

PRESS RELEASE

UNICEF calls on all stakeholders to re-open public schools and ensure all children are learning

Beirut, 13 February 2023 – Public school closures in Lebanon for the past six weeks have caused large and persistent damage to children’s learning, mental and physical well-being and safety.

UNICEF acknowledges the dedication and commitment of teachers to their students and understands the negative impact of the economic crisis on their lives. We also recognize the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to secure the allocation of additional domestic funding to support teachers.

It is time now for all stakeholders to come together to ensure that all children get back to school and that learning is never interrupted again.

We continue to sound the alarm on the education crisis. When schools close, early marriage increases, sexual exploitation and abuse of children and child labour rise. The impact will be devastating on the future and well-being of children and youth, their families, and Lebanon’s prosperity. The World Bank in a report¹ estimates that a lost year of schooling would translate into losses to the Lebanese economy of up to US\$2.5 billion in the coming years.

UNICEF, together with the international community will continue our long-standing support to the education sector to ensure that all children in Lebanon have access to education.

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About UNICEF

Working in Lebanon for over 70 years, UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

For more information about UNICEF Lebanon and our work for children, visit www.unicef.org/lebanon/

Learn more on the situation of children and UNICEF’s work in Lebanon in 2020: www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/5681/file

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¹ 2022, World Bank unpublished report: Another Lost Year? Cost-Benefit Analysis of Keeping Lebanon’s Public Schools Open in 2022-23