

# Teach For Lebanon includes trauma-informed practices in its leadership development program

## Snapshot

Against the backdrop of the Beirut port blast in 2020, COVID-19, and ongoing socio-political challenges, Teach For Lebanon (TFL) has been exploring how to bring in more trauma-informed practices to their program to support the wellbeing of fellows and the community. Between 2020 and 2022, TFL has been connecting with TFAI and other external partners to deliver mental health support that is rooted in collective leadership.

## Context

Lebanon has the highest per capita population of refugees in the world, and the country continues to face dramatic economic and socio-political challenges. Eighty-two per cent (82%) of the country's population is trapped in multidimensional poverty, and 70% of young people were effectively unemployed in 2021. TFL placed its first cohort in 2009 to teach in high-need schools in Lebanon. Since then, the organization has placed 14 cohorts in multiple regions totaling more than 190 fellows, impacting 37,000 and 72 schools.

## Choice

As an emergency response strategy in 2020, TFL launched the Build Back Better (BBB) initiative. As part of this initiative, TFL partnered with a local mental health organization to offer free mental health support for parents, teachers, and students. Moreover, fellows and non-fellow teachers at partner schools were trained to identify and to support students dealing with trauma. TFL also worked with Teach For All's Global Leadership Accelerator in bringing a workshop series on trauma-sensitive practices during Summer Institute in 2021 to their fellows. Shortly after, a Teach For Lebanon coach joined a community of partner staff from across the network in an intensive fellowship that focused on embedding trauma-sensitive shifts in program and teacher development. This led to him developing the skills and knowledge to co-facilitate the workshop series in Summer Institute 2022, as well as co-design a wellbeing program with other relevant staff and 7 lead fellows who are taking a leadership role in co-planning and implementing the program.

## Collective leadership

TFL has grown collective leadership by involving and empowering several key stakeholders that represent the community. The involved stakeholders include parents, TFL and non-TFL teachers, TFL staff, TFL education mentors, students, external and local stakeholders, such as Georgetown Medstar WISE, TFAI, and the locally rooted mental health organization Nafsaniyoun. By fellows designing and leading wellbeing programs, the initiative is also designed to reach a critical mass to scale.



## Community impact

*By identifying and addressing mental health issues, this initiative has a direct impact on parents, students, and teachers' wellbeing, thereby strengthening the system's capability. In feedback on the workshop series, participants noted how they are now better equipped to take care of their mental health and wellbeing, and how to make students feel safe, heard, and loved so they can be ready to learn.*

## Further resources

- [A Year After the Beirut Port Explosion: Teach For Lebanon's Journey Toward Collective Recovery Continues](#)
- [Build Back Better Initiative](#)
- [Mouhammad Houssari talking about the Build Back Better Initiative](#)
- [Teach For Lebanon fellow at the Wellbeing Summit \(Pass: EZH#Je4W\)](#)
- [Teach For Lebanon's Annual Report](#)