



Evaluation of the Quality Holistic Learning Pilot Project

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Report prepared for The Center for Professional Learning at

Childhood Education International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Professional Learning at Childhood Education International commissioned RTI International to conduct an evaluation of their pilot of the *Quality Holistic Learning Project*, offered to educators in the Spring of 2022 with a focus on four countries –Kenya, Niger, Lebanon, and Chad. The pilot project involved 7 resources, ranging from facilitated in-person courses to a digital app. We surveyed course participants and compared pre- and post-course responses and interviewed course facilitators and educators. Here is a summary of what we found:

- **Despite the stress of the COVID pandemic and working to serve displaced, refugee, and other vulnerable students, educators volunteered to participate in the QHL pilot, and a remarkable 63% completed it.** For facilitated courses and resources, 65% of participants completed and remarkably, 59% completed the non-facilitated (i.e., self-paced) pilots. These are higher than expected completion rates given the conditions in which many of the educators are working, indicating the need for these QHL resources.
- **The QHL resources helped educators feel prepared to work with refugee, displaced, and vulnerable students and had a significant impact on changing instructional practices.** Educators who completed the piloted courses/resources felt more prepared to work with vulnerable students using social emotional learning (SEL), psychosocial strategies (PSS), and assets-based pedagogies to build on students' strengths. Educators applied a variety of strategies in the classroom, including relaxation techniques, empathic listening, and problem-solving skills. Some educators shifted their mindsets about their most vulnerable students, from punitive to more empathic, as they learned about their circumstances and how trauma impacts the human brain. Research indicates that developing empathy for others helps to counteract implicit and explicit biases about groups of people viewed as "other" and reduces discriminatory practices.
- **The course had a significant impact on changing educators' relationships with students and their feelings about their work.** The focus on SEL, PSS, and assets-based pedagogies helped educators build trusting, caring relationships with students. *Teacher-student relationships was the most frequently and significantly reported change associated with the QHL pilot.* Educators shifted their beliefs about education from a singular focus on academics to supporting the whole child. They reported using strategies to make the learning environment more welcoming for all. Research indicates that humans learn best in circumstances that are safe and supportive, which reduces cognitive load and facilitates focus, attention, and the motivation needed for effective learning. While attending to their students' psychosocial needs, educators learned to attend to their own, reporting significant changes in their joy and confidence as an educator.
- **QHL piloted courses and resources were highly regarded by participating educators.** Facilitators and participants reported changes in their beliefs and practices, and most (over 80%) would recommend the QHL resources and learning format, which is guided by CPL's Sustainable Learning Framework. They valued opportunities to learn together, to reflect, to share materials, and to engage with hands-on learning. Nearly all (95%) reported that the course content had a positive impact on their participation. About a quarter of participants reported difficulties with accessing the course due to infrastructure issues (e.g., internet access, electricity), where self-paced access was helpful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team at RTI International would like to thank the staff of the Center for Professional Learning (CPL) for their support and feedback for this evaluation. Without their assistance in data collection and their support and partnership, this evaluation would not have been possible--this truly was a collaborative team effort.



"...what I learned, which touched me very much, changed my way of teaching and my personality. I must be kind with my learners...they are not just empty containers to be filled with my theories." – Educator and QHL facilitator, Kenya

"This situation is very critical due to the flow of displaced students following the great insecurity that our populations are going through day by day. This very much concerns us and your intervention [QHL] is essential." –Educator, Lebanon

Why focus on Quality Holistic Learning?

In this report, we share outcomes of the Center for Professional Learning *Quality Holistic Learning (QHL)* pilot project. The *QHL* project offers a set of resources for teachers working with students in displacement, migration, and refugee host country contexts. Focused on social emotional learning (SEL) and asset-based pedagogies, *QHL* is embedded in and serves as a foundation for a broader community of practice within the Refugee Educator Academy.

The *QHL Project* was designed with diverse stakeholders to provide professional learning resources and opportunities for teachers working in displacement contexts within larger national education systems. *QHL* focuses on the educators who work with some of the most vulnerable children in our education systems, to change policy, pedagogy, and practice. In 2018, nearly 20% of the global population of school-aged children were out of school, and more than half were not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and math. In 2020, as COVID-19 spread globally, most countries temporarily closed schools, impacting more than 90% of students worldwide, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.¹

According to UNHCR, as of 2021, 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced, most (83%) of whom were hosted in low- and middle-income countries and about 27 million were refugees.² Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide, most of

Quality Holistic Learning

A pedagogical approach that considers learners in all their aspects – academic, emotional, social, physical, and psychological—within a learning program that fosters development in knowledge, competencies, values, and social skills.

– *The Center for Professional Learning*

¹ Statistics reported here are from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

² Statistics quoted here are found at <https://www.unhcr.org>

whom are Syrian, living in extreme poverty. In Niger, there is particular attention on protecting refugee children from sexual exploitation and abuse. Among the refugee population in Kenya, over half are school-aged, and almost half of those children and youth are still out of school. Education protects refugee youth from forceable recruitment into armed groups, from child labor, sexual exploitation, and child marriage. It empowers them with knowledge and skills to live productive, independent lives, and strengthens community resilience.³ The *QHL Project* was designed explicitly to meet the needs of refugee and other displaced and vulnerable students by providing resources to teachers in Kenya, Lebanon, Niger, and other host countries.

The Quality Holistic Learning Project

In 2021, 19 educators from Lebanon, Kenya, and Niger worked as Project Fellows with The Center for Professional Learning (CPL) at Childhood Education International to develop professional learning resources and opportunities focused on holistic learning. Built on the [Sustainable Learning Framework](#), the Fellows and CPL co-designed the [QHL Project](#) to contribute to a continually evolving, healthy learning ecosystem in which knowledge is co-created and shared in a community. In early conversations with educators and project partners in these target countries, SEL and asset-based pedagogies emerged as important professional needs for teachers to support displaced students and other marginalized and vulnerable learners.

In developing the *QHL* resources, CPL and the Fellows considered national curricula, existing professional development (PD) opportunities, infrastructure, and

local constraints (e.g., internet connectivity, political and economic pressures, legal issues for displaced people, large class sizes, and other classroom conditions).



Spring 2022 Pilot Testing

In spring 2022, 11 Fellows continued the work with CPL to review, revise, and pilot test the developed resources shown in **Table 1**.

³ From <https://www.unhcr.org>

Table 1. QHL pilot project educator resources

Resource	Description
Handbook for Holistic Learning: Implementing the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Kenya (English only)	Handbook to support teacher PD in communities of practice, e.g., Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs), in Kenya. Designed to be an introduction to SEL and to support implementation of the CBC and SEL curricula as integrated pedagogies.
Handbook for Holistic Learning, Facilitator's Guide, Kenya (English only)	Facilitation Guide to support leaders of TLCs or faculty in teacher training programs to guide teachers in use of the handbook.
Integrating SEL and Psychosocial Support (PSS) into Lessons for Quality Holistic Learning, Lebanon Online Course (Arabic and English)	Online course created in Lebanon, to be delivered by a facilitator or as a self-paced course. English and Arabic versions, which are similar but not the same.
Facilitator's Guide for SEL and PSS online course, Lebanon (Arabic and English)	Aims to assist facilitators with coordinating learning cohorts and communities of practice to support engagement in the course and application of learning.
Introduction to SEL Workshops (PowerPoint slide decks, handouts, and facilitation guide), Chad and Niger (Arabic, English, and French)	Introductory information about SEL, PSS, and safe, holistic learning spaces for in-person and blended learning PD sessions. Pilot tested in French (in Niger) and Arabic (in Chad).
Intro to SEL and PSS for Quality Holistic Learning, online course (Arabic, French, and English)	Based on workshop materials designed in Niger, this is a self-paced, non-facilitated learning resource. Translated materials in Arabic and French are similar to the English version.
Asset-Based Pedagogies for Quality Holistic Learning, online course (Arabic, French, and English)	Self-paced, non-facilitated introductory course focused on asset-based pedagogies.
SEL and PSS for Quality Holistic Learning micro-credentials (Arabic, French, and English)	Micro-credential or competency-based assessment for teachers focused on SEL and PSS, with English, French and Arabic language instructions.
Asset-based Pedagogies for Quality Holistic Learning micro-credentials (Arabic, French, and English)	Micro-credential or competency-based assessment for teachers focused on asset-based pedagogies, with English, French and Arabic language instructions.
QHL app to support educators	App that can be used online or on Smartphones, for teachers to monitor their own and their students' behaviors and emotional states; to track lessons and outcomes; and to link to QHL and country-specific resources.

Table 2 shows the QHL pilot project timelines and activities.

Table 2. Timeline and activities for the QHL pilot project in spring 2022

LOCATION	DATES (2022)	PILOT ACTIVITIES
Kenya	March 1 – 29	Virtual Learning Circles with colleagues of Senior Fellows in Nairobi and Kakuma
	April 25 – May 27	Virtual Learning Circles with partner schools in Nairobi
Lebanon	February 17 – April 17	Online course and live sessions with NGO partner Jusoor
	March 15 – April 26	Online course with live Zoom sessions with mixed enrollment (not just one NGO partner)
Niger	March 19 and 20	Facilitated in-person courses with colleagues of Senior Fellows in Niamey
Chad	May 9 – 11	Hybrid course coordinated by JRS and UNHCR, facilitated online with support from in-country staff using WhatsApp
Open pilots	March 28 – April 30	Open enrollment, non-facilitated SEL/PSS and Intro to Asset-Based Pedagogies courses
Micro-credential webinars	May 12 and 26	Micro-credentials for SEL and PSS, and for Asset-Based pedagogies
QHL app	Month of June	Onboarding workshops facilitated by CPL consultant, open to all



Completion rates shown in **Figure 1 (next page)** indicate the *proportion of participants (not enrollees) who completed the QHL pilot projects.*

Figure 1. Pilot project participants and completion rates

<i>SEL & PSS Course</i> Lebanon	<i>CBC & SEL Handbook</i> Kenya	<i>SEL & PSS Course</i> Niger, Chad	<i>Asset-based pedagogies course</i> Global
•Enrolled 175 •112 participated •41 completed 37% completion	•Enrolled 57 •56 participated •45 completed 80% completion	•Enrolled 137 •97 participated •79 completed 81% completion	•Enrolled 52 •34 participated •23 completed 68% completion

For the **QHL app pilot**, 46 educators attended the onboarding sessions from Lebanon, Kenya, Chad, Niger, and Sierra Leone. The app pilot is described later in this report.

Evaluation of the QHL piloted resources

The evaluation of the *QHL* pilot project involved two main sources of data: pre- and post-course surveys from pilot participants, and interviews with 12 Project Fellows/Pilot Facilitators and 14 participant educators. We also used data collected through the piloted QHL app from the 5 educators who were able to actively use it.

Study Design and Participants

The evaluation used a within-subjects, mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative measures) design. The within-subjects design involved comparing participants' responses prior to starting and after completing the resources, to evaluate perceived impact on their work as educators. The mixed methods design involved gathering quantitative and qualitative data from the survey, interviews, and QHL app, as multiple sources of information.

To conduct the within-subjects study, we used data only from those who completed both the pre- and post-course surveys. Participation dropped over the pilot project, and there were multiple issues trying to match post-course with pre-course surveys. We used data only from those whose surveys pre- and post-course could be matched without concerns about validity of the match. The sample size dropped from 171 participants who completed pre-course

surveys to 94 whose pre- and post- surveys could be matched. **Figure 2** highlights the process for getting to the final analytic sample. Given that 31% of pilot participants provided surveys that could be matched pre- and post-course, *these results should be regarded as exploratory and preliminary*. The individuals who provided usable data may not be representative of all program participants.

Figure 2. Enrollment, participant, and usable survey numbers

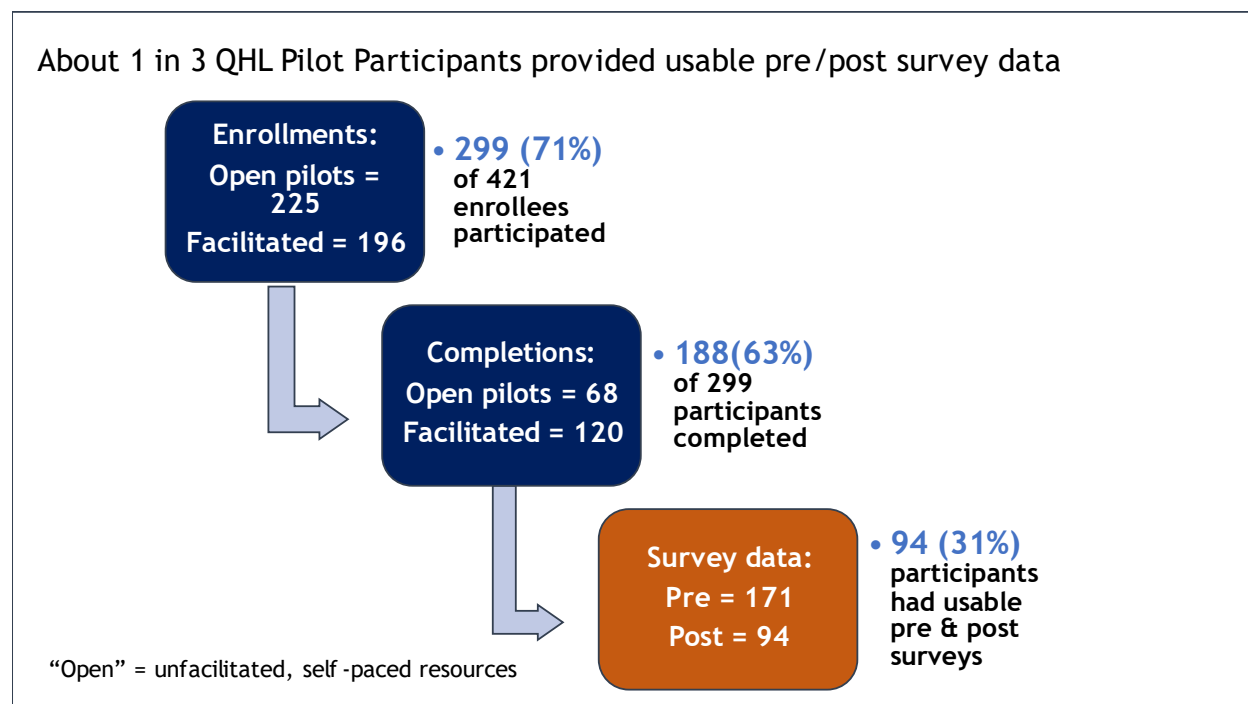
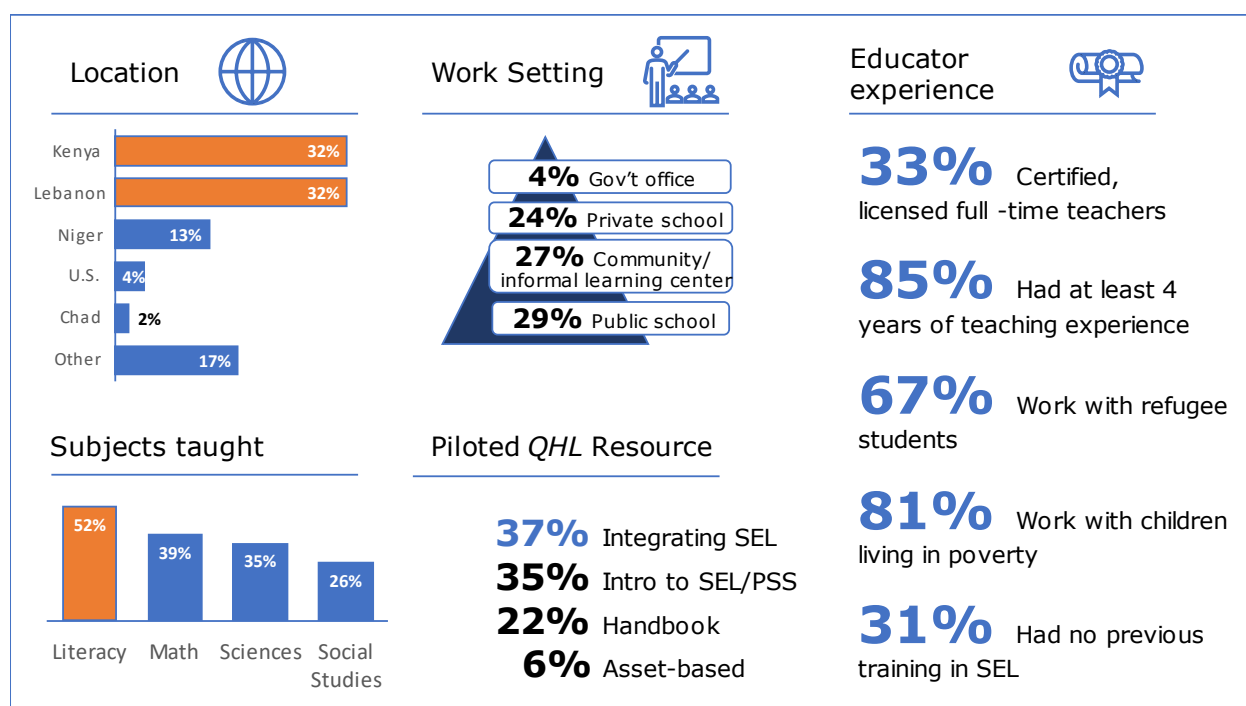


Figure 3 describes the 171 participants who submitted a pre-course survey. Almost all were teachers, with about 1 in 3 (33%) being full-time and licensed. Others were uncertified or unlicensed, working in supporting roles (e.g., teacher’s aide, instructional coaches) or working in informal teaching roles. As a group they were moderately experienced, with most (85%) having at least 4 years or more of teaching experience. More than half had at least some exposure to SEL, PSS, and/or asset-based pedagogies prior to these piloted courses.

Figure 3. Pre-Survey Respondent Characteristics (N = 171)



Internet connectivity plagued pilot project course and interview participation. For those with less connectivity issues, we conducted interviews via videoconferencing through Zoom. All facilitator interviews were conducted this way with 11 facilitators and 1 course designer; one facilitator could not be reached. Facilitators were interviewed in Arabic or English.

For educators, internet issues were generally more problematic and fewer could be reached and/or participate. Of the 11 interviews, most were conducted using Zoom while a subsample responded to interview prompts in segments, via WhatsApp. The interview sample characteristics are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Interviewee characteristics

Facilitators		Educators	
Country	Setting	Country	Setting
Lebanon - 4 Kenya - 3 Niger - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Public school • 4 Public & Private schools • 3 Syrian refugee schools, camps • 4 Other (Jesuit, non-government, "variety") 	Lebanon - 5 Kenya - 5 Niger - 4 Chad - 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Public schools • 4 Private or International schools • 2 Refugee camp, support center • 2 Other ("Charitable" school, no answer)

Evaluation findings

For the survey data, analyses focused on measuring change in key course outcomes before and after the piloted course. The variables we included in our analyses are listed below.

OUTCOME VARIABLES MEASURED PRE- AND POST-COURSE

- Belief in need to provide psychosocial support to students
- Use of teaching practices (incorporating SEL into lessons; focusing on learners' strengths instead of challenges)
- Preparation to attend to students' holistic learning needs
- Preparation to deliver trauma-informed, culturally responsive pedagogy

OUTCOME VARIABLES MEASURED POST-COURSE ONLY

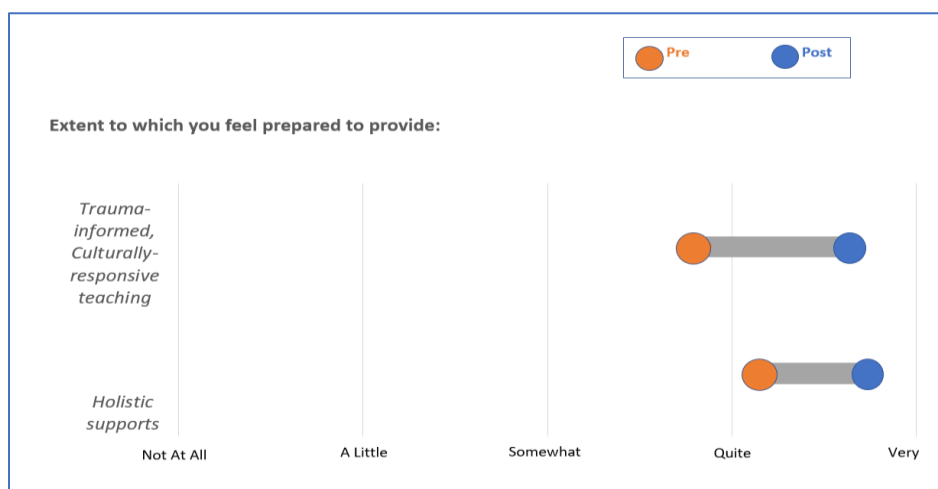
- Changes in student behaviors ("students are showing more.."):
 - Kindness, Calm, Focus
 - Positive relationships with educator and each other
 - Attending school and class more regularly, and engaging actively in lessons
- Changes in instructional practices ("I am doing more..."):
 - Holistic lesson plans
 - Making connections between students' home lives/interests and formal curriculum
 - Differentiating lessons
 - Collaborating with colleagues
- Change in educator's psychosocial outcomes:
 - Feeling more connected to learners
 - Feeling more confident in teaching
 - Feeling less stress and more joy as an educator
- Ratings of QHL resource(s) ("To what extent ..."):
 - Course aligns with needs as an educator and students' needs
 - Educator can apply learnings to daily work
 - Course changed how educator works
 - Pilot resource(s) prepared educator to work with refugee, displaced, and vulnerable students
 - Likelihood of recommending the QHL course/resource to colleagues
- Number of hours spent on the course

From our open-ended survey questions and interviews, we analyzed participants' responses for recurring themes, to supplement the quantitative information we collected in the survey. We share the results by outcomes that were the focus for the *QHL* pilot project.

1. Educators are more prepared to support refugee, displaced, and vulnerable students.

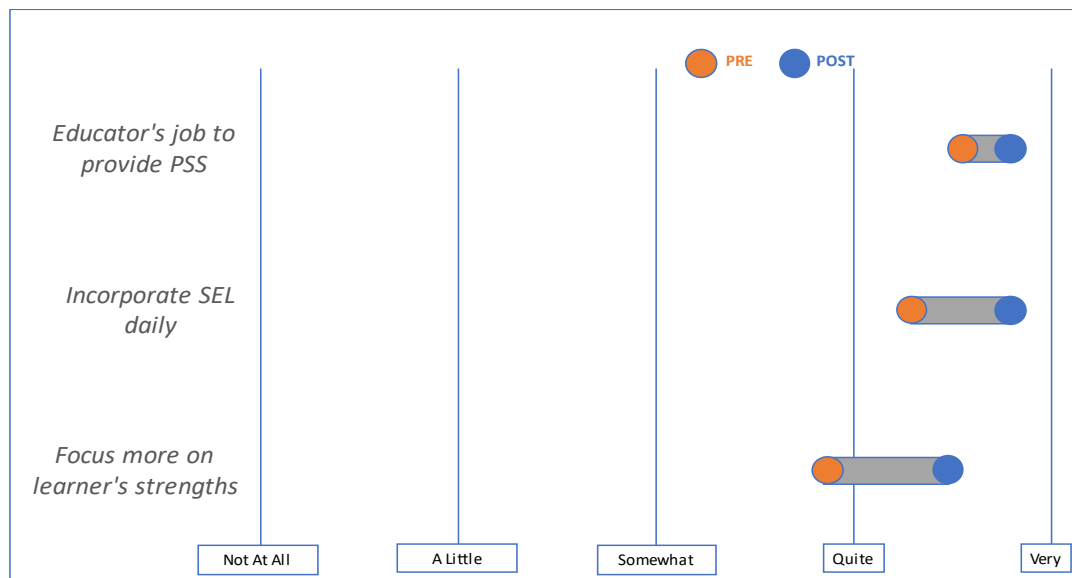
"I have gained an understanding of what SEL is in all forms and how to support the academic success of each learner, and to promote and guarantee to all learners at all levels respect, safety, and dignity." – Private School Teacher, Niger

Educators rated their preparation to provide for students' holistic learning needs, and to provide trauma-informed and culturally responsive pedagogy on a 5-point scale, ranging from "Not at All" to "Very Much", before and after participating in the *QHL* pilot. The average change in pre- to post-course preparedness was positive, shifting educators from feeling "somewhat" to "quite" prepared to support these students, as shown in the graph below. This shift is statistically significant⁴ and strongest for providing trauma-informed and culturally responsive instructional practices. *A shift of this magnitude amongst this group is meaningful in a practical sense. These educators are relatively experienced, and they are addressing learning needs in stressful environments, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is notable that they feel more prepared to attend to their students' learning needs after taking the course.*



⁴ We conducted dependent samples (also known as paired) t-tests to compare the differences in mean scale scores from pre- to post-course for each of these variables across all 3 cohorts. For preparation to provide holistic learning supports, $t(93) = -6.56$, $p < 0.0001$; for trauma informed, culturally responsive teaching, $t(93) = -5.93$, $p < 0.0001$.

In the survey, participants also rated their use of instructional practices pre- and post-course. The largest change was in applying an assets-based approach by focusing on learners' strengths more than their challenges, shown in this graph. All three practices showed statistically significant changes - in beliefs that it's the educator's job to provide psychosocial supports (PSS), to incorporate SEL into daily lessons, and in focusing more on learner's strengths than challenges.⁵



⁵ Dependent samples t-tests for these analyses include for beliefs about providing PSS, $t(93) = -2.11$, $p < 0.05$; for incorporating SEL daily, $t(93) = -4.36$, $p < 0.0001$; and for focusing on learners' strengths, $t(93) = -5.6$, $p < 0.0001$.

In interviews with 11 educators, we asked how they applied what they learned in the QHL pilot in which they participated. The following summarizes their responses:

- Teaching students new skills, e.g., relaxation, problem-solving
- Creating a welcoming, safe environment, e.g., introducing displaced learners to peers
- Increasing collaboration with colleagues
- Viewing the student as a whole person, e.g., checking their emotional state

2. Educators saw improvements in relationships with students and in their outlook as educators

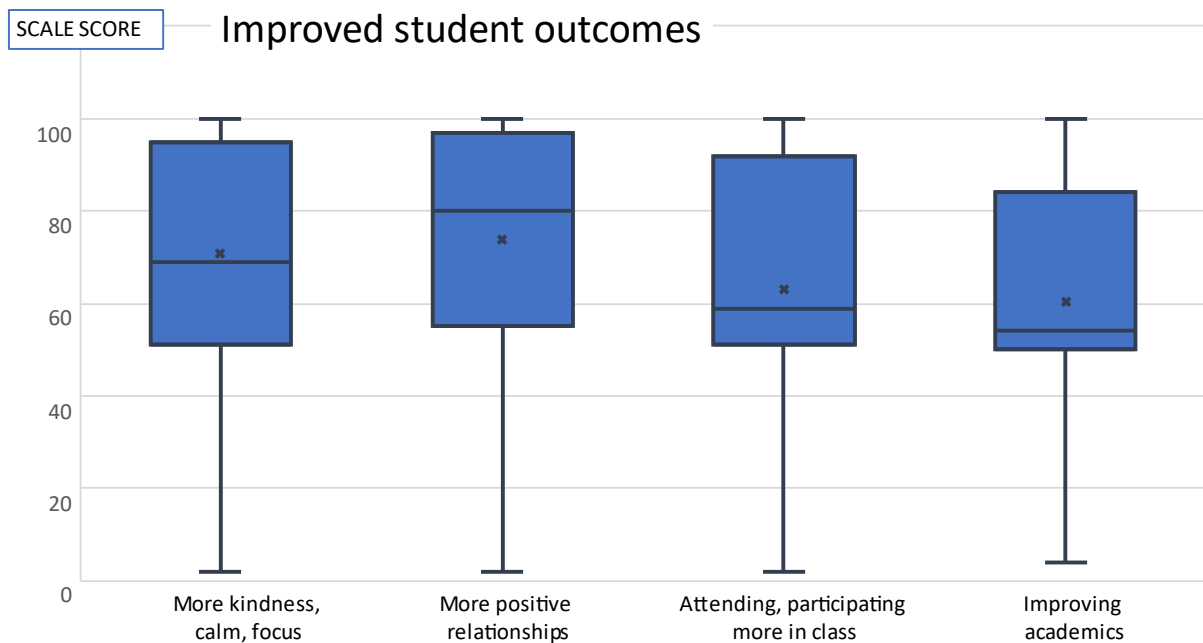
"This workshop allowed me to be a more noble person, filled with positivity...it gave all participants the chance to know students on all levels...it replaced the negativity with positivity towards my learners, including the parents of students, by being more lenient in my decision-making that had [previously] 'double punished' learners for misbehavior." – Teacher, Niger

"I'm quite deliberate when starting my lesson, to talk to children to find out how they are, is there any issue. Before, we would just go straight into my lesson. But I want to ask, 'how are you?' and explained to them, don't just say 'fine.' Tell me exactly what you're feeling, if there's anything we can work out in class - we will work it out." – International School teacher, Kenya

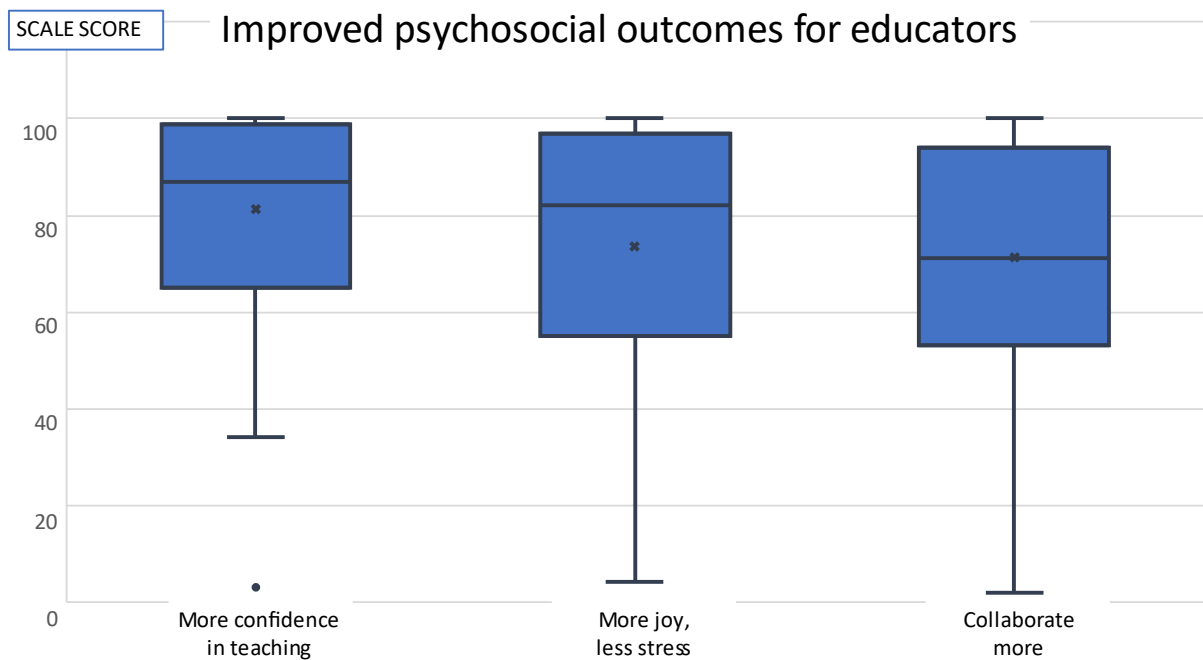
The survey asked educators to rate on a scale of 0 (no change) to 100 (a lot of change), the extent to which changes in students' behaviors, instructional practices, and positive emotional states resulted from their participation in the QHL pilot project. The boxplots (next page) show the results.⁶ The items they rated are listed on p. 11 of this report for the "post course only" outcomes.

For student outcomes, on average, educators rated the greatest change in positive relationships they had with students and their students had with each other (median = 80) and the least change for improved academic outcomes (median = 55). Overall, educators perceived moderate to large changes in these student outcomes due to their participation in the QHL pilot.

⁶ Each box represents the 25th through the 75th percentile scores on the 100-point scale for each of the items the respondent rated. The line in the middle of the box is the median, or 50th percentile, and the 'x' indicates the mean score.



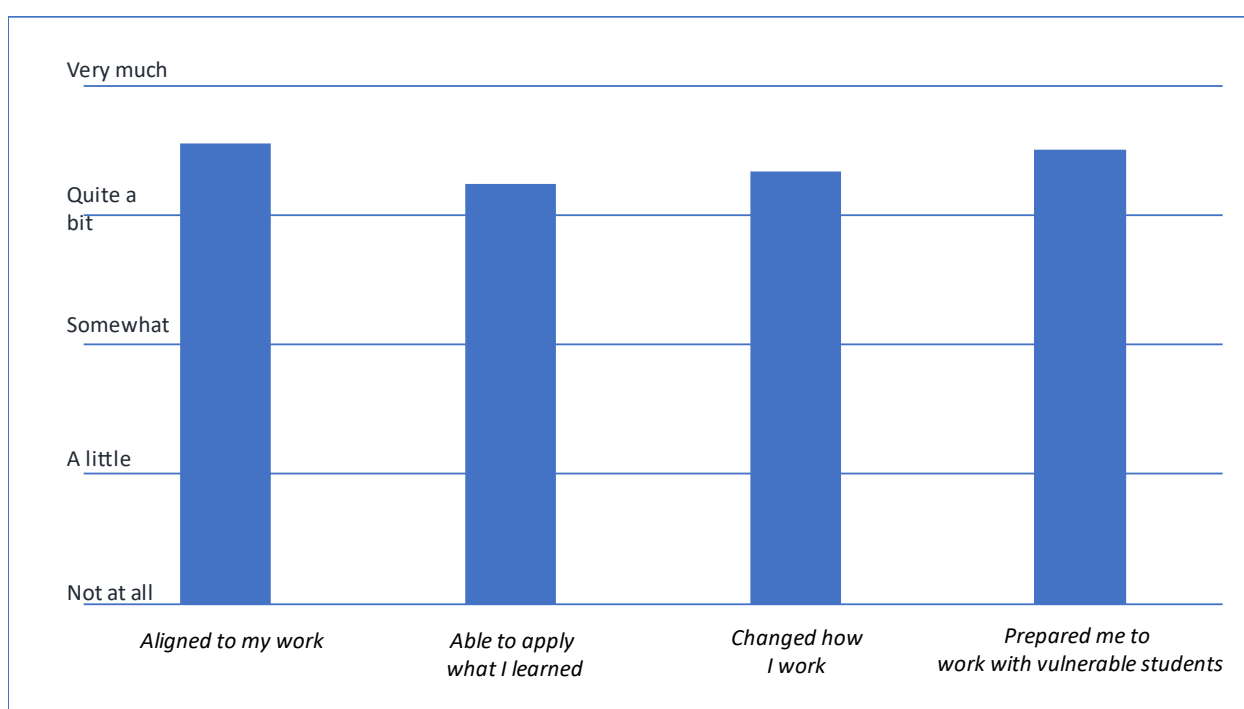
Educators also saw large improvements in their own psychosocial outcomes. They found more confidence in teaching (median = 87), more joy as an educator (median = 82), and they collaborated more with colleagues (median = 70).



Educators also rated how the course impacted their work, on a scale of “Not at all” to “Very much” on four dimensions:

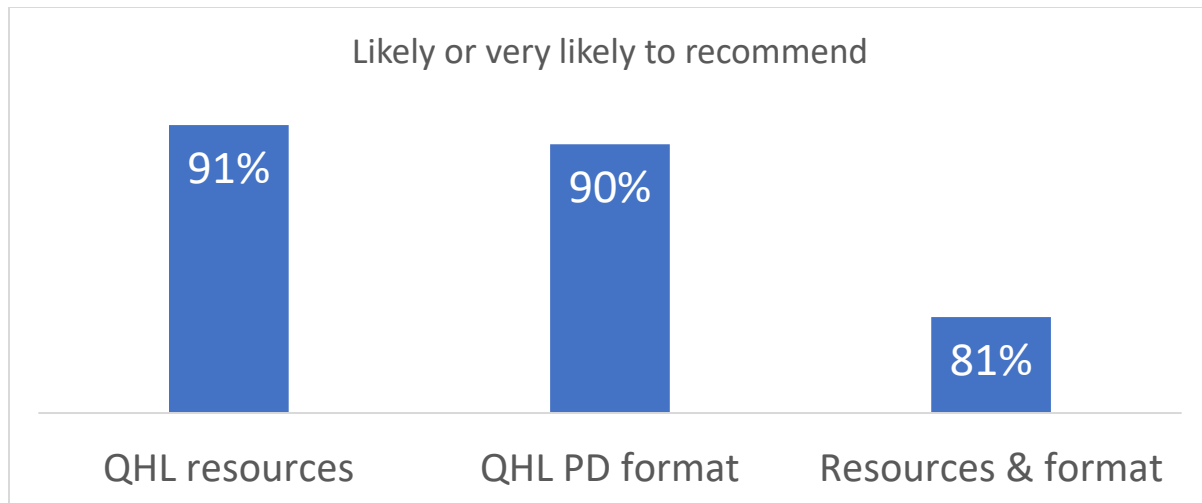
- Alignment of the course with the educator’s and the students’ learning needs
- Ability to apply what was learned in the classroom
- Extent to which the course changed how the educator worked
- Extent to which the course prepared the educator to work with refugee, displaced, and vulnerable students.

Results indicate that on average, educators regarded the impact of the QHL course/resources quite highly, with average ratings ranging from 3.24 – 3.55 on a scale of 0 to 4. The graph below shows these results.



Course satisfaction

Educators rated the likelihood that they would recommend QHL resources, the QHL professional learning structure (e.g., facilitated courses, peer-to-peer dialog, etc.), and the combination of the two. The scale ranged from 0 = “Very unlikely” to 4 = “Very likely” and the graph shows their responses, suggesting high satisfaction from participants.



Several comments provided by the educators included:

This was an awesome experience that left a huge impact on me. The lessons were very interesting as they had a variety of learning styles and were interactive. – Teacher in Kenya

The resources and learning opportunities enable a teacher to address some gaps in their teacher training. – Pre-Service Teacher, Kenya

I enjoyed the mode of learning and instruction, i.e., the round table talks where we shared experiences. – Physical Education Teacher, Kenya

The SEL would be somewhat challenging due to the high number of students per class (120), and chronic absenteeism. I am happy to have learned new classroom activities that I can easily adopt and incorporate in class, shared in each module. – Lead Teacher, Kenya



3. Educators changed teaching practices and supports to refugee, displaced, and vulnerable students.

"I benefitted in things that I was not focusing on... the teacher should have full awareness of his students' feelings... The teacher should follow up with his students, not only academically but psychologically... It is not only that you do the [academic] activity, that you give the students only the academic subject - it is important that the students are happy..." -Teacher, Lebanon

In our surveys and interviews with educators, we asked about any changes they made to instructional practices due to participating in the QHL piloted course. The survey addressed the following instructional practices:

- Integrating holistic practices into lesson plans
- Connecting students' lives and interests with the formal curriculum
- Differentiating lessons to leverage the strengths each student brings to their learning
- Feeling more connected to students due to changes in practices

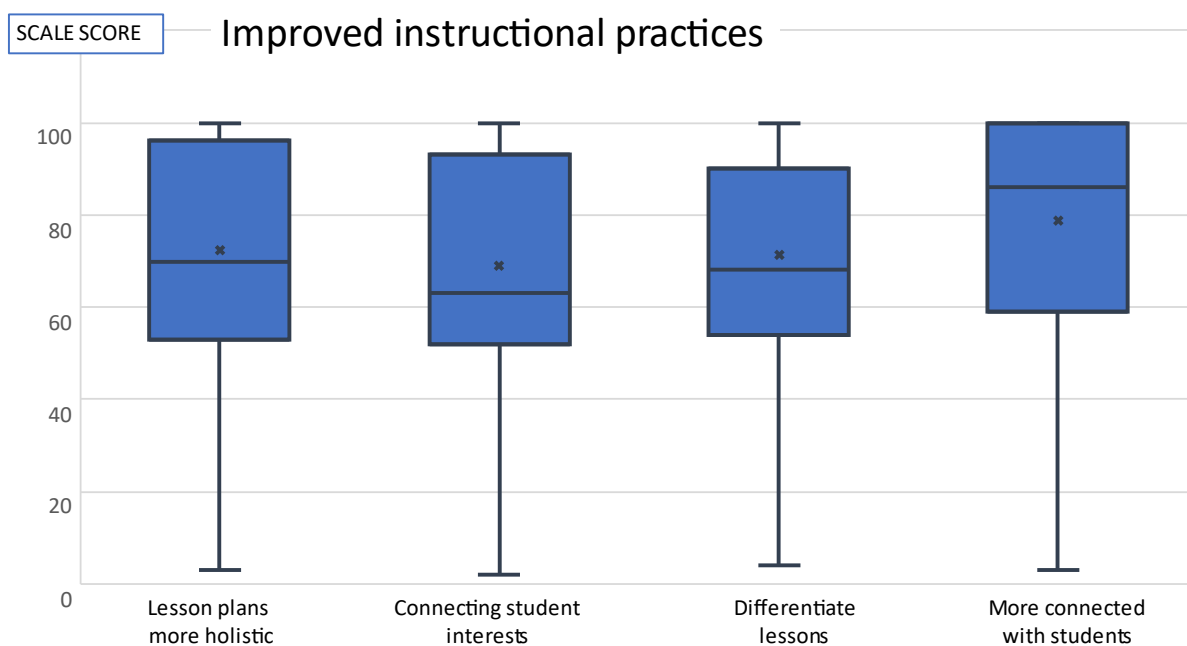
Survey results indicate that educators rated feeling more connected to their students the highest (median = 87) and making connections between their students' lives and interests with the curriculum the lowest (median = 62) on a scale of 0 (no change) to 100 (a lot of change) as shown in the boxplots on the next page. [Results for all four domains of instructional practices indicate that on average, educators reported a high level of change,](#)

EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

"...I know how to help my students in all their life aspects, not only in terms of academics. I know how to help them emotionally, socially, with the community, with their trauma, with their space, how to help them with everything. So I not only learn for myself or only for the students, I learned for the whole community." - QHL Facilitator and School Teacher, Niger

"I can tell you that it [QHL pilot project] opened [teachers'] eyes on stories; maybe they were not paying attention to [students' stories] in their relationships with students. There were things they should see and were not seeing. Here now, these stories open the teachers' eyes a little; we take care of these stories and they might guide us." - QHL Facilitator and School Teacher, Lebanon

due to their participation in the *QHL* pilot.



Interviews with course facilitators and participants supplemented the survey data about changes in instructional practices. The following highlights our findings from the interviews.

What were the most popular topics for teachers in the *QHL* pilot?

The impact of trauma on the human brain was mentioned most frequently, followed by increasing teachers' well-being, lesson construction, and activities to share with students.

What benefits to their work as educators did teachers report?

Teachers focused on the following benefits:

- **Learning to build empathy and patience with students** due to a new understanding of their needs and circumstances.
- **Understanding the importance of working with the whole child** and understanding their trauma
- **Obtaining a new set of tools** for integrating into lesson plans and instruction, focused on the whole child
- **Opportunities to reflect on one's own practice** and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement
- **Opportunities to collaborate** with colleagues

What benefits to their work as educators did facilitators report?

QHL pilot facilitators were educators themselves, and found several benefits to their work as the pilot facilitators, including:

- **Understanding the importance of SEL** and feeling empowered to help students more effectively
- **Creating curricula and activities** for sharing with other educators
- **Building relationships** with other educators
- **Supporting teachers in their well-being**

Were teachers able to apply what they learned to their classrooms?

QHL pilot facilitators indicated that most teachers were able to apply the course materials to their work with students. They first and foremost were able to improve relationships with their students; create a professional learning community; use activities to boost students' confidence and enhance problem-solving skills; and apply knowledge of holistic learning to how they treated students.

There was some variability in teachers' ability to apply what they learned to their work. One facilitator estimated that 60% of the teachers they worked with applied what they learned, and that there would have to be continued follow up and supports. Teachers' learning environments had a heavy impact on their ability to apply what they learned. As an example, one of the teachers worked in Syrian refugee camps by traveling on a mobile bus, in circumstances that were difficult and continually changing.

4. The QHL pilot app shows initial promise to help educators deliver and measure holistic learning.

CPL engaged the assistance of students from Boston University to develop and pilot test an app that could be used on Smartphones to help teachers use effective teaching methods and

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

"Mostly, these learners get to learn from the environment – I mean the parents, the guardians, or people in the community. So how these people in the community behave, how they address issues, how they react to issues, actually affects these learners.

...Luckily [with QHL], we have educators that are able to teach them how to cope with stress, and even to solve a problem, so when [learners] are growing up and being taught this...they are able now to deal with issues amicably instead of fighting and quarreling...

I also learned we the grown-ups can actually model it before the learners so the learners can get to know how they can live and resolve problems. So I think we are also supposed to teach the grown-ups and beginning with the parents' meetings or seminars, actually to enlighten them on what is expected so that this generation doesn't go the wrong way."

-- Public School Teacher, Kenya

measure holistic learning outcomes. The goal is to make the impact of their teaching more visible, to them and to others. The app guides formally and informally trained teachers in displacement contexts to assess, reflect, and deliver holistic learning.

The QHL app

The app has three functions: (1) to assess student SEL competencies; (2) to monitor teacher well-being; and (3) to facilitate teachers' reflections on SEL lesson plans.

The pilot test of the app involved training 46 volunteer educators from Lebanon, Niger, Chad, and Kenya, to use it and test it in their classrooms. There are four options within the app for teachers to use: Students, Teachers, Resources, and Feedback. **Figure 4** shows a screenshot of the Student option, which is intended to help teachers evaluate individual students' SEL competencies. Teachers select a student (left screen in **Figure 4**) and answer questions about their demeanor and behaviors related to SEL competencies (right screen).

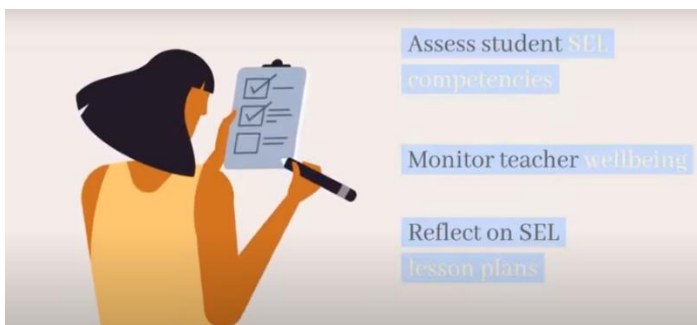
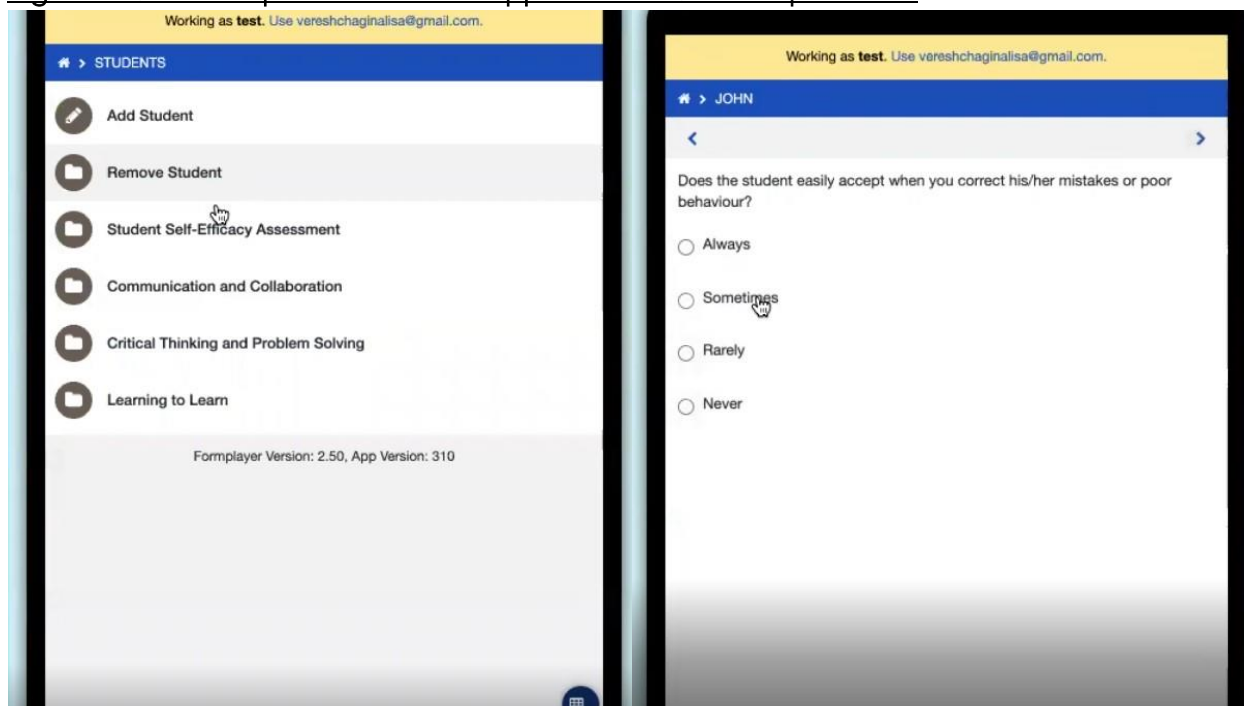
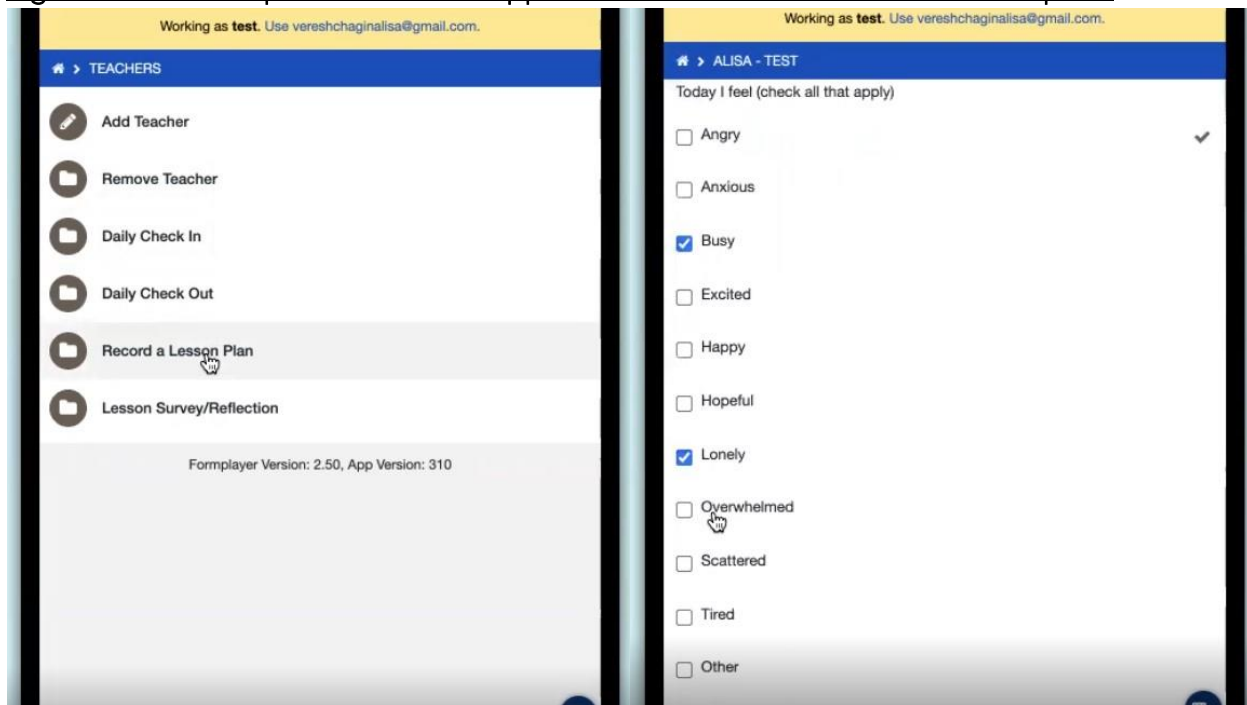


Figure 4. Student option in the QHL app to assess SEL competencies



The interface for the educator feature is similar. **Figure 5** (next page) shows teacher options, including daily check ins and recording lesson plans. If teachers indicate that they're feeling stressed (overwhelmed, lonely, scattered, tired) the app shares resources, ranging from local assistance such as hotline numbers, to meditation and breathing exercises.

Figure 5. Teacher option in the QHL app to monitor own emotions and lesson plans



One of the four features the app provides is a Resource tab. When teachers select Resources, the app shares location-specific as well as general resources for teachers, as shown in **Figure 6** (next page), an example from Kenya.

Figure 6. The QHL app provides teachers with SEL and asset-based resources



Evaluation of the QHL app

The piloting of the QHL app involved training volunteers ($n = 46$) in its use and asking them to try out two of the features: (1) the teacher well-being check-in, and (2) the assessment of student SEL competencies. Five teachers used the self check-in and one of those five tried the student SEL ratings. Although use among the teachers was not high, the facilitator of training indicated that interest in the app was high, particularly regarding the features they were testing (student ratings and self check-ins).

One of the challenges was the cost of data and electricity for using the app. Teachers hoped they would receive an Internet bundle as incentive to participate but because they would not be reimbursed for their costs, most chose not to continue. [Moving forward, it may be that funds for incentivizing teachers to try and/or to continue using the app will be needed.](#)

Students at Boston University helped to create additional content for the app. However, it was media heavy and required more internet bandwidth than the teachers had access to, making it difficult to download and use.

From the data that were entered, teachers rated their state of mind (e.g., tired, hopeful, busy) and of the 8 ratings, 4.5 was the median rating on a scale of 1 (feeling good) to 10 (feeling stressed). Forty percent of the 10 mood ratings provided by the 5 educators indicated that they were stressed. Only one educator used the student SEL competency ratings feature and rated only one student on their classroom behaviors, such as interacting politely, raising their hand to ask a question, and so on.

The facilitator reported [positive feedback from teachers who did try out the app](#). The most positive feedback was about the Resources feature. Some participants suggested that [teachers become trainers for colleagues](#) in the use of the app, and if necessary, they [share a phone to access multiple accounts](#). They further suggested that in sharing a phone with multiple accounts, they could mutually check on the status of students and discuss the struggles the students were facing as a team.

5. Overall, the QHL pilot was highly valued by facilitators and educators, despite logistical issues.

“The most important thing is to train students in all aspects of life so they are people who will be responsible and supportive for their well-being. After this training as a teacher, I will say that these notions MUST be a part of the current educational program.” – Teacher, Niger

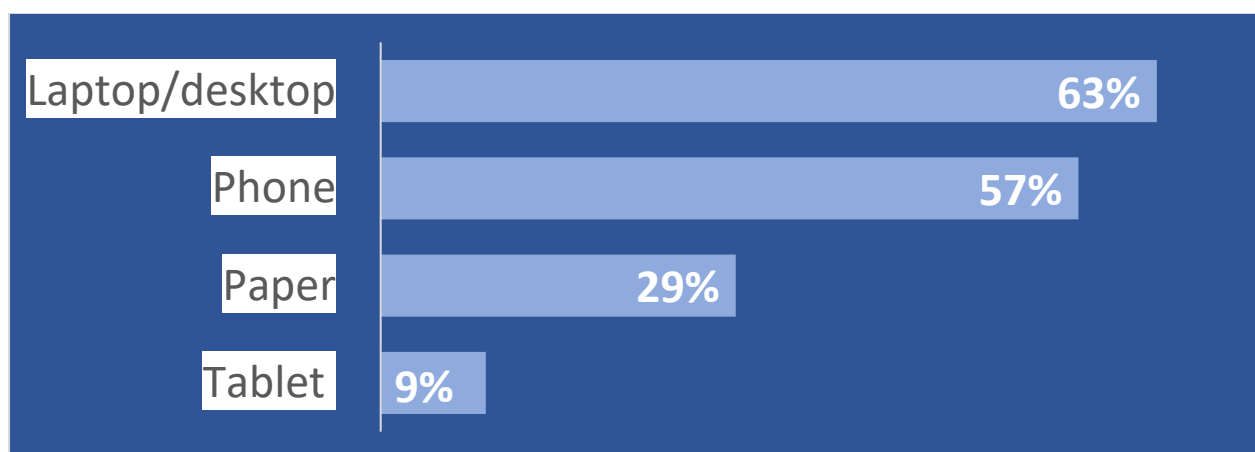
Interviewing QHL pilot facilitators, who are teachers themselves, as well as the teachers who participated in the pilot, allowed us to dig deeper into their reflections on the pilot and how it impacted them and their students. There were notable issues with internet connectivity, primarily in Niger and Lebanon. This compromised participants’ ability to complete the piloted courses.

Course logistics and participation

Most educators (about 66%) spent 5 - 13 hours on the piloted course. Educators reported a POSITIVE impact on their participation in the course due to the following factors:

- The content (access, usefulness, structure): 95%
- Infrastructure (internet access, electricity): 75%
- Time available: 73%
- Facilitation (activities, discussions, etc.): 86%
- Peer community and connection: 77%

Educators accessed the course in the following ways:



Best aspects of the course and recommendations for improvements

We asked *QHL* pilot facilitators about which features of the *QHL* pilot they delivered seemed to be the most impactful on the teachers. The features they reported align well with the Sustainable Learning Framework, e.g., continuous assessment of learning, democratic processes, collaboration, and practical skills that are usable.

Most impactful features of the <i>QHL</i> pilot	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content, support, and learning activities • Online format • Sharing out with others • Continuous assessments • Learning activities for students and teaching materials to support them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical skills for teachers to use • Democratic way of learning: all are included and heard • Facilitation of the course to “move it along” • Games and activities

We also asked both the facilitators and the teacher participants about recommendations for improvements. Their responses focused on improving content, logistics to enhance participation, and improving the andragogical (teaching adult learners) approach to enhance professional learning and development, as shown below.

Suggested <i>QHL</i> course/resource improvements
Logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide in-person sessions and/or printed materials given internet connectivity issues • Increase number of trainings over more days • Provide transportation compensation • Provide more laptops – some teachers are sharing one between all of them

Course Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve graphic design of online content • Create materials with one voice throughout • Handbook should include no gender differences (girls appear to be not as supported) • Improve course links—some did not work • Use activities that don't require costly materials, e.g., bridge activity that required a ream of paper • Create a shorter version of the handbook for easy reference
Andragogical Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train participants how to use technology before the course begins • Create check-in assessments in the online modules to ensure comprehension • Create assessment method for teachers, post-course, to ensure knowledge is being applied

Conclusions

Overall, the *QHL* project pilot appears to show promise as an effective set of co-developed resources created for educators, by educators, to support all students by educating the whole child. Despite significant logistical and infrastructure challenges, more than half of the educators who participated in the pilot project completed it, which is impressive during these challenging times for schooling. The courses and resources engaged educators in evidence-based ways that support effective andragogy, driven by the CPL's Sustainable Learning Framework. They also impacted the work of educators in ways that improve student learning. Research indicates that positive, caring, and trusting relationships between students and teachers serve as a foundation for safe learning spaces.⁷ Safe learning spaces reduce cognitive load on students whose focus might otherwise lean toward anxieties and fears, which detracts from the cognitive resources needed for attention and motivation to learn.⁸ Educators in this *QHL* pilot reported change in their relationships with students, in students' demeanor and behavior, and ultimately, in student academics. Given the positive, initial results from this evaluation, we recommend that the *QHL* courses and materials are refined based on lessons learned, and that a larger implementation with a rigorous evaluation is implemented. The *QHL* approach and resources show strong promise for improving the lives of educators and their students, including those who are most vulnerable.

⁷ For example, see Payton, J. W., Wardlaw, D. M., Graczyk, P. A., Bloodworth, M. R., Tompsett, C. J., & Weissberg, R. P. (2000). Social and emotional learning: A framework for promoting mental health and reducing risk behavior in children and youth. *Journal of school health*, 70(5), 179-185.

⁸ For example, see Leppink, J. (2017). Cognitive load theory: Practical implications and an important challenge. *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences*, 12(5), 385-391.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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