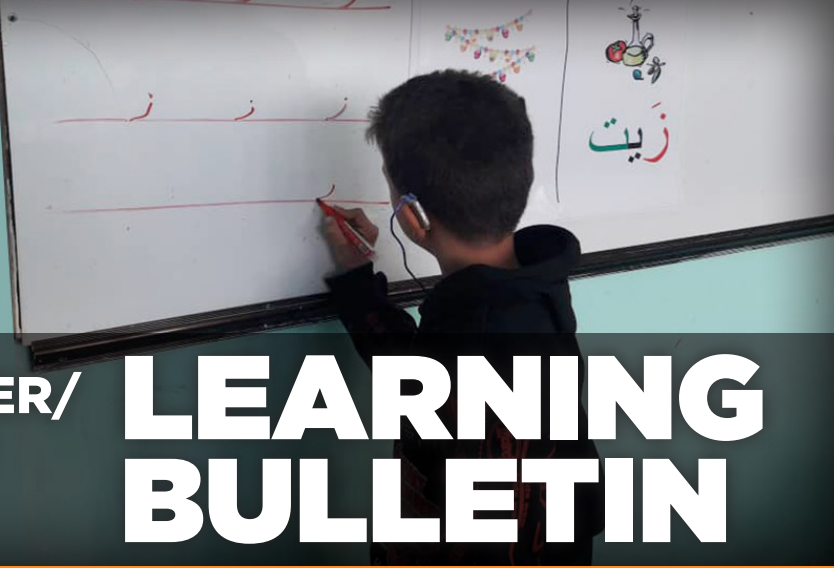


# MANAHEL

SYRIA  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAMME

SEPTEMBER/  
OCTOBER  
2024

# LEARNING BULLETIN



**In this issue, we're sharing updates from Manahel activities in September and October. Over this period, we have started to improve how resources are distributed, made significant progress with the Education Leadership and Influencing Component (ELIC), supported hundreds of students to successfully pass recovery exams, encouraged out-of-school children back into learning and developed key competencies for teachers' development.**

## Improving resource distribution to ensure equity and quality

Manahel has recognised several challenges in the distribution of operational resources to supported schools. This was affecting the quality and equity of support so action was taken to initiate a structured response. Previously, partners were providing different quantities and types of materials, creating inconsistencies across schools and limiting the ability to standardise learning environments. Resources were being allocated uniformly across all schools, regardless of the number of students or class sizes, which meant resource shortages in larger schools and resource surpluses in smaller ones. Differences in the quality of materials resulted in some schools receiving lower quality supplies.

To address these issues, Manahel organised a series of meetings with partners to agree a set of standard operating procedures (SOP) that could be adopted by all partners and approved by the Education Directorates (EDs). This ensures that the distribution of resources will be adjusted to reflect class sizes and four types of resources will be prioritised and standardised: water, sanitation supplies, stationery, and refreshment items. Additionally, up to 7% of the budget will be reserved for emergency repairs, enabling schools to address urgent needs without compromising operational costs. Resources will be distributed every two months, allowing for regular adjustments based on ongoing assessments of each school's needs.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** A proactive, adaptative approach that develops from continuous feedback can drive improvements in resource allocation, ensuring that educational support is fair, effective and aligned with schools' needs. To evaluate the processes, feedback from all stakeholders will be collected after two distribution cycles, which will refine the distribution model, address emerging challenges, and ensure that the model remains responsive to needs.



Manahel is addressing resource distribution challenges by standardising supplies across schools.

## Progressing the Education Leadership and Influencing Component (ELIC)

Significant strides have been made in planning and implementing the Education Leadership and Influencing Component (ELIC), the mechanism designed to establish Manahel as a leader and coordinator in the education system in Northwest Syria (NWS). Through ELIC, Manahel shares valuable insights and expertise while coordinating efforts across the region to drive impactful and sustainable change.

Manahel conducted three shift-mapping workshops with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to understand conditions for success, identify milestones for change over time, and clarify the roles key actors must play to achieve ELIC's goals. After mapping these shifts, FCDO and Manahel identified barriers, opportunities and inputs needed to drive changes.

In terms of implementation, the August Learning Lab brought together 35 members of donors and implementing partners to inspire the adoption of our approach beyond Manahel-supported schools and build confidence, both locally and internationally, in supporting formal education within the region. Manahel also continued to strengthen relationships with key actors, for example, by supporting the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) to develop their new education programme in Syria through multiple planning sessions and by sharing tools and resources. Manahel also finalised two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to maximise support for children through collaboration and coordinated responses: one with Syria Civil Defense (SCD) and another with the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

**35**  
**partners**  
**influenced to scale up**  
**Manahel activities**



**LESSONS LEARNED:** Structured planning, collaboration and strong networks are vital for achieving sustainable and impactful education outcomes across the sector. Shift-mapping workshops are a proactive way to define the ELIC milestones and map progress. In addition, anticipating challenges and planning accordingly is crucial for effective implementation. Hosting learning labs builds confidence in Manahel's approach and inspires others to adopt proven strategies. And, through the MOUs with other organisations, Manahel reinforces commitments that enhance collaboration. These partnerships improve resource-sharing and resource mobilisation, and ensure that actions are complementary and aligned to the broader mission of supporting children's education.

## Supporting 665 students to pass recovery exams

The ED launched the 'I Can' campaign to help students in grades 1-8 in conflict-affected regions strengthen foundational Math and Arabic skills, aiming to close learning gaps that threaten educational continuity. This initiative enabled 665 students to successfully pass recovery exams after receiving support during the summer school programme and the academic year. Analysis shows that students in middle elementary grades achieved the highest recovery success rates, suggesting that they respond more effectively to these interventions. This may be due to stronger foundational skills and established study habits, which enable them to absorb additional support more readily. Younger students, particularly in Grade 1, face greater challenges, likely due to the transition from early childhood programmes to formal schooling, which demands stronger foundational literacy and numeracy skills that take time to build.

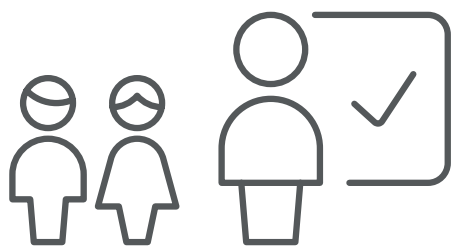
Results demonstrated that year-long Manahel support led to greater improvements (up to 4.8% in Grades 3 and 4) than shorter-term summer programmes. Schools combining academic year and summer interventions saw consistent, though slightly lower, gains, suggesting that sustained support can lead to stronger overall academic growth. Variability in outcomes across grades also points to the need for tailored strategies: middle grades benefit from intensive support, while younger and older students may need different, developmentally adapted interventions.

The campaign's success in addressing academic setbacks provided valuable insights for optimising future interventions.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The campaign highlighted the importance of structured, subject-specific support under the leadership of the EDs to inform future interventions that can successfully close learning gaps, particularly for middle-grade students. The campaign also demonstrated that longer-term interventions may be more effective than short-term programmes alone. Continued refinement of intervention methods, targeted support for younger grades, and enhanced data collection practices could further amplify the positive impact on student learning and achievement.

## 'Back-to-School' campaign reached more than 600 out-of-school children

Manahel and partners launched the 'Back to School' campaign to re-engage out-of-school children and mobilise community support for education. To promote school attendance, a collaborative planning meeting was held with the Protection Department of the ED, aligning efforts to encourage families to prioritise school enrolment. Community committees, established at both ED and local levels, visited the homes of 616 out-of-school children (354 boys and 262 girls) that had been previously identified by the Safeguarding Officers (SGOs). They also engaged influential community members, such as camp administrators and mosque imams, leading to 43 mosques promoting back to school messages.



**Encouraged 616**  
out of school children  
to re-start education

Partners joined with other NGOs and volunteer groups at the community level – including Civil Defence, Toyor Al Jannah, and the Mulham team – to organise welcome back activities for students, including school decorations and recreational events in all 228 Manahel supported schools. The campaign was disseminated through brochures in public spaces, such as hospitals, health facilities and sport stadiums and on social media with an awareness video featuring key community leaders. Materials highlighted the value of education and encouraged school attendance as a critical step toward personal and community development.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The 'back to school' campaign underscored the essential role of community committees in facilitating large-scale educational initiatives. Their active participation in planning and outreach efforts was essential in promoting the importance of education and encouraging families to enrol their children. We also learned that, by leveraging their local influence, community committees can amplify campaign messages so they reach a broader audience. Their involvement also leads to greater engagement and support. Partnerships with other NGOs and volunteer groups also enhances campaign visibility and contributes to create a more welcoming environment for returning students.



Activities from the 'Back to School' campaign aimed at re-engaging out-of-school children.

## Six key competencies to improve teachers' professional growth

In preparation for the 2024-2025 academic year, Manahel initiated a process to identify the key competencies for teachers' professional development. This involved discussions with the technical teams from Manahel's partners and coordination with the EDs in Idlib and Aleppo. Together, we established six core competencies derived from the Manahel Teacher Competencies Framework. These are aligned with the programme's learning cycles to ensure relevance in training materials.

Each teacher will complete a pre-assessment to gauge their current skill levels, leading to the creation of individualised development plans. These plans will encompass one-on-one coaching and classroom observations throughout the first and second semesters. This structured, competency-based approach aims to enhance teacher performance and elevate the quality of education during the school year. The identified competencies focus on the following areas:

- Encouraging self-reflection and professional collaboration
- Planning and delivering instruction for individual learning needs
- Understanding child development and diverse learning styles
- Enhancing teachers' social awareness to support students
- Planning lessons with clear objectives across learning domains
- Implementing positive discipline strategies for classroom management.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** A structured, competency-based approach to teacher development is vital to improving education quality. Ongoing support and feedback through coaching and observations foster a culture of professional growth that can adapt to the evolving educational landscape. By collaborating with partners and local education authorities, we ensure that all stakeholders are onboard and that our competencies are aligned with broader educational goals.

## Plans for next months

- Implementing the first parenting skills session for the new academic year.
- Conducting Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) training for newly hired SGOs.
- Implementing SEL sessions for students in Manahel supported schools.
- Implementing the first round of the Teacher-led Early Grade Learning Assessment (TEGLA) for the new academic year.
- Conducting Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessments (EGMA).
- Delivering literacy and numeracy training for newly hired education staff.

Manahel, named from an Arabic word referring to fountains (of hope, knowledge and 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.