendations, can be found below.

#### Digital Support Recommendations

**Area 1:** To investigate how a platform could act as a global searchable repository for validated EiE curriculum and instructional materials, including the project's own.

- That the Learning Passport project focuses on developing a central bank of OERs.
- That these OERs should be cleared for reuse in platforms as a global public good.
- That this OER bank is the subject of a feasibility study.
- That curation and adaptation for any context should be done hand-in-hand with local expertise.
- That where the Learning Passport is digitally supported, any teacher training distinguishes between general training in the Learning Passport and training in 'how to use the technology'.
- That the potential for centralised digital support for capacity building among teachers and facilitators is pursued.
- That any digital solution includes on-going, documented and accountable monitoring to prevent and stop harm (bullying, grooming, recruitment, incitement).

## Potential for digital assessment and accreditation

Research found that the provision of digital assessments themselves was less feasible than supporting the ways in which schools and other stakeholders may already be recording progression data and indicating how digital methods could improve on this.

For example, the model in Myanmar is for teachers to record marks in a traditional markbook, meaning that this data stays within the classroom and cannot be easily presented or analysed. There is little time for ‘assessment for learning’ activity. The headteacher may or may not have time to review the performance of each class by reviewing quarterly test results. Only end-of-year results are fed up from the school into higher levels of education administration.

The next level of sophistication in tracking would be to record data directly into spreadsheets or a package such as Forms. Schools often create their own rubrics to allow teachers to track against the curriculum. It is our belief that the majority of such data would, in practice, continue to be gathered away from digital devices, but that a platform could serve as a vital ‘second step’ in collating data and making it available for inspection, transmission and analysis. Here, primary data could be coming from, for example, termly written (paper-based) tests tailored to the local curriculum, high-stakes government examinations or teacher observations in the classroom.

The logging of assessment for learning (assessments made in class whilst teaching) should also be considered. However, in many scenarios, class sizes mean that in practical terms there is little time to make qualitative judgements about individual children’s progress, so this should be seen as less of a priority for the platform.

Taking into account principles one, two and nine of UNICEF’s T4D Design Criteria (given above) – ‘Design with the User’, ‘Understand the Existing Ecosystem’, and ‘Be Collaborative’ – it is clear that the overall approach to developing any Learning Passport platform needs to be heavily focused on the user. ‘Design with the User’ is the first and most important principle. Therefore, in terms of an approach to developing the Learning Passport platform, we would recommend Human Centred Design (HCD), which is informed by the well-established principles of Design Thinking. UNICEF has already used HCD in at least one project.

### Digital Support Recommendations

**Area 2:** To investigate how a platform could act as a repository for children’s assessment data, and a means for updating and tracking it in the field.

- That a digital platform will be best suited as a secondary repository for data derived from written or paper-based assessment material, rather than used to collect data directly.
- That the Learning Passport digital platform should allow for the recording of assessment data against all relevant local curriculum assessment objectives.
- That the functionality of storing assessment data and other identity data be adaptable within the Learning Passport.
- That design and development of digital support use a Human Centred Design process.



## Digital Support Recommendations

**Area 3:** Potentially deliver assessments/accreditation, as part of an online and offline digitally-based assessment/accreditation option.

- That the desirability of implementing digital assessments is considered.
- That flexibility is retained regarding the number and function of platforms to be used in the stages of contextualised development.
- That in line with UNICEF's T4D principles, existing embedded solutions and platforms are considered for re-use/adaptation/enhancement as part of any solution.





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## The Learning Passport Research and Recommendations Report: Summary of Findings

This document is a summary of findings from the **Research and Recommendations Report** produced by the University of Cambridge to improve the quality of education for vulnerable children, and in particular those unable to effectively access national education systems. The project aims to develop an education model for rapid local adaption and deployment, and which delivers both better outcomes and better recognition of outcomes.

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