FINAL EVALUATION

Rainbow of Hope III

LEBANON

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Search is also thankful to ForumZFD, whose peacebuilding curriculum for animated activities was integrated in Level 2 of the project, and to Steps for their support in the Capacity Building component of the project.

Last but not least, to Search’s implementation team and support staff, who implemented the project in a highly professional and sensitive manner, and ensured the project supported its participants throughout its different phases.
Abbreviations

DM&E - Design, Monitoring & Evaluation
FGD - Focus Group Discussion
LCRP - Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
MEHE - Ministry of Education and Higher Education
PC - Project Coordinator
RoH - Rainbow of Hope
Search - Search for Common Ground
US - United States of America
Executive Summary

This final evaluation report presents the key findings as a result of Search for Common Ground’s (Search) internal evaluation for the project “Rainbow of Hope - Phase III” (RoH III) implemented, for the third consecutive year, with funding from the Public Affairs Section of the United States of America (US) Embassy in Beirut. Search implemented the first and second phases of RoH from October 2014 to September 2016, gaining extensive expertise in embedding peacebuilding in English-language learning and animated activities. The main objective of the project was to bridge existing gaps between Lebanese and Syrian children, ages 6 to 11, through extracurricular channels and ultimately to strengthen social cohesion in their communities. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the program as it was carried out in six communities throughout Lebanon (Berqayel and Wadi Jamous in Akkar, Nede el Hekmeh in Tripoli, Joub Janine and Riyak in Bekaa, and Ter Debba in South Lebanon) from October 2016 to July 2017. The evaluation was conducted between June and September 2017 and is based on the analysis of data collected through the ongoing monitoring of the project, the feedback of several focus group discussions with the project’s stakeholders, and the conclusions of the teachers and animators’ monthly reporting analysis.

The RoH III conflict transformation curriculum enhanced the ability of children coming from different backgrounds to deal more effectively with the conflicts they face in their everyday lives, and taught them to use positive choices while interacting with others. Conflict transformation skills have helped in building children’s resilience by teaching them to think critically. Developing children’s problem solving abilities has built their self-esteem, as it provided children with the tools to regain control of their emotions and behaviors. This appeared particularly true with Level 2 participants who were eager to meet their friends from previous phases and to share new common experiences. As reported by the teachers, participating children demonstrated a strong commitment to improving their relationships further and developing a growing sense of pride in that context.

The curriculum promoted participants’ ability to socialize and build positive relationships with their peers, their families, and their communities. The progress is evident in terms of the quantity and complexity of the activities carried out by the children, showing that the children had both the will and ability to engage in more activities as the project progressed. Notably, there was a change from being only interested in “fun” activities to being interested and actively participating in all activities and engaging in discussions. Such improvements were also noticed outside the project-specific activities by the teachers and animators who reported how the participants started to visit each other on their own time in order to share food and play games.
These outcomes resulted from the creation of safe spaces, recreational activities, parent’s committees, and the efforts invested by the teachers and animators to enhance group dynamics, which built and strengthened relationships at both the child and parent level. The change in the participants’ perceptions and attitudes is demonstrated by their increased acceptance of and interest for people from different nationalities and/or backgrounds, the decrease of violent incidents and tensions among the participants, and the new friendships created across dividing lines. Over time, participants started to feel a sense of ownership over the project. Washing off initial negative stereotypes, some children even proposed to rename the project “Syr-non,” a combination of Lebanon and Syria.

Change was also perceived at the teacher and animator level, where collected data showed an increased ability in transferring to the children the conflict transformation skills learned throughout the project. Teachers’ knowledge and skills in conflict transformation increased noticeably. Teachers showed a capacity to resolve conflicts between participants by using positive language, fostering communication between participants in case of misunderstandings, and enforcing the active listening approach. These learnings were supported by the morals of the stories they were exploring during the English classes. On a wider scale, the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) showed that the change was also propelled at the parent level by their kids and through their direct engagement in project activities. The engagement of the parents was crucial in the project, as it helped in creating a more child-supportive environment that fostered the learnings and changes that they were going through. The children's personality was empowered in a way that allowed them to better understand and communicate their views, which resulted in reduced use of violence in conflicts and increased empathy. The group dynamics were highly inclusive by the end of the project and children proved to have gained increased understanding on how to address one another without unintentionally hurting the feelings of others, enhancing cohesion between Lebanese and Syrian children, and strengthening bonds between the children across dividing lines.

The teachers and animators worked effectively to address incidents and transform negative issues into opportunities to strengthen bonds and enhance communication between the children.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to fully capture the change at the community level within the available resources for the evaluation. From the collected data from the parents, however, Search is confident of the ripple effect from the children to their parents, and eventually of the indirect effect on the wider community resulting from direct and indirect engagement in project activities.

The internal and external challenges faced during project implementation were effectively transformed into opportunities to further bridge the gap between Syrian and Lebanese children and their families in a well-structured manner, and Search would recommend that an impact assessment be conducted in two years’ time in order to assess the long-term effects of the project.
Through the implementation of Rainbow of Hope and the learning that occurred during each yearly phase of the project, Search has gathered strong experience in the field of Peace and Education in Lebanon. Future peacebuilding projects engaging with children should rely on the lessons learned in this context and follow certain recommendations in order to enhance their effectiveness and impact.

Involving Search's staff has proven to have a very positive impact on project implementation in general. The partners as well as the participants were galvanized by each field visit and showed renewed enthusiasm and determination following these trips. This finding drives the recommendation of planning regular field visits throughout the project.

Several recommendations fall in the same category and lean towards conducting wider upstream work prior to beginning project implementation. Even though the relationship with the partners has proven successful throughout the project, one recurrent problem lies in their lack of reporting skills, especially related to financial reporting. Consequently, in future projects it is recommended to conduct a financial reporting training with each of the partner focal points prior to the launch of activities. At the beginning of the implementation, partners also struggled to enroll students in the project, leading to fewer participants than expected. Therefore, the project team recommended that in the future, extra activities be implemented during the summer to reduce recruitment challenges and ensure ongoing engagement in preparation for potential future phases of the project. Certain partners also experienced difficulties in using the toolkit appropriately. Hence, it is recommended that the evaluation and editing process of the toolkit should begin in the first month of implementation as a constant monitoring of the toolkit’s effectiveness to ensure preparedness for making potential adjustments before the start of future project phases. An intensive training to increase practical sessions on the toolkit for teachers and animators should also be set up. Furthermore, it is advised to have regular sessions with the parents supported by a specific toolkit for them to be able to address similar objectives that the children are working on with the teachers and animators. Finally, the different activities of the project should keep in mind the regular school schedule to avoid any overlap and ensure maximum attendance.
1. Background Information

Introduction

The Syrian crisis has affected Syrian children’s access to education and placed a strain on the education sector in Lebanon, considering that approximately 35 percent of the 1.07 million refugees in Lebanon are children aged 5 to 17. There has been an increase in the number of Syrian children enrolled in school due to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)’s efforts to include Syrian children in the public school system by mandating schools to accept them and introducing a second shift exclusively for Syrian students. However, most school-aged Syrian children still do not have access to formal education, and separated shifts do not allow for Lebanese and Syrian children to meet and learn together, thus contributing to increased divides.

The increased numbers of Syrian children in Lebanon has also affected Lebanese children in public education. Before the Syrian crisis, only 30 percent of Lebanese children accessed education through the public school system. With the growing number of Syrian refugees in public schools, some Lebanese parents are choosing to take loans in order to place their children in private schools due to concerns that the inclusion of Syrian children in the public school system is hindering their children’s academic progress, which in itself presented another challenge for the positive interaction between Lebanese and Syrian children and further polarized these communities.

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) highlights the advantages of investing in after-school activities such as Rainbow of Hope (RoH), both for children and their communities. Programs like this provide the opportunity for both Lebanese and Syrian children to engage with each other positively in a safe and inclusive environment, thereby helping to mitigate social tensions that may lead to conflict. Within this context, the RoH project aims to use after-school, supplemental English classes and recreational activities to teach Lebanese and Syrian children about the humanity of the other community and how to use conflict transformation principles in their daily lives.

Project Overview

This project, as it represents the third phase of RoH, was built on a strong expertise in peacebuilding programming for children based on lessons learned from the first two years. Throughout the implementation of the first two phases, Search has tested the relevance and effectiveness of its approach and performed adjustments where needed in order to create enhanced material for the

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project “Rainbow of Hope Phase III.” The US Embassy-funded project was implemented in six communities in five different regions (Berkayel and Wadi Jamous in Akkar, Nede el Hekmeh in Tripoli, Joub Janine and Riyak in Bekaa, and Ter Debba in South Lebanon) for a timeframe of 10 months starting in October 2016 up until July 2017. Akkar was the only location where two centers were implemented, while the four other centers were respectively located in Tripoli, Tayr Debba, Zahle, and Western Bekaa. Overall, 240 Lebanese and Syrian children were involved and divided between the six centers. Search partnered with four local organizations and one consultant to assist with logistics of everyday activities and ensure smooth implementation. The organizations are the following: Utopia in Tripoli, Nabad Association for Development in Riyak, Sada al Bekaa in Western Bekaa, Hadatha in Akkar, and finally Kawthar Sati as a consultant in Tayr Debba, South. After assessing which collaborations were successful during the first two phases of the project, Search’s Project Coordinator and Education Specialist selected the focal points, teachers, and animators. The centers’ location relied on the partners’ selection process.

The overall objective of the project was to bridge the social and educational divides between Lebanese and Syrian children aged 6-11 through informal education and ultimately strengthen social cohesion in their communities. In the pursuit of this overall objective, Search was looking to reach the following specific objectives:

Specific Objective 1. Lebanese and Syrian children aged 6-11 develop respectful and empathetic relationships with one another.

Specific Objective 2. Syrian and Lebanese teachers and animators embed non-violent conflict transformation and acceptance of the other in their work.

Specific Objective 3. Lebanese and Syrian parents are jointly engaged and supportive of their children’s journey.

The activities were set up between the following targeted groups: children, teachers and animators, and parents.

RoH III, for the first time, divided the children into two levels: Level 1 for newly engaged children, and Level 2 targeting children from the previous phases. In a preliminary phase to the project’s activities on the ground, the two-level curriculum linking directly the English classes and the animated activities was further refine for Level 1 and newly developed for Level 2 (integrating ForumZFD curriculum as part of the animated activities). The activities organized for the children were English classes, recreational activities, and intensive vacation programs, all of which were intended to enhance peacebuilding skills. In addition, regional final events were organized to enable the children to showcase stories and lessons learned throughout the year and to celebrate together with their parents their achievements and new friendships. After selection, teachers and animators had to follow an advanced training in order to further build their capacities in teaching techniques and peacebuilding education, followed by direct coaching in the field. Finally, introductory meetings for the parents were organized to familiarize them with the program, and joint Lebanese and Syrian Parent’s Committees were set up for them to hold awareness sessions and jointly organize the final events.
This set of activities was expected to result in giving children an opportunity for positive interactions with each other; increasing teachers’ and animators’ knowledge, skills and tools to foster conflict transformation principles; and bringing Lebanese and Syrian parents together to participate in joint activities.

2. Methodology

Objectives

The objective of the internal Final Evaluation is to assess the project’s relevance, effectiveness, and overall change on the participants in the communities where the project was implemented. The main purpose of this analysis is to establish if and how the project influenced Lebanese and Syrian children and their parents’ interactions. This appears particularly relevant since this is the third phase of the RoH project and, as such, presents the opportunity of cumulative learning. The evaluation also looks into elements of project sustainability and recommendations.

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

Relevance
1. To what extent are RoH objectives and activities answering to the targeted communities’ needs and context in terms of social cohesion and children development?
2. To what extent are the activities and outputs of RoH relevant to reaching the objectives?

Effectiveness
1. To what extent were RoH objectives achieved?
2. What were the internal and external facilitating and hindering factors towards the achievements of the objectives?

Potential Impact
1. What changes happened at the teachers/animators, children, and parents levels and how?

Sustainability
1. To what extent will the achievements of the project continue after the end of the implementation and contribute to the ToC broad objective of strengthening social stability in Lebanon in the long-term (looking at the “ripple effect” of project achievements).

Project’s specific learning questions
1. Evaluation of the curriculum: relevance of the content, effectiveness of its use, and the related capacity building component?
2. To what extent was RoH III’s approach to parent engagement relevant and effective?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the partnerships in terms of implementation and achievements?
Data Collection and Analysis

In light of the above mentioned research questions, the research team collected data through ongoing monitoring data collection tools, focus group discussions with parents and the project’s teams, and monthly reporting tools from the participating teachers and animators.

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach -- combining qualitative and quantitative methods -- for data collection. Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Beirut, Tyre, and Akkar, in addition to one Outcome Harvesting session with the project’s team in Beirut, were conducted by Search to further collect qualitative data for the final evaluation.

The analysis of the monitoring data and the collected data from the focus group discussions represents the qualitative part of this evaluation, along with the teachers and animators reporting including a quantitative and a qualitative component. The RoH team produced monthly reports, which provided an update on the latest activities held, success stories, challenges encountered, and recommendations for advancing to next steps in the project. The reports relied on the continuous feedback of the partners, teachers, and animators (primarily through their monthly reports and Search’s field visits) and were also used to enlighten the evaluation analysis.

The table below describes the FGD participant profile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FGD Type</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akkar Parents FGD</td>
<td>16 Syrian and Lebanese mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sour Parents FGD</td>
<td>6 Syrian and Lebanese mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beirut Teachers and Animators FGD</td>
<td>4 men and 3 women (2 teachers and 5 animators)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limitations

Search’s Design, Monitoring & Evaluation (DM&E) team faced certain challenges conducting the evaluation phase of RoH III project. The main challenge was the scarceness of available resources and time to conduct extensive data collection and analysis since all activities had to be conducted internally, within a short timeframe, by Search staff whose time was scarcely budgeted within the project’s overall budget. This resulted in lacking some data to adequately answer all evaluation questions. Therefore, the evaluation findings are limited to the direct participants in the project and cannot be generalized to indirect stakeholders.

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6 Please see Annex 1 for the Focus Group Discussion Guides.
3. Findings

Relevance

In launching the third phase of Rainbow of Hope, Search relied on the experiences gathered during the first two phases of the program. The successes and the learning from the first two phases made the case for the relevance of Search’s approach in spreading a culture of dialogue and and strengthening the acceptance of the “other” in children. The children participating in the project’s earlier phases expressed their desire to see similar projects repeated in the future. This positive reception demonstrates the profound impact of the project on children’s initial negative stereotypes of members from other communities. Search has long seen the significant potential of young people as positive agents of change, and as a result, how projects engaging children can create new channels for mitigating growing tensions between communities.

With its pre-existing sectarian divides and the strain on its economy resulting from the massive influx of Syrian refugees, Lebanon finds itself at a critical juncture. Overall, these conflict drivers have exacerbated societal tensions in Lebanon and endangered social cohesion. Consequently, one of the priorities in that context is to establish impactful ways to strengthen social stability and ensure its perpetuation. Because children represent the generation of tomorrow and are a demographic vulnerable to being incentivized by negative stereotypes and violence triggers, they should be a priority target in any peacebuilding project. Taking into consideration the current state of tensions in Lebanon, the lack of resources of the Lebanese State to handle these tensions appropriately at an institutional level, and the fact that more than half of the refugee population is below 18 years old, projects involving peace and education appear particularly relevant.7

In this third phase, Rainbow of Hope responded to several needs. First, the program focused on educating children that have been out of the education system, subject to child labor, and vulnerable to child enrollment. The project also worked to bridge the existing gaps between refugees and host communities by providing a safe space where they are able to interact as equals.

- Storytelling approach and new curriculum

For the third phase of RoH, Search’s Education Specialist developed an integrated curriculum, directly linking English classes and animated sessions around common themes that were reflective of the children’s contexts, adapted to varying levels of English, and more focused on a “learning by doing” approach. The Level 1 material was reviewed and adjusted based on already developed and tested curriculum from RoH I and RoH II, and a Level 2 was developed in order to further engage children from the first two phases. The new curriculum uses a storytelling learning approach to promote conflict transformation principles through two English courses and one recreational activity session per week.

7 Final Evaluation, ROH I, p.5.
for six months. In an attempt to improve the program’s overall cohesiveness, the updated curriculum employed by the teachers and the animators intended to ensure that the recreational activities reinforce the peacebuilding concepts introduced in the English classes. The schedule was also modified in response to recommendations from previous phases, shortening the length of each class and reducing the number of children per class reduced. In November, the toolkit for teachers and animators in both English and Arabic was finalized by the Education Specialist with the support of an external consultant, and was introduced to the teachers and animators during the training that took place in Beirut prior to the start of the activities in the field. English classes and recreational activities started in December in five of the centers, although the team in Tripoli launched the project in March. Each center hosted a Level 1 and a Level 2 class, for a total of 12 groups engaging approximately 20 children each.

As RoH III aimed to test the two levels of the curriculum in order to integrate the learning into a final sharable curriculum, the following are learning and insights that Search deems important for the future use of the curriculum:

- **Teacher feedback**

  Overall, teachers gave positive feedback on the activities and workshops they participated in. The division of the children in two levels, following the recommendation from the previous phases of the project, proved successful. Such a distribution appeared to be the most effective way of responding to the challenge of level disparity in English the teachers were struggling with at the beginning.

  During previous phases, several teachers expressed the need for more extensive capacity building, namely in the areas of classroom management, child protection in multicultural settings, learning new teaching methods, and teaching students with specific learning needs. RoH III addressed these requests by organizing multiple trainings aimed at familiarizing teachers with proper methods and empowering them to use their student’s stories and incorporate these personal experiences into their conflict transformation teaching.

- **Animator feedback**

  Throughout the project, the children consistently showed a will and ability to engage in the recreational activities, leading the animators to increase the number and complexity of the activities. The recreational activities were particularly effective for establishing safe spaces and breaking the ice between participants, enabling the children to build solid relationships and actively participate in the remainder of activities. Overall, the animators found the curriculum to be useful, as participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive and the activities’ positive impact on the children’s interactions was clearly evident. The animators expressed feeling empowered by seeing participants’ rapid progress.

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8 Quarterly Report I, October - December 2016, p.2.
Parent feedback

From the FGDs, all parents emphasized the importance of their children learning English, especially since not all of them have had the opportunity of learning it at school. For those who have, the quality of the teaching is often poor: Said parents, “I would like to emphasize on the necessity of learning English even more. Their level in English is better; we notice this in their grades in English at school. But we should insist even more on English. We want our kids to learn English because it is the top language in the world.”9 and “Our kids appreciated the way they learn the language here, because it is much more adapted to kids’ pedagogy, unlike the traditional way of doing it at school.”10 The teachers also shared how they even have been thanked by some school directors for the skills they taught the children.

Parents also shared how the children were talking among themselves about RoH activities and encouraging each other to attend. Children were motivated to learn and play at the same time, which demonstrates the relevance of RoH’s approach to learning. Parents also mentioned how the project is needed to improve the relationships between Lebanese and Syrian children. For example, a Lebanese mother shared that her children “have Syrian friends at school. Before there was a misunderstanding of the other, so it’s good that they can get to know each other better.”11

Effectiveness

The RoH team has scheduled monthly coordination meetings in each center with the focal point, teacher, and animators to discuss the delegation of tasks for the monthly reports, monitoring and evaluation tools, case referrals, plans for the following month, and ongoing challenges and achievements. The coordination meetings were an important opportunity for teachers and animators to collaborate, reflect, and share their experiences of skills developed and challenges noted during the sessions, while jointly evaluating the children’s progress through the different activities.

Through the creation of the parents’ committees in each center and the monthly meetings for the Lebanese and Syrian parents that were held as a result, the parents became more aware of the aims of the project, and more familiar with the center and the local NGO. They jointly attended awareness raising sessions and activities at the same centers where their children were participating in RoH. The agenda included discussions on positive parenting, identifying and understanding how children think and feel, and problem solving.

At the final events, the participants and their parents gathered to celebrate the achievements of the project around the motto “we came as strangers, we leave as friends.” The mothers actively engaged by preparing traditional Lebanese and Syrian dishes to be shared with all the participants. The parents who

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9 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Akkar, 26th of July 2017.
10 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Tyr, 27th of July 2017.
11 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Tyr, 27th of July 2017.
participated in the final events shared their gratitude, and the children were happy to be eating and playing with their new friends and their parents. At the final events, the cohesion among Syrians and Lebanese parents and children was clearly noticeable.

Hereafter, the project’s achievements are presented in more detail.

- New curriculum

The participating teachers had the opportunity to share their insights on the new curriculum used for this third phase.

**Level 1:**

The main objectives of the Level 1 curriculum were to introduce participants to basic life skills concepts, such as self-esteem, sharing, diversity, friendship, acceptance of differences and non-violent attitudes towards others and the community and to help them develop a set of behavioral values through a variety of interactive and participatory exercises.

Teachers’ feedback on the curriculum are split into three categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Feedback</th>
<th>Slightly Useful</th>
<th>Moderately Useful</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>4 %</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers were asked to rank the relevance of the curriculum into four possible categories: not useful at all, slightly useful, moderately useful, and extremely useful. The analysis of their reports revealed that 68 percent of them considered the curriculum to be extremely useful and 28 percent considered it to be useful, whereas 4 percent only considered it somehow useful; none of them considered it not useful. One of the teacher from Akkar mentioned that “The stories were relevant to the participants, as they reflect real life situations and are meant to teach real and useful tools,” while the teacher from Tayr Debba commented that “The stories were very entertaining and valuable, the participants liked them a lot.”

Although the vast majority of the teachers found the curriculum to be at least useful, four out of six demonstrated their engagement and creativity by developing extra activities to engage with the participants. Among those activities, the teachers reported teaching additional short songs, decorating classrooms during Christmas time, or visiting Syrian refugee camps. This also stemmed from the fact that not all the sections of the curriculum contained enough suggested activities for the duration of the sessions.

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12 Teacher’s report, p.2.

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A few issues were reported that should be addressed, such as the printing layout and the necessity of increasing the letter font in order to make the reading easier, certain writing errors, and the cover design of the stories that did not match the content. Certain teachers recommended ways to enhance the toolkit content such as including specific movies as a visual support for the stories or adding an environmental perspective to the stories.

Besides the technical aspects, some features of the stories themselves were problematic. Certain teachers complained about the level of English used in the stories, as it didn’t seem to match the level of most of the participants. It took the teachers additional time and effort to clarify the content of the stories to the children. Some teachers griped about the length of stories they considered too long.

**Level 2:**

The main objectives of the Level 2 curriculum were to further enhance participants’ self-understanding, enable them to explore relationships with others, and build long-lasting friendships; and provide them with conflict transformation skills they can use in their everyday life in order to play a positive role in society.

Teachers’ feedback on the curriculum are split into two categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Feedback</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the Level 2, all the teachers found the curriculum to be at least useful, with 46% of them considering it to be extremely useful.

During the English sessions, 40% of the teachers followed the curriculum by the book, while 60 percent of them also implemented extra activities, such as spending time outdoors, drawing participants’ faces, or imitating animal voices. Teachers were not always satisfied with the content of the stories: “Stories tackled one problematic only and it was easy for the participants to guess it and analyze it.” They also didn’t recommend reusing the “Swiss Family Robinson” story because “it’s too long and contains very difficult vocabularies.”

The teacher in Tayr Debba added that: “This project is the only hope for those kids as it helps them forget about their illness and live in peace. In other word, it’s the safe bridge that is encouraging them to overcome all their problem.”

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13 Ibid, p.3.
14 Teacher’s report, p.9
- **Participation and retention**

In terms of **participation and retention**, by the end of the project, 256 children (for a target of 240 children) had gone through all the activities. Of these, 54% were Lebanese children and 46% Syrian children, 51% of which were boys and 49% girls. The age average among all participating children was 9.5 years old.

- **English skills**

By the end of the project, children had globally increased their **English skills** by 48%. The following table illustrates in more detail the specific learning skills assessed and their level of increase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is using some English to express himself/herself</th>
<th>Is able to recognize, pronounce, and use simple English words</th>
<th>Is able to formulate and use appropriately sentences in English</th>
<th>Is able to comprehend main ideas in a story</th>
<th>Is able to tell about the story using learned vocabulary</th>
<th>Is able to roleplay the story that has been read</th>
<th>Is completing his/her homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% increase</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More specifically, the children demonstrated their ability to introduce themselves in English as well as to start expressing needs and feelings in English. From the FGDs, the parents also mentioned how their children, for the ones who have English classes at school, improved their grades thanks to their participation in RoH classes.

- **Evolution of the participants’ interactions**

By the end of the project, children had globally increased their **conflict transformation skills** by 54%. The following table illustrates in more detail the specific skills assessed and their level of increase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interact easily and positively with one or more children</th>
<th>Participate successfully as a member of the group</th>
<th>Understand and respect others’ rights</th>
<th>Seek teacher help when needed for emotional support, physical assistance, or to mediate conflicts with other children</th>
<th>Use words and other non-violent strategies to resolve conflicts</th>
<th>Recognize and sustain interaction</th>
<th>Is able to</th>
<th>Is having positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% increase</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>Recognize and sustain interaction</td>
<td>Is able to</td>
<td>Is having positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>appreciate similarities and differences between self and others from diverse backgrounds</th>
<th>with other children by cooperating, helping, sharing, and expressing interest in the other</th>
<th>listen to others even if he/she disagrees</th>
<th>interactions with children from different nationalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% increase</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the main goal of the project is to bridge gaps between children in order to **strengthen social cohesion** in the targeted communities, it is important to highlight that the highest increase, 65%, was at the level of children's ability to have positive interactions with children from different nationalities. According to the majority of the teachers, as they didn’t know each other, certain children had negative interactions with each other at the beginning. Nevertheless, as they advanced in the curriculum, the level of negativity decreased, turning into a positive and constructive approach of the other. One teacher from Akkar reported that “Participants learned how to express their feelings. They even started to help and accept each other, and think of useful solutions to their problems.”

According to the animators, the level of tension between the Lebanese and Syrian participants was high at the beginning of the project, mainly due to negative stereotypes. Consequently, the RoH team worked to instill values related to diversity, sharing and acceptance through art, physical activities, and group work. The ongoing support ensured by the RoH team and the regular field visits proved effective, as the group dynamics and the interactions between the participants from different nationalities changed from negative and non-acceptance to acceptance and sharing: “The participants started to visit each other when they were absent, they shared food and games and invite each other to their homes.”

The children clearly demonstrated an increased ability to communicate constructively with each other, which their parents also acknowledged during the FGDs, stating that their children had become more adaptable and willing to have friends from different nationalities while appreciating each other’s differences: “Before, they used to say “The Syrian is here. The Syrian left. I don’t want to play with him. This changed a lot.” This change was clearly noticed by the teachers and animators throughout the project: “The Lebanese are proud, feel superior, and sometimes refuses to sit next to a Syrian. With time, you find them playing together. The separation between Lebanese and Syrians did not last for more than 2 weeks. But the tension is still vivid, they say terrible things sometimes. This year things are much better. This project overall reduced much of the tension between communities.”

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15 Teacher’s Report, p. 4.
16 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
17 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Tyr, 27th of July 2017.
18 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
Parents also noticed a change in the general attitude of their children who became more able to communicate: “My kid didn’t use to talk a lot to me. Now when he comes back from the center, he talks to me about what they did.” or “Our kids improved a lot: they were shy to participate in class at school, they are not anymore.” The teachers also mentioned how the children developed stronger personalities and were more able to overcome their shyness to interact with each other: “Some Syrian kids don’t have human interactions, because at school they have few friends, and their parents don’t really take care of them. Now, they express themselves, they say what they need and what they feel. There is a strong attachment between the students.”

- Regarding the evolution in the group dynamics, participants at first had difficulty organizing themselves in groups due to different reasons: feeling shy, lacking confidence in their answers, and fearing judgments of others. After a few months, they learned how to cooperate and achieve tasks through communication and group work, and started to appreciate each other and share their ideas and suggestions out loud.

- Decline of violent incidents

For the Level 1, 52% of the teachers answered that they felt totally comfortable in addressing violent incidents in a constructive way, whereas 48% of them seemed not able to handle them fully. It is worth mentioning that all teachers received a capacity building training at the beginning of the project and an ongoing coaching from the RoH team to help them better deal with conflicts arising between participants. Furthermore, the RoH team conducted field visits to the centers to support the teachers by attending English sessions, coaching meetings, and implementing awareness sessions about diversity and positive parenting for the parents of the participants.

One of the biggest challenges the teachers faced was the recurrence of insults between the children. Throughout the project, participants became more aware of each other’s feelings and needs and the best choices to deal with a conflict inside and outside the classroom by linking their actions with the moral lessons of the stories. The “Kelso’s Choice” story, in particular, had a very positive impact on the participants’ behavior by showing them how to peacefully solve their everyday problems and issues.

Teachers showed a high capacity to resolve conflicts between participants by using many techniques, such as: the use of positive language, asking participants to sit together and talk about their misunderstandings, enforcing the active listening approach between them and the participants and between the participants themselves, referring to the morals of the stories when needed, knowing

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19 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Tyr, 27th of July 2017.
20 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Akkar, 26th of July 2017.
21 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
22 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
about each other’s lives, splitting tasks and responsibilities between them, helping participants identify a problem, agree on a solution, and respect the rights and values of others.

One teacher from Akkar reported that “Yes, of course, I was surprised when my students told me that they have a new invention. And when I asked them what it was, they answered me: a new nationality, Lesyrianese. Through this invention, they wanted to say that there is no difference between Syrians and Lebanese and for this, I give them praise.” Another one from Tayr Debba mentioned that: “Rainbow of Hope is the main reason for these kids to smile, to laugh, to enjoy every single moment in their childhood, it’s not just about acceptance. So whenever you see my students in a small safe zone sharing and attending classes, you’ll know how much this project is affecting them.”

At the Level 2, 28% of teachers didn’t face any specific violent incidents, while 72% of them had some incidents. Most of these incidents arose from jealousy between participants who were trying to prove themselves, as well as discrepancies between participants from different nationalities (Lebanese and Syrians), who exchanged bad words in a few incidents. However, all teachers demonstrated the capability of resolving problems between those participants, especially when they made them sit together and talk about the conflict between them, encouraging them to apologize to each other and respect one another as a big family. The teacher from Tayr Debba mentioned that “Participants learned that they are different but their differences shouldn’t lead to conflicts.”

50% of teachers felt completely comfortable in addressing those incidents in a constructive way, while 43% of them were somewhat comfortable. 7% stated they were neutral. Most teachers mentioned how they have learned to transform conflict between participants into useful and positive opportunities thanks to their own experience with Search and the support of the stories. Throughout the project, the teachers enhanced their ability to handle such violent incidents, demonstrating an overall improvement in handling confrontations between the children. One teacher from Akkar stated that “Participants were showing compassion and empathy towards each other, and most of all, they listened to each other's different points of view and were depending on themselves to find good solutions.”

A correlation can also be inferred between the increase of interest in the class and the decrease of violent incidents. During the recreational activities, several violent incidents happened (ranging from verbal to physical violence) -- but over time the animators noticed a significant decrease of these types of incidents. Another element reported by the animators was the change in the type and intensity of violent incidents from the beginning to the end of the project. The development of the children’s character and attitudes helped the animators better address violent incidents. The children started to demonstrate a more empathic attitude towards each other. Considering the evolution of the project, it appeared that the animators were properly selected and effectively trained to address these types of incidents.

- Implementation of the toolkit
RoH III’s new toolkit included two levels and integrated the English classes and the recreational activities around common themes and objectives. This allowed the teachers and animators to work together towards a common goal and develop a clearer vision of the project’s objectives and the related activities to be implemented at each step: “As teachers, there were gaps in the previous years in the progression of the classes. It was only since last year that the toolkit made it possible for all the teams to work at the same rhythm. There was no coordination before and this was corrected. The toolkit allows us to function and progress according to steps.” and “This year, the themes were better differentiated. Every story had its theme. The toolkit helped the animators even more than the teachers. The toolkit, you open it and know what you need to do. Before this, we used to ask one another ‘Where are you? At which step?’ Before, the kids could see we were a bit lost in the organization.”

The Level 2 added in RoH III also aimed at continuing to engage children from previous years through a new curriculum that was praised by the teachers and animators: “By creating another level, you create in the kid’s mind the will to surpass their limits.”

- Parent’s engagement

At the parent’s level, a major achievement of RoH III was to create space for Lebanese and Syrian parents to meet and share common concerns regarding their children’s education and development. In each community, a parents’ committee was created and engaged throughout the project’s implementation. These committees built relationships of trust among members: “Now we come at the center and exchange with one another, we cook together, we all participated when organizing parties for the kids.”

Through the meetings and awareness sessions, the team clearly noticed a positive change in their interactions with each other as well as in their interactions with their children, as they were able to discuss their concerns regarding their children and be introduced to new perspectives on how to deal with those concerns. For example, during awareness sessions, mothers discussed in length about sexual harassment and early marriage: “Some, in Syria or Lebanon, say ‘Ok she found a husband, so let’s marry her,’ regardless of her age. But 15 is too young, so we must be aware of this, and the project did make us more aware.”

Another major topic was about punishment and the use of physical violence. Through RoH, parents learned about alternative ways to address difficult situations with their children and how to use communication instead of violence: “We do not slap our kids anymore, now we think before doing it. Not

24 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
25 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
26 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Akkar, 26th of July 2017.
27 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Tyr, 27th of July 2017.
slapping my kid might help understanding between us.”  

The majority of the mothers in the FGDs mentioned how they would like to get further support in raising their children: “We all don’t know how to interact with our children, we have very weak parenting skills.”

By the end of the project, the parents clearly demonstrated a change in their attitude towards each other, as it was the first time for most of them to interact and collaborate with parents from the other nationality. This, in turn, affected how they influenced their children: “We used to tell them not to talk to Syrians. Now, it is not the case anymore.”

Teachers and animators also mentioned how the role of the parents had been important in RoH III: “This year, we had much closer and stronger interactions, we even used WhatsApp groups. The interaction was very positive this year, with strong mix between Syrian and Lebanese parents.” For example, parents played an important role in the preparation and implementation of the Final Events, which was occasion for them to collaborate together: “During the final event, we had a lot of fun. We participated in making the food; there was strong cooperation between kids and parents, a better sense of responsibilities.”

- Collaboration between the different team members

As previously mentioned, RoH III also improved collaboration and coordination between the teachers, animators and partners’ focal points, as they were all trained together on the new curriculum, their different roles in its implementation, and the importance of cohesive and comprehensive implementation. As such, they met on a monthly basis to coordinate and plan their activities as well as to jointly evaluate the children’s improvement in their conflict transformation skills. This approach also empowered the partner’s focal point in their coordination and monitoring role.

- Sustainability elements

In terms of sustainability, teachers noticed how some children who attended the first year of RoH and came back for the Level 2 of RoH III still remembered much of what they had learned more than a year before. They also mentioned how they experienced trust and opened up thanks to the teachers and animators, showing how the project played an important role during a formative phase of the children’s

28 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Akkar, 26th of July 2017.
29 Ibib.
30 Ibib.
31 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
32 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Tyr, 27th of July 2017.
development: “They will never forget this, children are very smart. Children never forget anything they do. We opened up their perspectives to communicate with us; they feel safe and free to talk to us. They trust us 100%. They will still remember the skills they gained, presentation skills, acting skills, those never go away.”

The RoH team believes that the education process takes time but its impact lasts forever. With this philosophy at the core, project staff showed a high level of dedication to empower the capacity of participants, parents, and field staff (teachers, animators, local organization focal points) in order to foster lasting change through their new skills, relationships, attitudes, and behaviours towards dealing with conflicts in general and engaging with people from different backgrounds in particular.

**Internal and external facilitating and hindering factors**

- **Recruitment and retention of students**

  In certain locations, the partners faced difficulty in the identification and engagement of children from both nationalities together. This was an ongoing challenge for joint activities, as most of the RoH children were also attending school in separated shifts and thus, were not available at the same time. Moreover, as the Level 2 aimed to engage the same children from the previous year, the teachers shared how it was sometimes challenging to find the Syrian children who had previously participated. This issue was exacerbated by the frequent movements of Syrian refugees. Several teachers also mentioned the proliferation of programs of similar scope and activities as RoH in the targeted locations, thus occupying some students who would otherwise have been recruited at Level 2.

  This demonstrates the needs for increased collaboration among organizations in terms of programming.

  When asked if they faced challenges regarding the implementation of the curriculum, 43 percent of the teachers answered that they did, with retention being among those challenges. This problem appeared particularly strong during winter, namely because of mobility and health issues.

- **Teachers’ and animators’ commitment**

  RoH teachers and animators are at the center of the success of the project and continuously proved their commitment to positively influence the children. Teachers especially made the extra step to engage with the parents as much as possible in the learning process of their children, which was highly appreciated by the parents: “We are now able to work hand-in-hand with the professor.” and “Our kids are still today very touched by this initiative. They keep talking about Professor Mohammad and Professor Ahmad.”

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33 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
34 Quarterly Report, October - December 2017, p. 4.
35 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Akkar, 26th of July 2017.
36 Focus Group Discussion with RoH parents, Akkar, 26th of July 2017.
• Updated toolkit and subsequent capacity building

The development of the toolkit required more time and resources than initially expected. The proofreading, editing, and translation processes in particular required extensive time and resources from the entire team, which highlights the need to allocate more resources at the beginning of the project to ensure an adequate and effective preparation phase.

In line with the toolkit, the capacity building component of the project can be considered as both a facilitating and a hindering internal factor. Indeed, on one hand the new curriculum linking the activities between the teachers and animators and the joint capacity building as well as the individual coaching in the field allowed an improved coordination and harmonization between the two project’s component and ongoing support on the curriculum implementation and on the teaching/facilitation skills of the project’s team. On the other hand, as the curriculum was a new addition, both teachers and animators would have required more time and resources dedicated to capacity building in order to fully grasp and own the curriculum and its specific components as well as the needed technical skills.

One challenge faced in the implementation of the toolkit in Tyr was the accommodating of two participants with physical disabilities, both of which required a wheelchair. Search’s Project Coordinator responded to this need by reaching out to the organization Arcenciel, who was able to provide adequate wheelchairs for these participants. Nevertheless, the teachers and animators stressed the need to integrate tailored activities to the curriculum for disabled children, especially in terms of physical exercises.

• Specific challenges in the implementation of the curriculum

During the implementation of the curriculum, 76% of the teachers found no major challenges. 24% of them highlighted several challenges, which can be divided into three main categories. First, certain centers faced a challenge regarding the outreach and retention of students. This lack of attendance was primarily an issue in Tripoli, where RoH faced delays in initial implementation, and some difficulties in using the curriculum as intended. While this problem did not concern the recreational activities specifically, it still impacted their effectiveness since they were designed in line with the English sessions. The second challenge encountered by certain centers was related to the English level of the participants. This language challenge brought certain teachers to lower the level in order to accommodate all participants. Finally, certain teachers were faced with a behavioral challenge, as some of the children thought they were there just to play. Nevertheless, the teachers demonstrated a high degree of perseverance and managed to change the mindset of the children away from wanting to disturb the class.

• Human resources

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In terms of **human resources**, Search faced an internal challenge regarding the recruitment of a new Project Coordinator, which led the Education Adviser to assume both roles for several months. As such, some tasks were delayed. Moreover, the fact that Search did not have its own focal points in the field led to a heavy reliance on the local partners’ focal points, who did not always have the necessary skills, time, or dedication to effectively conduct their tasks. Had Search required partner organizations to assigned fully dedicated focal points, some focal points would still have been in charge of several other roles within their organizations depending on their internal structures and resources. This fact made it difficult for partner focal points to dedicate adequate time to RoH in some instances. Another challenge was the low budget available for teachers and animators, which resulted in lower salaries and translated into decreased motivation for some, especially as the addition of Level 2 increased teacher workload: “I found Level 2 very exhausting. We had two missions. Usually, we plan the class, do our planning, you have 20 kids. This year, there were 2 levels, so 40 kids, as well as 2 programs, two plannings. So for the same salary and time, we had to double our efforts.”

- **Improved communication with partners**

Regarding **partnerships**, the relationship between Search (as an international organization) and the local partner organizations was strengthened over previous years. This success is attributed to Search’s regular field visits and frequent communication with partners over the phone and through emails. Nonetheless, some partners feared to share implementation challenges with Search due to perceived power balance. This required extra effort on the part of Search in order to maintain and enhance trust and communication and prevent or address possible issues through field visits. In Ter Debba, where the project was implemented directly through the contracted consultant (Kawthar Sati) as both teacher and focal point, the partnership has proven to be exceptionally reliable, competent and skillful.

- **Focal point’s and Search’s responsiveness**

Search’s partners and focal points have shown to be very responsive to certain unexpected challenges. A good illustration of this is the attitude of the partner in Tripoli, Utopia. When faced with increased dropouts, Utopia decided to change the location of their center from Daher el Magher to El Hkemeh to ensure the right number of participants.

Similarly, one of the major challenges faced during the implementation of the final events was the de-motivation of the focal points, as they were affected by the fact that there would not be a fourth phase of the project. In response, Search asked focal points to take the lead in organizing the final events, ensuring that they still felt ownership for the project that they had been implementing for three years.

- **Parents’ engagement**

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38 Focus Group Discussion with RoH teachers and animators, Beirut, 28th of July 2017.
39 Quarterly Report, April - June 2017, p. 3.
40 Quarterly Report April - June 2017, p. 4.
Parents’ engagement at the beginning of the project proved challenging due to mismatched expectations. In their previous interactions with other organizations, many parents had grown accustomed to receiving incentives for their participation in project activities, which is something they did not receive in RoH. Nonetheless, after attending the first meeting, most of them expressed their satisfaction and recognized the added value of the meetings and awareness sessions.

The RoH team faced a major challenge at the Western Bekaa center where the Lebanese parents showed a negative attitude toward the Syrian and the Bedouin parents, and the Syrian refugees showed the same attitude towards the Bedouin community. In the words of a Lebanese mother “We don’t want our children in the same class with the Bedouin children.” RoH team tried to highlight the similarities by organizing a joint workshop to reduce negative perceptions and increase the diversity and acceptance between them. This approach yielded positive results.

There were also certain problems related to the final events. Some of the parents insisted on bringing their whole family even though the team could not accommodate such a high number of participants. The RoH team tried to explain to them the importance of full involvement, but certain families still did not attend the events because of this disagreement. Nonetheless, the final events were considered to be a great success, and several mothers who participated expressed their gratitude for being able to participate in the planning and the food preparation for that day.41

4. Conclusion on project’s specific learning questions

1. Evaluation of the curriculum: relevance of the content, effectiveness of its use, and the related capacity building component?

The curriculum developed for RoH III is the result of lessons learned from the first two phases of RoH. The updated program used a storytelling learning approach to teach English and promote conflict transformation principles through a 1½ hour English class 2 times per week and 1 weekly animated session. The change in the English class schedule (from 4-5 times a week in RoH I and II to only 2 times a week) is based on lessons learned from the first two years of the program in which teachers reported low attendance. Five days per week turned out to be too much for students to attend, particularly when they needed to focus on their school studies. To provide greater continuity and engagement in light of this adapted schedule, the project team planned intensive program schedules during summer, winter, and spring vacation periods when students have more free time to participate in the program.

The students were divided into two levels based on English language ability, age, and previous participation in RoH. This was an important addition to the program, because the lessons in acceptance

and understanding of diversity as well as English skills were further reinforced as students continue to participate in the program for a second year, and the Level 2 option also continued to provide a safe and engaging space for children from vulnerable backgrounds to learn and thrive.

The recreational activity of the toolkit were developed with the support of a consultant from “Steps” in order to reinforce the themes and objectives of the stories for Level 1 and Level 2. The recreational activities aimed to ensure a safe and playful environment for participants in order to foster an environment in which they can positively and constructively express their emotions and needs.

“Steps” consultant and RoH team members conducted field visits to monitor the sessions implemented with the local partners. The team observed the English and recreational sessions; coached the participating teachers, animators, and focal points; and provided recommendations and advice on facilitation skills. One focal point in Akkar said “It’s great that you are visiting us regularly, so we don’t feel alone and detached from the office, and we can communicate more easily face to face.”

2. To which extent was RoH III’s approach to parental engagement relevant and effective?

Parental engagement was one of the main strengths in Search’s improved engagement strategy for RoH III. In light of the experience gathered through RoH I and RoH II, a greater outreach to the participants’ parents would increase the project’s overall impact on the community. This engagement took the form of an introductory meeting with all stakeholders during which parents would get to familiarize themselves with the project and the staff. This meeting intended to serve as an opportunity for them to express suggestions and concerns related to their children’s participation and to create a committee to hold events and Q&A sessions throughout the project’s implementation.

The establishment of the parents’ committee followed three objectives: collecting their feedback on the changes noticed in their children and their recommendations, delivering one positive parenting workshop in two half-day sessions to help parents better understand the stages of their child development during RoH III process, and holding one conflict transformation and diversity workshop to reinforce their skills in those fields.

The RoH team, with the support of the focal points, managed to build up parents’ committees in all the six centers. Moreover, the teachers also noticed the greater involvement of the parents as, according to them, 56% of the parents were highly engaged, 24% sufficiently engaged, and 20% somewhat engaged in the project. To some extent, the two focal points from the Bekaa partners--Nabad Association for Development and Sada al Bekaa--faced some challenges while trying to engage with parents. The Lebanese parents resisted the idea of meeting Syrian parents, and certain Syrian mothers initially refused to attend the meetings. Nabad Association for Development kept trying to engage the parents by organizing segregated meetings. Towards the end of the project, realizing the positive impact of the project in their children, parents started to open up and even collaborated for the final event.
One initiative that proved very useful was the **Whatsapp group** created by the teachers at the centers to keep the parents involved and aware of their children’s activities and achievements. It also contributed to developing trust between the teachers/animators and the parents.

One teacher from the Eastern Bekaa mentioned that “*Parents were following up on their kids with the notes I was writing down on their notebooks. They were cooperative, they used to contact me asking on what they could do to improve their children’s English,*” while the teacher from Tayr Debba stated that “*Parents are always concerned about their children’s classes, so they contact me all the time to know how their children are behaving and how they are being taught.*”

3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the partnerships in terms of implementation and achievements?

Search worked with several partners in different areas on this project, including four local NGOs and one consultant. The four organizations were chosen based on recommendations from the Final Evaluation of the second phase of RoH and taking into consideration their local presence and the quality of their collaboration with the teachers selected by Search’s Education Specialist. The entire selection process was overseen and approved by the US Embassy. Overall, all partnerships proved successful and the obstacles faced were all overcome. In Akkar, the organization Al Hadatha was in charge of two centers and has been accommodating with all of Search’s requests and with most of the project’s needs. In Tripoli, Utopia faced certain challenges with the recruitment of Level 1 participants, which delayed project implementation until March 2017. Other difficulties arose, especially regarding the attendance and the organization of the final event. In Tayr Debba, the consultant was committed and successful, with the only issue being the infrequent meetings with the animators who needed attention and support. In Zahle, Nabad Association for Development proved to be a strong partner. Finally, Sada al Bekaa in West Bekaa, faced challenges related to reporting. Overall, the experience with the partners was positive. All of them demonstrated valuable qualities such as flexibility and responsiveness. The challenges faced were largely external, as all five partners have proven to be driven and invested in the project. A recurrent element was the request for more capacity building, especially regarding the coordination of teachers and animators as well as trainings in reporting skills.

Another element worthy of mention is the continuous communication between Search’s staff and the focal points, which substantially contributed to the team’s responsiveness to unexpected obstacles and enabled it to address problems quickly and effectively. The focal points were unanimous regarding the value of Search’s staff presence on the field and even asked for more field visits.
5. Recommendations

● Involvement of Search’s staff
Throughout the project, Search’s team conducted several field visits which were appreciated by the partners. These investments in the field proved to be beneficial because of the encouragement they provided to the local teams. Taking into account the feedback of the parents, teachers, and animators, it is recommended to organize such field visits on a monthly basis. Search has found these visits to be motivational for partners, in addition to being an opportunity for various participants to debrief and coordinate. The refresher training organized in March and which involved teachers, animators, and focal points, was praised by the participants as an occasion for project stakeholders to meet and enhance the cooperation between facilitators and teachers.\(^{42}\)

● Capacity building for reporting
For future project phases, the RoH team recommends continuing partnerships with al Hadatha, Nabad Association for Development, and Kawthar Sati, as they showed a strong level of cooperation, commitment, and transparency. Going forward, however, partner focal points should be required to attend capacity building trainings related to management, communication, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Also, one of the weaknesses highlighted several times was the difficulties faced by certain partners in their reporting. Consequently, it is recommended to conduct a financial reporting training for the focal points.\(^{43}\)

● Participant recruitment
One of the notable challenges faced by the RoH team concerned participant recruitment. In certain areas, the focal points struggled to attract an adequate number of participants. Therefore, it is recommended that in the future, extra activities be implemented during the summer to reduce recruitment challenges and ensure ongoing engagement in preparation for potential future phase of the project. This recommendation is particularly relevant considering Level 2 classes.\(^{44}\)

● Project approach activities
Through the project’s implementation, it was observed that teachers and animators took more time than expected to familiarize themselves with the updated toolkit, especially given the fact that they had to coordinate their activities as a joint process. Consequently, it is recommended that the evaluation and editing process of the toolkit should begin in the first month of implementation as a constant monitoring of the toolkit’s effectiveness will allow for necessary adjustments to be made prior to the start of future project phases.\(^{45}\) Additionally, an intensive training should be implemented at the launch of the project cycle to increase practical sessions on the toolkit for teachers and animators.

\(^{42}\) Quarterly Report 3, April - June 2017, p. 1.
\(^{43}\) Ibid, p. 4.
\(^{44}\) Quarterly Report 1, October - December 2016, p.5.
\(^{45}\) Quarterly Report 1, October - December 2016, p.5.
Furthermore, it is advised to have regular sessions with the parents supported by a specific toolkit for them to be able to address similar objectives that the children are working on with the teachers and animators.

Finally, project activities and final event dates should take into consideration the school schedule and the dates of the final exams in local schools of each area in order not to overlap with them and give the participants the chance to prepare for their exams and attend all activities.
6. Appendices

Annex 1: Focus Group Discussion Guides

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Parents
RoH III - Final Evaluation

1. Purpose of the FGD - Evaluation questions

Relevance
1. To which extent are RoH objectives and activities answering to the targeted communities needs and context in terms of social cohesion and children development?
2. To which extent are the activities and outputs of RoH relevant to reach the objectives?

Effectiveness
1. To which extent were RoH objectives achieved?
2. What were the internal and external facilitating and hindering factors towards the achievements of the objectives?

Potential Impact
1. What changes happened at the children and parents levels and how?

Sustainability
1. To which extent the achievements of the project will continue after the end of the implementation and contribute to its ToC broad objective to strengthen social stability in Lebanon in the long-term (looking at the “ripple effect” of project’s achievements).

Project’s specific learning questions
1. To which extent RoH III approach to parents engagement was relevant and effective?

2. FGD Protocol
Hello everyone and thank you all for coming today.
My name is............. and I am working with Search for Common ground on the evaluation of the Rainbow of Hope project which as funded by the US Embassy in Lebanon and implement in 6 communities across the country in partnership with local organisations.
We are with you today to gather your feedback on the project and to hear your experience and your children’s experience.
Everything that you will share today will remain confidential and no names would be mentioned in the final report. Your participation is voluntary and you can decline to participate or leave the FGD anytime.

● Ask for the participant’s permission to record the discussion
● Inform participants that the FGD will last between 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes
● Ask participants if they have any question, inquiry or comment before the start of the FGD
● Ask for the participant’s oral consent to participate in the focus group
3. **FGD Information**

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4. **FGD Guide**

1. Can you please introduce yourself and tell us how many of your children participated in RoH, in which level (level one or two) and since when (did they participate in previous years of the project)?
2. How did you get to know about the project and why did you choose to have your children participating? What were your main expectations from the project?
3. Do you think a project like RoH is needed/useful in your community? Why/Why not?
4. What are the main achievements of the project in your opinion, what did you like about it?
5. If your child participated in more than one year, what motivated you to register him/her again? What changes did you notice from one year to another?
6. What do you think could have been better or did not like about the project? Would you have any suggestions to improve it?
7. Did you face any difficulties about registering your children in the project and/or for them to keep attending?
8. Can you tell us how you were involved in the project? What did you do? What do you think of parent’s engagement in RoH III, in general and for you personally? What was positive or less positive?
9. You participated in the parent’s committee, can you tell us more about your experience? Do you think it was useful? Did you learn anything new? If yes, what did you learn?
10. What did you like about meeting with other parents? Do you think you will keep seeing each other? Why?
11. What changes did you notice in your children throughout the course of the project (behaviour, attitudes, relationships, etc.)? How did it happen?
12. What did you think about the curriculum? Did you find it useful, were there any particular challenges your children faced when trying to learn? What were their reactions?
13. What do you think could be the long term effect of your children participation in RoH? How will it influence their future?

14. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?

*Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the FGD. Your answers are valued, very much appreciated and will remain strictly confidential.*

**Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teachers and Animators**

**RoH III - Final Evaluation**

1. **Purpose of the FGD - Evaluation questions**

   **Relevance**
   
   1. To which extent are RoH objectives and activities answering to the targeted communities needs and context in terms of social cohesion and children development?
   
   2. To which extent are the activities and outputs of RoH relevant to reach the objectives?

   **Effectiveness**
   
   1. To which extent were RoH objectives achieved?
   
   2. What were the internal and external facilitating and hindering factors towards the achievements of the objectives?

   **Potential Impact**
   
   1. What changes happened at the teachers/animators, children, and parents levels and how?

   **Sustainability**
   
   1. To which extent the achievements of the project will continue after the end of the implementation and contribute to its ToC broad objective to strengthen social stability in Lebanon in the long-term (looking at the “ripple effect” of project’s achievements).

   **Project’s specific learning questions**

   1. Evaluation of the Curriculum: relevance of the content, effectiveness of it use and the related capacity building component?
   
   2. To which extent RoH III approach to parents engagement was relevant and effective?
   
   3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the partnerships in terms of implementation and achievements?

2. **FGD Protocol**

Hello everyone and thank you all for coming today.

My name is............ and I am working with Search for Common ground on the evaluation of the Rainbow of Hope project which as funded by the US Embassy in Lebanon and implement in 6 communities across the country in partnership with local organisations.

We are with you today to gather your feedback on the project and to hear your experience and your children’s experience.
Everything that you will share today will remain confidential and no names would be mentioned in the final report. Your participation is voluntary and you can decline to participate or leave the FGD anytime.

- Ask for the participant’s permission to record the discussion
- Inform participants that the FGD will last between 1 hour and 1 hour 30 minutes
- Ask participants if they have any question, inquiry or comment before the start of the FGD
- Ask for the participant’s oral consent to participate in the focus group

### 3. FGD Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Facilitator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Note-Taker</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD starting and ending time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants Breakdown</td>
<td>Teacher Male:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Female:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Were there any particular challenges the children faced when trying to learn? What were their reactions?
12. What do you think could be the long term effect of the children participation in RoH? How will it influence their future?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the FGD. Your answers are valued, very much appreciated and will remain strictly confidential.
Annex 2: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation

Rainbow of Hope III

Search for Common Ground Lebanon seeks to conduct a Final Evaluation for its US Embassy funded project in Lebanon. The assessment should be completed by the 15th September 2017.

Search Lebanon will conduct the Final Evaluation internally through the collaboration of RoH III project team, Search Lebanon DM&EL Manager and Coordinator and ILT Regional DM&E Specialist.

1. Background

1.1. Organization Overview

Search for Common Ground (Search) is a non-governmental organization working to transform the way societies deal with conflicts. We have acquired over 30 years of experience in peacebuilding and are based in 53 local offices worldwide.

Search first worked in Lebanon in 1996, and we opened up our office in Beirut in 2008. Since then, our activities and capacities have grown significantly. We rely on local staff as well as local partner organisations in order to ensure our work is culturally sensitive, sustainable and well grounded in the Lebanese context.

Our Vision

While conflict is inevitable, violence is not! Therefore we work to achieve social change through transforming the way people deal with conflicts – away from violent and adversarial approaches, towards collaborative problem solving.

For more information, visit: https://www.sfg.org/lebanon/ and https://www.facebook.com/sfcg.lebanon.

1.2. Intervention Summary

In partnership with four local non-governmental organisations, Al Hadatha, Utopia, Nabad and Sada al Bekaa, Search implemented, for the third year, a project titled “Rainbow of Hope III”.

Search for Common Ground | LEBANON
The project is based on the following Theory of Change:

*If Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian English teachers and animators are trained to embed conflict transformation principles in their style and curriculum and Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian children are going through a learning and development process together; and Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian parents are actively engaged in the process then social stability in Lebanon will be strengthened in the long-term.*

The project targeted Syrian refugee and host community children and their parents in six communities around Lebanon: Berqayel and Wadi Jamous in Akkar, Nede el Hekmeh in Tripoli, Joub Janine and Riyak in Bekaa, and Ter Debba in South Lebanon.

The overall objective of the action is to **Bridge gaps between Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian children aged 6-11 through extra-curricular channels to strengthen social cohesion in 6 communities in Lebanon.** RoH III aimed to contribute to this goal through reaching the following Specific Objectives:

- **SO 1.** Lebanese and Syrian children aged 6-11 develop respectful and empathetic relationships with one another
- **SO 2.** Syrian and Lebanese teachers and animators embed non-violent conflict transformation and acceptance of the other in their work
- **SO 3.** Lebanese and Syrian parents are jointly engaged and supportive of their children journey

2. **The Final Evaluation**

2.1. **Evaluation’s Objectives**

At the end of the third year of implementation, the Final Evaluation will collect data and provide findings and recommendations on the relevance, the effectiveness, the sustainability and potential impact of the project. Findings analysis will look at any possible differences between communities and between host and refugee stakeholders. In particular, it will answer to the following questions:

**Relevance**
1. To which extent are RoH objectives and activities answering to the targeted communities needs and context in terms of social cohesion and children development?
2. To which extent are the activities and outputs of RoH relevant to reach the objectives?

**Effectiveness**
1. To which extent were RoH objectives achieved?
2. What were the internal and external facilitating and hindering factors towards the achievements of the objectives?

**Potential Impact**
1. What changes happened at the teachers/animators, children, and parents levels and how?

**Sustainability**
1. To which extent the achievements of the project will continue after the end of the implementation and contribute to its ToC broad objective to strengthen social stability in Lebanon in the long-term (looking at the “ripple effect” of project’s achievements).

Project’s specific learning questions

1. Evaluation of the Curriculum: relevance of the content, effectiveness of its use and the related capacity building component?
2. To which extent RoH III approach to parents engagement was relevant and effective?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the partnerships in terms of implementation and achievements?

2.2. Audience

The primary audience of the Final Evaluation will be Search and its donor whom will use its findings and recommendations to feed into future programming. The secondary audience will be the humanitarian, development and peace building community for which recommendations should also emerge from the evaluation in order to improve its programming in terms of social stability in Lebanon and similar contexts.

2.3. Methodology

a) Methodology Approach

Search approach to evaluation is grounded in the guiding principles of its work: participatory, culturally sensitive, committed to building capacity, affirming and positive while honest and productively critical, and valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context.

b) Scope

The evaluation will investigate two principal target groups: host communities and refugees and three type of stakeholders: teachers/animators, children, and parents. The Final Evaluation will collect data from the 6 target communities and from the three groups of stakeholders. The evaluation sample size should adequately cover the project target groups.

c) Methodology

Based on its existing methodology for data collection, Search will adjust its tools according to the lessons learned and will follow a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach.

The evaluation will employ both quantitative and qualitative participatory methods to answer to evaluation questions and provide lessons learned, best practices and recommendations. Data will be collected through:

1. Project’s monitoring tools. Data will be extracted by the project’s team and Search DM&EL Coordinator
2. Focus Group Discussions (1) with teachers, animators, and partners focal points to be conducted by Search Regional DM&E Specialist with note-taking from Search DM&EL Coordinator
3. **Focus Group Discussions (3) with parents’ committees to be conducted by Search Regional DM&E Specialist with note-taking from Search DM&EL Coordinator**

4. **Tentatively: Focus Group Discussions with children (2) to be conducted through a partnership with Gage**

### 3. Implementation Information

#### 3.1. Evaluation Manager

Search Lebanon DM&E and Learning Manager will be ensuring that milestones are met, providing ongoing support to the team during the analysis phase and will sign off on the Final Report with the primary approval of the MENA Regional DM&E Specialist and the final approval of the Lebanon Country Director.

#### 3.2. Location

For data collection purposes (FGDs with parents’ committees), the facilitator and note-taker will have to travel to the 6 project specific locations. The rest of the activities will be conducted in Beirut.

#### 3.3. Responsibilities and deliverables

**Regional DM&E Specialist:**

- Review Final Evaluation ToRs
- Review data collection tools for FGDs developed by the DM&EL Manager
- **Facilitation of 9 FGDs**, 3 in Beirut and 6 in the implementation locations
- Review draft Final Evaluation report

**Project team (with the support of DM&EL Coordinator):**

- Finalise collection of monitoring data
- Extraction and preliminary analysis of monitoring data in line with evaluation questions
- Support in the logistics of the FGDs (contact participants, set schedule, etc.)
- Review the draft Final Evaluation report

**DM&EL Coordinator:**

- Note-taking of FGDs
- Support in the analysis of the data and drafting of the evaluation report

**DM&EL Manager**

- Develop data collection tools
- Analysis of the data and drafting of the Final Evaluation report
- Support in ensuring milestones are met
The **Final Evaluation report will be using Search specific template and written in English**, 30-35 pages excluding annexes, consisting of:

- Table of contents, list of acronyms, abbreviations and list of tables and charts.
- Executive summary of key findings and recommendations – 3-4 pages
- Background information and context analysis presented per key criteria with a brief description
- Evaluation methodology with clear explanation of sampling and limitations, FGDs participants selection and data analysis approach.
- Research findings, analysis, with associated data presented, where appropriate in clear graphs or charts. The findings will include subsections for each evaluation question.
- Conclusion and Recommendations for future similar projects or iteration of the evaluated project. The recommendations should be forward looking and should focus on program design.
- Appendices, which include evaluation ToRs, data collection tools, list of data collection conducted, etc.

**3.4. Evaluation team**

The evaluation team will consist of RoH project’s team, Search Lebanon DM&EL Coordinator and Manager and Search MENA Regional DM&E Specialist.

**3.5. Deadlines**

- ToRs finalisation: June 23, 2017
- Data collection tools finalisation: July 15, 2017
- Finalising data collection: August 5, 2017
- Finalising extraction and preliminary analysis of monitoring data: August 7, 2017
- Deadline for the draft report: September 5, 2017
- Deadline for the final deliverables: September 15, 2017