



MANAHEL

SYRIA
EDUCATION
PROGRAMME

**MARCH/
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2024**

**LEARNING
BULLETIN**

In this issue, we are sharing updates from the Manahel programme in March and April, including support on safeguarding policy implementation, development of School Community Committees, engagement of local communities in learning assessments, urgent response to shortages in learning materials, and initiatives to improve community and learner wellbeing.

Preparing for the Safeguarding Policy implementation

Manahel supported the Education Directorates (EDs) in coordinating a conference with 65 participants from 40 local NGOs and partner organisations to share and discuss the Safeguarding (SG) Policy. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the policy's impact and encouraged cooperation among the various organisations committed to safeguarding children.

The agenda covered child safeguarding challenges, community perspectives on child upbringing, policy formulation, implementation, and case study scenarios. Participants recommended comprehensive training for education sector

staff, effective policy dissemination, and digital awareness campaigns. They also suggested measures to support teachers' psychological well-being, fostering motivation for those involved in safeguarding, and sharing success stories to inspire commitment.

The team also completed the draft of an implementation protocol, which provides detailed, step-by-step information on applying the SG policy, a breakdown of the staff roles and clear definitions of individual responsibilities for maintaining a safe environment for children.

LESSON LEARNED: By building on available resources and putting together pieces of the current policy, Manahel was able to provide the EDs with crucial support for the SG policy development. Manahel acknowledges that to ensure proper policy implementation, it is important to support the ED in developing clear guidance and procedures, which helps to ensure that staff members are prepared to keep children safe and handle any incidents that may arise.

65 participants
from **40 NGOs**
attended safeguarding conference

School Community Committees enhancing community involvement

School Community Committees (SCCs) are essential to involve parents and guardians in their children’s education, which can improve educational outcomes, accountability and safety.

After finalising the development of the SCC terms of reference, Manahel convened a conference with EDs, community representatives, and NGOs. The meeting emphasised the introduction of an election mechanism to ensure fair representation, transparency and inclusivity across the committees, allowing a diverse range of voices to participate in the decision-making processes affecting local schools.

Committees function at three levels:

1	ED level: SCCs facilitate policy implementation. For example, they coordinate teacher development programmes and integrate new educational technologies across schools.
2	Education Assembly (EA) level: SCCs leverage collective resources and knowledge to benefit all schools in an area and comprise representatives from multiple schools. For instance, they organise shared resources for extracurricular activities or address common administrative barriers.
3	School level: SCCs involve parents and local community members directly in the daily management and support of educational activities. These are crucial for implementing specific school-level initiatives, such as improving school facilities or organising community-sponsored events that enhance the learning environment.

Piloting community engagement in learning assessments

The Teacher-Led Early Grade Learning Assessment (TEGLA) helps teachers and headteachers understand student performance so they can develop targeted teaching action plans that fill gaps in learning. Following its first semester implementation, Manahel piloted TEGLA community engagement with three key visits in six schools in Idleb and Aleppo. During the first meeting, staff trained the community on data presentation and explained the next steps. In the second visit, the SCC and school management team shared performance data with parents, community leaders, and educators to develop strategies for supporting students in reading and maths. The final visit involved a comprehensive review, providing crucial feedback for refining the model before wider implementation.

Positive outcomes included increased community engagement and proactive student support strategies. Looking ahead, Manahel will extend this model to other schools and conduct a Positive Deviance study to understand performance disparities. A workshop will discuss integrating TEGLA data with other assessments, fostering broader collaboration among educational stakeholders. This initiative enhances transparency and community involvement, offering a scalable model for improving student outcomes.

LESSON LEARNED: Manahel launched this initiative to achieve better community engagement. Close collaboration and data sharing between the teachers and the school community will allow for better understanding of the challenge that hinder students’ improvement and will allow teachers and parents to work together ensuring better learning outcomes.

LESSON LEARNED: The establishment of School Community Committees (SCCs) demonstrates the critical importance of involving parents and communities in the educational process to enhance accountability, transparency, and educational outcomes. Through a multi-level approach, adequate community participation in the monitoring and enhancement of the education process is ensured.



Manahel's strategic response to learning material shortage

During the last quarter, Manahel faced a significant challenge due to a shortage of literacy and numeracy booklets. Despite distributing 9,000 copies to all supported schools in the last semester, only 18% of Manahel students received these resources.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, Manahel implemented group learning strategies to optimise the use of resources amongst students while 50,000 additional booklets were printed with savings from the 2024 fiscal year.

These efforts were maximised through collaborative efforts with partners, resulting in Orange securing funding for other 4,100 copies. All these responses led to an increased coverage of 73% of Manahel students having received the necessary learning materials.

Looking ahead, Manahel remains committed to addressing the ongoing need for learning materials and will continue advocating for support, working closely with stakeholders to explore further opportunities for assistance. Additionally, Manahel is developing a strategic list of priority needs to effectively allocate any identified cost savings, ensuring that students have the necessary tools to succeed.

LESSON LEARNED: Through its partners and continuous needs assessments, Manahel closely monitors availability of learning resources, so that gaps and shortages can be identified. This proactive management allows Manahel to adapt its approaches according to available resources and allows for innovative solutions. In addition, Manahel strongly collaborates with partners to identify other sources of funding, when possible, to cover the gaps.

Improving community and learner well-being

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a tool to assess the mental health and well-being of children, parents and teachers. It evaluates various domains of behaviour, emotions, and social functioning, which allows Manahel to measure the impact of interventions and identify areas for improvement.

Latest findings from the first semester SDQ highlighted the importance of improving students' abilities in managing peer relationships, understanding emotions, and promoting pro-social behaviours. Results were based on responses from more than 16,200 children, 16,208 parents and 16,233 teachers.

Results also suggested more emotional or behavioural issues observed at home versus school environments. For instance, parents reported a higher incidence of emotional problems (22 %) compared to teachers (12%) and peer problems (36.9% vs 14.5%, respectively).

Responses from:

16,200
children

16,208
parents

16,233
teachers

Continuing with its efforts to improve community well-being, Manahel also conducted tailored awareness sessions for 1,188 parents and 100,000 children in the second semester. Parents attended three sessions that responded to specific needs identified through consultations with protection instructors, SCCs, and partners. Sessions involved topics such as the cognitive development of children aged four to five years, the significant role parents have in their children's lives, and effective care strategies for deaf children. Three further sessions were conducted for children, focusing on personal empowerment, time management, and personal and public hygiene.

LESSON LEARNED: The remarkable number of people involved in the study indicates a substantial impact on the community, promoting not just education but also crucial life skills amongst a wide range of stakeholders - from learners and teaching staff to community members.

Plan for next months

School selection for Summer Club and new academic year.

Summer school activities planning workshops.

SCC EA and ED level elections.

Analysis of end-line TEGLA assessment data conducted for 3rd grade students in Manahel supported schools.

100,000

children

1,188

parents

attended awareness sessions.

Manahel, which in Arabic means 'fountains' - of hope, of knowledge, and of life -, is the northwest component of the FCDO-funded Syria Education Programme (SEP). Delivered by Chemonics UK, Manahel provides education to primary school-aged children and, since 2018, has benefited over 600,000 children through school, home, and after-school education and by responding to children's psychosocial and protection needs.