



RED EDUCATION INITIATIVE PROTECTING CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

Lebanese Red Cross

CASE STUDY

Photo description: Child participating in Lebanese Red Cross Red Education Initiative
Photo credit: Lama Chidiac - IFRC MENA

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Photo description: Lebanese Red Cross and IFRC personnel delivering Red Education Initiative at a school
Photo credit: Lama Chidiac - IFRC MENA

Background

Since October 2023, Lebanon has faced a sharp escalation in conflict, severely impacting southern Beirut, the South, and Bekaa governorates. By early 2025, over one million people were affected, with significant damage to homes, businesses, and schools. As a result, children's access to education was severely disrupted with an estimated 25% of conflict-affected children unable to re-enroll in school. Financial barriers, displacement, and infrastructure damage were among the primary causes. This situation underscored the urgent need to support school-aged children while simultaneously strengthening school disaster preparedness.

Who was Supported and How

In response to these needs, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) implemented the Red Education Initiative in May 2025. The initiative targeted two public schools in conflict-affected areas, aiming to enhance access to education and improve disaster preparedness using a Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) approach. Over the course of one month, the project completed school profiling, conducted Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments and focus group discussions, formed school-based resilience committees, facilitated Disaster Risk Reduction awareness sessions and trainings, and distributed educational kits and safety equipment.

This initiative is part of the IFRC Children Affected by Armed Conflict Project. The project is possible thanks to funding by the Government of Norway.

Successes

Through the project, a number of successes were achieved that build on existing work by the LRCS.

- **School profiling and Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment workshops** were completed in both selected public schools (Burj Al-Barajneh Second Official Mixed School and Ali Al-Jammal Mabarrat Official Comprehensive Model Secondary School). Disaster Risk Reduction teams conducted in-depth assessments and focus group discussions with students and school staff to identify hazards, vulnerabilities, and preparedness needs.
- **Two school resilience committees** were established, one in each school, composed of students and teachers. Each committee led the development of a **school resilience plan** grounded in the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment findings.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction capacity-building sessions** were delivered to 630 participants (259 male, 371 female), covering first aid, firefighting awareness, evacuation procedures, and mock drills.
- **Multi-hazard awareness sessions** were conducted with 555 (out of the 630) students and staff, tailored to age groups and local risks. These sessions aimed to increase understanding of disaster risks and promote everyday safety behaviors.
- **Distribution of fire safety and first aid equipment** was completed. Distribution includes items such as: fire extinguishers, emergency equipment boxes, signage for assembly points and exits, alarm bells, first aid kits, safety vests, and megaphones.

Both schools showed notable improvements in risk awareness, inclusion, education, and social cohesion. For example, Tyre saw a +1.6 increase in Risk Awareness point and a +1.7 point improvement in Inclusion. Bourj Al-Barajneh similarly showed strong gains in Inclusion (+1.8 point) and Connectivity (+1.5 point), reflecting the impact of DRR trainings and school-level coordination.

Challenges and Difficulties

As part of the project, a few operational constraints emerged that required careful coordination and adaptation:

- **Coordination with school calendars:** Extra effort was invested in aligning project activities with school exam schedules, particularly since implementation took place during the final month of the academic year. This was addressed through early communication with school administrations and flexible planning by LRC teams.
- **Inability to conduct knowledge assessments:** The project's key indicator on knowledge improvement could not be measured, as schools were unable to accommodate pre- and post-tests. This was due to shortened class durations (reduced to 40 minutes) and increased academic pressures related to year-end exams, limiting available time for additional assessments.
- **Delayed distribution of equipment in Beirut:** The distribution of fire safety and emergency preparedness items in Burj Al-Barajneh school (Beirut) was postponed due to reconstruction efforts following conflict-related damage. To mitigate any risk of equipment loss or deterioration, items were stored in the LRC warehouse and will be delivered once the school is ready to receive them.

These challenges were largely anticipated given the operating context, and mitigation efforts allowed the project to proceed without major disruption to planned outcomes.

Lessons Learned

1. The importance of conducting early and meaningful engagement with school stakeholders, especially through focus group discussions with students. This approach helped tailor the educational kits to real needs, improving relevance and impact. Another insight was the value of maintaining flexibility in scheduling and delivery, particularly in school-based programming where timing must align with academic cycles.
2. Embedding resilience planning at the school level through committees led to greater ownership and enthusiasm from both students and teachers. This participatory approach supported stronger engagement and encouraged schools to view Disaster Risk Reduction as a core part of their institutional development rather than a one-time intervention.
3. The project was implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), which facilitated school selection and access. LRC's Disaster Risk Reduction teams also coordinated closely with school principals, administrative staff, and local focal points throughout the planning and implementation process. This coordination ensured smooth scheduling of activities, alignment with school calendars, and active participation from key stakeholders.
4. Internal coordination across LRC units, particularly between the DRR and Logistics teams, enabled efficient kit procurement and distribution. The project also benefited from shared learning and operational alignment with other ongoing school-based Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives, contributing to a more harmonized approach across the education sector.

To see a video of the project, visit:

- https://x.com/IFRC_MENA/status/1989703171875201482?s=20 **or**
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/DRFlzDAjDCa/>