



BREAKING BARRIERS: ENHANCING RETENTION AND SOCIAL STABILITY THROUGH PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VULNERABLE LEBANESE AND REFUGEE STUDENTS IN LEBANON



LOCATION

Bekaa, Lebanon



DURATION

1 April 2021 → 31 March 2022



BUDGET

EUR 57,532



PRIORITY AREA

- Completion of Higher and Further Education
- Access to the Labour Market

LEAD INSTITUTION



OBJECTIVES

- To support young Lebanese and Syrian refugee students in completing their education and developing soft skills for the labour market which will contribute to improving their chances for a better life and for building more peaceful communities
- To enhance the access of students to a practical online resource for individual and group learning supporting psycho-social wellbeing and personal development



BENEFICIARIES

- **Young students** between the ages of 16-25,
- **Universities, NGOs working on livelihoods (VT)**, education and social stability (youth programmes) and individual trainers and counsellors working with vulnerable youth and students,
- **56 students participated in the course testing** and co-design sessions,



26



30

- **More than 133 participants** from organisations working on education



ACTIVITIES

- The development of a practical online course entitled Towards Success and Wellbeing: 21st Century skills available in English and in Arabic, free of charge for individual asynchronous learning: <https://campus.kiron.ngo>,
- Co-design sessions and testing of the course with students and education practitioners through meetings, workshops before and after completion,
- Launching webinar with educators, practitioners and students,
- Promotion and dissemination of the course through info sessions, social media, brochures.

After the project end:

- 104 students have completed the online course,
- Info sessions with 32 educators and NGO workers in Bekaa and Tripoli,
- Blended peer-to-peer sessions with 145 Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian students in Bekaa and Tripoli



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HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES & PERSPECTIVES

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE LEAD INSTITUTION

The HOPES-LEB funded project allowed International Alert to develop its first online resource for youth focusing on 21st century skills and conflict resolution. The online course merged in an engaging and creative way learning objectives relevant to young people's employability and to their participation in promoting stability and peace in their communities. The project was also unique in its ability to engage students in co-designing a course. Alert worked with a mixed Lebanese-Syrian youth group in the Bekaa to choose the name of the course, collect feedback on the animated characters, and review the exercises in all 5 sections of the course. In follow-up to the HOPES-LEB funded project, the same youth received a Training for Trainers (ToT) and led peer learning blended sessions targeting Lebanese and Syrian students.

The project inspired multiple collaborations and synergies: a fund from the global End Violence Fund (Safe to Learn initiative) was utilized as co-funding to support the course development. A follow-up project on strengthening local capacities for social stability funded by the Regional Development and Protection Program (RDPP) used the course as a key tool for learning. Additional funding by the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Foundation was used to disseminate the course to educators and NGO workers who can use it for blended work with students or promote it for asynchronous independent learning.

Alert's main learning from the project can be summarized as follows:

- In the current context, there is a recognized need from educators in schools, non-formal education centres, vocational training programmes to harness education to strengthen social stability. The development of accessible tools and training educators on their use should be an integral part of efforts to develop students' skills, knowledge and attitudes and enable young women and men to be active voices for social stability in their schools, universities and communities. Student support programmes should cater to students' wellbeing in times of crisis and equip young women and men with 'life skills' and skills to deal with adversity and conflict constructively and non-violently and offer an opportunity to connect and grow one's social capital.

- Students prefer blended learning modalities to asynchronous online courses. Therefore, tools that can be used in different settings are preferred.
- Students are not just beneficiaries of education programmes. They have the capacity, commitment and sensitivity to be resource designers and peer-educators. Educational programmes need to ensure students' voices are included from the early stages of programme and resource design.
- Funding for online learning platforms has diminished after the end of the pandemic. This poses a risk to the use of existing resources, which remain available on platforms but online technical assistance to students is less available.

The HOPES-LEB programme created an opportunity for new partnerships. Alert partnered with Kiron – another HOPES-LEB grantee – who provided hosting for the online course. Partnering with Kiron has not only allowed us to share the course with thousands of learners, it also enabled Alert to gain the knowledge and confidence to navigate online learning spaces and make peacebuilding practical and accessible to young people.

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