

# Acute Humanitarian Response in Education – Learning Review

Since 2024, NRC has delivered First-line Education Responses in eight crisis-affected countries. The response modality uses Learning through Play to support children to recover from trauma, build relationships, and prepare for continued learning.

## Background

NRC's **Acute Humanitarian Response in Education**, funded by the LEGO Foundation, ensures flexible funds are earmarked for education needs in acute crises. This funding, **reserved solely for education responses**, has enabled NRC to develop its FLER approach and rapidly deliver critical education support. The funding **supports children aged 5-12+ years**, as well as the caregivers, families, education practitioners, and community members who care for them, by **initiating lifesaving education activities within 42 days**. Since 2024, NRC has delivered FLERs in DR Congo, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Uganda,

With **Learning through Play (LTP)** at the center of the approach, NRC FLER seeks to best meet children's educational, psychosocial, and social-emotional needs in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. Interventions are **contextually tailored** to maximise children's improved wellbeing. Programming often includes the establishment of safe and accessible learning spaces, distribution of teaching and learning materials, training for facilitators, light school feeding, engagement of parents and caregivers, and **LTP sessions for children** inclusive of NRC's flagship Better Learning Programme.

## FLER Parameters

- The most **relevant contexts** are those where communities suffer acute shocks and children need play-based education and MHPSS to recover, reconnect, and be ready for the classroom.
- NRC ensures **capacity** to deliver FLERs through collaboration between specialised country-level Education teams, support from global and regional offices, and critical engagement of operational staff.
- Delivery of FLERs aims to have sessions starting for children within 42 days of the onset of the shock. To date, the **fastest** FLER reached children in just 34 days.
- **Effectiveness** of the modality is increased through pedagogical trainings tailored to crisis contexts and consistent engagement with parents and caregivers.
- FLERs support **children's wellbeing**, with improvements observed in engagement, academic functioning, and emotional regulation.
- **Cost efficiency** is ensured through strict requirements around programme spending and careful strategies to best leverage resources.

## FLER Key Facts

- NRC FLERs funded by the LEGO Foundation have directly supported over **13,800 children** with a further **20,200 children targeted** in new or ongoing responses across **eight countries**.
- FLERs have been initiated in response to **natural disasters**, acute escalations or outbreaks of **internal conflicts**, and to respond to **cross-border displacement**.
- Where economic conditions allow, the cost of implementing a FLER can be as low as **103 USD** per child.
- NRC implements FLER with an **integrated** approach. This includes Shelter and WASH facilities and resources for learners, school feeding, and Protection from Violence programming where contextually relevant.
- In DR Congo and Somalia where programming has concluded and outcome monitoring has been conducted, up to 98% of children report feeling **safe and protected**, 90% of **teachers can replicate key skills covered in trainings**, and 98% of learners report **improved confidence at school**.
- FLERs enable dissemination of **lifesaving** learning to children and their families and can provide an entry point into communities for the delivery of other essential services.
- The **flexibility** of the funding mechanism allows NRC teams to quickly **adapt** programming to respond to dynamic and evolving contexts.
- Selection criteria are strictly applied to ensure that **earmarked funds are used only for FLERs** that meet contextual needs and respect programmatic parameters.
- When strategically planned and delivered, FLERs can help **strengthen formal education systems**. This builds absorption capacities of schools and improves the likelihood that supported children can continue their educational pathways.

## Continuing to Improve

NRC is continuing to strengthen its FLER mechanism. Immediate actions include streamlining the internal application process, refining the LtP content with a phased approach to fit children's recovery processes, and preparing a lifesaving learning package that country teams can contextualise. NRC is also working to improve the rapidity of responses by starting earlier and implementing faster through the integration of lessons learned around programming, operations, and mitigation of contextual challenges.

### Feedback from Communities

**"We want to go to school right away, even though I didn't like school or being around other kids. But you made us love it because of all the fun things you did with us."** A child supported with FLER in Syria talks about their new love of school.

**"We saw our children happy again. They were learning, creating, and coming back home with stories and crafts. It made us feel like they were getting their childhood back."** A parent in Lebanon describes the impact of the LtP approach.

**"The support enabled us to resume education activities even before we expected."** A teacher in Ethiopia comments on the speed of the response.

**"The children who followed the play-based learning are doing so well that we have had distinctions in our school."** A teacher in DR Congo describes how the response supports academic readiness.

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