

Girls' educational needs in Libya

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Question

What do previous assessments identify as the key needs for girls to access education in Libya?

- a) What is the current situation of education in Libya, disaggregated by gender, age, region, ethnicity?*
- b) What are the challenges/barriers hindering access to education for children (particularly girls) in Libya?*
- c) What are other donors and multilateral organisations doing in this space?*
- d) What gaps / unanswered questions require addressing through further primary research?*

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1. Summary

Access to education is a basic human right. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to ensure women and girls enjoy equal access to quality education, to fulfil their individual potential and for the wider benefits to society. Moreover in conflict-affected states, schools provide stability, structure and a protective environment for children (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2017, p. 41).

Girls' – and boys' – education in Libya has been affected by the ongoing conflict. Seven years on from the 2011 crisis, three governments compete for power, with deep divisions along political, geographic, religious and ethnic lines (Freedom House, 2018; OCHA, 2017, pp. 7-8). Fighting continues in populated areas, and there is an environment of deepening vulnerability for the population at large with a proliferation of weapons and autonomous militias, and a rapidly deteriorating economy and public sector (Freedom House, 2018; OCHA, 2017, p. 7).

This rapid review focuses primarily on primary and secondary education in Libya (with some headline findings on pre-school and tertiary education). It provides a summary of available data on the overall educational situation and looked in particular for information on girls' education. There is limited recent data on education in Libya, with data collection and verification very difficult for a number of years (Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), 2018, p. 163). International organisations have been operating remotely, largely from Tunisia, since 2014². Data on damage to school infrastructure and impact on educational provision, attendance and results is limited, with gaps in information. There is no nationwide data for a number of SDG indicators, including on educational enrolment and results. There is little gender-disaggregated data or analysis, or on children with disabilities.

Key findings

Before 2011

- **Libya had met the education Millennium Development Goals.** Key achievements included: universal access for primary and secondary education with no significant gender disparity; enrolment in higher education comparable to middle-income countries; and one of the highest literacy rates for women (and men) in the region. Improved access particularly benefited girls, with enrolment rates exceeding boys from the age of 12 (World Bank, 2009b, p. 74).
- **However, educational quality was a concern.** Issues included: limited pre-primary school provision; high repetition rates and poor learning outcomes; and a lack of coordinated investment planning and management, with uncontrolled staff recruitment and underserved poorer, rural regions (World Bank, 2009; Libya Ministry of Education (MoE), 2012, p. 10).

Impact of the conflict since 2011

- **The protracted crisis since 2011 has damaged vital education infrastructure, and impacted on the education system's delivery, outreach, coverage, retention and**

² Accessed 15 August 2018. <https://www.acaps.org/country/libya>

quality, with some areas affected more than others (OCHA, 2018, p. 29; UNESCO, 2017, p. 1).

- The conflict is affecting 489 schools (just over 10% of all schools) to varying degrees, impacting on the education of 244,500 children (OCHA, 2017, p. 41).
- While in 2015 there was a reported average drop in school enrolment rates of 20% across the country (21% boys / 17% girls), in 2017 gross enrolment was 96.7% for children in primary and secondary school, including almost global enrolment of displaced Libyan children (OCHA 2017, p. 11; UNICEF, 2018c, p. 3).
- However, areas with the most acute needs (experiencing ongoing conflict and/or have large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs)) have more severe educational needs. A 2017 assessment of eight areas with a large number of IDPs and the greatest needs found around 30% of school-aged children were not enrolled (REACH, 2017b, p. 2, 10; REACH, 2017a, p. 8, 49)
- In 2018 an estimated 300,000 children are estimated to be in need of emergency education support. This includes: 67,000 IDPs; 79,000 returnees; 121,000 non-displaced children; 32,000 refugees and migrants (OCHA, 2017, p. 41).
- **In 2017 the majority of households with school-aged children (87.3%) reported facing no barrier to accessing education; IDP households were more likely to report barriers. For those that did report barriers, the most common challenges were the distance to school and not being able to afford educational services –** with IDPs most likely to be affected by the cost (REACH, 2017a, p. 3). Other issues limiting attendance and/or leading to children dropping-out of school included:
 - Families keeping children at home due to perceived or actual danger of violence, or due to their involvement in household work or employment.
 - Occupation of schools by IDPs (especially in East Libya).
 - Children’s health, including conflict-induced psychological distress, affecting their ability to attend school and learn.
 - Discrimination faced by some IDP, migrant and refugee children.
 - Low quality of the school provision (due to lack of supplies; teacher shortage; and weak classroom assessment and examination quality, among other factors).

Focus on girls

- **In addition to being affected by the above challenges, girls are particularly vulnerable to violence and insecurity in Libya – with negative impacts on their education.** With women and girls suffering severe human rights offences (including sexual and gender-based violence) during the conflict years, women and girls’ access to the public sphere – including going to school in some areas – has been restricted (Freedom House, 2018; UNDP, 2015, p. 5; Idris, 2017, p. 2).
- **The most vulnerable girls (and boys) are in active conflict locations, migrant families, and unaccompanied displaced children** (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 3). Other vulnerable girls (and boys) are in hard-to-reach areas where freedom of movement and access to services is limited; engaged in child labour or recruited by armed groups; with disabilities; and adolescent girls at risk of early or forced marriage (OCHA, 2017). Ethnic minority children are also vulnerable to exclusion from education (Taha, 2017, p. 6).

- **Girls' educational needs are shaped by multiple, intersecting factors** such as location, tribal affiliation, presence of armed militias and organised crime, social norms driving gendered experiences including harmful practices such as child marriage, and the lack of adequate school WASH facilities, among others (Larsson and Mannergren, 2014, p. 21). However, there is little analysis that looks at the impact of these issues on girl's education in Libya.

Donor activities

- **UNICEF is the main provider of education assistance (humanitarian and developmental) in Libya**, and facilitates the Education Sector Working Group under the leadership of the MoE. A small number of donors (multilaterals and bilaterals) also provide support.
- **With a budget of USD 5.3 million, the 2018 Humanitarian Response Programme aims to reach 133,450 school-aged children** (out of the 300,000 children in need), targeting the most vulnerable, especially those living in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas (UNICEF, 2018a, p. 1). This includes a focus on girls, children with disabilities and minorities. The two key objectives are: 1) providing the most vulnerable children with access to education, psychosocial support and provision of education in emergencies supplies; and 2) strengthening the capacity of education personnel (OCHA, 2018, p. 47).

Key information gaps

- **There is a lack of data on net enrolment; out-of-school children; repetition, dropouts and completion; geographical disaggregation; access to school in remote and desert areas.**
- **There is no in-depth qualitative analysis of girls' educational needs in Libya today.** In particular there appears to be limited analysis unpacking the multiple, inter-sectional factors that shape girls' educational needs.
- There are unpublished and ongoing assessments of various aspects of the education system in Libya, as well as initiatives to strengthen Libya's education data. **Further information on these assessments and initiatives is required** to identify remaining information gaps that may require additional primary research.

2. Education in Libya

Background

As of 2017, the Libyan population was estimated at 6.5 million: 49% female and 40% children (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 2). For children aged six to fifteen, the first nine years of education are compulsory (since 1975) and free in principle (World Bank, 2009b, p. 74). Secondary education covers grades 10 to 12 (fifteen to eighteen year olds)³. According to the 2011-2012 nationwide assessment by the MoE (with support from UNICEF), there were 4,800 schools in the country, 10.5% of which were private schools (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 10).

³ Accessed 30 July 2018. <https://www.epdc.org/country/libya>

With substantial public investment, prior to the 2011 crisis Libya achieved universal access for primary and secondary education, and enrolment in higher education comparable to middle-income countries (World Bank, 2009a, p. 23). Libya had one of the highest literacy rates in the region – 88% (95% for men; 81% for women) compared with the average of 72% of the Arab States. The youth literacy rate (15 – 25 years old) was 100%. (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 13, citing UNESCO, 2011, pp. 274-275)

However, while the education MDGs were achieved in Libya, the quality of education was a concern (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 14; World Bank, 2009b, p. 73). The Global Competitiveness Report for 2010-2011 ranked Libya 128 for primary education and 138 for secondary education of 139 countries (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 4). Key shortcomings included high repetition rates, poor results in learning outcomes and considerable inequity of learning outcomes by district; and a lack of coordinated investment planning and management, leading to uncontrolled hiring of staff.

Age profile

Pre-primary education is not accessible to most of the population: provided by the private sector, it is not compulsory (UNICEF, 2017b, p. 9). According to the preliminary data of an out-of-school children study⁴, a significant number of pre-primary school aged children are out of school (OCHA, 2017, p. 41). The World Bank reports that in 2015 only 18% of 5 year olds were in early childhood education programmes⁵.

In 2006 the gross enrolment ratio⁶ was 9% for pre-primary education, 110% for primary and 93% for secondary⁷ (Libya MoE, 2012, p.13). Drop-out rates in the 2009 study were low, with average rates of: 0.6% in primary education, 2.8% in lower secondary, 2.3% in upper secondary, and 1.2% in higher education (World Bank, 2009b, p. 84). In 2010, 68% of enrolled students successfully completed secondary school, and 102,270 students out of 149,518 passed the last grade final exam. (Libya MoE, 2012, p.14) More recent nationwide data was not found.

Gender profile

Female youth (15-24 years) literacy rose from 61% in 1997 to almost 100% in 2008⁸ (WFP and FAO, 2011, p. 4). More recent data was not found.

Pre-crisis data showed fairly even numbers of girls and boys participating in pre-primary (GPI 0.97 in 2006) and primary levels (GPI 0.95 in 2006), and more girls than boys participating in secondary education (GPI 1.17 in 2006) (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 10). In 2009 the World Bank found improved access had particularly benefited girls, with enrolment rates exceeding those of boys

⁴ This review was not able to source a copy of this study.

⁵ Accessed 15 August 2018: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/libya/publication/ecd2015>

⁶ Libya MoE (2012, p.13) found it noteworthy that age-adjusted data on enrolment are not available, so it is not possible to calculate the net-enrolment rate at any level of education

⁷ World Bank (2009b, p. 72) reports slightly different statistics: a coverage ratio of 6.1% for the relevant age group (aged 3 to 5) for pre-primary school, and “the gross enrollment ratios are 114 percent for primary education (Because of the early inscription and the adoption of domestic education), 124 percent for basic education, 81 percent for secondary education, and 38 percent for higher education (not including enrollment in the private sector of higher education and students abroad)”.

⁸ Save the Children state on their website that only 42% of girls 15 and older are literate but the source of this statistic is not known. Accessed 31 July 2018. <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/where-we-work/greater-middle-east-eurasia/libya>

from age 12 (World Bank, 2009b, p. 74). The 2012 MoE assessment found 1,246,121 students enrolled, of which 51% were boys, and 49% girls, with the proportion of male and female students roughly equivalent among regions (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 23).

It is not known what proportion of girls (compared with boys) are going on to tertiary education. The most recent data found is for 2011/2012, when 59% of the 341,841 students were female and 41% male⁹. The IFES 2013 Libya Status of Women survey found that the overwhelming majority of young Libyan women (77%) intended to pursue either a college/university education (40%) or a post-graduate education – master’s degree or doctorate (36%) (Abdul Latif, 2013, p. 39). UNICEF (2018d, p. 4) reports that “Technical and vocational education is generally given less importance than the traditional curriculum and enrolment of girls is particularly low”.

Regional profile

Libya has a highly urbanised population: 79% of the population live in urban areas, with the vast majority in large cities in the North, Tripoli and Benghazi in particular¹⁰ (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 2). Population density varies widely across regions, from above 1,273 persons / km² in Tripoli to below 1 person / km² in the desert regions of the south¹¹, each situation has particular challenges for education provision.

However, UNICEF (2018d, p. 3) finds that “the quality, inclusivity and relevance of education and the disparities between regions are of concern”. Both the 2009 World Bank Public Expenditure Review (PER) and the 2012 MoE assessment highlighted significant pre-crisis geographic disparities in access to basic services between the different regions of Libya, with poorer, rural areas as a rule underserved (in terms of students-teacher ratio, classroom size, and provision of facilities and materials) and with poorer educational outcomes (World Bank, 2009b, pp. 84, 93; Libya MoE, 2012, pp. 10-11). At the same time Libya MoE (2012, p. 25) found school infrastructure in highly populated urbanised coastal provinces was strained by the high number of students.

3. Impact of the conflict

The protracted crisis since 2011 has damaged vital education infrastructure, and impacted on the education system’s delivery, outreach, coverage, retention and quality (OCHA, 2018, p. 29; UNESCO, 2017, p. 1).

Access to education was severely compromised in 2014 and 2015 (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Libya (OHCHR), 2016, p. 73). In 2015 the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) reported an average drop in school enrolment rates of 20% across the country (21% boys / 17% girls) (OCHA, 2015, p. 11). Benghazi was the most affected province with enrolment rates as low as 50%, with 73% of schools no longer functional (OCHA, 2015, p. 11). Nearly 2,000 schools were reported destroyed or damaged between 2011 and mid-2013. This damage appears to have lessened in recent years – reduced to 100-200 reported

⁹ Accessed 31 July 2018: <https://www.acaps.org/country/libya/country-profile> (The original source cited by ACAPS (European Commission 07/2012) was not found.)

¹⁰ Accessed 15 August 2018: <http://monitor.icef.com/2014/07/libya-struggling-to-meet-massive-demand-for-higher-education/>

¹¹ Data from 2009 cited in Libya MoE, 2012, p. 13.

attacks between 2013 and 2017 – although data challenges make it difficult to reach a firm conclusion. (GCPEA, 2018, pp. 35-36)

In 2017 gross enrolment was reportedly up to “96.7 per cent for children in primary and secondary school, including almost global enrolment of displaced Libyan children” (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 3). The latest assessment finds that the conflict is currently affecting just over 10% of schools, in total around 489 schools (OCHA, 2017, p. 41). Of those, 40 have been fully damaged, 423 partially damaged, and 26 are accommodating IDPs. This is impacting on the education of around 244,500 Libyan students. In addition an estimated 160,178 child refugee and migrants are in need of education. (OCHA, 2017, p. 41)

The May-June 2018 round of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessment by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – covering all 100 *baladiyas* (administration level 3) – reported that: (IOM DTM, 2018a, p. 17)

- 80-100% of public schools were operational in 90 *baladiyas*
- 61-80% of schools were operational in 6 *baladiyas*
- 41-60% of schools were operational in 1 *baladiya* (Rigaldeen).
- 97% of *baladiya* reported that the majority of students were attending schools regularly.
- 3% of *baladiya* reported irregular attendance of students in Ubari, Derna and Janzour.

A MSNA of eight locations – prioritised as having a high concentration of displaced populations and where needs were expected to be the greatest¹² – found that: (REACH, 2017b, p. 2, 10; REACH, 2017a, p. 49)

- 67.5% (or 69.5%¹³) of school-aged children (from 4 to 17 years old) were enrolled in formal education and nearly all enrolled children were attending school (68.4% or 67%¹⁴).
- 89.4% of non-displaced households (HHs) with school-aged children report their children faced no barriers to accessing education, compared with 82% IDPs and 93.8% returnees.
- 20.6% (or 32.2%¹⁵) of HHs with school-aged children reported that one or more children in their households were attending some form of non-formal education¹⁶.

Regional impact

In 2018 OCHA identified which areas of the country have the most severe and critical needs across multiple sectors. The areas with the most acute needs have experienced ongoing conflict;

¹² REACH did two rounds of multi-sector data collection in June and August, surveying 2,978 households in 8 Libyan *mantikas*. The first round covered three locations: West: Mantika of Al Jabal Al Gharbi; South: Mantika of Sebha; East: City of Derna. The second round covered five locations: West: Mantikas of Tripoli, Misrata, Al Margab; South: Mantika of Ghat; East: Mantika of Benghazi. (REACH, 2017a, p. 8)

¹³ The main MSNA report states 69.5% (REACH, 2017a, p. 49); the MSNA education sector brief 67.5% (REACH, 2017b, p. 10).

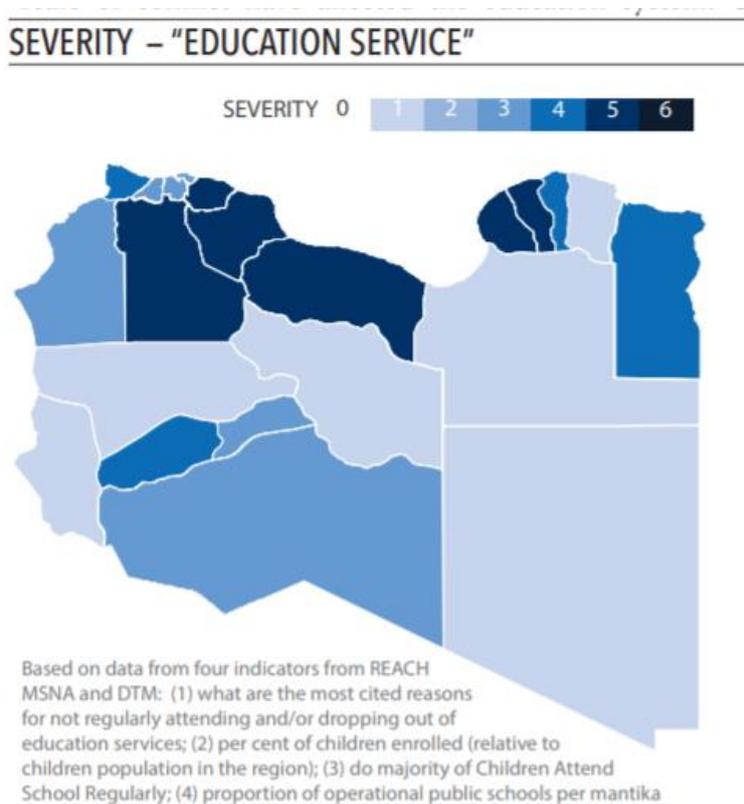
¹⁴ The main MSNA report states 68.4% (REACH, 2017a, p. 49); the MSNA education sector brief 67% (REACH, 2017b, p. 10).

¹⁵ The main MSNA report states 32.2% (REACH, 2017a, p. 49); the MSNA education sector brief 20.6% (REACH, 2017b, p. 10).

¹⁶ “Non-formal education’ was defined as any kind of education provided by uncertified staff and which does not give access to any official education certification” (REACH, 2017a, p. 49)

have limited job markets and public services; and/or are further strained by IDPs¹⁷ (OCHA, 2017, pp. 28-29). OCHA (2018) has ranked the *mantikas* (administration level 2¹⁸) in order of the severity of their educational needs – taking into consideration four indicators – see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Severity of educational needs by *mantika*



Source: OCHA, 2017, p. 16

In 2017, Benghazi, Tripoli and Al Margab had the highest proportion of HHs reporting barriers to accessing education (19.9%, 13.6% and 13.5% of HHs respectively) (REACH, 2017a, p. 49). The top three reported barriers are: 1) distance to the educational facility is too far; 2) cannot afford educational services; and 3) route to educational facility is unsafe. The main reasons cited were inability to afford educational services (42.2%) and inability to continue their children’s education due to displacement (24%). (REACH, 2017a, p. 49)

In 2018 Benghazi is one of the most conflict-affected areas in Libya, ranked as a level six “catastrophic problem” in terms of severity of needs, matched only by Tripoli (ACTED, 2018, p. 1). Benghazi hosts the largest number of IDPs in the country (29,790 individuals) and the largest number of returnees (180,300 individuals) (IOM DTM, 2018a, p. 8). A number of the reports highlight that education in Benghazi has been particularly affected by the crisis, with schools having been either damaged, destroyed, occupied by internally displaced persons,

¹⁷ Six *mantikas* – Sirt, Ghat, Derna, Benghazi, Aljara and Zwara – are considered to have the most severe cross-sectoral needs (OCHA, 2018, p. 29).

¹⁸ “Libya is divided into four types of administrative areas: 3 *regions* (admin level 1), 22 *mantikas* or districts (admin level 2), 100 *baladiyas* or municipalities (admin level 3), and *muhallas*, which are similar to neighbourhoods or villages (admin level 4)” (REACH, 2017b, p. 10).

converted into military or detention facilities, or otherwise dangerous to reach (Save the Children, 2015, p. 35; OHCHR, 2016, p. 53). The 2017 MSNA found 76.6% of school-aged children of HHs assessed in Benghazi were enrolled in schools while 1.2% of HHs had one or more children who had dropped out of formal education services (REACH, 2017c, p. 13)

4. Vulnerable children

The 2018 HCR estimates that a total of 300,000 children are in need of education in emergency support. The most affected population groups are: 67,000 child IDPs; 79,000 child returnees; 121,000 non-displaced children; and 32,000 child refugees and migrants (as per DTM round 12) (OCHA, 2017, p. 29, 41). OCHA (2017) also identifies other population groups deemed to be particularly vulnerable and exposed to protection risks during the ongoing crisis. These groups are an indication of the type of children vulnerable to missing out on an education:

- Unaccompanied and separated children
- Children living in conflict-affected areas, or in areas contaminated with explosive hazards, or in hard-to-reach areas where freedom of movement and access to services remain extremely limited and challenging.
- Children engaging in child labour or recruited for military purposes
- Children living in crowded spaces (collective centres, with host families) who may be at greater risk of domestic violence.
- Children with disabilities
- Adolescent girls at risk of early or forced marriage.
- Children living in overburdened host communities experiencing a scarcity of resources and competition over services provision.
- Children living in displaced female-headed households, who are often unemployed with no income.

Children with disabilities

Children with physical and mental disabilities have had difficulties in accessing any form of education, facing discrimination in schools or often completely excluded from the formal education system (Save the Children, 2015, p. 36; UNICEF; 2018d, p. 4). The 2012 MoE nationwide assessment found a “strikingly low” proportion of students with disabilities, with only 4% of schools with provisions for students with special needs (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 10, 28). There was better provision for students with special needs in the urbanised north (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 10).

Ethnicity

Libya is home to more than 140 tribes and clans. There is little data disaggregating Libya’s ethnic educational profile, either pre- or post- 2011. Reports highlight widespread political and cultural marginalisation and exclusion of Toubou and Tuareq communities – Libya’s two principal non-Arab ethnic minority groups in the least developed southern parts of the country (Howard, 2014; Taha, 2017, p. 6). Most members of these communities have been denied official Libyan citizenship and cannot access many educational and other opportunities (Taha, 2017, p. 6).

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers¹⁹

According to the latest IOM estimates (May-June 2018), Libya is currently hosting 679,897 migrants of which 8% are children; 33% of these migrant children are unaccompanied (IOM DTM, 2018b, p. 3). These migrant children are highly vulnerable. They “have experienced multiple rights deprivations, including arbitrary detention; lack of access to family, education, protection – including from all forms of violence and exploitation – health care, adequate nutrition and living environment; and lack of time or space to play” (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 3).

Education is not free for many migrant children. While long-term Syrian and Palestinian refugees get free access to education, other refugee and asylum seekers have to pay.²⁰ In 2011 WFP and FAO (2011, p. 4) found fees could reach up to USD 2,000 per child per year.

There is a lack of data on migrant children’s school attendance rates (ACAPS, 2016, p.11). OCHA (2015) reported 43% of refugee households with school-aged children were not regularly attending school, while the 2018 international humanitarian response identifies some 32,000 migrant and refugee children in need of emergency education support (OCHA, 2018).

Internally displaced children and returnees

The conflict has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, with indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas and destruction of civilian property (GCPEA, 2018, p. 163). There are around 192,513 internally displaced people in Libya (IOM DTM, 2018a, p. 3). Some 67,000 child IDPs and 79,000 child returnees need emergency education support (OCHA, 2017, p. 41).

Many children are residing in camps for displaced persons, without access to proper education facilities (Home Office, 2018, p. 23). Meanwhile host communities can struggle to cope with the influx of people. While most IDPs are in rented accommodation, some are in collective centres, including schools where there can be poor conditions. OCHA (2017a, p. 17) reported that the top five *mantikas* with the highest numbers of IDPs in rented accommodation and collective centres were Benghazi (36,430); Misrata (23,360); Tripoli (19,140); Al Jabal Al Gharbi (15,827); and Ejdabia (14,425).

Approximately over 372,741 returnees have returned home (IOM DTM, 2018a, p. 3). OCHA (2018, p. 33) notes that in the first few months of return from displacement, families often need assistance to avoid negative coping strategies (such as reducing expenditure on education). Meanwhile some communities remain displaced unable or unwilling to go home because homes and livelihoods have been destroyed or due to fear of attacks. For example some 40,000 members of the Tawergha community (displaced since 2011) remain scattered throughout the country. (OCHA, 2018, p. 13)

The 2017 assessment by REACH found a higher proportion of school-aged IDP children (5%) dropped out of formal education compared with 1.5% of non-displaced and 2.8% returnees (REACH, 2017a, p. 49). The highest drop-out rates were found among school-aged children from IDP households in Benghazi (5.3%), Misrata (6%), Tripoli (6.4%), Sebha (6.6%) and Al

¹⁹ Svoboda (2016, p. 4) reported that Libya’s legal framework does not distinguish between irregular migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers and victims of trafficking. All are considered to be ‘illegal migrants’, subject to fines, detention and expulsion, and have limited access to healthcare, education and legal support.

²⁰ Accessed 15 August 2018. <https://www.acaps.org/country/libya/country-profile>

Margab (8.9%). The same assessment found that returnee children of school age showed slightly worse attendance rates (61.5%) compared to other population groups (68.8% attending for non-displaced, 67.5% for IDP households) (REACH, 2017a, p. 49).

5. Barriers and challenges

For all children

Intersectional analysis (taking into account a child's gender, age, disability, ethnicity, location, household food security and income status and other factors) is needed to understand the challenges faced by individual children. There is little of this type of analysis available to understand how individual children's access to education is affected.

In the 2017 MSNA, households with school-aged children reported facing no barrier in 87.3% of cases; 5.8% reported the distance to educational facilities and 1.9% reported the inability to afford educational services (REACH, 2017a, p. 3). The full list of barriers households reported included (in no particular order): 1) distance too far; 2) cannot afford it; 3) no space for new pupils; and 4) missed enrolment deadlines (for returnees). Meanwhile the top reasons reported for children dropping out of school were (in no particular order) 1) household work or employment; 2) health reasons; 3) no quality education available; 4) can't afford it; 5) education interrupted due to displacement; 6) poor performance. (REACH, 2017b, p. 10)

REACH (2016, p. 54) highlighted that in East Libya security concerns overtook other commonly reported challenges to access from June 2015. The primary barrier was the use of schools as temporary centres for IDPs. Other challenges reported to REACH (2016) included unsafe route to school, unsafe school buildings, lack of school supplies, no space at school for new pupils, lack of teaching staff and lack of transportation.

Safety

Some civilians are trapped between frontlines; some are unable or feel unsafe to move, which will affect being able to go to school (OCHA, 2018, p. 11). For example, in Aljara and Sebha, almost 100% of surveyed respondents feel they cannot move safely due to insecurity, closure of roads and threat/presence of explosive hazards²¹ (OCHA, 2018, p.11).

According to MoE staff, families who have access to functioning schools are often not sending their children to school due to the perceived or actual danger of children becoming victims of violence, especially in urban centres. (Save the Children, 2015, p. 36) GCPEA reported that increasingly common abduction of civilians by armed groups was negatively affecting school attendance, with sporadic cases of students and educators being individually targeted for attacks and parents keeping their children away from school in response (GCPEA, 2018, p. 165, citing news reports²², Amnesty International, 2015 and OHCHR, 2016, p. 73).

²¹ The presence of explosive hazards, including landmines, unexploded or abandoned ordnance, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) is a persistent threat. Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) has been reported in nine out of 22 *mantikas*. Between 2011-2016 Libya has seen 5,891 deaths and injuries from explosive violence; of these, 66% (3,895) were civilians. (OCHA, 2018, p. 12)

²² Accessed 15 August 2018: <https://www.libyanexpress.com/in-libya-children-vanish-without-trace/>

There are other safety issues. For example in 2012 Libya MoE reported that a large number of schools are located in close proximity to highways, particularly in coastal areas, and 35% of these schools did not have access to a crossing point (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 11).

Mental health

The exposure to prevailing violence and the presence of armed groups is affecting the mental health of children and youth. According to MoE staff, most children exposed to conflict are suffering from psychological distress, which affects their ability to learn and regularly attend schools even where schools are regularly functioning (Save the Children, 2015, p. 36). OCHA (2017, p. 41) highlights the need to establish in-school psychosocial support systems for vulnerable children and children and adolescents with special needs, including children severely distressed by the conflict;

Quality of school provision

OCHA (2017, p. 41) reports recurring delays to the start of school for multiple reasons. These include security issues, teacher shortage, delays in receiving text books and the need for building repairs. Children out of school for these months find it hard to return to school and/or acquire minimum learning competencies.

A survey of IDP households by Mercy Corps highlighted parents' reports that the lack of stationaries and education materials affected the quality of education offered, with 50% of respondents finding this caused a significant challenge for students (Mercy Corps, 2016, p. 30).

World Bank's benchmark of student assessment policies and systems – carried out in 2013 – found weak classroom assessment practices as well as limited mechanisms to systematically monitor the quality of examinations (World Bank, 2015)

A 2017 assessment of water quality, sanitation and hygiene in 140 schools found school water quality falling short of international standards. Schools in the west perform more poorly than schools in the east and south, with some requiring immediate attention to avoid the occurrence of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) related disease (Libyan National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC-Libya), 2017, p. 33).

IDPs and financial barriers

IDP households were more likely to report educational barriers – 18% compared with 10.6% for non-displaced and 6.2% for returnees (REACH, 2017b, p.10). For those IDP households that had a child or children who had dropped out of school, the main reasons cited were inability to afford educational services (42.2%) and inability to continue their children's education due to displacement (24%)²³.

²³ REACH (2017a, p. 49) notes that "Findings revolving around reasons for dropouts correspond to a small subset of the population assessed and should therefore be considered indicative rather than representative".

An ACTED survey with households in collective shelters and an informal settlement in Benghazi²⁴ between December 2017 and January 2018 found these households are significantly more vulnerable and more likely to have children who have dropped out of school (ACTED, 2018, p. 5). The main reason for their children not regularly attending and/or dropping out of school is no/lack of money to send children to school and/or pay for transportation to school (30.8%) (ACTED, 2018, p. 4).

Mercy Corps' 2016 survey of IDP households²⁵ found 9% of households with school-aged children not attending school. Of these 54% of respondents said this was because the children were involved in child labour (Mercy Corps, 2016, p. 30).

This highlights the economic vulnerabilities faced by IDP households, who tend to be in more precarious economic situations and may be unable to afford educational services (REACH, 2017a, p. 49). Meanwhile cash liquidity issues have increased prices of basic household items, including educational supplies, particularly for the displaced children (OCHA, 2017, p. 41).

Discrimination

OCHA (2015, p. 29) noted that “there is no reliable, consistent access to public education system for Sub-Saharan African refugees/asylum seekers and migrants due to issues of lack of documentation as well as the stigma of being ‘foreigners’ and the resultant discrimination. This has been accompanied by an unclear legal regime governing access to higher education by foreigners, which has resulted in further restrictions on access to education in western Libya”. The report goes on to highlight that “In eastern Libya, a number of refugees and asylum-seekers are among the internally displaced population in Benghazi and surrounding areas and face the additional challenges of being foreigners among the displaced. The likelihood of refugee children resuming schooling will be different from IDP children in this region.”

In focus group discussions for the 2015 MSNA, participants mentioned that harassment in schools was a problem for some IDP children: “we face harassment in school from teachers as they stigmatize us from the rest of the students by calling us “refugees” and we get bullied by other students” (Female IDP, Misrata) (REACH and JMW Consulting, 2015, p. 26).

Specific challenges for girls

In addition to the above barriers, girls face gender-related challenges to securing an education. Larsson and Mannergren (2014, p. 21) highlight Libyan women (and girls) face multiple, overlapping challenges shaped by a number of dynamics, such as geographical location, livelihood, the presence of state institutions, access to justice, tribal affiliation, access to education, level of social conservatism, proliferation of weapons, and the presence of armed militias and organized crime. However, these “deeply gendered challenges” are rarely analysed in depth (Larsson and Mannergren, 2014, p. 21).

In 2006 Freedom House found that the status of women in Libya was better than in many other Arab countries, with Libyan girls enjoying more access to education than girls in other

²⁴ The survey covered with 162 randomly selected households across five sites – Bodhema, Helis, and Shouhada Bouzgheiba and Abubaker Alrazi School (collective shelters), and the Turkish company (informal settlement for non-displaced households).

²⁵ Mercy Corps surveyed 2,609 IDP households in 20 locations.

neighbouring countries. The 2013 IFES Survey found that large majorities of both men (82%) and women (89%) strongly agree “women and girls should have equal access to education as men and boys.” (Abdul Latif, 2013, p. 34)

However, women and girls have suffered severe human rights offences during the conflict years (Larsson and Mannergren, 2014, p. 21; Freedom House, 2018; UNDP, 2015, p. 5). UNICEF (2018d, p. 3) highlights “girls in Libya are particularly vulnerable to violence and insecurity, most notably migrant women, girls and unaccompanied and separated children on the move”. OHCHR has received credible reports of different armed groups committing sexual and gender-based violence against women, girls and boys, with complete impunity (OHCHR, 2016, p. 49). Migrant women and girls are reported as being the most exposed to sexual and physical abuse (Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, 2018, p. 3). Meanwhile violence against women and girls is underreported due to “weak reporting structures, cultural attributes and practices that link to shame, stigma, and fear of retaliation, a general lack of trust among service providers, and the lack of a multi-sectorial GBV [gender-based violence] referral system and coordination mechanism” (OCHA, 2018, pp. 10-11; OHCHR, 2016, p. 49).

The ongoing insecurity has increasingly restricted women and girls’ access to the public sphere, because families see the need to protect them and thereby safeguard family honour (Idris, 2017, p. 2). Moreover this prevailing experience will have affected girls’ physical and mental health, impacting on their ability to access and benefit from education.

There are reports of actions targeted at girls that specifically mention the negative impact on their access to education:

- Parents have been reluctant to send girls to schools in areas controlled by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). (OCHA, 2015, p. 28):
- “Before January 2017, when ‘IS’ lost control over territory it had held in the eastern cities of Derna and Benghazi and Sirte, the group instituted gender-segregated classes in some areas, closed educational facilities that they alleged contradicted Islam, enforced dress codes, and restricted the movement of women and girls”. (GCPEA, 2018, p. 163):
- Parents in areas of Derna and Benghazi—then controlled by the later dissolved Ansar al-Sharia militant groups – were afraid to send their daughters to school for fear they would be abducted. (OHCHR, 2016, p. 73; GCPEA, 2018, p. 165).
- OHCHR also reported receiving reports that girls had been attacked and harassed on their way to school in Tripoli but GCPEA notes the frequency or precise nature of those threats was not stated. (OHCHR, 2016, p. 73; GCPEA, 2018, p.165)

Another factor that can affect participation in schools, especially of girls, is adequate access to safe and gender-appropriate WASH facilities (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 5). A 2017 assessment found the vast majority of surveyed schools (95.8%) were either not sex-segregated or not usable due to a lack of maintenance and cleaning. The average number of students to a functional toilet was 71 (compared with MoE standards of one toilet for every 25 students). (NDCD-Libya, 2017, p. 3)

Boys and young men

While the focus of this review is on girls’ educational needs, it is important to note that boys and young men also face particular challenges in accessing education in today’s Libya. For example, UNICEF (2018d, p. 3) highlights that “there is significant involvement of boys and young men in

armed groups due to high unemployment, the easy access to weapons and sociocultural factors that encourage youth (particularly boys) to join armed groups". Save the Children (2015, p. 35) found civil society organisations reporting a higher secondary attendance rate for girls than boys, as boys were more likely to drop out of school to either earn an income or join armed groups.

6. Donor activity

There are few donors working on education in Libya (UNICEF, 2017). Challenges include the unpredictable security environment; multiplicity of interlocutors and armed actors; unclear bureaucratic requirements; and limited local civil society capacity (OCHA, 2017, p. 10; UNICEF, 2017b, p. 21). Moreover there is a lack of funding to reach children in need of educational support, particularly the most vulnerable communities in active conflict settings, disabled children, and displaced families (Save the Children, 2015, p. 36). In 2017 UNICEF reported a funding gap for the education sector of 42% (UNICEF, 2017, p. 2). At the same time OCHA (2017, p. 10) highlights the need for humanitarian presence beyond Tripoli, in the east and south: "to address acute needs as well as to counteract perceptions of uneven assistance".

UNICEF is the lead agency providing education assistance (both humanitarian and developmental) in Libya, and facilitates the Education Sector Working Group. UNICEF (2017a) provides this list of Education Sector actors in Libya:

- *Government:* MoE & Ministry of Planning (MoP)
- *National non-governmental organisations:* Boy Scouts and Girls Guides of Libya, Ekraa Assembly for Education and Development, Breezes Organization for sustainable Development in Libya, Libyan Association for Youth and Development, STACO.
- *UN Agencies:* UNICEF (Main Education Provider: development & humanitarian), UNDP (under stabilization fund) & World Bank (Assessment).
- *Donors:* German Government; European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO); US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA); Department for International Development (DFID), UK; European Union (EU); and Government of Sweden.
- *Service Providers for Libya Education Intervention:* British Council, Education Development Trust - UK (former CfBT-Education Trust)

The UNICEF 2017 annual report mentions that UNICEF's three largest donors were Germany, Italy and the European Union (UNICEF, 2017b, p. 2). In the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS), Germany, France and the UK have been the largest bilateral providers of official development assistance to Libya earmarked for educational activities in recent years²⁶.

OCHA 2018 Humanitarian Response

During 2018, humanitarian actors plan to scale up their presence and reach in Libya, with the UN returning to operate in the country (OCHA, 2018, p. 17). The 2018 Humanitarian Response Programme aims to reach 133,450 school-aged children out of the 300,000 children in need,

²⁶ Accessed 31 July. <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>

reaching the most vulnerable, especially those living in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas. The response will target school aged children from grades 1-12 in the east (Benghazi and Derna), in the west (Sirt, Zwara, Tripoli) and in the south (Sebha and Ubari) (OCHA, 2018, p. 41). The targeted groups include 10,154 vulnerable refugee and migrant school-aged children. (UNICEF, 2018a, p. 1). This requires a budget of USD 5.3 million (UNICEF, 2018a, p. 1).

The two main objectives for the education sector are: 1) providing the most vulnerable children with access to nonformal/formal education, psychosocial support within a safe and protective environment and provision of education in emergencies supplies – including a focus on girls, children with disabilities and minorities; and 2) strengthening the capacity of education personnel to provide the vulnerable children equitable access to quality education (OCHA, 2018, p. 47).

OCHA (2018, pp. 29-30) reports that 50% of the children benefiting through the educational services are girls and gender disaggregated data will be provided. The sector will take into account the different needs of adolescent girls and boys based on their age, gender and other specific circumstances. Special attention will be given to providing opportunities for girls, children with disabilities and minorities.

UNICEF

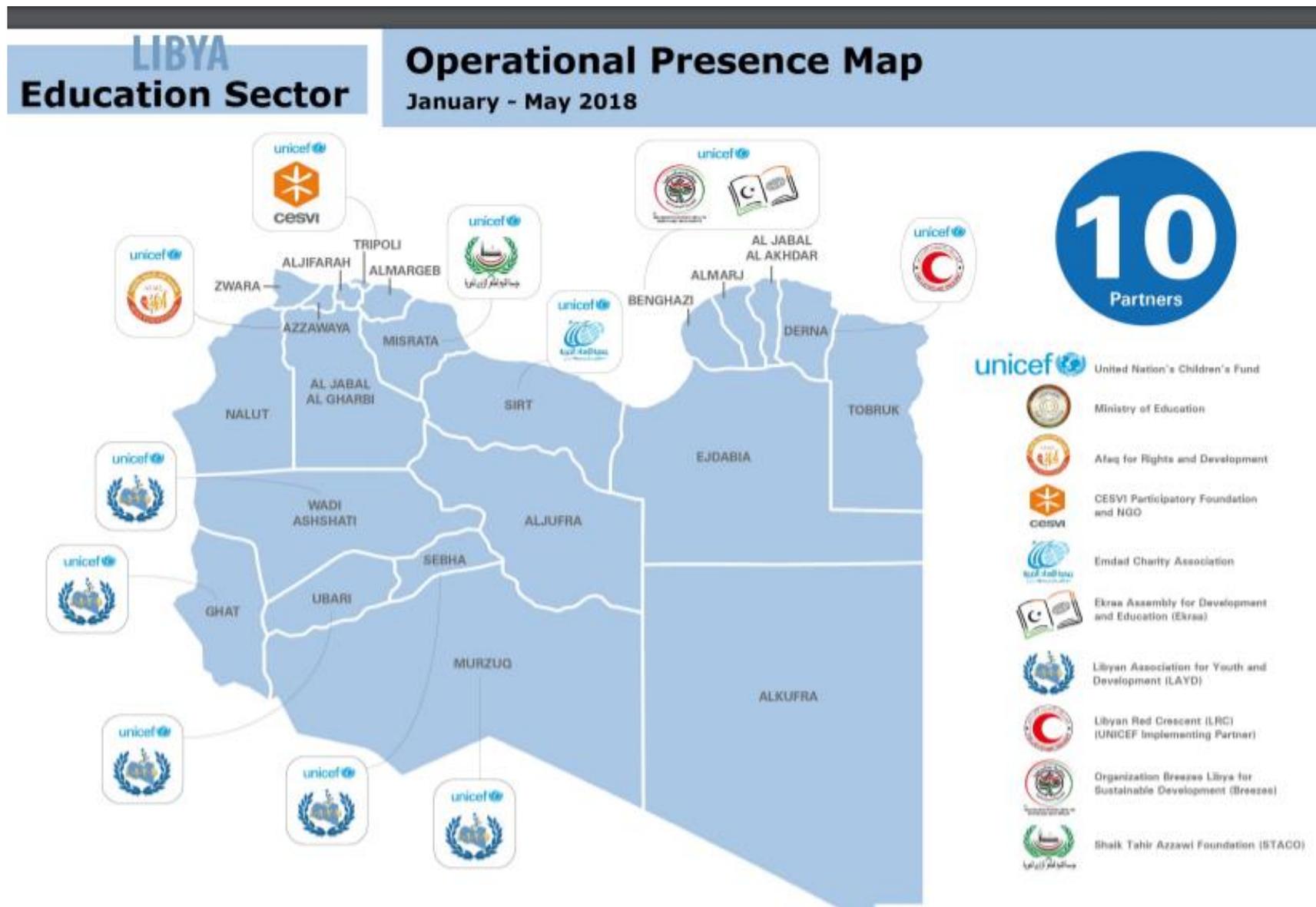
UNICEF is the lead international agency supporting the development of Libya's education and working directly with the Libyan government. It is the primary organisation delivering the OCHA humanitarian response on education. Figure 2 depicts the operational presence of UNICEF and partners working on education in Libya January-May 2018.

In the first half of 2018, UNICEF, in coordination with national partners, provided educational support in the east, west and south of Libya. Mid-year results include: (UNICEF, 2018b)

- Non-formal education, psychosocial support and preschool education classes – 4,936 children (2,532 girls and 2,404 boys) – including 49 children with disabilities.
- Essential learning supplies – over 82,000 girls and boys in conflict affected areas such as Benghazi, Sebratha and Tripoli.
- Psychosocial support through community and school-based Child Friendly Spaces – over 64,000 girls and boys.
- 30 prefabricated classrooms installed in Sirte for 1,000 students (majority returnees).
- Thirty-one teachers in Sirte trained on education in emergencies, mine risk education and psychosocial support – estimated to benefit 1,741 (961 girls and 780 boys) primary school age students (majority returnees).

In 2017, UNICEF Libya reached a total of 89,280 children, of whom 50% (46,884) were girls, through non-formal education, recreational activities, school-based psychosocial support services (including for children affected by gender-based violence), and essential teaching and learning materials (UNICEF, 2017b). Targeted conflict-affected areas were Benghazi in the east, seven cities in the South and Sirte in the west. UNICEF focused on all children in targeted locations, whether they were migrants, refugees, internally displaced, returnees or from host communities. Other activities included teacher training, WASH assessments and installation of facilities, and support to establishing an Education Management Information System (EMIS). (UNICEF, 2017b)

Figure 2: Libya – educational operational presence, May 2018



Source: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/education_sector_libya_0518.pdf

UNESCO

The UNESCO costed plan 2018-2019 aims to respond to Libya's education needs. It includes plans for: 1) urgent interventions (such as rehabilitating universities/schools) to be identified through a scoping mission (indicative cost USD 1-2 million); policy and education sector review (USD 80,000); Institutional capacity development (USD 2 million); and building a monitoring and evaluation system (USD 2 million). (UNESCO, 2017)

World Bank

The World Bank is also providing assistance to the education sector in Libya. The World Bank "is committed to supporting Libya's transition and economic recovery through technical assistance and analytical services, as well as trust fund and grant financing". The World Bank's near-to-medium term objectives for its support to Libya include improving education delivery, to ensure a more predictable and equitable service.²⁷

7. Evidence gaps and future research

Other reports highlight significant gaps in Libya's education data. Prior to the crisis there were significant data gaps, with a lack of data on net enrolment; out-of-school children; repetition, dropouts and completion; geographical disaggregation; and access to school in remote and desert areas (EU, 2011, p. 7; WFP and FAO, 2011, p. 4). ACAPS (2016, p. 1, 11) identifies key information gaps on the functionality of schools and attendance rates, with a lack of regularly updated information on the situation of the population in hard-to-access areas. UNICEF (2017a, p. 1) highlights the need for comprehensive and disaggregated data on key issues related to the situation of children, their families and social service provision.

This rapid review has also found a lack of in-depth qualitative analysis of girls' educational needs in Libya today. In particular there appears to be a lack of analysis unpacking the multiple, inter-sectional nature of girls' education situations and the challenges they face.

There is ongoing and unpublished research and initiatives monitoring and assessment of various aspects of the education system in Libya, as well as initiatives to strengthen Libya's education evidence base, which this review has not seen. A key recommendation is to scope this research fully to identify any remaining information gaps on girls' educational needs which could be filled by additional primary research. The ongoing/unpublished studies identified by this review (and there may be others that this review did not come across):

- A study of out-of-school children.
- A World Bank supported pre-tertiary education study expected to be completed in 2018.
- Monitoring of the 2018 OCHA humanitarian response for the education sector.
- UNICEF Libya and CORAM International plans with the NCDN-Libya to undertake a study on violence against children in schools

²⁷ Accessed 15 August 2018: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/libya/overview#2>

There are also completed and planned multi-sector needs assessments and other monitoring which will cover some education indicators:

- UNFPA, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF undertook a 'Libyan Household Multi-sectoral Needs Assessment', in 2017. This is unpublished (with some results reported in OCHA, 2017).
- The 2018 MSNA (which will update previous MSNAs) is taking place in July-August 2018 (surveying 4,569 households – 2,010 non-displaced, 1,425 IDPs and 1,134 returnee households – across 14 *mantikas* and the municipality of Derna²⁸).
- The regular IOM multi-sector assessments of migrants, IDPs and returnees.
- UNFPA and UNHABITAT 2018 Rapid city profiling and monitoring system – Libyan city profiles covering Benghazi, Sirte, Janzour, Al Kufra, Ubari and Sebha²⁹.

There are also ongoing efforts to strengthen Libya's education evidence base, but this rapid review has found limited information on these. Two key initiatives are:

- UNICEF is supporting the establishment of an Education Management Information System (EMIS) for sector planning and monitoring implementation of education policies (UNICEF, 2017). Further information is required on what data this EMIS is collecting, and what gaps remain.
- UNESCO's plan for 2018-19 includes building a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system (UNESCO, 2017). This rapid review has not ascertained what stage this plan is at, and what data and analysis this M&E system will cover.

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