

# Innovation for equity in Lebanon

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**Innovative approaches in Lebanon aim to address, in two very different ways, the particular needs of the most vulnerable among the refugee and host populations.**

For over three years, Lebanon has been hosting refugees fleeing the violent conflict in Syria; today, there are over 1.1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, comprising over 20% of the country's population. The continued escalation of the crisis has required UNICEF to find new ways to respond to the vast and growing needs of the most vulnerable children and their families. New and innovative approaches have been developed to plan for and reach those who need it the most, two of which are discussed here.

The first innovation focuses on how to plan to reach the most vulnerable children in an

environment where vulnerable groups are dispersed across the country. The second innovation focuses on unconventional ways to complement learning for out-of-school children in a country with more children out of school than there are children enrolled in public schools.

## **Mapping for targeted interventions**

With large numbers of refugees spread across Lebanon, it is important to think about what geographical areas to prioritise if scarce resources are to be used effectively and efficiently. In order to identify the most vulnerable areas, in 2013 UNICEF Lebanon



The Pi4 Learning programme being showcased at Dhour El Shweir public secondary school in Lebanon.

developed a vulnerability map of the country in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office. The map, which has now evolved to highlight a range of aspects of the crisis, reflects five strata of vulnerability, inclusive of both the vulnerable Lebanese population (living on less than US\$4 a day) and the registered Syrian refugee caseload – the best available data in a context where data is scarce. The resulting composite map of 1,561 localities highlights those places with the largest numbers of vulnerable people. The most vulnerable fifth amounts to 225 localities which together contain 86% of the registered refugee population and more than 66% of the vulnerable Lebanese population. Therefore, a relatively restricted geographic focus for programming allows for significant coverage of the most vulnerable populations in the country.

The mapping can also be used to drill down further to rank the most vulnerable locations within those 225 localities. For example, it is striking that half of all refugees and 40% of the Lebanese poor reside within the 90 most vulnerable localities of Lebanon, less than 6% of the total number.

Vulnerability mapping presents a new way of prioritising interventions for the most vulnerable, identifying defined geographical areas of vulnerability around which to coordinate action. Informed by this vulnerability analysis, UNICEF and its partners are using a variety of delivery 'gateways', such as schools and health centres, to reach Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese communities, an effort that will have even greater impact as others follow suit.

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### The Pi for Learning (Pi4L) Programme

The Pi4L pilot to give Syrian refugee out-of-school children the chance to learn skills in numeracy, literacy and technology was launched in May 2014.<sup>1</sup> This programme consists of tailored courses that utilise Raspberry Pi computers to offer a scalable and affordable solution that supports children in learning basic skills.

The Raspberry Pi is a credit-card-sized 'single-board' computer developed in the UK by the Raspberry Pi Foundation in order to promote the teaching of basic computer science in schools. Its small size, affordable price (£25/\$41) and the fact that it uses an open-source operating system means it is suitable and cost-effective for the large-scale Pi4L outreach programme.

Pi4L is a joint initiative between the International Education Association (IEA) and UNICEF Lebanon, in collaboration with Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Currently in testing phase, it seeks to provide refugee children in Lebanon with access to learning opportunities in

non-formal education programmes, teaching not only basic core skills to displaced Syrian children but also fundamental computing skills, as well as child rights. Access to the internet is not required.

The Raspberry Pi can be used in classrooms and informal refugee settlements while the growing Raspberry Pi community offers resources and support for students and teachers, such as software dedicated to learning coding to create stories, games and art. Teachers and students will also have access to video exercises that can help identify learning difficulties that students may face.

More Syrians are likely to try to seek refuge in Lebanon in the coming months. Where resources are over-stretched, innovative solutions are required if needs are to be adequately addressed.

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1. [www.facebook.com/Pi4Learning](http://www.facebook.com/Pi4Learning) and [www.facebook.com/UNICEFLebanon](http://www.facebook.com/UNICEFLebanon)