

MANAHEL

SYRIA
EDUCATION
PROGRAMME

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News in Brief

- **Manahel expanded support** to 150 additional schools in Idleb, Aleppo city and Aleppo countryside.
- **Over 6,000 education staff completed training** on Differentiated Instruction and the Modified Phonics Approach, while 845 strengthened remedial literacy and numeracy teaching.
- **A Manahel-supported parents' association** contributed to a national conference on inclusive education.
- **Parenting sessions, school committees and improvement school plans** empowered parents and community members to take part in school decision-making and maintenance.

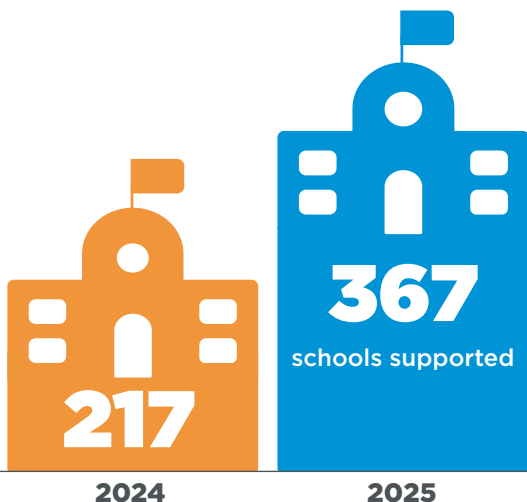
Across Syria, Manahel continues to advance its commitment to safe, inclusive and quality education for all learners. From expanding school support and strengthening teaching to fostering community participation and safeguarding reform, every strand of work reflects our belief that schools must be safe, nurturing spaces where every child can learn and thrive.

Manahel is expanding

Since September, Manahel support now extends to 150 additional schools in Idleb, Aleppo city and Aleppo countryside – covering a total of 367 schools. Priority strands of work cover inclusive education, school rehabilitation, safeguarding, community engagement and structured remedial learning. Implementing partners completed the distribution of learning aid kits to the same 150 schools. Kits contained materials on literacy and numeracy, such as illustrative maps, visual references and geometric shapes, to help teachers deliver engaging lessons and reduce preparation time without changing curriculum requirements.

Building momentum for inclusion and policy reform

The Association of Caregivers for Children with Disabilities — founded in 2022 with support from Manahel — joined the first Syrian Conference for Persons with Disabilities last September. The Association serves as a unified voice that advocates for better support and access to services for children with disabilities. At the conference, government leaders committed to establish a national council to represent people with disabilities, reform education admissions and public-sector employment policies and improve accessibility across health, transport, agriculture and digital services. It is vital that caregivers have a voice in spaces like this so they can advocate for, and represent the rights of, their children with authorities, NGOs and sector ministries. This national momentum reflects a shared ambition between the Government and Manahel to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn and participate fully.



150
more schools supported

Strengthening teaching quality and competencies

While schools were closed over the summer, headteachers, teachers and safeguarding officers were given professional development support by Manahel teams to strengthen school leadership, teaching quality and child protection.

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

A total of 845 education staff (453 female, 392 male) completed Literacy and Numeracy training, consolidating remedial methods in ongoing schools and introducing the approach in newly supported ones. Areas of focus included effective teaching methods, assessments to identify learning gaps, strategies for engagement and tools to track student progress.

“I am attending educational trainings to improve my skills and apply these into my teaching.”

Teacher

Differentiated Instruction and Modified Phonics

Over 6,000 education staff (3,901 female, 2,193 male) were given training on the fundamentals of the phonics approach and practical methods to adapt instruction to diverse learner needs. Building teachers' capacity to support learners of all abilities is essential to creating classrooms where every child can progress with confidence. To develop this training, Manahel and partner technical education teams designed a cascade training from heads of department and instructors to deputy headteachers, then classroom teachers, ensuring consistent delivery and wide reach across schools.

Assessment for learning

Manahel facilitated Learning Circles for instructors, deputy headteachers, and teachers in Idleb and Aleppo on Alternative Education Plans, building on earlier Child Functioning Screening efforts. Almost 2,000 education personnel (1,159 female, 837 male) strengthened the use of functional assessment to identify diverse learning needs and tailor instruction for children with special educational needs.

“The functional assessment helped me better understand students' needs, allowing for more tailored support.”

Teacher

Education staff supported:
9,136



- Strategic Planning = 201
- Literacy and Numeracy = 845
- Differentiated Instruction and Modified Phonics = 6,094
- Learning Circles on Alternative Education Plans = 1996



Headteachers training in Idleb. Photo credit: Takaful Al Sham

Safeguarding: Strengthening policy and practice

Safeguarding is fundamental to quality education - children can only learn effectively when they feel safe and supported. Across Manahel-supported schools, safeguarding reforms continue to scale up as more trained staff act as focal points, clearer reporting pathways are established and awareness is increased. In a recent study 97% of teachers reported feeling responsible to act when witnessing violence. Technical assistance with the Ministry of Education is also progressing to strengthen national safeguarding policy and practice.

Training for Safeguarding Officers

A total of 150 Safeguarding Officers (SGOs) from newly supported schools completed intensive training on the full safeguarding cycle: safe identification, referral, confidentiality, survivor-centred response and case management coordination with partners. SGOs reported greater confidence in managing disclosures and sensitive information, meaning learners will feel safer at school and better able to focus on their studies.

Why safeguarding matters?

Ezzat Hafez,
Director of Monitoring,
Evaluation, Research
and Learning



“Every child deserves to feel safe at school yet violence against children remains widespread and often hidden. Corporal punishment is directly linked to anxiety, school avoidance and poor academic performance. Given the trauma children face in conflict settings, safeguarding their rights is essential.

Structured, community-informed safeguarding systems are key. Trained safeguarding officers, safe spaces, and clear reporting mechanisms are all making a difference.

We’re scaling up reforms - training staff, appointing safeguarding officers and creating complaint systems. We’re also supporting the Ministry of Education to embed national safeguarding policies.”

Community Engagement and Governance

Strong governance and parental engagement are key to shared responsibility for children’s learning and wellbeing. Through dialogue, clear roles and joint action, schools, communities and local actors can strengthen accountability and inclusion.

Promoting positive parenting

Manahel-supported schools hosted small group parenting sessions to promote positive discipline and child well-being. A total of 220 parents participated in reflection, open discussion and role-play on non-violent communication. Parents reported adopting calmer communication styles and greater awareness of the emotional impact of shouting or punishment. Teachers observed improved student behaviour and attendance attributed to stronger home-school collaboration.

Community Committees: first directorate-level coordination

School Community Committees (SCCs) in Idlib held their first directorate-level coordination meeting, bringing together 15 committee representatives. This initiative redefines parents’ role from passive actors to proactive decision-makers while introducing greater transparency in school operations. The group reviewed protection risks identified during school visits, including unsafe access routes, damaged water lines and weak parent-teacher communication.

▲ **“We used to wait for NGOs to fix things. Now, we fix them together.”**

Parent Committee Member

◀ **“I used to think discipline meant control. Now I see it means connection.”**

Mother

220

**parents participated
in the workshops**





Community-driven School Improvement Plans

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) pilot promotes sustainable, school-led transformation by putting planning and decision-making into the hands of the school community. Over the summer, 24 schools designed plans for implementation so they could identify and prioritise needs then agree on tangible actions. School and special education staff, Directorate focal points and community members, including the Association of Caregivers for Children with Disabilities, have already:

- repaired equipment, carried out maintenance and provided safety materials.
- installed solar panels and heaters.
- increased motivation, strengthened community ties and improved resource mobilisation.

“We can only contribute effectively if we are included in the planning. Through these meetings, we can be part of the team that identifies and prioritises needs”

Civil Defence Representative

“By involving diverse groups in the session, everyone has witnessed the challenges and committed to being part of the solution”

Administration and Teacher

Plans Ahead

- ✓ **After school clubs to support learning recovery and psychosocial wellbeing**
- ✓ **Positive parenting campaign engaging more than 1,000 parents**
- ✓ **Workshop with partners to review the School Improvement Plan pilot**
- ✓ **Support to 100 Resource Rooms - formerly Special Education Centres**
- ✓ **Regional EGRA/EGMA in 75 schools to track progress in foundational literacy and numeracy.**

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.