

NO LOST GENERATION (MIN ILA) CHILD-FOCUSED HUMANITARIAN SAFETY NET

Overview

NLG/Min Ila is a child-focused refugee safety net program implemented in Lebanon since 2016. It seeks to reduce reliance on negative coping strategies harmful to children (e.g. reduced meals, early marriage, child labour etc.) and help households invest in the human capital development of children (i.e. education, health) to avoid a 'lost generation' of children displaced by the crisis in Syria. NLG/Min Ila currently serves 50 000 children living in 27 000 households.

INDIRECT COSTS OF EDUCATION

Appropriate Clothes / Shoes
Stationary
School Snacks
Transportation

NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Early Marriage
Insufficient Nutrition
Child Labour
Learning Challenges
Violence & Bullying

ADDITIONAL CHILD WELL-BEING RISKS/ VULNERABILITIES

Discrimination
Health Issues



The program applies a **safety net approach** to the **protracted refugee crisis** in Lebanon. It responds to the **multi-dimensional** challenges to child well-being through an **integrated approach** with other programs & sectors.



Why a 'Humanitarian Safety Net'?

Poverty is an inter-generational trap

Poor parents cannot afford to consistently invest in children's education & health

Poor parents are forced to resort to negative coping strategies to meet basic needs

Children thus have less resilience against poverty, limited opportunities, life-long health issues, etc.

An entire generation of Syrians is at risk of falling into this poverty trap

Regular cash transfers & referrals help break this cycle & contribute to children's human capital development

Base Cash Transfer for all children enrolled in 2nd shift schools, for investment in children, including the indirect costs of school

Top-up Cash Transfer for those aged 12+ to reduce reliance on negative coping strategies (child labour, early marriage)

Referrals to complementary services for support with issues not related to costs for children at higher risk of child labour/early marriage, disabled children, etc.



MIN ILA IMPACT ON CHILDRENS' LIVES



3rd PARTY
IMPACT STUDY



OFFICIAL
EDUCATION DATA



MIS DATA



3rd PARTY
MONITORING

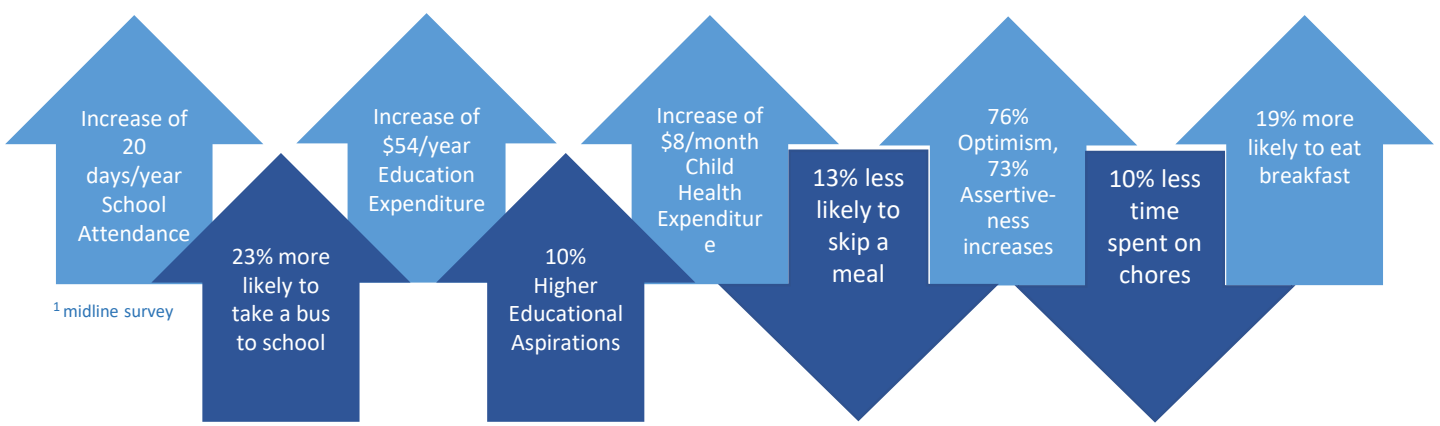
Given the challenging context in which the program was implemented, a range of M&E tools were employed to measure results. Together these tell the story of a child-focused safety net approach, beyond a poverty-targeted household cash grant, applied to the protracted refugee crisis in Lebanon.

Impacts and Outcomes

While a wealth of **evidence on Social Protection** exists, research on its **humanitarian applications** is thin. UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti and American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted a **rigorous study** to measure program **impacts**.

Despite the risks of implementing rigorous research in a **complex refugee context** the study went forward to strengthen the global evidence base* around social protection in protracted displacement, particularly on cash-based safety nets.

The study findings show broad child well-being gains:



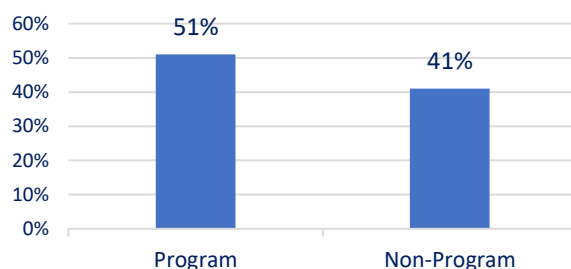
Enrolment Data

While the study found no direct impact on enrolment, this may be explained by households in the study having been sampled from around **existing 2nd shift schools**, 50% of which reached full enrolment capacity during baseline data collection.

However the official enrolment data tells a different story showing an increase of **51% in program areas** (2016/17) compared to 41% in non-program area.

For older children (12+), who received the program top-up assistance, enrolment increased by **100%**. While enrolment of older children in non-program area increased by just 56%.

Enrolment Increase of 2016/17 from 2015/16

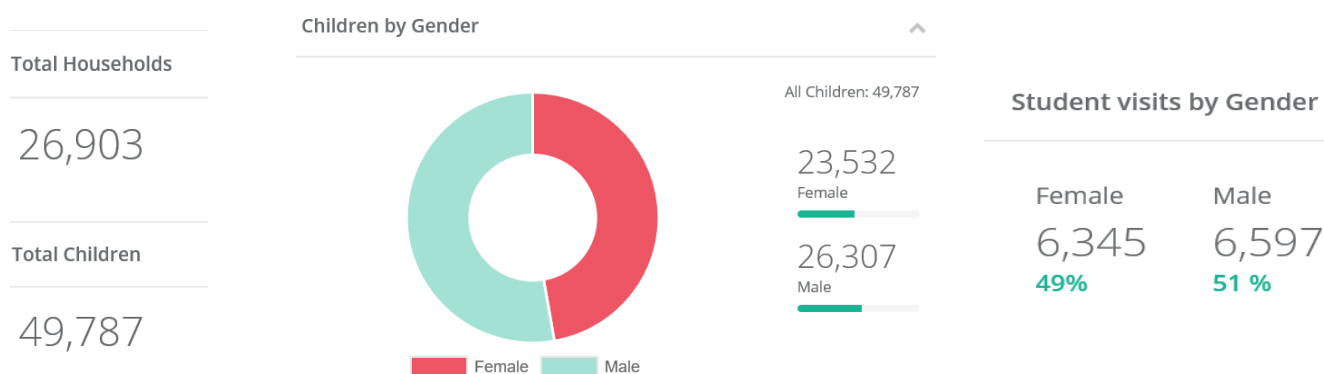


[*https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1794-social-protection-in-humanitarian-situations.html](https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1794-social-protection-in-humanitarian-situations.html)

[*https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1829-evidence-on-social-protection-in-contexts-of-fragility-and-forced-displacement.html](https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1829-evidence-on-social-protection-in-contexts-of-fragility-and-forced-displacement.html)

MIS Data

In line with international best practice for large-scale safety nets, the program uses an auditable, custom **Management Information System (MIS)** to support the operational cycle & **boost transparency and efficiency**. The MIS enables the program to use administrative data to monitor basic metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs).



During the household visit children and their families were referred to other complementary services depending on the need of the child and the family. A set of 8 complementary services were used to provide information to beneficiaries to reach the service, such as “Health”, “Protection”, “Education” and others. The aim of the household visit was not limited to referral to other services; the families were also receiving awareness of the importance of education for the children.

In 2017/18, the majority of household referrals were to health services, education (e.g. ALP, BLN), and cash assistance programs (e.g. MCAP, WFP e-voucher). In 2016/17 **60%** of children who had dropped out and were visited were returned to **regular school attendance** after only a **single visit and referral**.

3rd party Monitoring

In addition to the internal monitoring, a **3rd party** firm was also engaged to carry out both **qualitative and quantitative external monitoring** of the program, with a focus on understanding beneficiary satisfaction and how well the program performed against its intended design.

64%

Of Beneficiaries said:
The assistance was sufficient to cover their children wellbeing

84%

Of Beneficiaries said:
The assistance had positive impact on their children.



"If it wasn't for UNICEF's assistance we wouldn't have been able to continue the education of our children" – Female Beneficiary, Akkar

The three biggest expenditures with the assistance

Education

Winter - related specific to child

Food

"Before I used to receive the financial assistance, my three children used to work. They all returned to school after we started receiving the financial assistance" – Male Beneficiary, Akkar



The household visits were considered a valuable part of the program

49% said:

It allows them to communicate the situation and challenges enabling to receive individualized advices and solutions through referrals

22% said:

it allows them to be referred to specific services needed and didn't know about



"Cash is better [than buses]. The difference is that you choose the driver you prefer" – Female Beneficiary, T5

"I would not have been able to send my children to school if it weren't for this cash assistance" – Male Beneficiary, T5



Conclusion

Min Ila/NLG was Lebanon's **only child-focused social assistance** programme for refugee families, reaching around 50,000 children over two years with **regular, predictable social assistance**. Through the provision of a regular cash transfer, household visits, and an integrated referral mechanism, families were supported to invest in their children themselves, demonstrating **significant positive impacts**. Improvements were recorded in areas including spending on children, food security, school enrolment and regular attendance, as well as optimism. When asked about the Min Ila programme, more than 8 out of 10 beneficiaries stated that the assistance had a positive impact on their children including reducing child labour.

Lessons learnt include proving the possibility and importance of carrying out an impact evaluation for a social assistance programme in a humanitarian context; the need to ensure when cash is provided that service supply keeps pace with demand; and lastly that the concept of holistic social assistance in humanitarian contexts is still less well understood than that of cash transfers, thereby jeopardizing the sustainability of funding for such programmes.