

Summative Evaluation

PADILEIA

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AABU	Al al-Bayt University
AUB	American University of Beirut
FL	FutureLearn
HC	Host Community member
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher education institution
KCL	King's College London
KII	Key informant interview
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
PADILEIA	Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access
RI	Relief International
SEO	Stakeholder Engagement Officer
SPHEIR	Strategic Partnership for Higher Education Innovation and Reform
SSO	Student Support Officer
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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Executive summary

PADILEIA (Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access) is a project consortium made up of five partners: King's College London (KCL), the American University of Beirut (AUB), Al Al-Bayt University in Jordan (AABU), Kiron Open Higher Education, and FutureLearn, which develops and delivers blended higher education programmes to Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon and to local Jordanian and Lebanese students. This summative evaluation aims to assess the overall effectiveness of the PADILEIA project throughout its four-year lifespan (2017-2021). The evaluation seeks to determine how, and the extent to which, PADILEIA has enabled refugees and disadvantaged host community members in Jordan and Lebanon to access higher education and facilitated onward transitions to further higher education and employment.

This evaluation followed a mixed-method design, combining findings from a student survey, and in-depth interviews with students, delivery team members, and project management staff. The data from these sources was then triangulated with available reporting data from the project. As a result of travel restrictions and health and safety concerns relating to conducting in-person research due to Covid-19, an entirely remote approach to data collection was adopted for the study, with the survey distributed via email and WhatsApp for remote completion, and interviews conducted via voice or video call.

The report is divided into five main sections: Introduction (Section 1), Methodology (Section 2), Research Findings (Section 3), Lessons Learned (Section 4) and Recommendations (Section 5). There are also a number of annexes attached to the report, which include additional information on the evaluation objectives and associated definitions, the extended methodology, the project data sources consulted, and the data collection tools used.

Research findings and lessons learned

The evaluation found that PADILEIA has increased education access for refugees and disadvantaged host community members in Jordan and Lebanon. Key success factors were the blended learning model and the intentional integration of facilitation into course delivery. This simultaneously allowed for increased flexibility of delivery while also providing valuable physical study spaces and direct support from delivery staff. Furthermore, the blended learning approach was found to have an important positive impact on women's access to higher education. The availability of a range of student support was also found to be crucial in securing student access to the course offerings, with technical, academic, English language, and psycho-social support emerging as key access-enabling services for students. The high teaching quality was also consistently identified as a key project strength and enabling factor for student success. Additionally, the student-centred, adaptable project design enabled project staff to remain responsive to students' changing needs, especially given regional instability and the forced shift to online-only delivery during Covid-19. The key factors that may have limited student access to the courses included poor internet connectivity, and logistical difficulties relating to travel and transport. Though the project was able to mitigate these issues to some extent, by providing internet access in study hubs, data cards, and devices for some

students, the evaluation findings suggest that more could have been done in the form of increasing device provision and improving student communications around access to financial support.

Strong partnership collaboration and communication were found to enable successful delivery, despite some indication of misalignment between consortium members' approaches at times. The diversity of the partnership was found to be a major strength, combining some partners' academic expertise with others' contextual knowledge and flexibility, to bring students a rich study experience. A key way in which project coordination could have been improved was by increasing the presence of the lead partner within the area of implementation, which would have led to smoother communication and a deeper understanding of the regional context. Additionally, the project would have benefitted from a more robust, centralised monitoring system, which would have served to improve communication and information sharing between partners, as well as increasing the project's ability to accurately measure its transition outcomes. Finally, although there was evidence of successful collaboration within the partnership, increasing collaboration between partners, perhaps by centralising student communication and access to support services from the beginning, could have led to increased success for students.

The evaluation also highlighted important findings relating to onward transitions. The project was found to be successful, with project targets largely being met in terms of post-PADILEIA university transfers and the Foundation Courses achieving a university transfer rate of 20.1%. However, these transfers amounted to only 5.2% of all PADILEIA course completers, and a large proportion of students reported that they were still looking for work or study opportunities following their PADILEIA study. Furthermore, a lack of access to funding meant that some students missed out on the opportunity to transfer to higher education following their PADILEIA course. Broader contextual factors, such as the lack of scholarship availability and strictness of scholarship eligibility criteria, rendered this issue beyond PADILEIA's immediate control. However, it was suggested that increasing the project's overall focus on helping students to gain scholarships and allowing more time and resources for securing MoUs allowing students to transfer credits could have led to better university transition outcomes. Additionally, a greater focus on setting staff and student expectations about the extent to which PADILEIA was able to help secure higher education transitions may have helped to reduce disappointment in this respect. Furthermore, though students reported successful outcomes in terms of transitions to employment, it was found that greater emphasis could have been placed on this exit pathway through establishing links with employers and increasing awareness-raising activities around employment opportunities.

The project was found to have been highly successful when it came to transferable skills, with students making notable gains in digital literacy and English language. Other notable subject-specific knowledge gains were made in mathematics, sciences, business, and graphic design. There was significant evidence that students found these knowledge and skill gains useful, with multiple reports of students using their newly acquired skills in their current jobs, to complete university assignments, and for job and study applications. In terms of transferable skills, qualitative and quantitative data revealed strong

perceived gains in a variety of areas, including: communication, interpersonal skills, presentation skills, teamwork, problem-solving, organisational skills, research skills, study skills, and CV writing and application skills.

The evaluation also identified a range of less tangible, though arguably no less valuable, impacts that PADILEIA had on its students. The most significant of these was self-efficacy; students reported high increases in confidence with reference to specific skills and tasks, with an average of 81% of respondents reporting confidence increases across a variety of scenarios. Qualitative data also revealed increased levels of self-efficacy and confidence across a variety of skills, including English, digital skills, and skills related to work and study applications. Another key impact was in students' sociability and network development, with many reporting profound new friendships resulting from participation in their course. There was also some indication that PADILEIA had positively impacted students' identity. Finally, the evaluation found that the project had a significant impact on students' future work and study aspirations, motivation to succeed, and general hopefulness for the future.

In addition to the impact on students, there was strong evidence to suggest that PADILEIA's approach had a meaningful impact on its own partner organisations, as well as the higher education structures in the region. The most significant of these was its impact on attitudes towards blended learning. The value of PADILEIA's expertise with blended learning models was spotlighted by Covid-19, at which point the project was able to pivot relatively easily to the online-only mode. This had the effect of softening other institutions' attitudes towards online and blended learning.

Finally, the project demonstrated the potential to create positive long-term benefits on refugee and vulnerable host communities. Interviewees reported that attending PADILEIA courses had raised student aspirations, which would have a ripple effect on their communities. Both refugee and host community students felt strongly that the courses helped them to develop socially, notably helping refugees to integrate in society and guiding host community students to a greater level of acceptance of their refugee counterparts. The study hubs will also remain for future community use, and as a symbol of the power of education to bring unity, strength and hope for the future.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings, recommendations are outlined for the PADILEIA partnership, PADILEIA delivery partners, and the wider refugee education and connected learning sectors. The recommendations can be read in detail in section 5.

Recommendations for the PADILEIA partnership

- Commit to raising additional funds to support the provision of an increased number of scholarships, alongside supporting other exit pathways.
- Develop linkages to a greater selection of exit pathways and promote these through support services and transfer opportunities.
- Define the PADILEIA connected learning approach.

- Ensure clarity of communication among staff and students regarding the scope of the project, including the project aims and expected outcomes.
- Create a centralised database for project data.
- Collect data on student transitions to assess project impact.
- Prioritise contextual knowledge and lead partner presence in the region.
- Increase skills and experience-sharing opportunities for consortium members.
- Share details of PADILEIA's positive impact on students' self-efficacy and aspirations.

Recommendations for delivery partners within the PADILEIA partnership

- Increase facilitation of online courses to ensure students are supported when learning remotely.
- Increase support for in-person study.
- Further develop and expand access to the existing English language support services, especially English conversation sessions.
- Consider how to facilitate the provision of internet-enabled devices and access to the internet for students studying online.
- University partners enable PADILEIA students to transfer to further study at their institutions.
- Conduct regular needs assessments to ensure that PADILEIA courses are appropriate and relevant for students.
- Continue to prioritise psycho-social support, including incidental support provided through academic support and relationships with the delivery team.
- Prioritise the rigorous recruitment and training of delivery staff to maintain the high standard of teaching and facilitation.
- Streamline and centralise communications with students across delivery partners.
- Create a social media presence for the PADILEIA project to increase the reach and scale of the project, especially the MOOCs.

Recommendations for the wider refugee education and connected learning sectors

- Recognise the wider societal benefits of scholarships and university study among refugees.
- Continue to advance recognition of online learning courses by universities to facilitate students' transition from online learning to further and higher education.
- Advocate for investment in internet infrastructure for refugees in camps.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

PADILEIA (Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access) is a project consortium made up of five partners: King's College London (KCL), the American University of Beirut (AUB), Al Al-Bayt University in Jordan (AABU), Kiron Open Higher Education, and FutureLearn, which develops and delivers blended higher education programmes to Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon and to local Jordanian and Lebanese students. This summative evaluation aims to assess the overall effectiveness of the PADILEIA project throughout its four-year lifespan (2017-2021). The evaluation seeks to determine how, and the extent to which, PADILEIA has enabled refugees and disadvantaged host community members in Jordan and Lebanon to access higher education and facilitated onward transitions to further higher education and employment.

The report is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the PADILEIA project and the evaluation research questions. The methodology employed in the evaluation is outlined in Chapter 2, as well as the primary data collection samples. The findings are presented in Chapter 3 in four thematic areas: project management and design, project implementation and experiences, student challenges and support, and project impacts and onward transitions. Chapter 4 draws together the findings and explores the key lessons and wider learnings for the project's future implementation. Lastly, recommendations for the PADILEIA partnership, delivery partners and the wider refugee education and connected learning sectors, are presented in Chapter 5.

1.2 Project and evaluation background

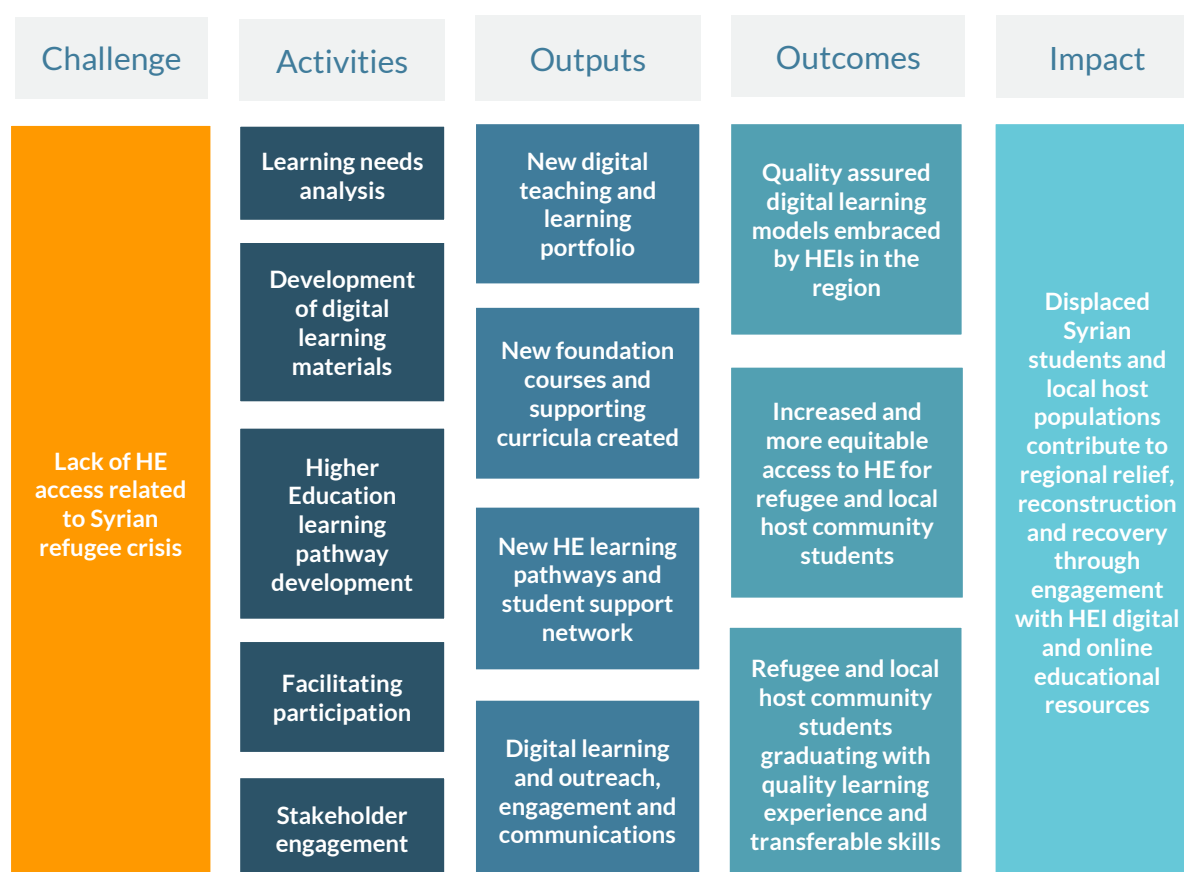
PADILEIA produces and delivers blended education programmes to Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon and to local Jordanian and Lebanese students. The partnership aims to broaden access to high-quality educational programmes, provide a foundation for further higher education and prepare students for their futures. It does this through the delivery of micro-credentials in relevant fields, student support services, and through the provision of affordable pathways into locally-delivered formal academic qualifications. The original project design included three learning formats: (i) short online courses, (ii) blended classroom-based foundational programmes, (iii) online study tracks with credits available for transfer into local universities.

Prior to the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, the in-person elements of the Foundation Courses were hosted at study hubs on the AUB Bekaa Valley Campus in Lebanon, and at the AABU campus in Mafraq, Jordan. Students could also access the KCL/FutureLearn short online courses remotely (for open run courses) or at a physical study hub (for closed run courses) on the AUB Bekaa Valley Campus in Lebanon. Students could access the Kiron online study tracks remotely at the study hub at AUB in Lebanon, or at study hubs hosted by partner organisations (like JRS) in Jordan. Courses delivered at study hubs were facilitated and students were provided with laptops.

However, the Covid-19 outbreak subsequently forced PADILEIA to alter its blended learning approach. This included moving all programming for foundational courses and short courses completely online, training staff to deliver classes remotely, changing schedules to accommodate for advanced preparation, and providing students with devices, internet cards, and increasing support services. A rapid evaluation conducted in October 2020 found that, overall, these actions had enabled PADILEIA to successfully manage the transition to remote online delivery. The rapid evaluation also provided a number of recommendations for the PADILEIA partnership regarding student and facilitator support, course design and delivery, and approaches to MEL activities. PADILEIA's activities came to a close in November 2021, as such summative evaluation aims to assess the overall effectiveness of the PADILEIA project throughout its four-year lifespan (2017-2021).

The evaluation is shaped by the project's theory of change, outlined in Figure 1 below. This is used as a framework to assess the activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of the project, which are captured in the research questions (see Section 1.3).

Figure 1: Theory of Change



1.3 Research questions

The summative evaluation seeks to answer three research questions, which were adapted from the evaluation objectives outlined in the terms of reference. These are referenced throughout the research findings and learnings.

Table 1: List of research questions

#	Research question
1	Assess whether PADILEIA increased higher education access for refugees and disadvantaged host communities, outlining the reasons behind these achievements/non-achievements
2	Assess whether the knowledge and transferable skills gained through PADILEIA contributed to students' successful onwards transitions (Higher education, employment, further study), or could do so in the future
3	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following:
3a	the relevance, responsiveness, and effectiveness of PADILEIA's learning environment design
3b	student support structures, assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of student support structures in increasing access across all delivery modes
3c	open educational resources and platforms
3d	higher education delivery remit, bridging programme design and student level
3e	form of learning delivery

It was agreed with PADILEIA at the inception phase of the evaluation to remove a fourth evaluation objective that examined the project's impact on students' self-efficacy due to a lack of data tracking change over time. However, the joint concepts of self-efficacy and confidence are investigated with reference to the research objectives. Definitions of these key concepts, along with those of access and onward transitions, are outlined in Annex A.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter outlines an overview of the methodological approach of the summative evaluation, including the overall design, data collection and data analysis. The chapter ends with a presentation of the evaluation samples. An extended methodology is presented in detail in Annex B, including the approach employed with regard to research ethics, risk assessment and quality assurance.

2.1 Overview of evaluation design

The evaluation employs a mixed methods design, incorporating: relevant available project data; a digital student survey; interviews with students, delivery team members, and project staff. The approach was based on a fully distance-based methodology. This was due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 upon international travel, which severely limited scope for in-person data collection for the duration of the evaluation.

The methodological approach encompassed the following three phases: (i) inception, (ii) project data analysis and sequential quantitative and qualitative data collection, (iii) and analysis and write-up. The data sources were triangulated to provide a foundation for rigorous analysis.

2.1.1 Inception

The evaluation started with an inception phase, in which the evaluation objectives, methodology, work plan and deliverables were finalised. An inception report was produced and signed off by PADILEIA. At this point in the evaluation it was decided to implement a sequential approach to data collection, with the digital student survey conducted first and qualitative data collected second. The rationale for sequential data collection was that it allowed for initial quantitative data to inform and enrich the subsequent qualitative data collection. Survey responses were monitored for trends, which were addressed with interview participants in the next stage. The key informant interview templates were informed by the initial analysis of the student survey, and student interviewees recruited from survey participants.

2.1.2 Data collection

Data collection was conducted sequentially, with an initial project document review in June and July 2021, the digital student survey deployed in August 2021 followed by qualitative data collection with students, delivery team and project management staff in September 2021. The data collections are presented in summary below. For a detailed breakdown of the samples, see chapter 2.2.

Table 2: Data collection samples

Data collection method	Target sample size	Final clean sample size
Digital student survey	94 (minimum)	447
KIIs with students	27	27
KIIs with delivery team members	10	9 interviews with a total of 10 interviewees
KIIs with project staff	10	11 interviews with a total of 14 interviewees

Project document review and analysis

A number of project data sources were drawn upon for the evaluation, including the Theory of Change, Results Framework and end of year reports to the fund manager. A full list of the project data sources reviewed and analysed for the evaluation are included in Annex C. Project data was primarily used to address research question 1 and was also used to triangulate findings relevant to research questions 2 and 3. It is important to state that detailed interrogation of project monitoring data was beyond the scope of this evaluation. The figures contained within the report have been reviewed and discussed with PADILEIA staff, and when triangulated with findings from the survey and KIIs have not raised any concerns, however they have not been independently verified and this should be borne in mind when considering findings relating to project data.

Quantitative data collection

The first methodological component was a digital student survey. This approach was selected as it allows a large number of students to contribute to the evaluation, providing a broad range of student opinions and experiences, and can be completed remotely. There were 85 survey questions split across six sections: 1) about you (sample demographics), 2) course details, 3) course experiences, 4) student support, 5) access and barriers, and 6) onward transitions. Three versions were created in order for the survey to be tailored to students across PADILEIA's three offerings: blended foundational courses, online study tracks made up of Kiron MOOCs, and online short courses. The survey contained questions relating to all three research questions and the majority of questions are the same across the three survey versions for comparability. Questions related to the relevance and effectiveness of student support structures, learning platforms and learning delivery were also included to engage with aspects of research question 3. The student survey tools are included in Annex D.

The surveys were distributed through the Zoho platform and were available in Arabic, as the language that the majority of students are most comfortable using. The survey was live from 9th-21st August 2021 and responses were monitored to ensure distribution among the course offerings, country, gender and refugee status. Convenience sampling was used as the survey was open to all contactable PADILEIA students who were able and willing to participate. Once

the survey was closed, an initial analysis was conducted to inform and enrich the subsequent qualitative data collection, with tools updated to reflect trends and questions arising from the student survey. Contact lists were also created with survey respondents who consented to be contacted for an interview, and included their contact details and demographic information.

Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data collection took place in September 2021, and consisted of key informant interviews (KIIs) with students, delivery team and project management staff. All templates are available in Annex D.

The student interviews were designed to answer all research questions, with a focus on questions 1 and 2 as well as aspects of research question 3 relating in particular to student support structures, learning platforms and learning delivery. A sampling strategy was created that ensured students were selected from each year of implementation and course provider, as well as having a representative proportion of students by gender and refugee status. The student interviews were conducted in Arabic over phone or video calls, depending on individual preference, and detailed notes were captured during the interview and then translated into English.

Interviews were also conducted with delivery team members, including facilitators and instructors, primarily to address research question 3 but also to gain supplementary data to be used for triangulation purposes in research question 2. The sampling strategy aimed to ensure that each pathway was represented in the sample, and delivery team members with experience of both online and in-person facilitation and experience of both course design and delivery were targeted where possible. Finally, KIIs were conducted with project management staff, primarily to address research question 3. The interviews targeted representatives from each of the project partners or organisations. These interviews were conducted in English over video calls, and detailed notes were taken.

2.1.3 Data analysis

The survey datasets were downloaded and the data was cleaned. This included removing incomplete entries, entries without consent, duplicates, any entries from participants who did not meet the eligibility criteria, and re-coding any 'other, please specify' variables. The clean dataset was anonymised, with participants' names, contact details and location information removed. Once the data was clean, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted in Microsoft Excel. Contingency tables were constructed to explore frequencies and patterns between different variables.

KIIs were analysed thematically in a rigorous and systematic manner, using a deductive coding process to link back to the key evaluation questions, and an inductive process to ensure additional key findings were captured effectively. The analysis codebook is included in Annex D. This approach ensured that the analysis engaged with the substance and weighting of interviewee responses rather than relying solely on anecdotal feedback, and enabled a structure to be imposed on the analysis so that it is representative, clear and accessible for the reader. Qualitative analysis was carried out in MaxQDA.

Lastly, project data was analysed to triangulate findings. The list of project data sources was gathered in communication with PADILEIA consortium staff. The specific documents and data drawn upon for the evaluation are listed in Annex C. All data was disaggregated by location, gender and refugee status where possible to allow for insights into how different students have experienced PADILEIA courses.

2.1.4 Challenges and opportunities in evaluation design

The methodology employed for the summative evaluation was appropriate and feasible to meet the research questions. However, it is important to note the constraints and limitations of the approach as well as its opportunities.

Firstly, the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated that data collection was conducted remotely, which presented some challenges. For the digital survey it was challenging to ensure that the link was distributed to all PADILEIA students correctly, as some students have changed their contact details and links were shared between cohorts meaning that some students answered the wrong survey. Without an enumerator to ensure that all respondents met the selection criteria, many ineligible entries had to be removed. Also, connectivity can be poor in Jordan and Lebanon which meant that many duplicate and partial survey responses were received as respondents lost internet connection and had to restart the survey. The survey was also long, and some respondents did not finish it, meaning that there are a higher level of 'did not answer' responses in the last two sections of the survey. For interviews with students, it was challenging to contact participants as many did not reply to messages or emails. Participants were often busy with work, studying or domestic responsibilities so rushed their interview responses or interviews had to be conducted over multiple calls. Also, remote data collection does not lend itself well to certain qualitative data collection approaches and as such the evaluation was unable to include focus group discussions. This had the potential to limit the depth of insight through the qualitative interactions, however broad coverage and an increased sample of KIIs mitigated some of the potential loss.

However, remote data collection allowed for a greater number of students to be engaged through a digital survey, which was sent to previous students from all years of implementation. Data collection also utilised digital technology that respondents were familiar with and had access to, such as phones and tablets. This is an opportunity to reach students that may not have wanted to engage in in-person data collection. Another opportunity in the remote survey approach was that three separate versions and links could be sent out to students in each course offering to reduce confusion, which was a learning gained from the experience of the Rapid Evaluation conducted in 2020. This had the added benefit of increased ease of monitoring and ensuring coverage across the course offerings. However, this increased the data cleaning and analysis as three datasets were involved, and some students answered the wrong survey.

Secondly, the nature of the PADILEIA programme is complex with multiple course offerings, course providers and different modes of implementation over each of the four years of implementation due to adaptations, particularly due to Covid-19. Many students contacted for the survey and interviews had engaged in many PADILEIA courses and struggled to remember details of each specific course, particularly remembering when they studied. This made it

challenging to sample correctly from each year of implementation. There were also challenges in employing the correct terminology that students would recognise for course providers and student support services, which led to some conflicting information and a large amount of cross-referencing student survey entries with course providers' databases.

Thirdly, as this is a summative evaluation, the sampling strategies targeted students and staff from all years of implementation. This was an opportunity to include a range of experiences that reflected how PADILEIA had adapted and changed over the lifetime of the project. However, it was challenging to contact students from Year 1 and Year 2 of implementation, with many having changed their contact details or declining to participate. For delivery staff who had left their positions it was not always possible to contact them or engage them in data collection.

Lastly, the opportunity for sequential data collection allowed for richer and more targeted insights to be gathered in the qualitative data and provide contact lists of students willing to be interviewed. Where there were no contacts, course providers were contacted to find additional interviewees, but in some cases lack of availability required a change to the sampling strategy. Ultimately, the disaggregation of gender was de-prioritised from the student qualitative sample in favour of prioritising the year of implementation and course provider.

2.2 Evaluation samples

This sub-chapter presents the final cleaned and anonymised samples that were used for analysis.

2.2.1 Quantitative sample

There are a total of 447 survey respondents across the three course offerings: Foundation Courses, Kiron and KCL/FL MOOCs. There are more females (52%) than males (42%) in the sample (with 6% of respondents preferring not to disclose their gender), which aligns with the gender representation in PADILEIA's student population as a whole. Cumulative enrolment data up to and including 2020 shows that enrolment across all pathways averages out to 57% female and 43% male. There are also more refugee respondents (83%) than host community respondents (17%), which is in line with the PADILEIA student population as well, as cumulative enrolment data up to and including 2020 recorded 83% refugee and 17% host community enrolment. There is an almost even split between respondents based in Jordan (49%) and Lebanon (51%) in the sample, although this varies quite significantly by course provider. The average age of the survey respondents is 26, with the youngest respondent aged 17 (Kiron) and the oldest aged 54 (KCL). A summary of the samples is presented below.

Table 3: Summary of survey samples, combined and by course offering:

Dataset	Total sample size (n and % of total)	Male, including transgender (%)	Female, including transgender (%)	Refugee (%)	Host community (%)	Based in Jordan (%)	Based in Lebanon (%)
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			(%) ¹				
Foundation Course	254 (57%)	36%	56%	81%	17%	76%	24%
Kiron	143 (32%)	57%	40%	87%	13%	23% ²	74%
KCL/FL MOOCs	50 (11%)	26%	66%	80%	20%	0% ³	100%
Total	447	42%	52%	83%	17%	49%	51%

Foundation Course respondents make up the largest proportion of the student survey sample, followed by Kiron and KCL. However, the Foundation Course survey is the only survey dataset that includes respondents from multiple course providers: AABU (59%), AUB (24%) and Relief International (17%).

To contextualise the findings outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, it is helpful to understand the background of the survey respondents. Across all survey respondents, the largest proportion had completed secondary education as their highest level of education prior to studying a PADILEIA course (54%), followed by those who had completed a bachelor's degree (28%). There are some notable differences in survey respondents' educational backgrounds by refugee status. For example, a higher percentage of host community respondents had completed a bachelor's degree before studying with PADILEIA (57%) than refugee respondents (22%), whereas a higher percentage of refugee respondents had completed secondary school as their highest level of education (59%) than host community respondents (30%). There is no notable difference by gender. The evidence shows that PADILEIA students have a more advanced educational background than their parents. Among survey respondents, the largest proportion of both their mothers and fathers completed primary school as their highest level of education (47% and 38% respectively) compared to only 2% of survey respondents.

Furthermore, the majority of survey respondents were single while studying with PADILEIA (69%), and a quarter were married or in a civil partnership while studying. The largest proportion of respondents did not have any caring responsibilities at home while studying (38%), although some 33% were caring for children while studying. Lastly, it is important to note that a total of 34 respondents, some 8% of all survey respondents, can be considered as having a disability according to the Washington Group disability questions. This means that they reported that they have a lot of difficulty or could not do one of the following: seeing, hearing, walking, remembering or self-care.

¹ Note that the percentages of male and female respondents do not add up to 100% as the remainder of respondents answered with 'other' or 'prefer not to say'.

² Note that the percentage of respondents in Jordan and Lebanon does not add to 100% as two respondents reported living outside of these countries, one in Turkey and one in the UAE.

³ The survey was only distributed to students in Lebanon as only students in Lebanon had done closed-run MOOCs facilitated by AUB-recruited staff, and no such provision was available in Jordan.

In terms of survey respondents' engagement with PADILEIA at the time of taking the survey, 51% were still studying on a PADILEIA course and 49% had finished studying. Also of note is that 63% of survey respondents studied with PADILEIA during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.2.2 Qualitative sample

Student KIIs

A total of 27 students were interviewed covering all four years of implementation, male and female students and refugee and host community students. The tables below present summaries of the sample:

Table 4: Summary of student KII sample

Male	Female	Refugee	Host community	Total
11	16	21	6	27

Table 5: Detailed breakdown of student KII sample

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
AUB	1F	1M, 1F	1F	1M, 1F
AABU	1M	1M, 1F	1M	1M, 1M (HC), 1F
Relief International				1M, 1F
Kiron Jordan	1F	1M	1F (HC)	1M, 1F (HC)
Kiron Lebanon		1F	1F (HC)	1M, 1F (HC)
Closed run KCL MOOCs			1F	1F, 1F (HC)

M = male, F = female, and HC = host community members (all other participants are refugees)

Delivery team and project staff KIIs

A total of nine delivery team interviews were conducted with a total of ten participants, four of whom were female and six of whom were male. The interviewees' role included: student support officers, MOOC facilitators, Kiron facilitators and Foundation Course instructors. A total of 11 project staff interviews were conducted with a total of 14 participants, eight of

whom were male and six of whom were female. The interviewee's roles included: delivery team project managers, coordinators, instructional designers, and a member of the consortium's strategic management board.

Chapter 3: Research findings and discussion

This chapter will present the research findings and their interpretation. The chapter is split into four sub-chapters:

- 3.1 Project management and design
- 3.2 Project implementation and course experiences
- 3.3 Challenges and support
- 3.4 Impacts and onward transitions

Each sub-chapter will outline which research questions it is addressing and draw together findings from all relevant data sources. Given the complexity of the project and breadth of data collected, the analysis presented will be largely descriptive, and findings of particular interest will be explored in more depth on a case-by-case basis.

3.1 Project design and management

This subchapter presents findings related to the management and design of the project, including student recruitment, consortium relations, project organisation as well as the strengths and limitations of project coordination, individual partners and project design.

The following research questions are addressed in this subchapter:

Table 6: Research questions addressed in Chapter 3.1

#	Research question
1	Assess whether PADILEIA increased higher education access for refugees and disadvantaged host communities, outlining the reasons behind these achievements/non-achievements
3a	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: the relevance, responsiveness, and effectiveness of PADILEIA's learning environment design
3c	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: open educational resources and platforms
3d	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: higher education delivery remit, bridging programme design and student level
3e	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: form of learning delivery

The findings draw primarily on the delivery team and project management KIIs.

3.1.1 Project design

This section presents findings relating to the successes and challenges related to key aspects of the project design, including: adaptability and student-centredness; the holistic approach; blended learning; sustainability; and English as the medium of instruction.

Adaptability

Adaptability was a major theme that emerged from the qualitative data. Seven project staff interviewees (2 Kiron, 3 KCL, 2 AUB)⁴ referenced that the project activities were adapted every year of implementation in response to student feedback and needs. The major design adaptation decision to facilitate Kiron and KCL courses in study hubs was made in response to project and delivery staff's realisation that students were not coping with independent study (2 Kiron, 1 FL). Another key example of student-centred adaptations included adding Arabic subtitles to MOOCs (1 FL, 1 Kiron Jordan SSO). Project and delivery staff mentioned numerous other support adaptations relating to transfer guidance (1 Kiron, 1 KCL), access to extra English courses (1 Kiron, 1 AUB), and psycho-social support (1, AABU, 1 Kiron, 1 AUB). Students also valued the project's adaptability; six students (3 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan) noted instances in which provision had been adapted to meet their needs. This was exemplified by one AUB student's comment:

'Sometimes when we had to apply what we were learning on a mobile it would not work, so the teachers started providing alternative mobile platforms that we can use to apply what we were learning.'

Year 4 AUB refugee student, female

Moreover, staff and students both noted the key challenge of context uncertainty, which made it difficult to plan course content and delivery methods and adapt them to constantly changing needs (especially in light of Covid-19 and instability in Lebanon (2 KCL, 1 AUB)).

Student-centredness

Alongside adaptability, student-centeredness was a major theme that arose from the data analysis. These were regularly mentioned together and seen as a significant strength of the project, with particular mention of Kiron's engagement in this area. Comments were made about project activities being designed in consultation with students (2 KCL) and created with consideration for students' needs and potential exit pathways (1 FL, 1 AUB, 1 Kiron). For

⁴ Please note that throughout the report, qualitative data analysis information is included in brackets as supporting evidence. This presents the number of interviewees who referenced the theme or finding in their interview and what institution the interviewee is associated with. Therefore, "2 Kiron, 3 KCL, 2 AUB" denotes that the finding was based on references made by two Kiron, three KCL and two AUB interviewees. In some cases, where the findings cross over qualitative samples (student, delivery team and project staff), a summary of the number of interviewees per sample is presented instead.

example, 'English and digital skills made sense as courses, so did entrepreneurship as refugees have micro-businesses in the camp'. (1 FL).

Student-centeredness is evidenced by the needs assessments and meetings with students that were reportedly carried out prior to project implementation (2 KCL, 1 Kiron project staff; 1 Kiron delivery staff member). These included online sessions with students to better understand their contexts and goals. However, one KCL project staff member felt that he would have liked more discussion with students than ended up being possible; he believed that he would have benefited from more regular engagement with students to ensure the course design was relevant and appropriate. Finally, both Kiron staff members called for more frequent needs assessments due to the project's multi-year timeline and also to the instability and therefore changeability of the context and job market.

Four delivery staff (2 AABU, 1 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan) also highlighted the fact that all their courses had been designed specifically to respond to student needs. This often involved making the courses flexible enough to cater for a wide variety of student levels. One Kiron student felt that this had been successfully achieved: 'even if you do not have any background in technology, the course was designed in a way that anyone can benefit' (Year 2 Kiron Jordan refugee student, male), an opinion echoed by an AUB IT instructor. At the opposite end of the spectrum, one AUB instructor felt that the design had also facilitated academic stretch and challenge for more advanced students:

'There were some students who already took science and were aware of the content, but there was always something new for them, even with the most basic lessons.'

AUB instructor

In the case of Kiron Jordan, this flexibility was achieved through the variety of different MOOCs available: 'there was a lot of different content available for lots of very different levels'. One AABU instructor also explained that she and her colleague had designed the English course content 'to focus on skills the students need - speaking, reading, writing etc. For the reading section, we tried to choose texts that would be relevant to students, that they might benefit from'. The student focus was summarised by a Kiron project staff member:

'One word to characterise the experience is 'adapting to students' - adapting to what they needed, even if it went against the model.'

Kiron project staff member

Despite these considerable successes of student-centredness, staff also reported challenges in this respect. Two project staff (1 Kiron, 1 FL) pointed to some misalignment with contextual realities at the design stage. These comments were made in relation to the English for Healthcare MOOC: 'English for Healthcare presumes you can actually pursue a healthcare career and there is the issue of refugees not being able to access work in healthcare... Why would they be doing a course like that?' (FL project staff member); and also in relation to

Kiron's Nursing MOOC: 'It was flawed as participants were asked what they wanted to study, but it didn't account for what was realistic. Refugees cannot work legally as nurses'. Indeed, a pre-project needs assessment conducted by Kiron revealed 'Public health, medicine and nursing' as the highest ranked subjects in terms of student interest, indicating that responding to student interests and guiding students towards clear transition pathways might not always have been easy to align. However, it should also be clarified that the original purpose of KCL/FL MOOCs was not to provide direct pathways to employment as such, but rather to provide students with an insight into a particular subject area.

Holistic approach

The project's holistic focus on academic development, extracurricular activities and access to onward transitions was felt to make its design unique (4 project staff: 2 KCL, 1 Kiron, 1 AUB; 1 Kiron delivery staff member). As the Kiron Jordan student support officer (SSO) summarised, 'we provided a different flavour of education for students, extra-curricular activities, mentorship... you don't get this every day'. An AABU staff member agreed, stating that 'the academic stuff, as well as the psycho-social support and other activities outside the course, was the strength of the programme'.

The importance of the holistic approach was also noted by delivery staff, citing the concern for content delivery, development of transferable skills and further opportunities as key components of the holistic package. One AUB instructor and one Kiron Lebanon SSO noted that all subjects taught within Foundation Courses and MOOCs also aimed to develop skills that students would need for further study and in the working world. The strength of this design decision was also identified by two students; one AUB student felt that the Foundation Course 'gives the student the opportunity to learn English besides learning technologies that are necessary for any job you get' (Year 4 AUB refugee student, male). In a similar vein, a Year 2 Kiron Jordan student (refugee, male) noted that 'Kiron's courses are very relevant to what is provided by universities, they build the course in an academic structure', suggesting that the courses had been successfully designed to correspond with higher education pathways towards which students might progress.

Blended learning design

PADILEIA's blended learning design was recognised by staff and students as a successful way of combining the benefits of online and in-person learning, while mitigating the negative aspects of both approaches (2 project staff; 1 delivery staff member). Positive aspects of the online elements of the design identified by staff included: the ability to reach a much wider audience than in-person-only courses (1 FL; 1 Kiron); the ability to bypass the issue of student travel (1 Kiron), and the level of flexibility it gave students with differing schedules and priorities (1 RI; 1 AABU). Notably, five students also identified the latter benefit (2 AABU; 1 AUB; 1 RI). An AUB instructor observed that online delivery had the additional, and perhaps unintended, benefit of causing students to improve their general digital skills: 'they were learning how to use more applications and platforms, submitting by email'. Other benefits of online delivery identified by delivery staff included any-time access to course materials, either at home (1 AUB, 1 Kiron) or at a study hub (3 AUB; 1 AABU), and having a large volume and wide variety of resources available to access online (2 Kiron).

In parallel, a key benefit of in-person, facilitated learning was the opportunities to provide instant feedback, especially with practical tasks (2 delivery staff; 1 project staff member). Indeed, project staff identified this aspect of blended learning as particularly necessary given the limited digital skills of many PADILEIA students (1 Kiron, 1 KCL, 1 FL). One Kiron project staff member highlighted, in line with project data, that the Kiron course completion rates had increased when blended learning was introduced⁵. While encouraging, it is important to note that the switch to blended learning also involved introducing stricter selection processes such as individual interviews to assess students' dedication, which may also have contributed to the elevated completion rate. Similarly, FutureLearn data shows that completion rates for a typical FutureLearn student range between 5% and 8%, while the average completion rate across the PADILEIA FutureLearn/KCL MOOCs sits at 22%. With peer support and a trained facilitator available, the average completion rates across PADILEIA courses rises to 78%⁶.

One Kiron project staff member added a gender dimension to the benefit of blended learning, explaining that 'some parents of girls would be mistrustful of them being online all day, being more familiar with in-person learning, and are therefore more supportive of them participating in the blended model'. Support for the blended learning model was summarised thus:

'[Blended learning] is flexible, you get the opportunity to get to know students... Blended was self-paced, but at the same time a teacher was available. Students had access to better internet, a physical room to study in. Personally, I would always go for blended - there are pros and cons for both fully online and fully in-person.'

Kiron Jordan Student Support Officer

Other benefits of in-person learning included its potential to encourage peer support (1 AUB instructor; 1 AABU student) and increased possibilities for student monitoring compared to online delivery (1 AABU instructor). This instructor added that, perhaps as a result of the reasons given, she felt that students had generally made better progress when being taught in person. The importance of in-person facilitation was also noted by two project staff members (1 KCL, 1 FL), and was well summarised by the KCL project staff member:

'Digital is great but human beings will always be the most useful thing to get students the help, get them moving along... The single most important thing is this: human interaction to help them with connections, language, and understanding.'

KCL project staff member

⁵ Note: Completion rates rose from 35% to 69% once blended learning was introduced. Source: Kiron Completion Rates Blended Learning Cohorts_PADILEIA; Kiron Metabase.

⁶ Source: PADILEIA: USPs and Programme Features, v10 June 2021.

While the blended design was generally favoured, issues still remained with the individual online and in-person elements, which were not entirely mitigated by using them in combination. In addition to the central issue of connectivity (see Section 3.3.1), four delivery staff members from across the pathways (1 KCL, 1 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 Kiron Lebanon) spoke of the challenges they had encountered with engaging students online during the Covid-19 pandemic, mentioning students who were 'at work while they are in class' (AABU instructor), students who 'do not open their microphone and or answer in the chat' (AUB instructor), and some who 'are sleeping all the time - they don't interact!' (Kiron Lebanon facilitator). Other issues included distracting background noises when students were learning at home (1 project staff member; 1 delivery staff member; 2 students); and decreased student motivation (1 project staff member; 1 delivery staff member; 3 students). The latter issue was illustrated by one Year 4 AUB (refugee, female)'s comment: 'sometimes classes online are more boring since the interaction via Zoom is not the same as communication in person'. Some of these challenges experienced while studying online were also identified among survey respondents. For example, 18% of respondents reported difficulty concentrating during online class (18%), 11% reported missing interactions with other students while studying online and 9% experienced a lack of motivation while studying online.

In addition, two delivery staff members (1 AUB, 1 AABU) noted that shifting to online-only delivery during the pandemic had proved challenging in terms of how they communicated with students. In the case of the AUB instructor, this involved doing much more preparation than she was used to doing when teaching in person: 'At the hub, I would just write on the board and don't have to make all the preparations - when it is online it takes more time as you need to be more prepared'. She added that she had even had to change the way she spoke when teaching her material: 'it is a different way of explaining in person'. Similarly, an AABU SSO noted the difficulties he had encountered when interacting with students online, especially given the sensitive nature of his role: 'I am usually face to face with them but I struggled to do psycho-social work with them online, how to do group sessions online'.

Finally, two AABU project staff noted that online delivery made giving students instant feedback challenging, specifically during the practical elements of some courses. He explained:

'Most computer courses have hands-on training. Online the quality is affected a bit. When the teacher is close to you it is better, they provide evaluation especially if there's a bug in your program, it won't be as good as if a teacher can give you immediate feedback.'

AABU project staff member

This was echoed by a Kiron Jordan SSO, who noted that the Kiron Nursing MOOC had ultimately not succeeded in the online format because it 'needs to be put into practice in a physical environment and this wasn't fully applied in that way here'.

There were also disadvantages to in-person delivery. Introducing an in-person component reduced the project's ability to achieve the anticipated scale (1 FL project staff member). This

observation is reflected in the project data; despite achieving a total of 6,211 KCL/FL MOOC active learners, the original projection was 18,000⁷. It also prevented the scheduling of multiple sessions at the same time (1 Kiron Lebanon SSO). In parallel, the in-person element of the design also introduced the issue of travelling to and from study hubs (1 Kiron Lebanon facilitator), increasing the time and financial burden on students and facilitators (see also Section 3.2.1). Introducing the blended approach required the project to find physical spaces in which to conduct classes. This also required a budget allocation, which was not agreed internally and necessitated the introduction of external partners (1 Kiron project staff member).

Sustainability

PADILEIA shows initial signs of having achieved sustainability, with indications that the project's multi-strand, holistic design made it flexible enough for future project designers to pick and choose which aspects to adapt and replicate. One KCL project staff member highlighted that 'it might be that you want to take one or two strands to suit your context. e.g., using WhatsApp for mentoring', while another spoke of making MOOCs 'evergreen', i.e., usable for other organisations.

Study hubs were also found to be an important contributing factor to the project's legacy and sustainability; two project staff members pointed out that study hubs would remain and benefit communities beyond the project's lifetime (1 RI, 1 Kiron), and another noted that the model could and would be replicated in other contexts (1 KCL). The RI project staff member expressed the significance of this legacy in the following quote:

'Zaatari study hubs are under the PADILEIA name. The project left a legacy - this kind of support is going to last for the students, it is going to change lives.'

Kiron Jordan Student Support Officer

PADILEIA also left an important legacy in terms of knowledge transfer. Project staff noted that PADILEIA staff's expertise with online and blended learning had been transferred to other staff within their institutions, who were now replicating PADILEIA delivery practices (1 KCL, 2 AABU). Similarly, round table discussions with representatives from other institutions in the region had reportedly sparked increased interest in and acceptance of blended learning (1 AUB).

Finally, sustainability was promoted through Kiron's 'K-step' model⁸, which had already enabled more than 20 students to pass on the knowledge they had acquired through PADILEIA and to act as role models to others (1 Kiron project staff member; 1 Kiron Jordan SSO). That

⁷ Source: PADILEIA Plan of Work and Budget. Note: for KCL/FL, an 'active learner' is defined as a learner who has completed at least two steps on the FutureLearn platform. The term 'active learner' is treated as synonymous with 'enrolled student' within this report to allow for comparability of findings across the different pathways.

⁸ This refers to Kiron's progression structure, which enables students to become Kiron facilitators, then potentially progress to higher education by transferring Kiron credits

said, another Kiron project staff member noted that the final stage of the K-step programme - to make the transition to higher education using transfer credits - had often not been fully realised due to a lack of project focus around setting up clear and attainable onward transitions: 'if there are no clear exit pathways for students to go down then it undermines the sustainability of the project'.

Language of instruction

Opinions about English as the medium of instruction varied across the qualitative data, and were particularly mixed when it came to student responses. English as the medium of instruction was reported as a key challenge for students across all pathways (9 students, 6 delivery staff, 5 project staff), with some individual students recommending extra pre-course language preparation (2 KCL students) and slower course progression with more Arabic content (1 KCL student) in future project iterations. Notably, all students who reported issues with English as the medium of instruction were either Jordanian or Syrian, which can likely be attributed to the Lebanese education system's prioritisation of English, rendering Lebanese students more able to cope with it in their PADILEIA courses.

Conversely, six students were positive about the choice of English as the language of instruction, either stating that they had no issues with it (3 students: 1 AUB, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan) or that they felt it actively helped them to improve their language skills (3 students: 1 AABU, 1 Kiron Jordan, 1 RI). Indeed, the main reason students gave for undertaking their PADILEIA courses was to improve their knowledge and skills in English (1 AABU, 4 AUB, 2 KCL, 2 Kiron Jordan, 4 Kiron Lebanon, 1 RI). One Kiron Jordan student (Year 2, refugee, male) noted that it was especially important to have his course delivered in English 'since computer science and technology is all in English' and therefore 'I don't think translating the course to Arabic would have been beneficial'. This latter point was supported by two facilitators (1 KCL, 1 Kiron Lebanon), who highlighted the importance of using English for their MOOCs: 'they need to know the technical terms as in the Arab world the terms are not translated' (KCL facilitator).

Voices from across the qualitative data agreed that English had been a good choice as the language of instruction, but that support in Arabic had been crucial in facilitating this, both in the Jordanian and Lebanese contexts. Two project staff (both AABU), three delivery staff (1 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 KCL) and eight students (3 AABU, 2 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan, 2 Kiron Lebanon) pointed out that delivery staffs' use of Arabic in class had been an important factor in aiding comprehension, either through bilingual explanations or transcripts. As the KCL MOOC facilitator explained:

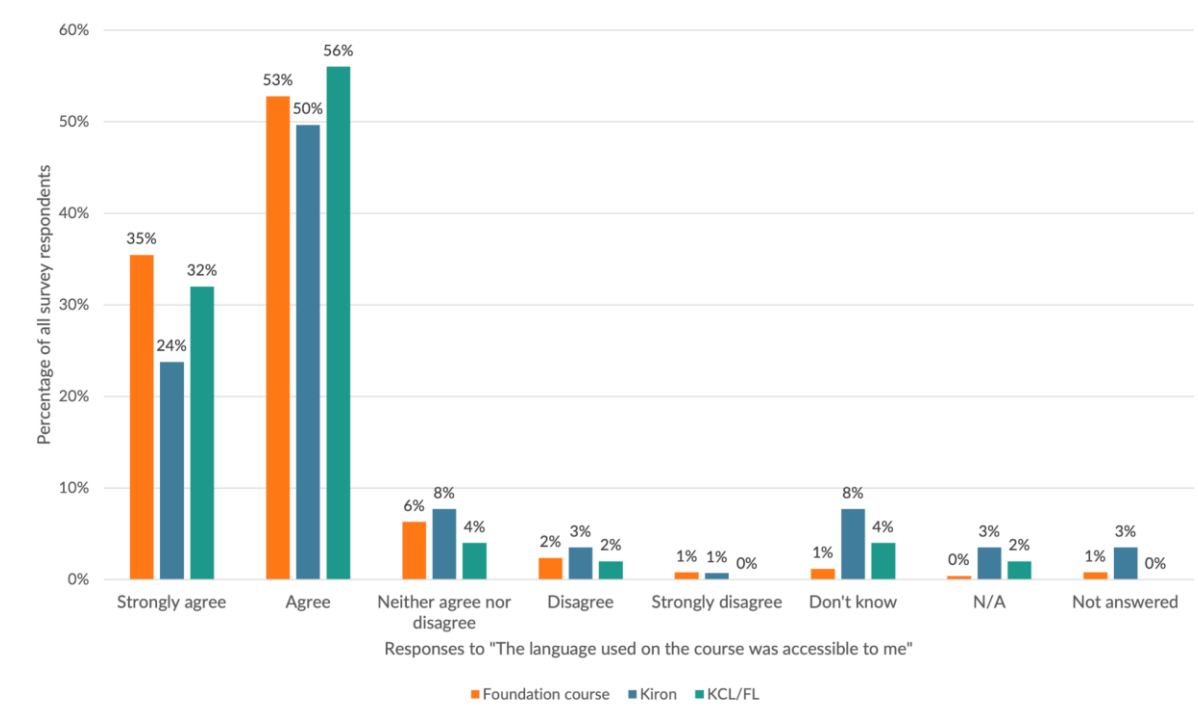
'I would give the question in English and Arabic and the answers in English only... And the grades increased when I did this as they understood the questions.'

KCL MOOC facilitator

It is important to note that overall survey respondents felt that the language used across the courses was accessible to them, however this did not preclude them from experiencing

challenges or difficulties and most likely reflects the fact that most students experienced Arabic-language support with the English course materials. The largest proportion of survey respondents agreed (52%) that the language was accessible to them, followed by those who strongly agreed (31%). Only 3% of respondents disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed that the language was accessible. Agreement was high among respondents from all course providers, however, was lowest among Kiron respondents (75% combined agree and strongly agree) compared to Foundation Course respondents and KCL respondents (both 88%). These responses are broken down by course provider in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Survey respondents who found the language used on their PADILEIA course accessible (%)



Number of respondents: Foundation Course = 254, Kiron = 143, KCL/FL = 50

Finally, providing Arabic subtitles for MOOCs was considered an important contributor to the success of English as the language of instruction (2 project staff - 1 FL, 1 KCL; 3 delivery staff - 1 Kiron Lebanon, 1 Kiron Jordan; 1 KCL). The KCL instructional designer pointed out that this had proven an important time-saver for delivery staff - 'when there is difficult content they can direct students to translations, especially in technical subjects like engineering'. A FutureLearn project staff member noted that the addition of Arabic subtitles for MOOCs had been a direct response to student feedback reporting that English-only content was inaccessible and lamented not having made this change earlier. Some 9% of survey respondents also reported accessing Arabic transcripts of course content as an important student support service.⁹

3.1.2 Student recruitment

Recruitment strategies appeared to vary across the pathways. For the Foundation Courses, project staff (1 AUB, 1 AABU) explained that they selected students based on academic credentials and entry interviews as the courses had become so oversubscribed. Indeed, project staff at AUB reported that they had received 450 applications for 60 places in Year 4, while AABU had received 639 applications for the same number of places. Both AABU and AUB project staff members indicated that being selective ensured that courses had the maximum impact, as the selection process also involved identifying students who demonstrated true dedication and a willingness to learn. However, it may have been possible, as one AABU

⁹ Note: it has not been possible to identify how students evaluated the use of subtitles specifically, as they tended to conflate bilingual teacher explanations and subtitling when reporting on issues relating to language of instruction.

project staff member suggested, to increase the places available on the Foundation Courses. This project staff member felt that this would be possible 'because the overhead cost is almost the same. We pay money for the labs so it would be the same cost in terms of infrastructure'.

Recruitment appears to have been less straightforward when it came to KCL MOOCs. While KCL staff reported that there had been no issue with recruitment for closed-run MOOCs, a Kiron project staff member flagged an issue with recruiting MOOC students onto their platform: 'we advertised the KCL courses, but it was hard to advertise standalone courses that didn't have a clear exit route'. Furthermore, one KCL MOOC facilitator (Business and Entrepreneurship) experienced a wide variety of student levels in his classes, and called for more robust recruitment strategies to help delivery staff anticipate new student levels. That said, there was a degree of rigour to the current MOOC recruitment processes; project staff confirmed that interviews were conducted for the Engineering closed runs, and English placement tests were carried out prior to selection in Basic English II: Pre-Intermediate level. Applications to other MOOC courses were screened and filtered according to eligibility criteria, then selections were made based on commitment and availability to attend the course. This process may have helped to limit discrepancies in the level and interest of the learners, though is unlikely to have solved this issue entirely.

There was also recognition of increased streamlining within the recruitment process when it came to the mentoring programme. According to a KCL project staff member, the fact that mentoring recruitment was initially done by country meant that 'the information [students] got might not be the exact info we were trying to get to them. Students might be coming into the programme unsure about what is involved'. That said, it appeared that this problem had been solved by centralising the process to KCL, which had lessened student confusion and carried the incidental benefit of lightening other partners' workloads.

From FutureLearn's perspective, in-bound marketing (through methods such as search engine optimisation resulted in wide student reach, which is evidenced by the fact that FutureLearn recorded a total of 6,211 active PADILEIA learners on its platform¹⁰, and a total of 1,117,174 worldwide active learners enrolling on PADILEIA MOOCs¹¹. However, the FutureLearn project manager also indicated that more could have been done in terms of PADILEIA-specific out-bound marketing (e.g., via social media), as he felt that this would have given students a better understanding of what courses were on offer.

3.1.3 Consortium relationships, communication and organisation

The qualitative data paints a predominantly positive picture of the quality of working relationships within the consortium, though some tensions were also highlighted. Nine project staff (3 KCL, 2 AABU, 1 AUB, 1 Kiron, 1 FL, 1 RI) made specific comments suggesting positive communication experiences, typified by the Kiron staff member's description of relations as 'procedural and friendly', and one AABU project staff member's comment that 'we were like friends working together. This was mostly my experience with them overall'. The regularity of

¹⁰ Source: Results Framework

¹¹ Source: FutureLearn Open Run data: subject enrolments.

communication and responsiveness of partners was valued by project staff and viewed to strengthen relationships (1 AUB, 1 KCL). Two Kiron staff (1 project; 1 delivery) also signaled that communication successes had been largely due to the individual with whom they had interacted at KCL as the lead partner. 'We were lucky to have [KCL project staff member] who we liked and worked well with, but it would have been challenging had that not been the case' (Kiron project staff member).

In contrast, there was also an indication of some staff experiencing challenges with consortium communication. Three project staff members (1 KCL, 1 FL, 1 Kiron) referenced moments of tension, with the Kiron staff member speaking specifically of feeling 'out of the loop' due to lack of recognition for her role. More generally, the KCL staff member described communications as 'sometimes a bit strained' and the FutureLearn staff member referred to 'some storming' early in the project. However, it was also felt that relationships had improved over time (2 KCL, 1 FL, 1 Kiron), with one KCL and one FutureLearn project staff member both pointing out that diverse partnerships inevitably always needed time to find their flow.

One project staff member (1 KCL) and six delivery staff (2 Kiron Lebanon, 2 AABU, 2 AUB) made general comments suggesting that the project had been well organised. Specifically, one AUB instructor mentioned that this high level of organisation had also enabled the project to be 'flexible enough to adapt the course design and delivery according to the changing circumstances'. Additionally, two Kiron delivery staff noted that project organisation had improved over time.

The main organisational issue reported related to staffing (1 Kiron, 1 FL, 1 RI, 1 KCL). High staff turnover within KCL, Kiron and FutureLearn, and 'a fair amount of shuffling' in the AUB and AABU teams (1 FL) reportedly led to a lack of clarity within the consortium, both for project staff (1 KCL, 1 Kiron) and delivery staff (1 Kiron Jordan SSO). However, staff members agreed that the staffing situation stabilised later on. Two KCL project staff members also reflected that making important staffing appointments such as facilitators and a SEO had happened later than it should have done, suggesting this as a potential project impact limitation factor.

Project staff suggested organisational improvements included better record-sharing between staff (1 AABU), better monitoring and follow-up with alumni (1 Kiron, 1 AABU), and more budget allocation for project activities and student devices (1 Kiron).

3.1.4 Project coordination: successes and challenges

Project staff shared a plethora of successes and perceived strengths within the consortium. A key theme was the shared sense of collaboration in the joint interest of strengthening each individual student offering (2 Kiron, 1 RI, 1 AUB). This was exemplified by Kiron staff citing important synergies with KCL, FutureLearn, AABU and AUB, the RI project staff member mentioning ongoing collaboration with Kiron, and AUB stating that they would generally 'link the cohort to other providers' whenever opportunities arose to do so. More generally, four other project staff (2 KCL, 2 AABU) reported fruitful experiences of sharing knowledge and experience within the consortium. This recognition for the strength of the consortium's diversity was expressed by one AABU project staff member:

'Kiron is an NGO, KCL is a university, etc... So it was a rich experience working in different ways on a programme about human nature... Having an international consortium with differences in opinion and vision was very important.'

AABU project staff member

Other important strengths noted by project staff included the high level of commitment from all partners (1 KCL, 1 AUB), and the high level of flexibility and understanding between partners, especially given the contextual challenges in the region during project implementation (1 KCL, 1 Kiron, 1 AUB, 1 RI). A final key strength was that of having partners working in the area of implementation (2 KCL; 2 Kiron). As one KCL project staff member highlighted, this presence was crucial as those partners 'know the environment, understand policies and stakeholders, and are close to students'.

Despite the numerous reports of successful coordination within the partnership, project staff also cited several challenges. In contrast to the reports of inter-partner collaboration, the most commonly mentioned of these was a sense of siloing, with several project staff and one delivery staff member feeling disconnected from the activities of other partners (4 Kiron, 1 RI, 2 AABU). This led to reports that some partners had not always been as open to collaboration as others (1 Kiron, 1 AABU). Furthermore, RI and Kiron project staff reported that almost all communications had been with KCL, or at least mediated by them, meaning that some partners experienced very little collaboration with others. As one Kiron project staff member summarised:

'It almost felt like we had separate projects happening at the same time - the Foundation Courses I was barely involved at all because I was focused on Kiron. I wish we could have had more synergies - we had shared access to student support services but that was it.'

Kiron project staff member

Finally, another Kiron project staff member flagged that collaboration had been hampered by technical issues; tools such as the Kiron Campus offer board, which was designed to make all PADILEIA students aware of upcoming opportunities, were in reality difficult for all students to access due to confusion around the different online platforms involved.

Another key challenge identified by several project staff and one delivery staff member was the variety of different approaches and priorities present within the consortium, an issue felt particularly amongst non-Foundation Course providers (3 KCL, 3 Kiron, 1 FL). As many noted, this issue arose from the diverse nature of the partnership, which included universities, NGOs and a for-profit company. For example, Kiron's flexible approach, as a result of their stage of organisational development, may have come as something of a shock to universities within the partnership: 'There was an understanding of the 'Kiron Model', and an assumption that models don't change - we weren't wedded to the model, but it took other partners time to get used to

this' (1 Kiron project staff member). Similarly, one RI staff member noted that working with a university had been challenging in terms of differing processes: 'KCL are in academia - so their mindset is different to ours. So, when we ask for a donation letter, they say "why?" This was difficult at the beginning'.

Elsewhere, a potential conflict of interest was identified between FutureLearn and other partners (1 FL, 1 KCL), given that FutureLearn is a for-profit company, which may have forced them to prioritise increasing their own student uptake over increasing access and opportunities for PADILEIA students overall. By the FutureLearn project staff member's own admission, this reality was a challenge:

'[FutureLearn] is different from an NGO or university. I have the question of whether it will benefit the whole business.'

FutureLearn project staff member

There appears to have been a lack of clarity within the partnership in terms of PADILEIA's project design scope. It is important to note that transferring to university with credit was a feature of the project design for Kiron only. This split focus may have led to some confusion around intended outcomes and frustration from Kiron staff, leading three Kiron staff members (1 project; 2 delivery) to report that exit opportunities were not clearly established within the project design as a whole. Furthermore, there appears to have been a lack of clarity around setting students' expectations in this regard; while the lead partner reportedly clarified to Kiron that giving students the expectation of securing exit pathways was not within the project scope, Kiron staff continued to feel that this was a crucial project design component. As one Kiron project staff member noted:

'Giving [students] a glimpse of nursing but no clear pathway to it makes it hard for students to be attracted to the course... students won't just come for KCL name; you need to give them something beyond the certificate.'

Kiron project staff member

3.1.5 Individual partner strengths and limitations

Consortium partners identified a variety of strengths present across the partnership, often linking these with overall project successes. University partners were recognised as strong players due to their levels of prestige (2 KCL, 1 AUB, 1 Kiron, 1 RI), which was felt to be a motivating factor for students (1 AUB), and a powerful way of ensuring acceptance of PADILEIA certificates by other institutions. KCL was noted for the strength of the team it provided, both in terms of project management (1 Kiron, 1 KCL, 1 RI) and the expertise of the team of academic experts developing the MOOCs (2 KCL, 1 AUB). AABU was valued for its 'strong political will' and power to effect change internally due to the status of its consortium representatives (1 Kiron). The start-up members (Kiron and FutureLearn) were recognised for their ability to quickly adapt to changing student needs and contexts (1 Kiron, 1 KCL, 1 FL), and

the NGO members (Kiron and RI) were valued for their knowledge and experience of working with refugees and the link they provided other partners to the on-the-ground realities (1 RI, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron). FutureLearn's particular strengths lay in its large-scale reach, experience of hosting university courses on its platform, and adaptability to meet reporting requirements not present in other projects (1 FL, 1 Kiron). Other individual strengths included AUB's history of community work (1 AUB), and KCL's wealth of academic and managerial expertise (2 KCL, 1 AUB).

A recurring theme in terms of partner limitations was the inflexibility of universities (1 Kiron, 2 KCL, 2 AABU, 1 AUB). It was pointed out that working in such big institutions made student advocacy (in the form of pushing for scholarships, for example) very difficult (1 KCL). The bureaucracy involved in working with these large structures also proved laborious (2 AABU) and costly in terms of time (1 AUB, 1 Kiron). A Kiron staff member reported that '[slow budget approval from KCL] hindered our effectiveness and we lost time re-profiling and creating scenarios for what to do with or without funding', although a KCL staff member later pointed out that budget approval came from the fund manager rather than KCL itself, and that deadlines and approvals were always communicated to partners within a day of receiving updates. Conversely, for all its flexibility, Kiron's infancy in comparison to the much more established university institutions was also noted as a limitation; one Kiron staff member noted that Kiron's lack of experience might have shown early on when 'we came in thinking we knew more than we did'.

Two Kiron staff (1 project, 1 delivery staff) and one KCL project staff member noted the limitation of the lead partner (KCL) not being based in the region of implementation. While the Kiron project staff member found that having KCL based far away was 'extra work for coordination', the KCL project staff member and the Kiron delivery staff member emphasised the need for the lead partner to be based in the region in order to truly understand the evolving project realities and stakeholder needs: 'The people for the project [need] to be based in the country of implementation. If not, the role should be solely management and reporting'.

The FutureLearn project staff member spoke at length of the difficulties he had encountered as a representative of the only for-profit organisation in the consortium. These constraints included having to constantly justify work done on PADILEIA given that it was 'not scalable' in the company's eyes, the fact that PADILEIA was not the central focus of FutureLearn's work, and the fact that FutureLearn's role was mainly tied to platform set-up and maintenance, preventing him from engaging in face-to-face delivery.

Two final constraints felt by university project staff were AABU's sense of being unable to provide students with further financial assistance due to the institution's own financial issues (1 AABU), and KCL's struggle to involve some of its own academics, whose own short-term deliverable deadlines made them too inflexible to work within project timings (1 KCL).

3.2 Project implementation and course experiences

This subchapter presents findings related to the ways the project was implemented and how staff and students experienced participating in PADILEIA courses. This includes exploring course delivery, teaching and facilitation quality, delivery staff experiences, and the impact of Covid-19 on project implementation and course experiences.

The following research questions are addressed in this chapter:

Table 7: Research questions addressed in Chapter 3.2

#	Research question
1	Assess whether PADILEIA increased higher education access for refugees and disadvantaged host communities, outlining the reasons behind these achievements/non-achievements
2	Assess whether the knowledge and transferable skills gained through PADILEIA contributed to students' successful onwards transitions (Higher education, employment, further study), or could do so in the future
3a	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: the relevance, responsiveness, and effectiveness of PADILEIA's learning environment design

The findings draw primarily on the student survey, student KIIs, delivery team KIIs and project management KIIs.

3.2.1 Access to PADILEIA courses

Project staff made several comments relating to PADILEIA's reach, ability to engage students, and capacity to guide them through to completion of their course, which can be substantiated through triangulation with existing project data. Key access data from existing project documents are summarised in the table below.

Table 8: Breakdown of access across PADILEIA course offerings¹²

	Foundation Courses (AUB, AABU, RI)	Kiron MOOCs	KCL FutureLearn MOOCs	TOTALS
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¹² Source: Results Framework

Enrolments (active learners)	578	6,385 ¹³	6,211	13,174
Completions	492	1,462	2,230	4,184

The project data is consistent with a FutureLearn project staff member's claim that FutureLearn's reach had far exceeded expectations; there was an initial projection of engaging 3,000 active learners in KCL/FutureLearn MOOCs, whereas the final number of active learners achieved was 6,211¹⁴. The same staff member also noted that PADILEIA's reach had not been damaged by Covid-19, and that he had in fact witnessed a spike in enrolments during that period. This is also substantiated by project data; pre-March 2020, there were 712 active learners (refugees and residents in Jordan and Lebanon) on FutureLearn courses compared to September 2020, at which point there were 1,600. This represents an increase of 2.2 times over seven months¹⁵. Similar patterns can be observed in the project data from Kiron, who reported 2,498 active learners as of May 2020¹⁶, which far exceeds the projected figure of 704¹⁷.

Though attendance data was not available, project staff noted that they felt engagement had exceeded expectations (1 KCL, 1 Kiron, 1 FL). Specifically, the FutureLearn project staff member noted that the high demand for English MOOCs (Basic English 1: Elementary; Basic English 2: Pre-Intermediate) was evidence of strong student engagement with those courses in particular; this is supported by the project data, which indicates that English MOOCs were the most popular, with 2,387 total active learners for Basic English 1 and 1,627 for Basic English 2, and with the next most popular MOOC being Business, which had 678 active learners¹⁸.

Project staff noted high rates of completion across the pathways, attributing this to course facilitation (1 AUB), and the direct support provided through the blended learning model generally (1 KCL, 1 Kiron). The AUB staff member's claim that 'a very high percentage have completed the facilitated online courses' is substantiated by the project data, which reveals a final completion rate of 46.9% for closed-run KCL/FL MOOCs¹⁹. The claim that blended delivery improved completion rates is also confirmed in the project data; Kiron completion rates rose from 35% to 69% following the decision to introduce blended learning to their pathway²⁰.

¹³ Note: Similarly to KCL/FL, Kiron also refers to enrolled students as 'active learners'. For Kiron, however, and 'active learner' is defined as a student who registers and completes an onboarding process on the Kiron Campus platform. The term 'active learner' is treated as synonymous with 'enrolled student' within this report to allow for comparability of findings across the different pathways.

¹⁴ Source: Results Framework

¹⁵ Source: FutureLearn Open Run Data: subject enrolments

¹⁶ Source: Annual Report 2019-20

¹⁷ Source: Results Framework

¹⁸ Source: FutureLearn Open Run Data

¹⁹ Source: FutureLearn Closed Run Data

²⁰ Source: Kiron Completion Rates Blended Learning Cohorts_PADILEIA; Kiron Metabase.

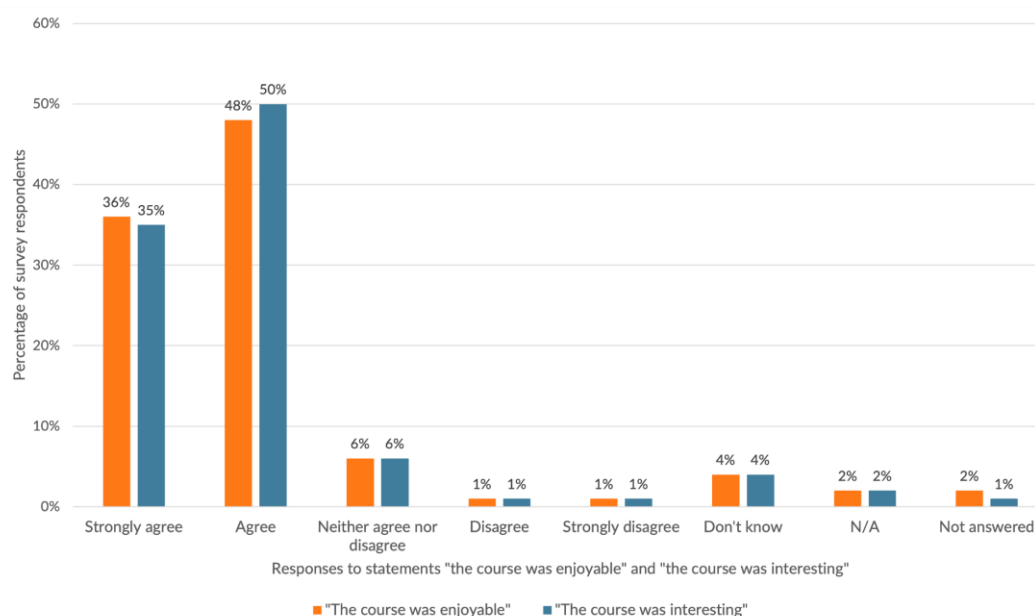
Finally, it was suggested that some dips in completion rates may have been due to factors beyond the project's control. These included, refugee students being offered resettlement (1 AUB) or taking up a university place mid-programme (1 AABU). The project's annual reports indicate that these were indeed known reasons for drop-outs; the reports state that several students per cohort did not complete courses for these reasons.

3.2.2 Course delivery

This section explores programme implementation and students' experiences of course delivery online and in-person, recognising that partners adapted their course delivery models throughout the lifecycle of the project to respond to students' needs and contextual challenges.

Firstly, it is important to note that students largely enjoyed and were interested in their courses, which is an important contributing factor to successful delivery overall.

Figure 3: Survey respondents who found their course enjoyable and interesting (%)



Number of respondents: 447

As Figure 3 shows, survey respondents reported that they found their course enjoyable, with 48% agreeing and 36% strongly agreeing. Only 1% of survey respondents disagreed and another 1% strongly disagreed that they found their course enjoyable. Enjoyment of the course was high across survey respondents from all course offerings, however it was particularly high among Foundation Course respondents (93% agreed or strongly agreed), followed by KCL respondents (88%) and then Kiron respondents (67%).

Survey respondents also reported that they found their course interesting, with 50% agreeing and 35% strongly agreeing that their course was interesting. Only 1% each disagreed and strongly disagreed that they found their course interesting. Again, a high percentage of respondents from all course offerings found the course interesting, but it was highest among

Foundation Course respondents (94% combined agree or strongly agree), followed by KCL respondents (92%) and Kiron respondents (66%).

Student enjoyment of their courses was also a theme in the qualitative data. Seven students (1 AABU, 3 AUB, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan, 1 RI) made specific comments relating to their enjoyment of their courses. They referred to their courses as 'engaging' (Year 4 AUB refugee student, female) and 'fun' (Year 1 Kiron Jordan refugee student, female). One Year 1 Kiron Jordan student (refugee, female) said that her enjoyment increased as she gained confidence, and one Year 4 AABU student (host community, male) noted that he had especially enjoyed the programming-related aspects of the Foundation Course. Additionally, students reportedly enjoyed English classes at AABU to the extent that they 'asked for English in the second semester too' (AABU instructor), and particularly enjoyed live sessions with the academics behind the Engineering MOOC: 'This was great. Students love it, they're very interested' (KCL instructional designer). The only negative feedback was from a Year 4 AUB student (refugee, female), who reported that she had found her English classes 'boring' because 'the classes lasted longer than three hours and it was impossible to concentrate in a grammar class this long'. That said, a delivery staff member subsequently explained that only half of that time was dedicated to teaching, including grammar explanations, while the rest of the time was spent learning online, suggesting that the student's comment might have been overstated.

Additionally, survey respondents were generally happy with the learning environment. Indeed, 54% of respondents reported that they were satisfied and 31% that they were very satisfied with the learning environment of their course, referring to both study hubs and online platforms. Only 4% reported that they were dissatisfied and 2% that they were very dissatisfied with the learning environment. Satisfaction of the learning environment was high across respondents from all course offerings, with the highest percentage among KCL respondents (92% combined satisfied and very satisfied), followed by Foundation Course respondents (88%) and lowest among Kiron respondents (81%).

Online course access

Table 9: Main online platform used for each course offering

Foundation courses	Google Classroom
Kiron MOOCs	Kiron Campus
KCL MOOCs	FutureLearn

A variety of opinions emerged in the data relating to the effectiveness of online delivery. Navigating the different online platforms (see Table 9) was evaluated as easy by 15 students from across all pathways, including two Kiron students who spoke of needing extra help from the facilitator in the beginning: 'even for someone with little background it is easy to use and navigate through content' (Year 4 Kiron Lebanon refugee student, male). Two AABU delivery staff echoed the positive experience of online platforms, one observing students' approval of the platform used for Foundation Course online instruction (Google Classroom) and the benefits of instant notifications that they received when new content was added.

Indeed, among survey respondents, 49% agreed and 20% strongly agreed that the online elements of their course, such as the learning platform and online resources, were easy to access. Only 4% of survey respondents disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that this was the case, suggesting that the majority of students were able to navigate the online platforms used. However, it is important to note that 13% of survey respondents reported a difficulty in using or accessing online platforms, including Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp and Teams. This was higher among refugee respondents across all course offerings (17%) than host community respondents (4%). This could be attributed to low digital literacy levels, which were reported by two project staff (1 RI, 1 AUB) and two delivery staff (2 Kiron).

It is worth noting that the ease of online access is strongly associated with internet connectivity, a key issue which is explored further in Section 3.3.1.

In-person course access

Of the students who reported that at least some of their course had been delivered in person, the majority agreed that the in-person elements of their course were easy to access, with 47% agreeing and 27% strongly agreeing. Only 1% disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed that the in-person elements were easy to access.

Foundation Course staff indicated that significant effort had been put into ensuring that students received support to help them travel to study hubs; there was a daily allowance of five pounds²¹ per student for AABU, and six pounds per student for AUB. Furthermore, an AUB study conducted in Year 4 revealed that 51% of students preferred to receive cash with which to secure their own transportation instead of the project providing a bus for them, as had been offered previously²². Despite this assistance, five Foundation Course students (2 AABU, 3 AUB) reported problems relating to transport, and also confusion about what support was available for this (1 AUB, 1 AABU). Another issue was that of time (2 AABU, 1 AUB). Students reported having to travel a long way from home to reach a study hub, and also having to wait for long periods to access the available travel allowance. A Year 2 AABU student reported on the latter issue:

'We had to wait four to five hours a month at the office to get the transport support. This was the worst within the programme since we had to lose a day and most of us were working or have domestic responsibilities.'

Year 2 AABU refugee student, female

The cost of transport also proved prohibitive, despite PADILEIA's financial assistance (3 AUB). As one, Year 4 AUB student (refugee, male) noted, 'Some students had to withdraw because of these issues'. These issues are reflected to some extent in the survey data; among survey

²¹ GBP

²² Source: AABU Transportation survey 2020.

respondents who studied partly online and in-person, 8% reported facing the challenge of travel disruption.

Delivery staff also appeared aware of students experiencing travel issues. This issue was attributed to general financial problems (1 AABU SSO) and the fuel crisis in Lebanon (1 AUB instructor). The Kiron Jordan SSO also pointed out that the transport problem was also particularly acutely experienced by women: 'the commute is a big deal for females especially. Even moving within the camp is hard, but moving from city to city, or from the camp to the city, is challenging'.

Study hubs

The study hubs emerged as crucial to course access, with nine students, two delivery staff and six project staff highlighting the importance of the physical study spaces provided, both for online and in-person course components. Study hubs were reportedly well-equipped with the resources that students required, such as internet connection, laptops, tablets, and books (2 project staff; 2 delivery staff; 7 students) and were viewed as especially crucial for students with limited internet access at home (3 project staff; 1 delivery staff member; 4 students). The versatile community space that study hubs provided was also identified as an important facet (2 project staff; 1 delivery staff member). Other valued features of the study hubs included air conditioning (Year 4 AABU refugee student, female) and access to food and drink (Year 2 AUB refugee student, female). Contrary to the travel issues reported in the previous section, three male AABU students noted that the study hub was easy to access in terms of location (Year 1 refugee student; Year 2 refugee student; Year 4 host community student).

A significant proportion of survey respondents (45%) studied some part of their PADILEIA course in a study hub. These were mostly Foundation Course respondents, of whom 74% had studied both in-person and online, whereas only 7% of Kiron respondents and 4% of KCL respondents had experienced studying in-person.

3.2.2 Teaching and facilitation quality

This subsection explores the teaching and facilitation quality of PADILEIA courses, both online and in-person, as well as commenting on the language of instruction, student and staff communication, and whether the course materials were pitched at the right academic level for enrolled students.

Students across the pathways were effusive in their praise of the teaching quality on their courses. Eight students noted that the teaching and facilitation quality was excellent (3 AABU, 4 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan). Many went into further detail; 13 students made reference to their teachers and facilitators being helpful and friendly (5 AABU, 3 AUB, 1 KCL, 2 Kiron Jordan, 2 RI). Five students reported that teachers and facilitators had given them motivation to succeed (1 AABU, 3 AUB, 1 RI), and six noted teachers' responsiveness to student needs by tailoring classes to suit their level (3 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan). Three students (1 AUB, 2 Kiron Jordan) also mentioned that their teachers had created an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom: '[teachers] made sure that all students are part of the class' (Year 2 AUB refugee

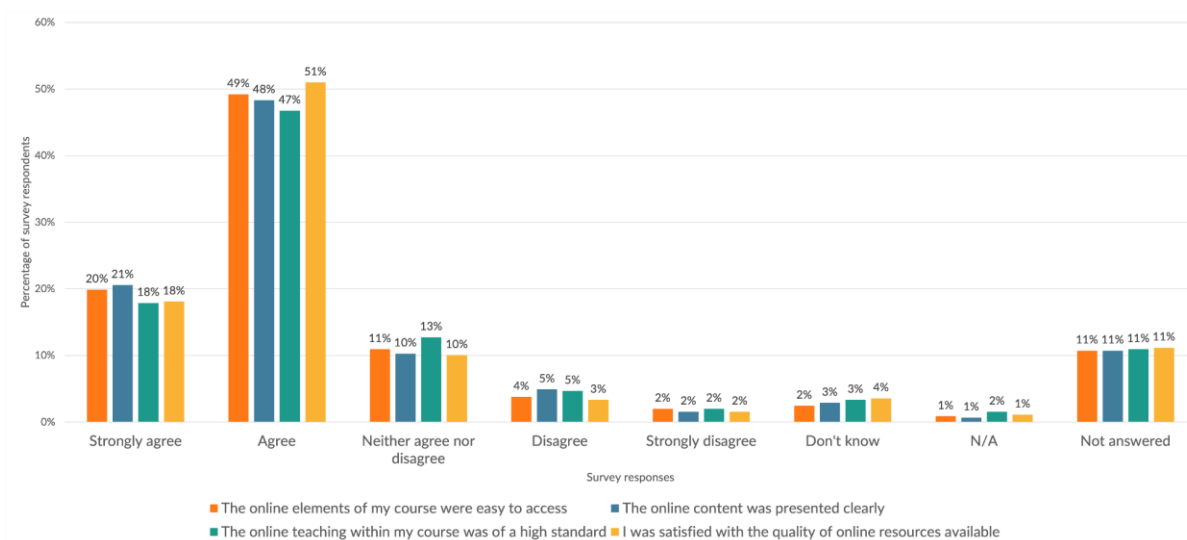
student, male); 'Our opinions were valued' (Year 1 Kiron Jordan refugee student, female). Students' high opinions of their teachers are exemplified in the following quote:

'Teachers were very nice and highly qualified, they motivated us to learn and participate, they also motivated us to apply for scholarships. The teachers tailored the classes and the contents to the students' level.'

Year 1 AUB refugee student, female

Survey respondents were also happy with both in-person and online teaching and facilitation, as shown in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Survey respondents' experiences of online teaching and facilitation (%)



Number of respondents: 447

Regarding delivery of course content, 45% of respondents who studied partly online and partly in-person agreed and 31% strongly agreed that the teaching staff delivered the course to a high standard. Only 1% of respondents disagreed and no respondents strongly disagreed. Moreover, 50% agreed and 27% strongly agreed that the in-person content was presented clearly, and 49% agreed and 27% strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of in-person resources available to them. A similarly positive picture emerged among survey respondents regarding online course delivery. Overall, survey respondents reported that online content was presented clearly, with 48% agreeing and 21% strongly agreeing and only 5% of respondents disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. Survey respondents were also satisfied by the quality of online resources available to them (including online support materials and discussion forums), with 51% agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing. Lastly, 47% of respondents agreed and 18% strongly agreed that online teaching within their course was presented clearly, and only 5% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

It is also important to note that overall survey respondents were happy with the study resources available to them, with the largest proportion reporting that they were satisfied

(55%) followed by those who were very satisfied (30%) with the study resources available to them. Only 3% of respondents reported that they were dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied with the study resources.

These views were supported by two project staff, both of whom mentioned rigorous delivery staff recruitment processes; the RI PM noted that 'we selected high level instructors - they are PhD holders and have taught in university before' and one AABU PM explained that they did not hesitate to make staffing changes when they felt that staff were not maintaining high standards.

Delivery staff adaptability

Another key factor in ensuring successful implementation for delivery staff was adaptability to student needs. This was evidenced through mentions of changing course schedules to accommodate students' work and domestic responsibilities (1 RI PM, 1 KCL facilitator); adjusting the pace of delivery where necessary (1 AUB instructor); making materials available outside of class time (2 AABU project staff; 1 AUB instructor; 1 AABU instructor; 1 Kiron Jordan SSO) and adapting materials for online learning (1 Year 4 AUB refugee student, female). Furthermore, delivery staff became demonstrably adept at tailoring their delivery in light of PADILEIA students' particular vulnerabilities; this included creating an 'informal' atmosphere in class to put students at ease (1 AUB instructor); deliberately avoiding potentially upsetting topics during class (1 AABU instructor; 1 AUB instructor); and exercising more tolerance and leniency when students did not follow instructions (1 AUB instructor). One AABU instructor summarised the considerations she made as follows:

'It's important to choose discussion topics carefully, to consider the people in front of us. There are people who miss their mothers, their kids... Sometimes we also have to be careful of religious topics, and also take their ages into account.'

AABU instructor

While adaptability emerged as a success for delivery staff, three Foundation Course instructors (2 AUB, 1 AABU) and one KCL project staff member reported the diversity of student levels and needs as a major challenge, due to the varying ages, prior knowledge levels and circumstances of the students they taught. As the AABU instructor summarised:

'Some are graduates, some are not. They are of all different ages. It is difficult to teach them all together in the same class. Levels vary widely. They are not like usual university students - normally they are of similar ages and their experience level is similar, but in PADILEIA it is not the same. Refugees also come from different circumstances, which poses challenges.'

AABU instructor

Class environment

Two delivery staff members (1 KCL, 1 AUB) spoke of successfully promoting an atmosphere of tolerance and care in their classes. The AUB instructor noted that he had made a point of ensuring that 'the treatment in class was very respectful, there was no discrimination between Lebanese and Syrians', which had resulted in everyone feeling 'like a family in the class'. Similarly, the KCL MOOC coordinator commented that his firm setting of expectations in relation to tolerance and discrimination at the beginning had paid off: 'No one was disrespecting anyone - I never had a case of disrespect as I made it clear that disrespect or mockery leads to removal from the course'. These reports are supported by one Year 2 AUB student (refugee, female)'s comment that she felt both teaching staff and other staff had had a genuine concern for her welfare: 'they were very friendly and were asking us all the time if we needed anything'.

Student-staff communication

Students' reports of the quality of communication with their teachers and facilitators was overwhelmingly positive; 26 of the 27 students interviewed commented on this. Four students made general comments relating to the ease of communication with all staff members they encountered (2 AABU, 2 AUB). 14 students (3 AABU, 4 AUB, 2 KCL, 2 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 2 RI) referred to the fact that staff were always available (response context indicates that the majority of these comments were regarding teaching staff, although some are ambiguous). Eleven students attributed the ease of communication with staff to the fact that they were contactable via WhatsApp and email (4 AABU, 3 AUB, 2 KCL, 2 Kiron Jordan), an opinion also expressed by two delivery staff (1 Kiron Jordan SSO; 1 AABU instructor). As one Year 4 KCL MOOC student summarised:

'The teachers were very nice and helpful, they were even available via WhatsApp anytime we wanted to contact them. Once I had a problem downloading files from the platform, I contacted the teacher and I got a fast response with a new link to the file.'

Year 4 KCL refugee student, female

There was also recognition of good communication between teaching staff and students during class time (1 AUB, 2 AABU, 1 Kiron Jordan), with the Kiron Jordan student (Year 2, refugee, male) noting that 'they provided the material in a simple language and also left comments in the platform'. Additionally, six students commented on the helpfulness of non-teaching staff with solving their issues (1 AABU, 2 AUB, 2 KCL, 1 Kiron Lebanon), with a Year 1 AUB student (refugee, female) remarking 'Even though the teachers were very nice and very friendly, I think I preferred to speak with the staff if I had any issue'. One AUB project staff member also highlighted the importance of non-teaching support staff:

'[Support staff] see the students every day, build the relationship. They can discuss, grow and talk with them... It's not just about academic progress, but about the journey they go on.'

AUB project staff member

Elsewhere, three Kiron Lebanon students and one KCL student experienced much more limited communication with staff. While it can be inferred that two of the Kiron Lebanon student's comments were neutral and that they simply never had the need to contact staff, it appears that the third (Year 4, refugee, male) would have valued increased communication with Kiron: 'even when I stopped, they did not contact me'. Similarly, one Year 4 KCL student (host community, female) expressed that she would have liked more information about future courses but that no one had contacted her. There was some reflection on this subject from an AUB project staff member, who felt that 'the relationship with Foundation Course students is much stronger' because 'we can reach out to Foundation Course students much more easily than MOOC students'.

Both Kiron and KCL project staff members alluded to issues with student communication due to the multi-partner project structure. Although he noted that the process had later become more streamlined, one KCL project staff member referred to miscommunications with students during mentoring recruitment due to information having to be passed through multiple partners:

'Student communications go through several different channels and the information they get might not be the exact info we were trying to get to them... This happens often in the programmes.'

KCL project staff member

Meanwhile, a Kiron project staff member spoke of difficulties getting students from other pathways to engage in Kiron offerings due to the use of multiple platforms. While the recruitment issue was solved by centralising communications to KCL, the issue raised by Kiron appeared to remain an issue throughout the project.

Only three negative comments were made in relation to students' direct communication with staff (1 AABU, 2 AUB). Two of these comments (1 AABU, 1 AUB) related to teaching staff members who were unresponsive to emails; in both cases, the students contacted management staff who resolved the issue. Finally, one Year 4 AUB student (refugee, female) reported a negative experience when communicating with a staff member, reporting that 'the person who made the interview was rude... the students said that she was acting superior to them.'

Course level

Overall, survey respondents reported that the PADILEIA course they studied was pitched at the right academic level for them. The largest proportion of respondents agreed (55%) that the course level was right for them, followed by those who strongly agreed (25%). Only 4% of respondents disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed that this was the case. While agreement was high among respondents from all course offerings, it was lowest among Kiron respondents (69% combined agree and strongly agree) compared to KCL respondents (86%) and Foundation Course respondents (84%).

However, views relating to the appropriateness of PADILEIA course levels varied widely according to different course providers and subjects. Two students (1 AABU, 1 KCL Digital Skills MOOC student), three delivery staff (2 AUB instructors, 1 Kiron Lebanon Computer Literacy facilitator) and one project staff member (KCL) felt that MOOC course content had been pitched too high for some students. Meanwhile, three MOOC students (1 KCL studying various MOOCs; 2 Kiron Lebanon studying English and Business) felt that their courses were at just the right level of difficulty for them. Finally, two Kiron students felt that the level of their courses was too low for them. The Kiron Jordan student (Year 4, host community, male) studying Graphic Design commented that he would have preferred a higher academic level, but he also acknowledged that 'some students do not have any background in graphic design so the course is designed for anyone who wants to learn'. Meanwhile, the Kiron Lebanon student (Year 2, refugee, female) studying English and Economics felt that raising the course level could be motivating to students. She also recommended that Kiron 'provide different difficulty levels and also make the exams a bit harder'. This was also felt by a Kiron Lebanon Introduction to Programming facilitator, who deemed this course too easy for his students.

Given the breadth of courses being studied and wide range of previous experience present within PADILEIA cohorts, and individual perceptions of acceptable difficulty, this variance is perhaps unsurprising. Student attitudes toward learning may also have played a part; for example, one KCL student (Year 4, host community, male) reported having studied seven different MOOCs, and viewed difficulty as a motivating factor: 'it motivates you to learn new terms all the time'.

3.2.3 Delivery staff support

Delivery staff spoke positively of the support they had received from PADILEIA. Five delivery staff members (1 KCL MOOC facilitator, 1 Kiron Jordan SSO, 2 AABU instructors, 1 AUB instructor) highlighted that training to prepare teaching staff for online delivery had been particularly beneficial. In contrast, one AUB project staff member felt that PADILEIA could have provided more support for delivery staff: 'psycho-social support for local instructors, similar to students, group support, maybe working groups for facilitators from different partners'. There was also an emerging theme of trust between project and delivery staff (1 AABU instructor; 1 AUB instructor; 1 KCL facilitator; 1 Kiron Lebanon facilitator). Delivery staff were happy with the level of autonomy they were given by project staff, which in itself made them feel more supported.

3.2.4 Impact of Covid-19

Covid-19 had both positive and negative implications for the delivery of the project. The negative impacts were widely reported across the qualitative data and varied in nature. In line with the findings of the Rapid Evaluation²³, there were reports of increased stress during the pandemic from project staff (1 AABU; 1 KCL), and delivery staff reported having to rapidly upskill to switch to fully online learning (1 AUB instructor; 1 AABU instructor). From the student perspective, there were six reports (all from Foundation Course students) of course experiences being negatively impacted by Covid-19. Students indicated that they had been prevented from studying effectively due to: noisy, distracting home environments (1 AABU, 1 RI); extra domestic responsibilities created by children staying at home (2 AABU, 1 RI); pressure from job loss leading to reduced study time (1 AABU); internet issues (1 AABU, 2 AUB, 1 RI); and a lack of suitable internet-enabled devices at home (1 AABU, 1 AUB). Two staff members (1 KCL project staff member; 1 AABU SSO) also noted that refugee students were disproportionately affected by the pandemic as movement in and out of the camps was restricted²⁴.

However, a variety of project staff (2 AUB, 1 AABU, 2 KCL) delivery staff (1 Kiron) and students (2 AUB, 1 AABU) also indicated that Covid-19 was not entirely detrimental to project delivery, primarily because staff and students were already used to blended learning. Furthermore, two instructors spoke of this transition as a positive learning experience: 'with COVID now we know how to manage [technology]' (AABU instructor); 'it was good for us to add more activities for completion online' (AUB instructor). Furthermore, Covid-19 was identified as a catalysing force for increasing acceptance of online and blended delivery models, both within partner institutions and within the region more broadly (1 Kiron Lebanon SSO; 1 AUB project staff member; 1 AABU project staff member). As the Kiron SSO noted:

'When PADILEIA started there was no discussion in the country about online learning so people were not used to it or and did not take it seriously. Now after the pandemic it is more accepted. So now the universities are more open to it.'

Kiron Lebanon Student Support Officer

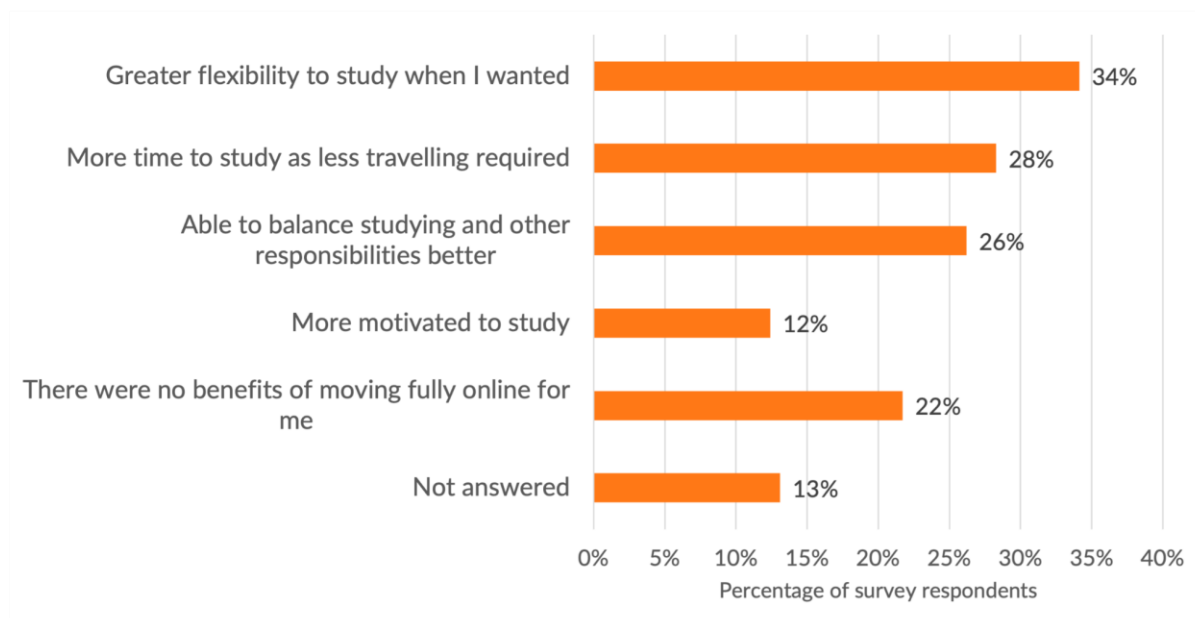
Some 51% of survey respondents experienced their course moving fully online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Of these a notable proportion reported that there were no benefits to moving online (22%). This was highest among Foundation Course respondents (29%), followed by Kiron respondents (16%), and lowest among KCL respondents (15%), which makes sense as Foundation Course students arguably experienced the greatest level of disruption with the closure of study hubs over a longer course duration than Kiron and KCL respondents.

²³ An evaluation of PADILEIA's Covid-19 adaptations, completed in February 2021.

²⁴ Note: Though some of these issues were linked elsewhere to online delivery generally, these examples are taken from moments when students identified them specifically as Covid-19-related impacts.

However, survey respondents who experienced their course moving online did identify some benefits to them. This is represented in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5: Benefits that survey respondents reported experiencing when their course moved fully online (select all that apply) (%)



Number of respondents: 290

The most commonly reported benefit experienced was greater flexibility to study when they wanted (32%), followed by more time to study as less travelling was required (28%), and then being able to balance studying with other responsibilities better (26%). Of respondents who reported benefits to moving online, the course specific most frequently selected greatest benefit was greater flexibility to study when they wanted for Foundation Course respondents (25%) and KCL respondents (47%), and it was more time to study as less travelling required for Kiron respondents (40%). For more information on the impact of Covid-19 on the PADILEIA project please refer to the Rapid evaluation report completed in early 2021.

3.3 Student challenges and support

This section will present findings related to the challenges that students faced while studying with PADILEIA and the relevance and appropriateness of the support provided.

The following research questions are addressed in this chapter:

Table 10: Research questions addressed in Chapter 3.3

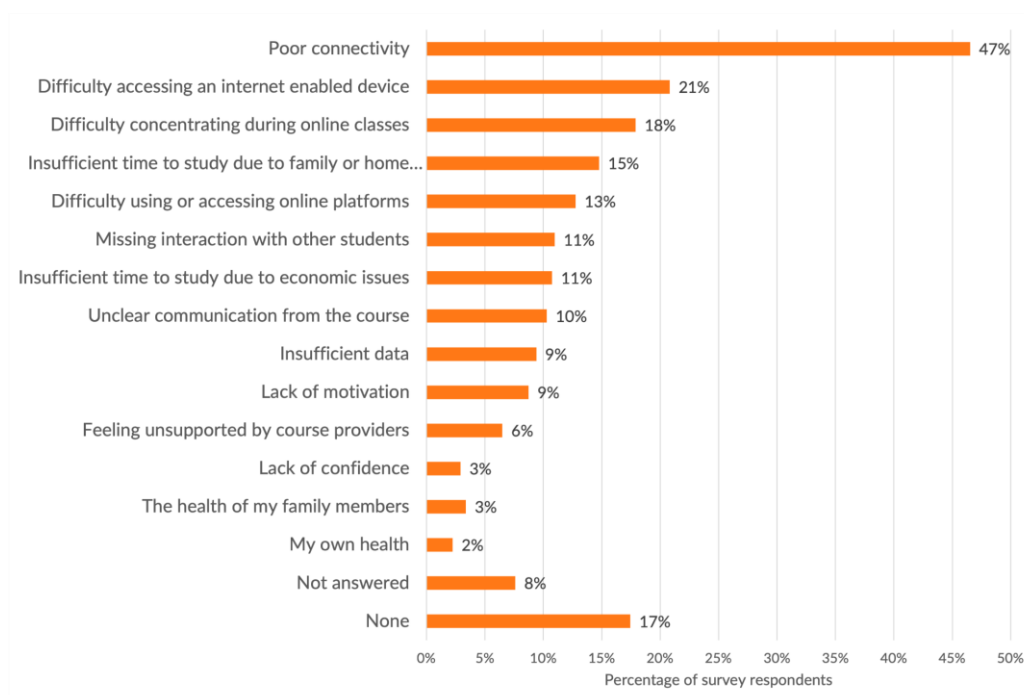
#	Research question
1	Assess whether PADILEIA increased higher education access for refugees and disadvantaged host communities, outlining the reasons behind these achievements/non-achievements

3a	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: the relevance, responsiveness, and effectiveness of PADILEIA's learning environment design
3b	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: student support structures, assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of student support structures in increasing access across all delivery modes
3c	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: open educational resources and platforms
3d	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: higher education delivery remit, bridging programme design and student level
3e	Assess to what extent PADILEIA's connected learning approach enabled these outcomes. This will encompass an evaluation of the following: form of learning delivery

The findings will draw primarily on the student survey, student KIIs, delivery team and project management KIIs.

3.3.1 Challenges

Students faced a range of challenges while they studied with PADILEIA. Qualitative data revealed five significant challenges faced by students while they studied: technological challenges, difficulties related to language, financial challenges, domestic challenges and difficulties related to the context of instability. These were understandably not the only challenges faced by the students, and a graphic of the range of challenges faced by students can be seen in Figure 6 below

Figure 6: Challenges faced by survey respondents while studying online (%)

Number of respondents: 447

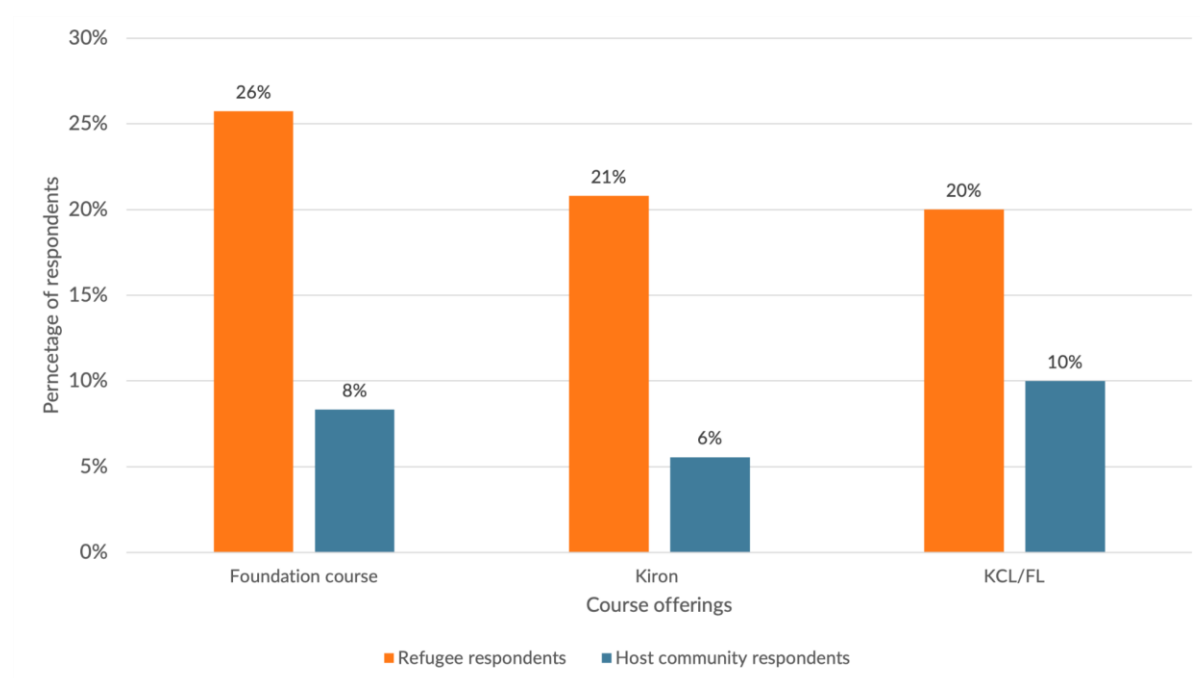
It is important to note that while the majority of students faced challenges while studying with PADILEIA, a notable portion of student survey respondents did not report facing any challenges while studying online (17%). This was highest among Foundation Course respondents (23%), followed by KCL respondents (12%) and lowest among Kiron respondents (9%). It is also worth noting that this response is higher among survey respondents who studied partly online and partly in-person, with 35% reporting that they faced no challenges while studying in-person. This indicates that blended learning may have helped to address any challenges that students may have faced if studying online only.

Technological challenges

Challenges associated with technology emerged as a major theme from across the qualitative data. Eight students representing all pathways (1 AUB, 2 AABU, 2 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 2 RI) mentioned that they experienced issues accessing both classes and resources due to having an unreliable internet connection, a finding supported by five project staff (1 Kiron, 1 RI, 2 AABU, 1 AUB) and five delivery staff (1 AABU, 1 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan, 2 Kiron Lebanon). Perhaps unsurprisingly, delivery staff often suffered from the same connectivity issues as their students, which would have impacted students' study experience (3 delivery staff; 2 students). Indeed, among all survey respondents the most commonly reported challenge faced while studying online was poor connectivity (47%). Of respondents who reported facing challenges during their online studies, this was the most frequently selected greatest challenge for all course providers: Foundation Course (25%), Kiron (25%) and KCL (42%).

A further six students (3 AABU, 1 AUB, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan) and one Kiron Jordan delivery staff member reported issues relating to students having limited access to internet-enabled devices, or to devices unsuitable for study. These students all explained that they had tried to complete their studies using their mobiles, but that these were either too old or not powerful enough to be effective learning tools for courses involving programming and graphic design. It is surprising that the Foundation Course students reported this issue, as two other AABU students reported that Foundation Course students had been provided with tablets upon request. Survey respondents also reported challenges related to accessing an internet-enabled device; it was the second most commonly reported challenge faced by Kiron respondents (19%) and KCL respondents (18%), and the third most common for Foundation Course respondents (22%). Among survey respondents, there are some notable differences in those who experienced this challenge. Refugee respondents across the range of course offerings reported facing this challenge at much higher levels than host community respondents, as demonstrated in Figure 7 below:

Figure 7: Comparison of refugee and host community survey respondents who reported difficulty accessing an internet device while studying online, by course offering (%)



Number of respondents: Foundation Course = 254, Kiron = 143 and KCL/FL = 50

In addition, a higher percentage of respondents in Jordan reported facing this challenge than in Lebanon: 37% of Kiron Jordan respondents compared to 13% of Kiron Lebanon respondents, and 24% of Foundation Course respondents in Jordan compared to 16% of those in Lebanon.

Finally, two project staff (1 RI, 1 AUB) and two delivery staff (2 Kiron) noted that students' lack of digital skills prior to starting the course had meant that using technology to complete their course had posed a major challenge.

Financial challenges

Eleven students (all pathways), three delivery staff (2 Kiron, 1 AABU) and four project staff (2 AABU, 1 RI, 1 Kiron) referenced financial challenges as a key issue which often underpinned other challenges such as internet access and transport. Kiron, KCL and RI students also reported challenges in obtaining financial support for transport and internet from the project. This also emerged as a finding from the survey, with 21% of survey respondents, who studied partly online and partly in-person, reported insufficient time to study as a result of economic issues. However, among all survey respondents only 11% reported this was an issue to them studying online.

Project staff in particular noted that financial pressures had often had an adverse impact on male students' attendance in particular, as they often had to prioritise their jobs when work and study schedules clashed. An AABU delivery staff member also noted that both Syrian and Jordanian students struggled to find jobs at all, and were therefore often completely dependent upon the financial support provided by PADILEIA. He added that some Jordanian students' families were able to support them financially, but that generally, both refugee and host community students suffered from financial difficulties.

Domestic challenges

Both male and female students reported challenges related to their domestic situations, though these challenges differed along gender lines. Four male students reported domestic responsibilities as a challenge to their ability to access education (3 AABU, 1 Kiron Jordan). Of these, two male AABU refugee students (one Year 3, one Year 4) noted that this challenge had intensified since the onset of the pandemic and the presence of children at home. One Kiron Jordan student (Year 2, refugee, male) also reported that domestic responsibilities had caused him to prioritise spending on his family rather than his internet connection, thereby compromising his ability to study at home. In contrast, a Year 4 KCL student (refugee, female) felt that domestic responsibilities were the reason for her turning to online study; she therefore viewed studying online as a convenient solution to fitting her studies into her domestic situation.

One challenge relating specifically to female students was that of family members preventing them from attending classes (1 RI project staff member; 1 AUB instructor; 1 AABU instructor). This is supported by the student survey. Among survey respondents, a higher percentage of male respondents reported that they have responsibility for someone else at home (77%) than female respondents (51%). Insufficient time to study due to family or home responsibilities was reported by 22% of respondents who studied partly online and partly in-person. Interestingly, 45% of male survey respondents chose this option, compared to 18% of female respondents. It was also reported as a challenge to studying online by 15% of survey respondents, with a slightly higher percentage of male respondents (18%) than female respondents (12%).

Context instability

Students, delivery staff and project staff all reported myriad challenges associated with instability within the region of implementation. These included electricity outages (3 students;

3 delivery staff; 1 project staff member) and economic instability (3 project staff, 3 students) in Lebanon. This instability was often identified as a causal factor to other challenges such as poor internet access and transport, which had been impacted by soaring prices and fuel shortages.

There were also references to the impact of the Syrian crisis, with three project staff, three delivery staff and two students (both refugees) commenting on the severe effects of having experienced the conflict on students' mental health. For one of these students (Year 4, Kiron Lebanon, male), grief, anxiety and trauma resulting from the conflict in Syria had ultimately led him to feel unable to continue with his studies:

'I can't actually communicate with my family in Syria due to the current situation, we are living in a miserable situation that is why I could not continue with the course.'

Year 4 Kiron Lebanon refugee student, male

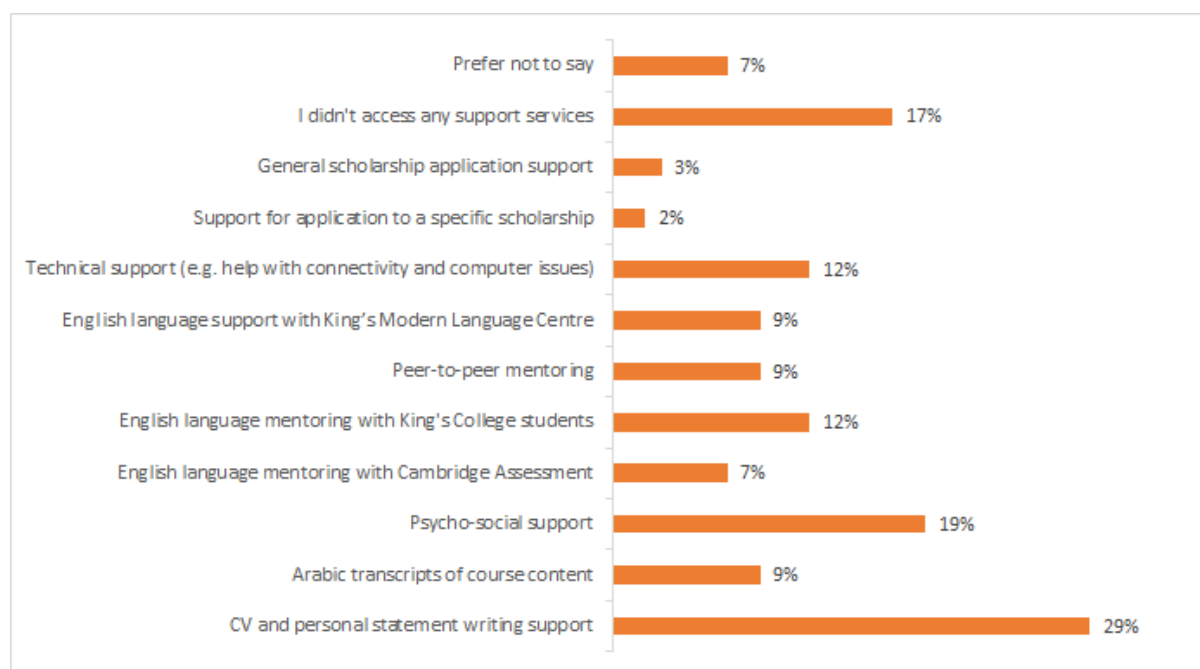
A Year 1 AUB student (refugee, female) echoed this, adding that Syrian students require particular support to allow course delivery to be effective: 'it is important to have a day to support them psychologically since most students are immigrants and had to flee Syria because of the war'.

3.3.2 Student support services

Students were offered a wide range of support services, which differed by course provider. These were accessed by students depending on their needs. The majority of survey respondents reported that the student support services provided to them were sufficient (with 49% agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing). Only 5% of survey respondents disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed that the support provided was sufficient. Furthermore, survey respondents found that accessing support had helped them in different ways; 52% felt that it increased their knowledge and skills, 43% said that it gave them confidence, and 29% reported that it helped them plan for the future.

The popularity of different support services is captured in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Survey respondents who accessed support services available across all three course offerings (%)



Number of respondents: 447

The most accessed form of support was CV and personal statement writing. This was particularly popular with Foundation Course respondents (40%), with 24% of KCL and 12% of Kiron respondents also selecting this option. Only 17% of survey respondents reported not accessing student support services, which was highest among Kiron respondents (27%), followed by Foundation Course respondents (13%) and lowest among KCL respondents (12%).

Qualitative data reflected these findings to some extent, revealing that students need five key types of support: academic, application, technological, English language, and psycho-social. These are explored in detail below.

Academic support

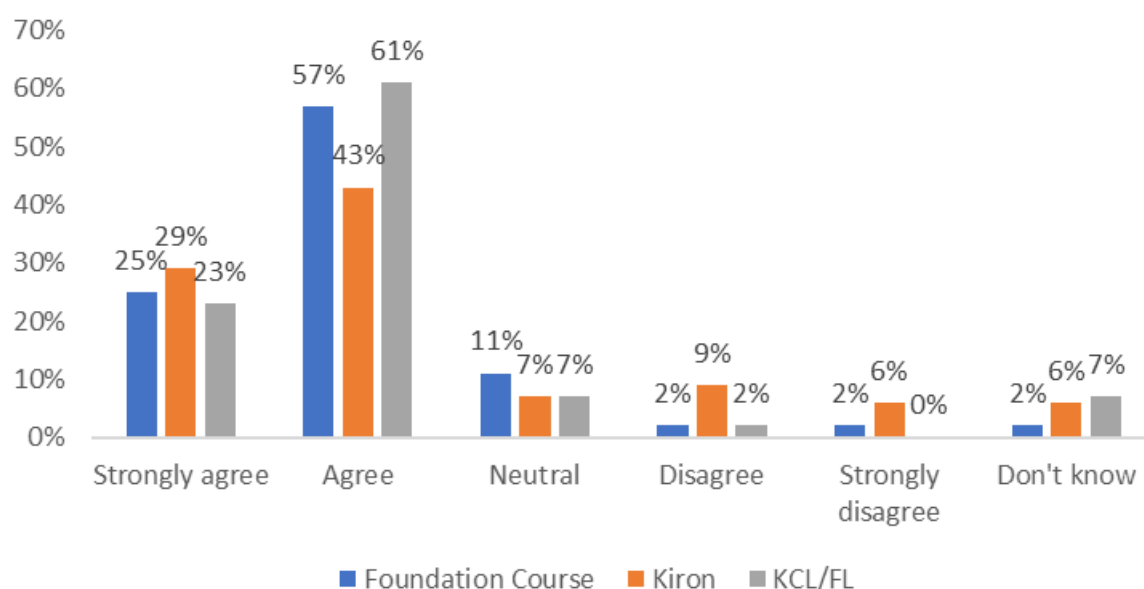
Students were particularly effusive when reporting the high quality of academic support that they had received from delivery staff. Six of the seven AABU students interviewed made explicit references to their teachers always being helpful and available. In addition, two AUB students and one 1 RI student made general comments demonstrating their satisfaction with the level of academic support, suggesting that all Foundation Courses were highly successful in this respect. Two students also praised Kiron facilitators for their academic support, both inside and outside class time, stating that their facilitators had provided support constantly and whenever needed. Similarly, three students (2 AABU, 1 KCL) mentioned that they had received extra academic support after missing classes, and that teachers had been very happy to help on all of these occasions. Finally, four students, each studying with a different provider (1 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan) indicated that the academic support they received had been well tailored to their specific needs. For example, the AUB student explained:

'I was a bit weak in mathematics so I asked my teacher for extra help in mathematics and they provided me with it.'

Year 1 AUB refugee student, female

The positive impression of the academic support provided by PADILEIA is supported by the survey respondents, the majority of whom felt that they were provided with enough academic support during their studies. Of the 411 students who responded to this question, Some 54% agreed and 26% strongly agreed that the academic support they received was sufficient, and only 4% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. Agreement was high across all course providers, with 84% of KCL/FL, 82% of Foundation Course, 72% of Kiron respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they had received enough academic support. These views are captured by course provider in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Extent to which survey respondents agree that they were given enough academic support, by course offering (%)



Number of respondents: Foundation Course = 242, Kiron = 125, KCL/FL = 44

Delivery staff also felt satisfied with the level of academic support they had been able to provide, citing examples of good practice such as providing student feedback individually and privately (KCL facilitator), supporting student progress through constantly recapping prior learning to consolidate knowledge (AABU instructor) and making extra time to be available outside of class time (AUB instructor).

Application support

Nine of the students interviewed (5 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 Kiron Jordan, 2 Kiron Lebanon) mentioned accessing support related to applying for opportunities beyond their PADILEIA courses. These included support with scholarship applications, CV and cover letters, and other courses such as IELTS exam preparation. The five AUB Foundation Course students

represented every year of the project between them, suggesting that particular emphasis had been placed on application support at AUB from the beginning. Only two Foundation Course students explicitly evaluated the quality of application support; one Year 1 and one Year 2 AUB student (both refugee, female) said that the help they had received with scholarship applications had led to them successfully winning scholarships to their chosen courses, suggesting that this support offering had been effective.

Similarly, the three Kiron students indicated that their application support had also been highly effective. Both Kiron Lebanon students noted how the application support they had received while studying with Kiron had directly enabled them to progress to their current positions. A Year 2 refugee student (female) explained that she was now studying for a Master's degree and that Kiron had helped her in applying for the scholarship, while a Year 3 host community student (female) said that Kiron's support with CV writing had contributed to her finding her current job as an accountant. The Kiron Jordan student described her experience as follows:

'I also learnt how to write a CV and a cover letter both in Arabic and English. We learnt how to use search engines in a proper way to find the results we are after. I never wrote a CV before Kiron. I am now using the skills I learnt to apply for jobs.'

Year 1 Kiron Jordan refugee student, female

Among survey respondents, the most commonly accessed support services was CV and personal statement writing support (29%), and it was among the top three support services accessed by respondents from all course offerings, as outlined in Figure 10. The application support available to students varied by course offering, as did access to the services, as presented in Table 10.

Figure 10: Top three student support services accessed by survey respondents across each course pathway

Foundation Course	Kiron	KCL/FL MOOCs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CV and personal statement writing support (40%) 2. Psycho-social support (32%) 3. Student support days (28%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal transfer guidance from the Kiron team (15%) 2. Workshops about applying to scholarships (13%) 3. CV and personal statement writing support (12%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CV and personal statement writing support (24%) 2. English language mentoring with KCL students (20%) 3. Arabic transcripts of course materials (14%)

Table 11: Breakdown of survey respondents' access of application support services provided by course offering (%)

Course offering	Application support services available	Accessed by survey respondents (%)
Foundation Course	Workshops with scholarship providers	24%
	Scholarship mentoring by King's College	22%
Kiron	Workshops about applying to scholarships	13%
	General scholarship application support	8%
	Support for an application to a specific scholarship	6%
	Application checklist on Kiron Campus	5%
KCL/FL MOOCs	General application support	8%
	Support for an application to a specific scholarship	2%

Technological support

Three staff members (2 Kiron Lebanon, 1 KCL) noted that the onboarding support provided to students had been highly effective, and much needed due to the 'minimal digital literacy' of some students (Kiron Lebanon SSO). This included an additional 'digital skills week' being added to MOOCs to get students up to speed before the course began. Students were also positive in their evaluation of the technical support provided by project staff: responses to IT support requests had been speedy (1 AABU, 1 KCL), support had been constantly available (2 AABU), and IT staff had been helpful and dealt with issues smoothly (1 Kiron). Among all survey respondents, 12% reported accessing technical support. Significantly more Foundation Course respondents (20%) accessed the support compared to KCL (8%), and Kiron respondents (5%). However, only 4% of survey respondents who reported accessing support services said technical support was the most helpful support service they accessed.

Three delivery staff (1 KCL MOOC facilitator, 1 AABU instructor, 1 AUB instructor) and one project staff member (1 AABU) felt that PADILEIA's provision of extra mobile data had been effective, although contrastingly, one RI student (refugee, male) felt that this was insufficient. Furthermore, there appeared to be some confusion among Kiron and KCL students around what kind of internet support was available: two male Kiron Jordan students (Year 4, host community; Year 2, refugee) and one female KCL student (Year 4, host community) said that either they or students they knew sometimes ended up missing class because they had not

been given internet allowance to help them get online. This was despite the fact that a Kiron project staff member and KCL delivery staff member stated that students had in fact been provided with data cards to get them online.

Foundation Course providers' distribution of tablets was acknowledged by 2 AABU students, although one of them (Year 4, host community, male) indicated that these were not compatible with the programme being used in class, thereby limiting the effectiveness of this support. Similarly, three other students (1 AUB, 2 AABU) flagged that they struggled to access classes remotely due to not having a laptop specifically, indicating that laptop provision might have been more effective than tablets (though likely more expensive). Furthermore, one Kiron project staff member confirmed that, unlike Foundation Course students, Kiron and KCL MOOC students had not been offered support in the form of internet-enabled devices. A KCL project staff member clarified that this decision had been agreed with the FM and project management staff in light of the fact that KCL and Kiron MOOC students studied with PADILEIA for shorter periods. It was felt that this did not allow enough time for trust to be built up between project staff and students, leading to a perceived higher risk of students not returning devices once they had completed their studies.

On the other hand, survey respondents appeared to feel that they were given enough support to access the internet during their course, with 45% agreeing and 23% strongly agreeing. Only 4% of survey respondents disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. However, 12% of survey respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. There was no notable difference, by course offering, in the proportion of respondents who felt the support to access the internet was sufficient. It is worth noting that transport stipends provided by AABU and AUB were instead used on internet access support during the Covid-19 pandemic, which may have helped to ensure that the majority of Foundation Course students either agreed or strongly agreed that the level of internet access support they received was sufficient (71%).

English language support

Students, delivery staff and project staff all felt that the English language support offered within the project had been highly valuable. Three Foundation Course students (2 AABU, 1 RI) mentioned valuing extra English provision, though they did not specify which support option they had accessed for this. Of these students, one Year 4 AABU student noted how vital this provision had proven for her:

'The support I had in English was very beneficial. Without it I don't think I could have managed to finish the course.'

Year 4 AABU student, female refugee

Delivery staff shared the view that English language support had been valuable for students, especially the peer-to-peer language exchange with KCL students in London. All three emphasised the positive effect of this opportunity, especially on students' motivation; as the Kiron Jordan SSO summarised, 'this has changed so many lives, being able to talk to students in the UK... you can sense the change'. A KCL project staff member echoed this, highlighting the fact that all mentoring offerings available through the central mentoring track, such as post-

course HE mentoring or scholarship application support, were conducted in English and therefore had the dual effect of supporting students in a specific area while also helping them improve their English.

Not many survey respondents reported accessing an English language support service, possibly because these support services were offered based on mentor capacity, and the cohort of students offered the mentoring was therefore much smaller than the total number of PADILEIA students. Only 12% reported accessing English language mentoring with KCL students, 9% with King's Modern Language Centre and 7% with Cambridge Assessment. A low percentage of respondents who reported accessing support services selected that these were the most helpful services provided: 4% selected mentoring with KCL students, 2% each selected mentoring with Cambridge Assessment and mentoring with King's Modern Language Centre. However, the qualitative data from both students and staff suggests that English language support, particularly conversations with native speakers at KCL was a more significant area of support than it appears to be among survey respondents. This may be due to students not recognising the name of the different English language support services available as outlined in the survey answer options.

Psycho-social support

Psycho-social support provided by PADILEIA was evaluated as highly effective by five project staff (1 AUB, 1 Kiron, 2 KCL, 1 RI) and two delivery staff (1 Kiron, 1 AABU). In addition to the general comments relating to the quality of this support, one AABU SSO felt that practical group activities had been especially effective as they had enabled students to think creatively and collaboratively about how to look after their mental health. Individual counselling sessions were also reported as highly valuable (1 KCL project staff member; 1 Kiron Jordan SSO). Despite this, and perhaps due to the sensitive nature of the subject, only one Year 4 AUB student (refugee, male) explicitly spoke about the effectiveness of the psycho-social support available; this student remarked on how the support days had been 'wonderful in helping us feel better'.

Beyond the intentional psycho-social activities, Foundation Courses, in particular, were found to carry intrinsic psychological benefits (2 AABU project staff; 1 AUB instructor; 1 AABU student), both for host community students and for refugees. While it was noted that the courses had improved refugee students' mental health by getting them out of the camps (1 AABU project staff member) and giving them something to work towards (1 AUB instructor), it had also provided host community students with a way to move forward:

'The course supported me psychologically as well since I started after graduating from university and I was lost. I did not know what to do since it was during the pandemic, and everything was paralysed.'

Year 4 AABU host community student, male

Among survey respondents, psycho-social support was the second most frequently reported student support accessed, with 19% of survey respondents reporting they had accessed it.

However, this was higher among Foundation Course respondents (32%) compared to KCL respondents (6%) and Kiron respondents (2%). Some 7% of Foundation Course respondents who reported accessing any student support services reported that the psycho-social support was the most helpful service they accessed.

3.4 Impacts and onward transitions

This subchapter explores the impacts of the project and onward transitions made by students. Firstly, access to PADILEIA courses is explored, then the onward transitions students made after participating in PADILEIA courses are examined, including their access to higher education, further education and employment opportunities. Lastly evidence of project impacts are presented including skill development, confidence and self-efficacy and student aspirations.

The following research questions are addressed in this chapter:

Table 12: Research questions addressed in Chapter 3.4

#	Research question
1	Assess whether PADILEIA increased higher education access for refugees and disadvantaged host communities, outlining the reasons behind these achievements/non-achievements
2	Assess whether the knowledge and transferable skills gained through PADILEIA contributed to students' successful onwards transitions (Higher education, employment, further study), or could do so in the future

The findings will draw primarily on the student survey, student KIIs and project management KIIs.

3.4.1 Onward transitions

Students' successful transition beyond study with PADILEIA was a key outcome for the project. Transitions are defined as progression from PADILEIA courses to further higher education study, or to employment. It should be noted that there must be careful consideration of what constitutes *successful* transition into employment in contexts where precarious labour and exploitation are rife, as is often the case in Jordan and Lebanon. This subsection explores the reported transition pathways that PADILEIA students have taken, with particular attention given to the transition to university and employment as key successful transition pathways targeted by the project. Scholarships and students' perceptions of the usefulness of PADILEIA courses for their future are also explored.

Transition pathways

Students have pursued a number of transition pathways, though relatively few have successfully transitioned to university or employment. As Figure 11 below shows, the most

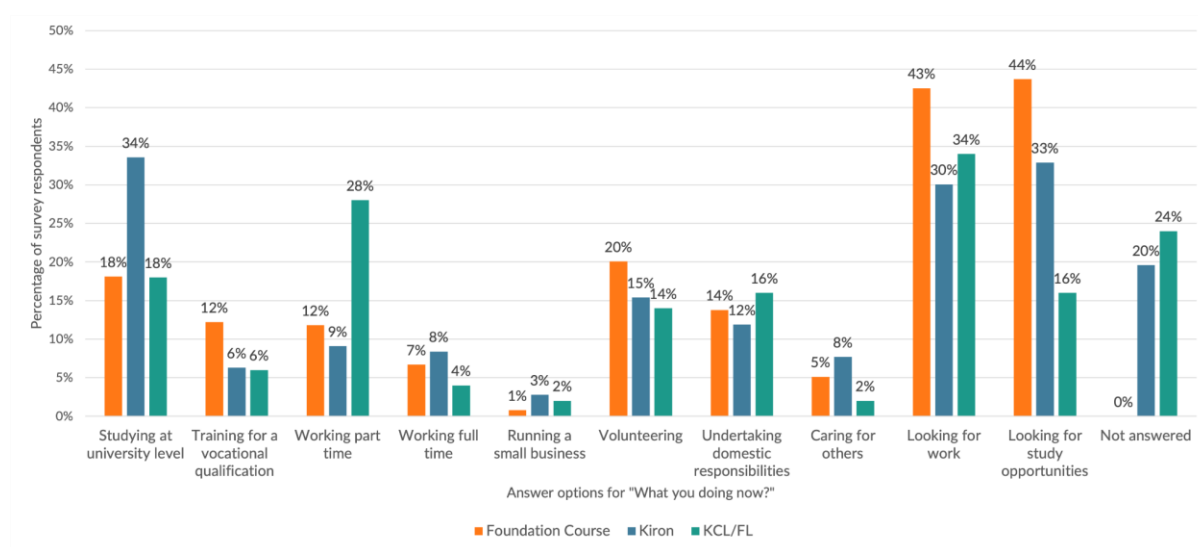
common activities that students report doing are looking for work (38%) and looking for study opportunities (37%). This suggests that they have not been able to successfully transition to employment or continued study after completing their course with PADILEIA.

Figure 11: What survey respondents are doing now (select all that apply) (%)



Number of respondents: 447

It is important to note that 51% of survey sample respondents were still studying with PADILEIA at the time of taking the survey, and therefore may not have started looking for activities to do after finishing their course. However, looking for work and studying opportunities were the most common answer options for both respondents who were still studying at the time of taking the survey and those who had completed the course: 38% of respondents who completed the course were looking for work and 27% for study opportunities, compared to 32% and 35% respectively of respondents who were still studying.

Figure 12: Comparison of what survey respondents are doing now by course offering (%)

Number of respondents: Foundation Course = 254, Kiron = 143 and KCL/FL = 50

As demonstrated in Figure 12 above, looking for work and study opportunities are the most common activities among Foundation Course students. Among Kiron respondents, the most common activities they are engaged in currently are studying at university level, looking for study opportunities and looking for work. Of KCL respondents, the largest proportion are now looking for work, followed by working part time and studying at university level. By gender, looking for work and study are the most common activities respondents are doing now, with a slightly higher percentage of female respondents reporting this (42% and 41% respectively) compared to male respondents (34% each). In addition to this, a higher percentage of host community respondents reported that they are looking for work (59%) than refugee respondents (33%), which may be linked to the regional issue of refugees being limited in their access to work permits and certain types of employment²⁵. Conversely, a slightly higher percentage of refugee respondents reported that they are looking for study opportunities (38%) compared to host community students (34%). Finally, a higher percentage of respondents in Jordan are looking for work (45%) and study opportunities (44%) than respondents in Lebanon (both 30%). Therefore, it is clear that many PADILEIA students have not yet made successful transitions since studying with PADILEIA.

Transition to university

One transition pathway targeted by the project was to study at university following a PADILEIA course. This initially appears to have been a successful pathway; 23% reported that they are currently studying at a university. This was a more common pathway among Kiron respondents (34%) compared to Foundation Course and KCL respondents (both 18%). However, it is important to note that this may be an unreliable measure of successful transition, as survey respondents may have answered erroneously that they are studying at university in reference to the PADILEIA course they are currently enrolled on. Indeed, 26% of

²⁵ <https://help.unhcr.org/jordan/en/frequently-asked-questions-unhcr/work-permit-syrian-faqs/>;
<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

survey respondents who reported that they are still studying on a PADILEIA course reported that they were studying at university. It may be the case that respondents are studying with PADILEIA while also enrolled in university, although this seems unlikely.

However, this may also be considered a relatively successful transition pathway when only considering responses from students who had completed their PADILEIA study. Indeed, 19% of these students reported that they are studying at university. This is highest among Foundation Course respondents (22%, n=30), followed by KCL/FL respondents (16%, n=5) and lastly Kiron respondents (10%, n=3), although the small sample sizes should be noted. It is also worth noting that many Year 4 students responded to the survey sample compared to other cohorts, meaning that successful higher education transitions from earlier years may not have been clearly or equally represented.

Studying for a technical or vocational qualification is a less commonly reported successful transition pathway, with 10% of respondents reporting they are studying for a vocational qualification. This was slightly higher among Foundation Course respondents (12%) than Kiron and KCL respondents (both 6%).

Transition to study at university also emerged as a key theme in the qualitative data, with six project staff (2 Kiron, 2 AABU, 1 AUB, 1 KCL) and three delivery staff (2 AABU, 1 AUB) reporting cases of students making successful higher education transitions. Their claims are reflected in the project data, which confirms that 3 Kiron²⁶, 35 AABU, 53 AUB, and 11 RI students enrolled in higher education courses following their PADILEIA study²⁷. Notably, project targets for higher education access (although perhaps modest given the total number of completions) were exceeded year on year, as Table 13 below shows. The transfer figure was higher for Foundation Courses only, with this pathway achieving a transfer rate of 20.1%, compared to the overall transfer rate of 5.2%²⁸. Some project and delivery staff directly attribute these successes, at least in part, to the fact that students who gained places on higher education courses had been able to transfer credits (2 AABU, 2 Kiron) and had received application support during the programme (1 KCL).

Table 13: Cumulative number of PADILEIA students progressing into higher education by university enrolment²⁹.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Planned	N/A	25	56	69
Achieved	22 ³⁰	47	57 ³¹	102

²⁶ Note: The figure for Kiron may be higher as this figure is based on students' self-reporting.

²⁷ Note: Data was not collected for KCL MOOC students as HE access for students on these courses was not an intended project outcome.

²⁸ Source: Results Framework.

²⁹ Source: Results Framework.

³⁰ Note: All of these were Foundation Course students and represented 25% of Foundation Course graduates. 20 of these gained a scholarship/financial aid.

³¹ Note: 54 of these were Foundation Course students, and 3 were Kiron students who did not transfer credits.

Three students, all refugees, referenced ways in which PADILEIA had impacted their access to university places (1 AUB, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 1 RI). For the AUB (Year 1, female) and Kiron Lebanon (Year 2, female) students, this impact was very tangible; both had gained places on higher education courses and attributed these successes to the application support they had received during their PADILEIA study. The RI student did not give such a clear-cut example but conveyed his perception that the Foundation Course had increased his general chances of accessing higher education in the future. The Year 2 Kiron student summarised her experience and Kiron's role in her success thus:

'I am currently studying for my master's degree. Kiron definitely helped me by helping me apply for the scholarship.'

Year 2 Kiron Lebanon refugee student, female

It is also important to note, as one AUB instructor did, that the Foundation Course at AUB had helped some students to gain their Grade 12 high school diploma, though project data, revealing the number of students who achieved this, is unavailable.

Despite these positive outcomes, twelve students expressed disappointment that their PADILEIA course had not enabled them to directly transition to higher education. These students stated at interview that their main motivation for studying with PADILEIA had been to access higher education (5 AABU, 3 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 2 RI), with two of the AABU students explicitly stating that the course had not met their expectations for this reason.

Similarly, the qualitative data also suggests that there was less success when it came to students gaining access to higher education by transferring Kiron credits. As the project data shows, PADILEIA had aimed to secure 10 university transfers through credits, but achieved 7 in reality, and none of these were ultimately able to take up their places due to lack of funding³². Indeed, two Kiron staff members expressed disappointment in the number of higher education transfers achieved. The most significant reason behind this, cited by both staff and students and discussed at length in the next section, was the fact that students usually lacked access to scholarships, which would enable them to take up their places at university. Other cited reasons for the low transfer rate included: the inflexibility of higher education institutions in the region and their reluctance to accept transfer credits (2 Kiron SSOs, 1 KCL project staff member), the (underestimated) time and money required to secure MoUs with universities in the region (2 Kiron project staff, 1 KCL project staff, 2 Kiron SSOs), a lack of general advocacy for refugee access to higher education (1 KCL project staff member; 1 Kiron SSO), and the fact that university acceptance is not within PADILEIA's arena of control (1 Kiron, 1 AABU project staff). As the Kiron Jordan SSO explained:

³² Source: Results Framework

'There was a gap between the KPIs which were set in stone, the number of transfer students, and our actual capabilities given the official agreements needed, the documentation needed.'

Kiron Jordan Student Support Officer

Although KCL MOOCs were reportedly intended as 'taster courses' with no assumption that they would directly lead to higher education transfers (1 KCL project staff member), this view appears to have evolved over the course of the project. As a FutureLearn project staff member summarised, 'when the project started there was an ambition to get the qualifications that would lead to higher education and work - but I don't think we can say we did that'. This was echoed by a KCL project staff member, who reported that accrediting KCL MOOCs had proved so challenging that they were ultimately offered as unaccredited courses on FutureLearn - 'very beneficial but not what we originally intended'. Similar to Kiron staff's experience, this change in direction was attributed to the reluctance of higher education institutions to accept transfer credits.

Scholarships

Scholarships are very important to students. Indeed, among all survey respondents, the most frequently cited reason for students choosing to enrol in a PADILEIA course was the expectation that it would help them get a scholarship (41%). This is reflected in the qualitative data, in which five students cited getting a scholarship as their main motivation for studying with PADILEIA (1 AABU, 2 AUB, 2 KCL). The project data confirming the total numbers of students who made successful scholarships applications is captured in Table 14 below:

Table 14: Final number of university enrolments, successful scholarship applications, and self-funded students, by course provider³³.

	Kiron	AABU	AUB	RI	TOTAL
University enrolments ³⁴	3	35	53	11	102
Scholarships	3	23	33	11	70
Self-funded	0	12	20	0	32

³³ Source: Results Framework

³⁴ Note: The project did not consistently track university place offers; these figures therefore only represent those students who were able to take up their places, and the total number of places offered may have been higher (see relevant qualitative findings in this section).

Project data confirms that a total of 70 PADILEIA students made successful scholarship applications: 3 Kiron, 23 AABU, 33 AUB, and 11 RI³⁵. These success stories are reflected to some extent in the student and staff interview data, with three students (2 AUB, 1 Kiron Lebanon) reporting successful scholarship applications. In parallel, 12% of survey respondents reported gaining a scholarship during or after studying with PADILEIA. This did not vary significantly among respondents from all course offerings: 13% of Foundation Course respondents, 12% of KCL respondents and 9% of Kiron respondents. Furthermore, three other students (2 AABU, 1 AUB) mentioned that they were in the process of applying for scholarships. The main ways in which PADILEIA is perceived to have helped students secure scholarships is through its awareness-raising activities such as transfer guidance sessions and visits from scholarship provider representatives (1 AUB, 1 Kiron project staff member; 2 AABU, 1 AUB students) and its support with completing applications (1 RI project staff member; 2 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 Kiron Lebanon students). Finally, one AUB instructor and one Year 3 AABU student (refugee, male) felt that PADILEIA's development of students' subject knowledge and skills enabled them to write stronger, and therefore more successful, scholarship applications. One Year 4 AUB student summarised her experience as follows:

'It was not my aim to apply for scholarships because I did not know they existed, but they informed us about existing scholarships and helped us apply for them.'

Year 4 AUB refugee student, female

However, challenges with gaining scholarships emerged as one of the most significant themes across the qualitative data. Ten students (all from Foundation Courses with the exception of one KCL MOOC student) reported being unable to access scholarships following their PADILEIA studies. Of these, three students (2 AABU, 1 RI) made general comments about their course not supporting them to access scholarships. Perceived reasons for students' failure to secure scholarships were diverse, which in itself indicates the complexity of this issue. These included: the lack of an internal PADILEIA scholarship (2 Kiron project staff); the restrictive eligibility criteria attached to many scholarships (1 KCL, 1 AUB project staff; 1 AUB instructor; 2 AABU, 1 KCL students); the lack of scholarships available in the region (1 AUB, 1 KCL; 1 Kiron SSO; 1 RI student); and logistical barriers such as unrealistic application windows and document requirements (1 KCL project staff member; 1 AUB student).

While one KCL project staff member stated that getting students scholarships was not within the scope of the PADILEIA design, two Kiron project staff members felt that helping students to gain scholarships was an essential component of ensuring successful university transfers. Indeed, none of the seven students who were accepted to universities using their Kiron credits were ultimately able to take up their places due to lack of funding, and student reports of being unable to secure scholarship funding indicate that students from other pathways had also ultimately failed to access higher education for this reason. As one Kiron project staff member summarised:

³⁵ Note: Data was not collected for KCL MOOC students as HE access for students on these courses was not an intended project outcome.

'If we do not have scholarships for those students they will not be able to take up the places offered to them. It is one thing to hit a milestone; it is another to set it up as a sustainable pathway.'

Kiron project staff member

It is important to note, however, as outlined above, that 19% of respondents who completed their studies with PADILEIA are now studying at university, suggesting that for some students a lack of a scholarship has not prevented them from accessing higher education. Indeed, AUB and AABU project data show that the Foundation students who enrolled in university courses but did not receive scholarships had been able to self-fund³⁶. However, a notable discrepancy in the survey data is that 19% of respondents reported that studying with PADILEIA helped them get a scholarship while only 12% reported gaining a scholarship while or after studying with PADILEIA. An explanation for this discrepancy could be that some respondents gained a scholarship but could not accept or use it, or that some respondents who had unsuccessfully applied, or were waiting for the outcome of an application, reported that the course helped them to be able to apply for a scholarship.

Despite the most common motivation to study being the increased opportunity to apply to and win scholarships, the largest proportion of survey respondents did not apply to any (35%). This was the most common response among respondents from all course offerings, with the highest among KCL respondents (42%), followed by Foundation Course respondents (37%) and Kiron respondents (29%). Some 26% of all survey respondents reported that they had applied to one or more scholarships but were unsuccessful and 13% were waiting for the result of an application at the time of responding to the survey.

Finally, it is important to note that one of the most commonly cited impacts of the PADILEIA courses is the opportunity to continue studying (22%). This suggests that while scholarships were not widely available to PADILEIA students, a notable proportion still felt that the course helped them to further their educational journey, either with PADILEIA or beyond.

Transition to employment

An alternative transition pathway is into employment, which the data suggests was successfully accessed by some students. While fewer students reported that they were employed compared to those who said that they were looking for work, there are some survey respondents who have successfully transitioned into employment since studying with PADILEIA. Some 13% of survey respondents are working part time and 7% are working full time. Across respondents from all course offerings, a higher percentage are working part time than full time, and 2% of respondents are running their own business. The second most commonly cited reason for students to enrol in a PADILEIA course is that they thought it

³⁶ Sources: AABU PADILEIA students at Universities; Scholarships graduates at Universities – AUB year 1-4

would help them get a job (23%) and, while not many respondents are in employment, some 14% reported that studying on a PADILEIA course has enabled them to get a job.

Notably, a higher percentage of male respondents are working part-time (19%) or full-time (11%) than female respondents (9% and 4% respectively). There was minimal difference in employment rates between refugee and host community respondents, with 13% of refugee respondents working part-time and 7% working full-time compared to 11% and 7%, respectively, of host community respondents. However, while still low, a higher percentage of host community respondents reported that they are running a small business (7%) than refugee respondents (1%). The difference between respondents in Jordan and Lebanon is also minimal, with 11% of respondents in Jordan working part-time and 7% full-time compared to 15% and 6% of respondents in Lebanon. As such, successful transition to employment was limited among students and there is scope to develop employment exit pathways. In parallel, staff and students both reported successful transitions to employment in the qualitative data (2 AABU, 2 Kiron project staff; 2 AABU instructors, 1 AUB instructor; 4 students - 2 Kiron, 1 AUB, 1 KCL). These reports are reflected in the project data; by the end of the project, 19 students were known to have entered the labour market following targeted support from Kiron, with 11 working as freelancers, and others working in E-commerce and for NGOs. Meanwhile, two AABU students were reportedly working as volunteers and another as an accountant³⁷.

Interviewees identified different ways in which they believed PADILEIA had enabled them to make transitions to employment. The first of these was the development of students' skill sets (1 AABU, 1 KCL project staff) including programming skills (Year 2 AABU refugee student, female); skills acquired through the Foundation Course in general (Year 2 AUB refugee student, female); and business plan and grant application knowledge (Year 3 KCL refugee student, female). The Year 3 KCL student summarised her experience as follows:

'I also learnt how to write a business plan and since I finished my course I applied for grants to start a business and I was given a grant recently to start my own business. Without the MOOC business course I would not have been able to apply for this kind of grant.'

Year 3 KCL MOOC (Business) refugee student, female

This final area of skills development was echoed by the KCL MOOC facilitator, whose students had reported that the Business MOOC had been 'helpful to implement changes to their business activities'.

Additionally, three other students indicated that practical support, available through their course providers, had been a crucial factor in securing a transition to employment. Two host community Kiron students (one Year 4 Kiron Lebanon, male; one Year 3 Kiron Lebanon, female) mentioned that Kiron staff had helped them to find work placements that had led

³⁷ Source: Results Framework

directly to getting a job. For the Kiron Lebanon student, this involved Kiron helping her to find two separate placements, during which time she was 'developing [her] skills within a commercial environment alongside the theory [she] was learning at the university'. She attributes these learning experiences to finding her current job as an accountant. Similarly, the Kiron Jordan student mentioned that Kiron had helped him to find a place on a training course at a place 'where [he] ended up working'. Finally, a Year 1 AABU student (refugee, male) noted that 'the course has helped me looking for work and applying for jobs that are related to technology', indicating that the support he received during his Foundation Course study may lead to employment in the future.

Unfortunately, students and staff also reported barriers to employment, some of which were contextual, and some of which may have been within PADILEIA's scope to overcome. Interviewees identified the official requirement of work permits and the general exclusion of refugees from the job market as the main barriers to employment (1 KCL project staff member, 1 Kiron Jordan SSO). One Year 4 Kiron Jordan host community student (male), who had studied Graphic Design with Kiron, cited the low demand and high competition for graphic designers in Jordan and the fact that living in Jordan is generally expensive, forcing him to rule out lower paid opportunities. Elsewhere, and with specific reference to Foundation Courses, one AUB instructor and one AABU project staff member noted that, although students had been given a good grounding in some core subjects, it was unrealistic to expect students to be able to secure professional employment without further training. Finally, and though not within PADILEIA's original scope, it was suggested that future iterations could place more emphasis on employment as a PADILEIA exit pathway, including raising awareness around the value of PADILEIA certificates with employers (1 KCL project staff member, Year 2 Kiron Lebanon refugee student, female), and providing students with more employment opportunities through developing relationships with employers (1 AABU project staff member).

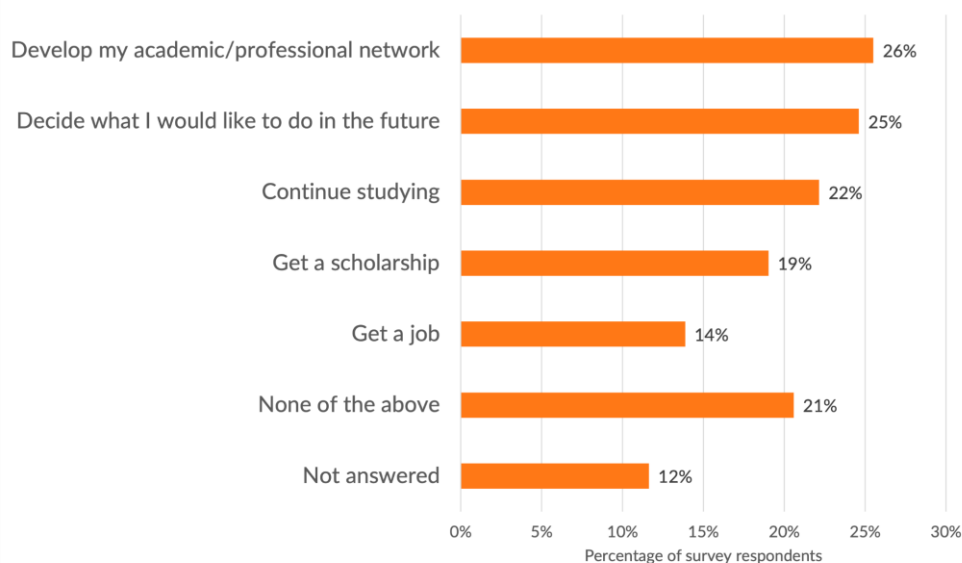
Course usefulness

Survey respondents reported many ways in which PADILEIA courses have helped them, although the evidence of the usefulness and impact of PADILEIA courses for transition is mixed. The majority of respondents thought the PADILEIA course would be helpful for them in the future (71%), and only 2% of respondents reported that they did not think the course would be helpful to them in the future. It is important to note that 13% of respondents said they did not know and 14% did not answer the question, suggesting some uncertainty about the usefulness of the PADILEIA course. Of survey respondents who reported that the course would be helpful to them in the future, the main reason for thinking this is the application of the skills they have learned, which suggests that the course material is relevant and applicable for students. The largest proportion reported that the course will be helpful for them because they will be able to apply their new knowledge and skills in their career (51%), followed by applying it generally in their life (39%). Some 30% of respondents reported that the course will be useful in the future because the qualification gained is attractive to future employers and that it will help them get a scholarship. Only eight respondents, all Foundation Course students, reported that the course will not be helpful to them in the future. Of these, five

reported it is because they decided to do something unrelated to the course and four reported it was because it did not help them to build enough academic or professional connections.

When asked what the course had helped them to achieve, the most common responses were developing their academic and professional networks (26%), deciding what they would like to do in the future (25%) and to continue studying (22%). These views are captured in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Survey responses to 'Which of the following has the course helped you to achieve? (tick all that apply)' (%)



Number of respondents: 447

It is important to note that around a fifth (21%) of survey respondents reported that the course did not help them to achieve any of the suggested options, which can be broken down into 25% of Foundation Course respondents, 17% of Kiron respondents, and 10% of KCL respondents. Though this may indicate that these students felt that their course had not helped them at all, it is possible that the course had helped them to achieve other outcomes that were not listed within the survey options.

However, survey respondents generally found PADILEIA courses helped them to take their next step after studying with PADILEIA. The largest proportion of survey respondents reported that the course was helpful (40%) followed by those who said the course was very helpful (32%). Only 1% of respondents reported that it was unhelpful.

That said, even though survey respondents found the course helpful for taking their next step, most felt like they would still be doing what they are currently doing even if they did not take a PADILEIA course. This suggests a limitation of the courses' impact, although this should be seen in light of the challenging contexts in which students are based. Some 40% of respondents reported that it was likely and 21% that it was very likely that they would be doing what they are doing now even if they did not study with PADILEIA. This is likely because of the high percentage of respondents who are looking for work and study opportunities. Only 8% of

respondents reported it was unlikely and 3% very unlikely they would be doing what they are now if they had not studied with PADILEIA. Also, the data points to some confusion among survey respondents answering this question, with 14% of respondents saying it was neither likely nor unlikely, 19% said they did not know and 17% did not answer the question. This confusion or lack of uncertainty is understandable as respondents were asked to make a counterfactual assessment of their transition outcomes.

3.4.2 Impacts of studying with PADILEIA

Alongside tangible onward transitions, studying with PADILEIA was found to have a range of impacts on its students, many of which will arguably contribute to increasing their future prospects in terms of accessing future opportunities such as higher education and employment. The findings related to these impacts are detailed below.

Targeted skills development

Some 23 of the 27 students interviewed reported knowledge and skills gains, suggesting that this was one of the project's most significant impacts. In addition to four general comments about improved 'computer science' or 'digital skills' (2 AUB, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan), students reported improved knowledge and skills with MS Office and Google suite (3 AABU, 2 AUB, 2 KCL, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 2 RI), online navigation and using search engines (2 AABU, 2 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon), database management (2 AABU, 1 Kiron Jordan) website development (5 AABU, 3 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan 2 RI), and programming languages (6 AABU, 4 AUB). The high presence of AABU students' comments with respect to computer skills suggests notable success from this provider in this respect. These reports are supported by observations from four delivery staff members (2 Kiron Lebanon, 2 AUB instructors), three project staff (2 AABU, 1 Kiron), and also AABU project data. Pre- and post-test scores for English and IT show gains in both areas, but particularly strong ones in IT:

Table 15: Percentage increases between pre- and post-Foundation Course tests at AABU³⁸

	English	IT
Year 2	15.3%	63.1%
Year 3	19.5%	42.7%
Year 4	16.2%	102.4%

Other subject-specific learning gains included mathematics (2 students - 1 AABU, 1 AUB; 1 RI project staff member), sciences (1 AUB instructor; 1 RI project staff member), business skills (2 students - 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Lebanon; 1 KCL project staff member) and graphic design (1 Kiron Jordan).

³⁸ Calculated from IT and English pre- and post-Foundation Course test scores at AABU in years 2, 3 and 4 of project implementation (AABU Year 1 post Foundation Course data not available)

Furthermore, students from Foundation Course and Kiron pathways projected a clear sense of the scale of progress in their subject areas. This, according to six students (and one Kiron Lebanon facilitator), was despite beginning their courses with very limited knowledge (3 AABU, 1 AUB, 2 Kiron Jordan). Four others simply stated that they felt their learning had been significant during their course (2 AABU, 1 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan). A Year 1 AABU student added that he was surprised at his own learning:

‘[The Foundation Course] exceeded my expectations; I did not imagine I would learn programming during this course and I did.’

Year 1 AABU refugee student, male

Significantly in terms of onward transitions, ten students (2 AABU, 3 AUB, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 1 Kiron Jordan, 2 RI) made specific reference to the fact that they were now actively using what they had learnt from their course content. These included using their newly-acquired skills with MS Office to complete university assignments (2 AUB), as part of their current jobs (1 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 RI), or for applying for scholarships and other courses (1 RI). Other examples included using new website development skills to prepare for gaining further qualifications (1 RI); using search engines in daily life to seek information (1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan); and using business skills to set up as self-employed (1 Kiron Lebanon). These reports are consistent with the survey data; overall, survey respondents felt that, since taking a PADILEIA course, they are able to apply what they have learned in a professional context, with 50% agreeing and 27% strongly agreeing. Only 2% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they could do so. Moreover, survey respondents feel that they are able to apply what they learned from their PADILEIA course to a personal or social situation, with 55% agreeing and 26% strongly agreeing. Only 2% of respondents disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed that they could do so.

Finally, four project staff members, two delivery staff members and one AABU student flagged that the knowledge gains students had made would have less tangible impacts, but arguably no less valuable ones, namely on student empowerment and hope (1 KCL, 1 RI; 1 AUB instructor); increased general awareness (1 Kiron, 1 RI; 1 AABU student), and a sense of purpose (1 KCL). The Year 4 AABU student recounted the experience of the project broadening his horizons:

‘[PADILEIA] helped me to learn a lot about how to deal with people in a better way, and I feel I became a different person since it exposed me to things I had never thought about before.’

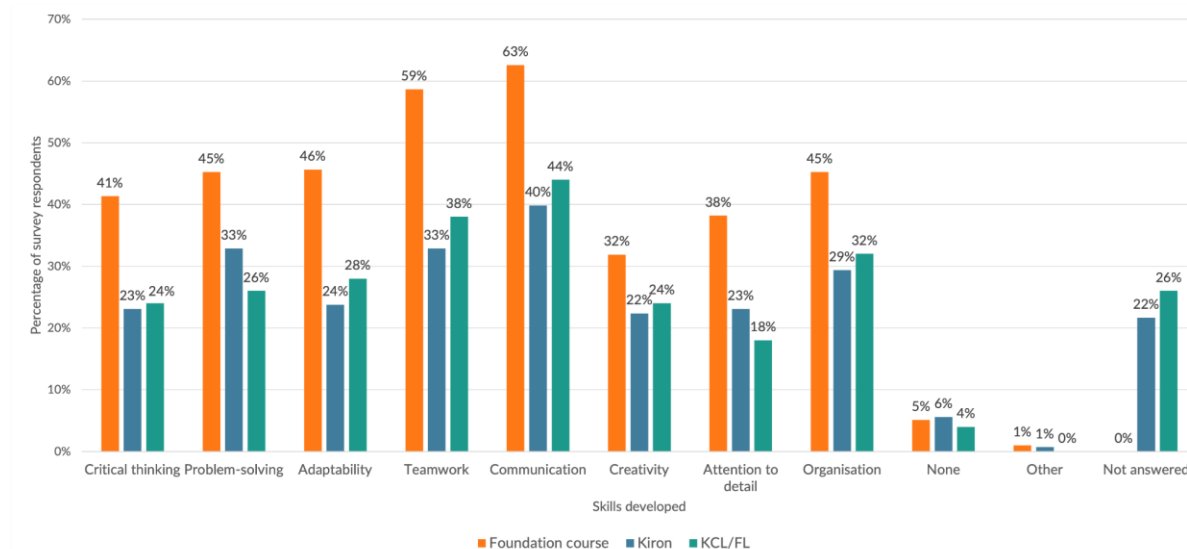
Year 4 AABU host community student, male

Transferable skills

Students reported developing many skills through studying PADILEIA courses, suggesting that the project had a meaningful impact in this area. Among survey respondents, the most

commonly reported skills the courses helped respondents to develop were communication skills (53%), teamwork (48%) and problem-solving and organisation skills (39%). Of survey respondents who reported developing skills through a PADILEIA course, the skills most developed varied by provider, as demonstrated in Figure 14 below.

Figure 14: Survey respondents self-reported skills that they felt the course they studied on helped them to develop (%)



Number of respondents: Foundation Course = 254, Kiron = 143, KCL/FL = 50

Communication skills were in the top two most frequent responses for all courses and teamwork was in the top two for Foundation Course and Kiron respondents. For Foundation Course respondents, the most frequently selected most-developed skills were teamwork (23%), followed by communication (21%) and adaptability (15%). For Kiron respondents, the most developed skills were communication (15%), problem-solving and teamwork (both 13%), and creativity (9%), however it is important to note that 24% did not answer the question. Lastly, for KCL respondents the most developed skills were communication (29%), followed by creativity (10%) and some 31% did not answer the question. Only 5% of survey respondents reported not developing any skills through the PADILEIA course.

The qualitative data is in general alignment with these findings; students and staff reported development of a variety of similar skills, including: communication skills (1 Kiron Jordan student; 3 Kiron delivery staff; 1 KCL and 1 AUB project staff); interpersonal skills (1 AABU, 2 AUB); research skills (1 Kiron Jordan, 1 KCL students; 1 KCL project staff member); study skills (1 KCL student; 1 AUB instructor); presentation skills (2 AUB students; 1 AUB instructor; 1 KCL and 1 AUB project staff); problem-solving (1 KCL facilitator; 1 Kiron Lebanon instructor); skills relating to preparing CVs, cover letters, and applications (3 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan); and teamwork (1 KCL project staff member). Four project staff members also alluded to general transferable skill development as being crucial to the success of the project (1 FL, 1 AUB, 2 Kiron).

Furthermore, four students reported that they had been able to use their transferable skills since completing their PADILEIA course. These included one AABU student (Year 1 refugee,

male) making a general comment about using his skills 'every day either for personal use or at work', and another (Year 2, refugee, male) saying that he used transferable skills only at home so far, but that he hoped to use them at work in the future. In addition, two Year 4 AUB refugee students (one male, one female) reported using their interpersonal skills at work, and one student (Kiron Lebanon) spoke of using his CV and cover letter knowledge to apply for more jobs.

English language skills

Improved English language skills emerges as a key project impact. References to gains in this area were made by 13 students (2 AABU, 5 AUB, 4 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 1 RI), two delivery staff (1 AABU, 1 Kiron Lebanon) and three project staff (1 AABU, 1 RI, 1 Kiron). The AABU students' perceptions of improved proficiency are consistent with AABU pre- and post-course test scores, which reveal that students had made progress in English overall; AABU English test scores increasing by an average of 15.3% in Year 2, 19.5% in Year 3 and 16.2% in Year 4. Furthermore, two students (1 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan) mentioned improvements in their written skills, four students (4 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan) reported improved speaking skills, and one Year 4 RI student (refugee, female) reported improved reading skills. That said, one AABU instructor observed that improvement in English had not been universal, pointing out that some students had struggled to grasp new grammatical concepts 'because of their age'. She did, however, still feel that these older students had still been able to 'improve their vocabulary' despite struggling with other aspects of language acquisition.

Significantly, six students reported that their increased knowledge and skills had helped them beyond the course, in situations such as using their English to communicate with people at work and university (2 AUB, 2 Kiron Lebanon); helping their children with their studies (1 KCL); and conducting research more effectively online (1 KCL). One AUB student explained his current position:

'Currently I work as a volunteer within a local NGO and I meet people from all over the world. This course made it possible for me since my English now is much better.'

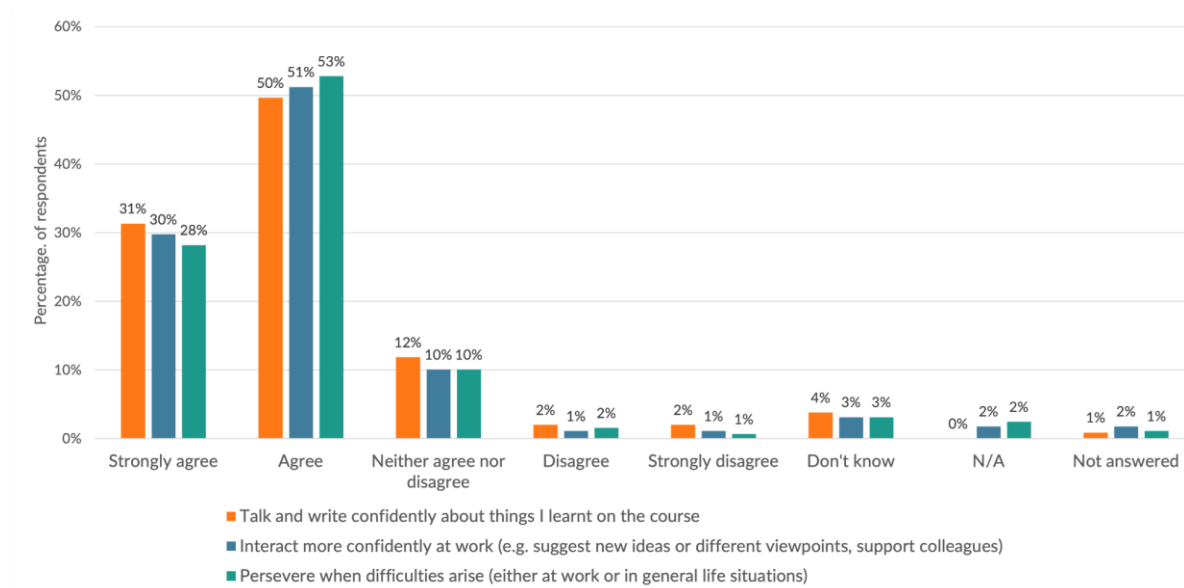
Year 4 AUB refugee student, male

Most students did not specify whether they felt that this improvement was due to the targeted English language teaching within their course or to the fact that English was the language of instruction. However, one Year 2 AABU student (refugee, female) and two AUB instructors felt English levels had improved due to English being the medium of instruction'. Conversely, two Year 4 female host community students (1 KCL studying English Basic and Pre-intermediate, 1 Kiron Lebanon studying English for Business) believed that they had made gains in English due to the fact that this was a central aim of their respective MOOCs.

Confidence and self-efficacy

Increased self-efficacy (defined as 'people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances'³⁹) emerged as a key project impact. As Figure 15 below shows, survey respondents reported that they are able to talk and write confidently about the things that they learned in the course, with the largest proportion (50%) agreeing with the statement, followed by those who strongly agree (31%). Confidence to talk and write about what they have learned is high among all disaggregations, although notably it is higher among female respondents (88% combined agree and strongly agree) than male respondents (76%). These findings are supported by the qualitative data. A total of 15 of the 27 students interviewed showed signs of increased self-efficacy thanks to their participation in a PADILEIA course. Eleven students expressed this through comments relating to self-perceived improvement in certain areas including: English (1 AABU, 1 AUB, 2 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon); mathematics (1 AUB); digital skills; (1 AABU, 1 AUB, 2 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon); general communication skills (1 Kiron Jordan); and general study skills (1 AUB).

Figure 15: Survey responses to 'Since undertaking my study, I would now be able to...' (%)



Number of respondents: 44

Furthermore, survey respondents reported that, since taking a PADILEIA course, they are able to interact more confidently at work, such as suggesting new ideas or supporting colleagues, with 51% agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing. Students' confidence is also reflected in their perception of how they will succeed in their efforts or overcome obstacles. Survey respondents feel that they are better equipped to achieve their goals since studying on a PADILEIA course, with 47% agreeing and 33% strongly agreeing. Feeling equipped to achieve goals was high across all disaggregations, although notably this was higher among female respondents (86% combined agree and strongly agree) than male respondents (72%).

³⁹ Bandura, A. (1986). The social foundation of thought and action. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Furthermore, survey respondents feel that, since taking a PADILEIA course, they are able to persevere when difficulties arise, with 53% agreeing and 28% strongly agreeing. In the words of one Year 1 Kiron student:

'They helped us improve our communication skills and participate in the class with our comments and opinions. Now when I apply for a job I feel more confident expressing myself.'

Year 1 Kiron Jordan refugee student, female

Similarly, five delivery staff members observed increases in students' self-efficacy, as well as the related concepts of self-belief and general confidence. Both AUB instructors perceived gains in self-efficacy specifically, given that they reported improved confidence in relation to the skills and knowledge specific to their respective disciplines (Sciences and IT). The AUB IT instructor added the element of self-belief, explaining that he felt he had enabled students 'to trust in themselves'. Elsewhere, two Kiron SSOs and one KCL MOOC facilitator noted an increase in students' overall confidence during their studies. For both the Kiron Jordan SSO and the KCL facilitator, this was evidenced by increased willingness to participate and express themselves more fully: 'They were expressing themselves at last, then there was this level of comfort that you could begin to see... It gives them a boost of self-confidence, on or offline'.

In addition, ten students (2 AABU, 1 AUB, 2 KCL, 4 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon) reported increased confidence with certain skills and in different situations. These included using English to communicate (1 AABU, 1 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon); applying for scholarships (1 AABU); applying for jobs (1 AABU, 1 Kiron Jordan); doing interviews (1 AUB); making presentations (1 AUB); and using computers and internet (2 KCL, 1 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon). One AABU student explained how confidence in one aspect had led to increased confidence in another: 'the course made me more confident in English and I can now easily apply for many scholarships'. Finally, one Year 4 AABU student (host community, male) spoke of the confidence he had gained by being accepted within a university environment: 'It felt as though I was an IT student at the university'. One AUB student summarised the experience of learning to study online:

'In the beginning I did not know how to study online, how to organise myself. But with time we got used to the teaching/learning methodology and I started improving in the courses I was registered in.'

Year 3 AUB refugee student, female

Gender equity

Delivery staff noted that PADILEIA managed to promote gender equity through its delivery, a finding that is consistent with project data showing that 58.2% of completions were achieved

by female students⁴⁰. It was suggested that this was achieved by providing the option to study online, which eliminates the issue of travelling to study hubs - often a particular difficulty for female students (1 RI, 1 Kiron Jordan SSO). Conversely, it was also highlighted that having the option of going to a study hub may have promoted female participation, as conservative family members may have considered this option more appropriate for their daughters than spending hours online (1 Kiron project staff member). Additionally, study hub sessions gave female students from conservative families an opportunity to mingle more than they usually would 'in a safe environment' (1 AUB project staff member).

Meanwhile, one KCL MOOC facilitator felt that he had achieved gender equity within his classes by acknowledging the gender divide existing in the country, then actively promoting and encouraging female participation by inviting female students to contribute in his classes. He added that this had even resulted in women exceeding men in terms of willingness to contribute to discussions.

Aspirations and motivation

Students from across the pathways reported that their PADILEIA experience had motivated them to seek a variety of new education and employment opportunities, indicating that this was a major achievement for the project. These included: aspirations to find a job related to what they had studied (3 AABU); to start a business involving support for other refugees (1 AUB); to apply for similar courses (1 AUB, 2 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon); to pursue higher education (2 AUB, 2 Kiron Jordan, 1 RI); and to look for volunteer opportunities (1 AUB). One Year 4 AUB student (refugee, female) noted the particular potency of attending a course alongside students who had higher education aspirations: 'most of the students who attended were wanting to go to university afterwards which made it more motivating for me to study', an observation echoed by a Kiron Jordan SSO - 'We celebrated students through virtual coffees, one student would be an inspiration for others'. The most common aspiration was to seek opportunities associated with technology: including getting a job involving programming (1 AABU), studying computer technologies (1 Kiron Jordan), artificial intelligence (1 Kiron Jordan) and website development (1 AABU) and app development (1 AABU); and starting a software engineering company (1 AUB). In addition, one Kiron Jordan student (host community, female) spoke of her goal to develop her business using the skills she learned during her English for Business MOOC to 'have a website and use technology to get more sales'. Notably, the AUB student spoke of her desire to use what she had learnt to create lasting change for other refugees:

⁴⁰ Source: Results Framework. Note: this percentage was calculated excluding all closed-run KCL/FL MOOC completion data, as gender data was not consistently available across all closed runs.

'I plan to start a software engineering company when I finish my degree. I want this company to provide internships for refugees in Lebanon who can not access work easily in Lebanon. This is influenced by the course we had, since I felt they helped me a lot in achieving my dream of studying at university.'

Year 2 AUB refugee student, female

In addition, eight students made positive references to finding their PADILEIA course content itself motivating. Though the majority of these references were worded in general terms, two male refugee students (one Year 1 AABU and one Year 2 AUB) mentioned that the course content had motivated them to improve their language skills, and another AABU student (Year 4, host community, male) said that he found the course motivating because the teachers encouraged students' independence: 'teachers motivated us to learn more and to find information by ourselves'. In parallel, two project staff members (1 AABU, 1 KCL) observed high levels of motivation across the course offerings, despite the contextual difficulties that could have reduced this, and two SSOs (1 Kiron Lebanon, 1 AABU) noted that students' motivation to do well in their chosen course generally increased as they progressed through it.

Finally, two project staff members (1 AUB, 1 KCL), and two delivery staff members (1 Kiron Lebanon SSO; 1 AUB instructor) felt that the courses had given students hope for the future. As the AUB project staff member summarised:

'I have seen how it gave them hope to grow, and not give up. They have experienced war, displacement, and have experienced many negative situations. PADILEIA gives them hope for the future.'

AUB project staff member

Sociability and network development

Making friends and developing networks was clearly an important aspect of course participation, especially for Foundation Course students. Eleven students mentioned that they had made new friends during their course (6 AABU, 4 AUB, 1 Kiron Lebanon), and three staff members (1 Kiron Jordan SSO, 1 AUB instructor, 1 AABU instructor) also observed students creating an increased sense of community, both within the class itself (AUB instructor) and within the university more broadly (AABU instructor). For two AUB students, these new connections were profound; both referring to their cohort as 'like a family'.

Two refugee students (1 AABU, 1 AUB) felt that their respective courses had helped them to integrate into society, a comment echoed by two staff members (1 AUB instructor, 1 AABU SSO) who felt that the Foundation Courses had enabled refugee students to integrate better within the host community than had been possible previously. A Kiron Lebanon refugee student also added that the experience had not only helped her to integrate generally, but also 'within a new community of university graduates who are looking forward to building their

careers'. Significantly, this sense of coming together was also felt by a Year 4 AABU host community student (male), who explained how his newfound friendships made through the course had helped to change his impression of Syrian refugees:

'I am Jordanian and since we live in a poor area of Jordan, immigrants were looked at as a competitor in a poor region of the country. Within the course, I met lots of Syrians and we became close friends. I don't have this feeling anymore and learnt to be more empathetic.'

Year 4 AABU host community student, male

This was reflected by a refugee student, who felt the course had helped them to belong to a community:

'As refugees, we do not meet lots of people from outside our community. The programme helped me a lot to meet new people and feel part of the society.'

Year 2 AABU refugee student, female

Furthermore, nine students (2 AABU, 4 AUB, 1 Kiron Jordan, 2 RI) spoke of the ease of accessing peer support via WhatsApp or Google Classroom. However (and perhaps unsurprisingly), this sense of easy communication with peers was not shared by students who studied independently in an online-only format. Five students (2 KCL, 2 Kiron Jordan and 1 Kiron Lebanon) indicated that their communication with other students had been limited, with four of these adding that they would have appreciated opportunities to meet their peers in person.

Finally, four Foundation Course students (3 AABU, 1 AUB) mentioned that being set group tasks during the course helped them to communicate with each other and develop relationships, which one KCL MOOC student (Year 4, host community, female) suggested would also have helped her to socialise better with her MOOC peers. In addition, five other students (3 Kiron Jordan, 1 Kiron Lebanon, 1 RI) commented that their respective PADILEIA experiences had made them more sociable generally.

Identity

A minor but thought-provoking theme to emerge from the qualitative data was PADILEIA's impact on students' identities. This was articulated by two project staff (1 Kiron, 1 AABU) and one AABU student (Year 4, host community, male). In the case of the host community student, the new knowledge he had acquired on the Foundation Course had enabled him to become 'a different person'. Meanwhile, the Kiron and AABU project staff spoke specifically of refugee students and the chance PADILEIA provided them to shed their refugee identities, often associated with disadvantage and vulnerability, and cultivate a new, more empowered identity as a student:

'They have a new identity. They are not just refugees; now they are also students. So even if other pathways are not open to them, they can pursue goals as students.'

Kiron project staff member

Impact on staff and partner organisations

PADILEIA was found to have had a pronounced impact on those who worked on it, both as individuals and at an organisational level. Development of skills was the most frequently mentioned way in which PADILEIA had impacted individual staff members; these skills included diplomacy (1 Kiron project staff member); management skills (1 AABU, 1 RI project staff) subject knowledge (AUB instructor); and digital skills (AABU instructor). Another AABU instructor reported having enjoyed teaching refugee students in particular, and one Kiron Jordan SSO reported an increase in her own confidence due to feeling 'heard' within the consortium. Two delivery staff (1 Kiron Lebanon facilitator, 1 AUB instructor) and one project staff member (1 RI) felt that their experiences had increased their ability to understand and connect with students from vulnerable backgrounds. For the AUB instructor, this impact had been especially profound:

'I have seen students who were coming from vulnerable families. Some of them had lost a member of their family in the war. This impacted me a lot, made me feel their suffering and gave me motivation at the same time. I feel more confident dealing with the students from such a background now.'

AUB instructor

Staff also identified several ways in which participation in PADILEIA had impacted their organisations. Staff members pointed to important learning taking place between partner organisations (1 KCL, 1 Kiron, 1 AABU, 1 AUB). Relatedly, two AABU and one Kiron project staff member felt that knowledge gained from the PADILEIA experience would be valuable for future projects. As one AABU project staff member explained:

'We plan to make use of our assets. Recently, we established a women's centre in the university. We want to train women and refugees in computer skills and use the IT courses we developed in PADILEIA for this.'

AABU project staff member

Additionally, four project staff (2 AABU, 2 KCL, 1 FL) noted the project's more tangible impacts on partner organisations and how they operate. The FutureLearn project staff member highlighted that PADILEIA MOOCs 'became top courses beyond PADILEIA too', indicating that these courses had proven a valuable asset, and would continue to be in the future.

Elsewhere, a KCL project staff member noted that her organisation would be using PADILEIA's mentoring and support suite for their own students on campus. The impact of PADILEIA was especially evident at AABU, where blended learning has subsequently been introduced across the university. An AABU project staff member pointed out that this had begun with PADILEIA and was expanded through university-wide training:

'We trained 20 people within PADILEIA to do online courses, then they became trainers, then we trained 440 instructors across the university.'

AABU project staff member

Finally, the impact of PADILEIA on Kiron appears to have been significant. Not only has their association with the project and its 'big-name' partners served to boost Kiron's reputation in the region (1 Kiron Jordan SSO), but the project had enabled them to establish new, strategic partnerships, such as with the Modern University of Business and Science, which one Kiron project staff member deemed 'a huge achievement' (1 Kiron project staff member).

Wider impacts

Although more difficult to measure, project staff felt that PADILEIA has already had an impact beyond the project itself, and that this impact will continue to be felt into the future. Staff noted that the project has served as a potent tool for refugee community empowerment. In terms of Foundation Courses, it was felt that not only has the project exposed refugees to university life, and thereby helped to raise their individual aspirations (2 AABU), but the skills and experiences gained through PADILEIA will also filter through into communities and bring positive change (2 AUB). An RI project staff member added that the project had helped to change community mindsets about what counted as a 'good job', opening students and their families' minds to other potential pathways: 'we moved students from traditional majors to majors in need - digital, AI etc'.

A major theme emerging from project and delivery staff interviews was PADILEIA's impact on higher education structures in the region. Staff felt that PADILEIA's work had led to increased acceptance of transfer credits (1 Kiron); online learning (2 Kiron, 1 AUB, 1 AABU, 1 KCL; 1 AABU instructor); and blended delivery models (1 KCL, 1 AABU; 1 Kiron Jordan SSO). Furthermore, staff cited a range of advocacy activities that may have meaningfully contributed to higher education institutions' awareness of PADILEIA's work, and therefore recognition of the need to facilitate refugees' transitions to higher education, and of the benefits of blended learning. The RI project staff member mentioned that she had recently written a higher education policy document inspired by her experience of working on PADILEIA, which she hoped would raise awareness of the importance of higher education bridging programmes. Elsewhere, Kiron and AUB project staff members mentioned that they had represented their respective institutions in various conferences and round table discussions during the project, which had given them opportunities to advocate for refugees within higher education, and for blended learning. The AUB staff member suggested that these advocacy activities were beginning to pay off:

'We had a HE round table and I heard from an NGO that was starting a bridging program in northern Lebanon - and PADILEIA was quoted! They are aware of it and cannot deny the project's success.'

AUB project staff member

Chapter 4: Key lessons

This chapter draws together the findings from chapter 3 and assesses them against the key issues highlighted in the research questions. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the project's key achievements in terms of access to PADILEIA courses, onward transitions, transferable skills, and other impacts. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the ways in which key aspects of the project's management, design and delivery may (or may not) have contributed to these achievements.

4.1 Summary of impacts

This subsection summarises the key impacts of the project.

4.1.1 Access to PADILEIA courses

Overall, the evidence suggests that PADILEIA has increased education access for refugees and disadvantaged host community members in Jordan and Lebanon. This is evidenced through higher-than-expected engagement in PADILEIA courses and high levels of course completion. The key factors for this success were the blended learning model and the intentional integration of facilitation into course delivery, the availability of a range of student support services, as well as prioritising student-centredness and adaptability. These factors maximised students' opportunities to successfully engage with the courses and successfully participate in higher education.

4.1.2 Onward transitions

A total of 102 PADILEIA students made the transition to higher education following completion of their course, representing 5.2% of all Foundation Course and Kiron completers⁴¹. The transfer figure was higher for Foundation Courses only, with this pathway achieving a transfer rate of 20.1%⁴². In terms of the survey data, 19% of survey respondents who had completed studying with PADILEIA reported that they were now studying at a university. Furthermore, 12% students successfully gained scholarships for higher education. However, project data⁴³ indicates that a lack of financial support (e.g., through a scholarship) prevented some students from taking up their university places, and interview data suggests that, while 102 PADILEIA students actually enrolled into university courses, more may have been accepted but unable to take up their places due to a lack of funding. A key learning for the project is therefore to further address the external barriers students have to accessing higher education.

While insights into the number of students who went on to gain employment were not available in the project data (with data limited to reports from individual students and staff),

⁴¹ Source: Results Framework. Note: KCL/FL MOOC completions are excluded from this figure as university acceptance was not a planned or measured outcome for this group.

⁴² Source: Results Framework.

⁴³ Source: Results Framework.

20% of this evaluation's survey respondents reported that they were employed following their PADILEIA course, with 14% of the students surveyed reporting that PADILEIA had helped them to get a job. Finally, students also reported a variety of other onward transitions, such as further (not higher) education study, internships, and volunteering opportunities.

In terms of the extent to which PADILEIA helped students to make these transitions, 22% stated that their PADILEIA course had enabled them to continue studying, while 72% of respondents agreed that the course had helped them to take their next step, either into higher education or into employment. Students' marked appreciation for the application support they received from course providers also suggests that transition successes may often have been directly attributable to the project's support activities. That said, 61% of survey respondents felt that it was likely or very likely that they would be doing what they are doing now even if they did not study with PADILEIA, perhaps because so many students are currently looking for work (38%) or study opportunities (37%).

Therefore, students perceive studying with PADILEIA as having a positive impact on their onward transitions and there is evidence of students making successful transitions in individual cases, often due to the targeted support and considerable dedication of project and delivery staff. However, a relatively small number of students have gained scholarships, enrolled in university or engaged in full-time or part-time employment in the context of all PADILEIA students, and most students are looking for work or study opportunities. As such, PADILEIA is making progress towards having a positive impact on students' onward transitions but further work is needed to diversify the exit pathways available to students at the design level. A key learning is to develop linkages to a greater selection of exit pathways and systematically promote these through support services and transfer opportunities, while harnessing the resources of the consortium to support the provision of an increased number of scholarships. Another learning is that it would be beneficial for university partners in the consortium to work to enable PADILEIA students to transfer to further study at their institutions. Finally, the fact that evidence of employment beyond PADILEIA is limited to individual reports reveals the importance of rigorously tracking alumni in order to better gauge PADILEIA's impact in this respect.

4.1.3 Knowledge and transferable skills

Some 23 of the 27 students interviewed for this evaluation reported knowledge and skills gains. The most notable gains were in digital literacy skills and English language, with other subject-specific knowledge gains in mathematics, sciences, business, and graphic design. There was significant evidence that students had found these knowledge and skill gains useful, with multiple reports of students using their newly acquired skills to complete university assignments, as part of their current jobs, and for job and study applications. In terms of transferable skills, qualitative and quantitative data revealed strong perceived gains in a variety of areas, including: communication; interpersonal skills; presentation skills; teamwork; problem-solving; organisational skills; research skills; study skills; and CV writing and application skills. There were also reports of students actively using these skills in their lives beyond PADILEIA, including at work, at home, and to apply for new opportunities.

These new skills were perceived as highly valuable for students; survey data also showed that the majority of students felt that their course would be useful for their future (71%), with 51% stating that they would be able to apply their new knowledge and skills in their career, and 39% felt that they would be able to apply it generally in their life. In addition, three students and two project staff attributed students' employment successes to the skills they had acquired during their PADILEIA courses. These skills included: general skills from across the Foundation Course; computer programming skills; and business skills.

As such, there is ample evidence that PADILEIA students are developing transferable skills through their study and are using them in their lives beyond PADILEIA. However, while students perceive these skills to be useful to their future, there is limited evidence that the transferable skills are impacting on students' ability to make a successful transition to higher education or employment. This is largely due to the high proportion of students who are looking for work or study opportunities, and the limited opportunities for refugees and disadvantaged host community members. Thus, a key learning for PADILEIA is to develop and diversify the exit pathways for their students and to systematically track student transition outcomes.

4.1.4 Other impacts

This evaluation has identified a range of less tangible, though arguably no less valuable, impacts that PADILEIA had on its students, staff, their communities, and higher education structures in the region. The most significant of these was self-efficacy; students reported high increases in confidence with reference to specific skills and tasks, with an average of 81% of respondents reporting confidence increases across a variety of scenarios. Students also reported self-perceived improvements in English, mathematics, communication skills, and study skills, and expressed increased confidence in English communication, digital skills, applying for scholarships, doing interviews, and making presentations. Other key impacts for students included increased sociability and network development, and future aspirations and motivation to succeed. There was also some indication that PADILEIA had positively impacted students' identity, and also that the project had increased higher education access for women. There is insufficient evidence to conclude what impact this is having on students' onward transitions, but it is important to note that the course design and delivery is developing students' confidence and self-efficacy. In particular, the high quality of facilitators and instructors appears crucial in developing these, as students reported significant benefits from how highly engaged and supportive the delivery team were for their personal motivation and development.

In terms of wider impacts, there was strong evidence to suggest that PADILEIA's approach had had a meaningful impact on its own partner organisations, and also higher education structures in the region. The most significant of these was its impact on attitudes towards blended learning, both within partner institutions and within other universities. The value of PADILEIA's expertise with blended learning models was spotlighted by Covid-19, at which point the project was able to shift relatively easily to the online-only mode. This had the effect of softening other institutions' attitudes towards online and blended learning.

Finally, the project was perceived to be capable of carrying long-term benefits on refugee and vulnerable host communities into the future. Interviewees felt that attending PADILEIA courses had raised student aspirations, which would have a ripple effect on their communities, both emotionally and tangibly in the form of refugees planning to set up opportunities for other refugee students in the future. Both refugee and host community students felt strongly that the courses had helped them to develop socially, notably helping refugees to integrate in society and guiding host community students to a greater level of acceptance of their refugee counterparts. The study hubs would also remain for future community use, and as a symbol of the power of education to bring strength and hope for the future.

4.2 Effectiveness of project structure and coordination

Selective recruitment strategies for the Foundation Courses can be seen to have improved student access, given that they ensured, as far as possible, that the students selected were the ones most likely to take full advantage of the experience. Extending this strategy to other offerings may have helped to boost attendance and completion rates. That said, selectiveness may arguably also have a detrimental impact on access in terms of reach and may be unnecessary for online-only models given that courses delivered completely online are not subject to the limitations of how many students can fit in a physical teaching space. Additionally, it appears that there was more scope for MOOC recruitment via out-bound marketing such as social media, which would have increased reach even further.

Despite some bumps in the road early on in the project, the good consortium relationships and communication can be viewed as having had a positive impact on student access. Having a strong, well-liked contact point within the lead partner organisation, plus the regularity of communication within the consortium, helped partners to feel respected and heard and therefore arguably helped to ensure that project decision-making around student access was smooth. High levels of organisation were undoubtedly also an important factor in ensuring clarity of communication across the partnership and with students, although there was an indication that this may have been hampered by high staff turnover within many of the partner institutions, and also by high levels of bureaucracy.

Collaboration between partners was found to be a strong enabling factor to ensure student access to PADILEIA, with high levels of commitment and flexibility reported across the partnership. More specifically, centralising MOOC recruitment ensured that student information did not lose clarity by being passed through multiple channels. Partner organisations were able to increase student access by making their offerings available to each other's students; for example, KCL English MOOCs were made available to Kiron students, Kiron offer board information was accessible for Foundation Course students, and the KCL-based mentoring track was available across the partnership. Access could therefore have been increased even further if collaboration had also increased; the findings suggest that there was more scope for joined-up efforts, as many project staff felt disconnected from other partners' offerings. There appeared to be a desire for more shared practice between some staff at AABU and AUB, for example. Increased sharing of opportunities might also have further facilitated

onward transitions for students; staff reported that they made their students aware of new opportunities as often as possible, but it is not clear to what extent this messaging reached all PADILEIA students. Kiron's offer board was a useful tool in this respect, although Kiron staff reported issues with getting students from other pathways to access it.

There was some indication that misalignment between consortium members' approaches might have had a negative impact on student access. For example, university partners' slower processes also reportedly slowed down decision-making of other partners, sometimes forcing them to work with limited time and budget visibility. Elsewhere, FutureLearn's profit imperative may have reduced the extent to which they were able to participate in project support activities beyond the initial MOOC set-up. That said, the strengths that different organisations brought to the table was undoubtedly linked to successful student access. The prestige of the university partners, for example, was clearly attractive and motivating for students, and the considerable academic expertise that KCL brought to MOOC design ensured student engagement through guaranteeing high course quality. Elsewhere, Kiron's ability to adapt its offering and associated support structures quickly to changing student needs, coupled with its knowledge of the implementation context, also contributed strongly to sustained student engagement. Crucially, flexibility also enabled Kiron to reallocate resources to finding new exit pathways, thereby increasing its ability to secure onward transition opportunities for its students. FutureLearn's contribution to student reach is a particularly stark example of an individual partner's strength increasing student access.

Having consortium members based in the area of implementation was crucial, not only for student recruitment, but also for understanding students' contexts, and therefore how to mitigate the challenges they faced when trying to access education. In addition, working with partners with direct and daily experience of the area of implementation arguably enabled them to secure more exit opportunities for students by being able to source opportunities such as internships within the local area. For some project staff members, including at KCL, the lead partner felt removed from day-to-day project realities, which might have led to some strained communication and therefore delays in decision-making around student access. A key lesson is to have the lead partner represented in the area of implementation to ensure smooth and direct communication with those members who were actively delivering for students. This may also have helped to promote equality and further inter-partner collaboration, given that some partners reported feelings of working in a silo.

Finally, a lack of shared focus within the consortium with regard to university acceptance and transfers' may have resulted in diminished morale among both staff and students. This lack of consensus around the extent to which PADILEIA should take on the responsibility of ensuring that students successfully enrolled in university courses (eg, by helping them to secure funding), instead of simply arming them with the knowledge and skills with which to gain a place, often left staff and students frustrated and disappointed. A key lesson in this regard is the importance of clearly establishing the project's scope at the planning stage, then ensuring that all key project concepts were well-defined, aligned with that scope, and clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Additionally, the frustration around scholarships might indicate the need either for increased financial support from within the consortium for this purpose, or alternatively for a shift in focus onto less problematic exit pathways for students.

Another key learning is the importance of collecting and storing monitoring data to track project outputs and impacts. The project did not systematically collect data on student transitions, and there is no centralised database for fundamental information related to the project implementation. Having access to these would allow the project to more easily track impact, and could reduce confusion between partners and inconsistencies in reporting.

4.3 Effectiveness of project design

Adaptability and student-centredness, as key features of the project design, enabled the project to maximise student engagement in PADILEIA courses. This aspect of the project design can be considered one of the most crucial to securing student access given the sheer number of adaptations made (see Chapter 3.1.1), and the fact that students and staff routinely recognised these adaptations as a significant contributor to student progress. Pre-implementation consultation with students ensured that offerings were targeted to meet students' needs and aspirations, although the findings suggest that access may have been improved further by conducting more regular needs assessments to ensure increased alignment with changing student needs and the unstable context. The same may be said for onward transitions; due to the changing context, courses such as English for Healthcare were found to have become less aligned with realistic exit pathways than they had been at the beginning due to changes in labour laws, indicating that they became devalued in terms of the extent to which they could help students with transitions into employment. A key learning here is to have regular needs assessments to ensure the courses are appropriate and relevant for students.

The joint offering of academic content, support structures and assistance with onward progression was identified as a design that made PADILEIA unique, which could have increased its appeal for students and therefore increased the project's reach. There was also an indication that the project's promise of facilitating exit pathways had proven instrumental in securing student access. Although this promise was arguably not fulfilled in many cases, the fact that students believed that their PADILEIA course would in some way help them to secure an onward transition to higher education or employment was an almost universal motivating factor for signing up in the first place. A key lesson in this respect might be the importance of setting students' expectations about what the project could realistically help them to achieve, and then setting up clear, feasible pathways for these onward transitions which are constantly reviewed to ensure that they reflect students' aspirations.

The blended learning design at the heart of the PADILEIA model was found to increase student access in a variety of ways; it increased student reach by offering online access options which were available to students in diverse locations, and self-paced online aspects facilitated access for students and with a range of different schedules and commitments. Meanwhile, the in-person and facilitated elements enabled students to access more direct support during their courses, leading to increased access in terms of completion. The blended learning design was also found to significantly mitigate the access issues created by Covid-19, given that the online component was already established and able to accommodate a full shift to online delivery. Finally, the blended design improved female participation by offering female students ways of accessing education that would not be as greatly impacted by the will of male family members.

4.4 Effectiveness of delivery formats

In addition to the design-related aspects of online and in-person learning, both delivery formats can be deemed effective means of ensuring student access, in different ways. A significant majority of students, both in the qualitative and quantitative data, felt that the online platforms through which online learning was delivered were easy to access, although access was also hampered by weak digital skills, especially among refugee students. Access was also ensured by the fact that online resources were made available for students to use at any time, meaning that they could study at their own pace where needed. That said, online delivery may not always have guaranteed student access due to the significant connectivity issues reported across the data, both because of poor internet access and not having an appropriate device with which to access courses (see 4.6 for more details on the extent to which this was mitigated). A key learning for the project is that facilitation of online content is particularly important for supporting students' remote learning.

In-person learning was considered to enhance student access due to its capacity to provide students with instant, tailored feedback, especially with practical subjects; this finding might suggest a need to increase the ratio of in-person to online elements for practical courses. In-person delivery also increased student engagement through motivation, and increased opportunities for social interaction and communication. In-person delivery was also not subject to the issues around motivation and student engagement associated with online learning. That said, access to in-person delivery was hampered by issues relating to travel and transport, and the financial issues associated with these.

Finally, study hubs were found to be a crucial success factor in ensuring student access to both in-person and online access to the PADILEIA courses. They increased access by: providing internet connectivity (which was often lacking in students' homes); being well-equipped with devices, study materials, air conditioning; and being within students' communities and therefore accessible to them physically. A key learning, therefore, is that in-person study is an important and valuable element of the project and with additional support, particularly for travel assistance, will benefit students who are able to study in-person.

The findings relating to delivery format suggest that blended delivery was an effective way of ensuring student access to PADILEIA courses, given that it mitigated, at least to some extent, the negative aspects of both online and in-person delivery. Where an in-person delivery component is not possible, increased online facilitation may go some way toward providing the same guidance and support as is possible in in-person delivery, but this is likely to be subject to student engagement challenges and will not always be suitable for practical subjects.

A last note of importance is that survey respondents from Kiron reported lower levels of enjoyment and interest in their course as well as satisfaction with the learning environment. It is not clear from the data why this is the case, and it should be noted that levels are still high, but it is notable compared to responses from foundation courses and KCL/FL MOOC respondents and therefore is worthy of further investigation.

4.5 Effectiveness of teaching and facilitation

The input of delivery staff was found to greatly influence the extent to which students were able to access PADILEIA courses, and also onward transitions. Indeed, teaching quality was one the most universally and effusively applauded successes of the project, with almost all students making references to their facilitators and instructors being helpful, friendly, and available whenever the students needed. Indeed, students reported high levels of satisfaction with the amount and quality of academic support that they had received, citing constant in-class support, catch-up support, and support that was tailored to students' specific needs. Furthermore, almost without exception, students reported easy communication with their teachers, whether via WhatsApp or in class.

The implications for student engagement here are perhaps obvious; some students articulated these explicitly, citing motivation and a sense of inclusion as key ways in which strong teaching quality ensured high levels of access to the courses. The latter was particularly important for access, given the wide range of prior experience and mix of course level perceptions present in each class. Similarly, the high quality of teaching and facilitation points to increased access to onward transitions; working on the logical assumption that high teaching quality leads to more successful development of knowledge and skills, it follows that students who benefited from this teaching had been better prepared for entry into higher education or employment. Indeed, the high levels of skill and knowledge development reported by students and staff are testament to this, with two Foundation Course students explicitly noting that PADILEIA's development of their subject knowledge and skills had enabled them to write stronger, and therefore more successful, scholarship applications. This finding highlights the importance of prioritising facilitation within the project design. As such, a key learning for the project is to continue prioritising the rigorous recruitment and training of delivery staff to maintain the high standard of teaching and facilitation.

4.6 Effectiveness of student support

This subsection explores the effectiveness of student support, including technological, travel, language, psycho-social and transition support.

4.6.1 Technological support

Technological support can be considered to have been effective at ensuring student access in some ways, and less so in others. Reports that onboarding processes were made increasingly smooth, and that students had positive experiences of interacting with helpdesk staff, indicate that this form of tech support did facilitate student access, especially later in the project. The fact that students' digital literacy was quite low in some cases points to the need to prioritise technological support from the very beginning.

Findings are contradictory when it comes to the effectiveness of technological support in the form of internet access. While many students reported internet connectivity issues in the

qualitative data, a large majority of students reported that they had been given enough support to access the internet in the quantitative data. It is possible that many students acknowledged that internet issues were beyond PADILEIA's control and were therefore accepting of the amount of support they received, despite it not always solving their connectivity problems. Additionally, access was enhanced by students having the option to connect to the internet via the study hubs. However, there were also reports of students being unable to access their courses due to not having an appropriate device; while Foundation Course students were provided with devices during Covid-19, the same support was not available for Kiron and KCL students, resulting in some students' either partially or completely losing their access to the courses. A lesson here is the importance of prioritising student access to the internet and devices, particularly when much or all of course content is being delivered in the online format.

4.6.2 Travel support

Qualitative findings suggest that issues in the area of travel support may have had a negative impact on Foundation Course students' ability to access courses. Issues included being unaware of the support available to them, delays in the support reaching them, and insufficient amount of financial support provided for travel purposes. Not only might this issue have decreased student access in terms of being able to attend in-person classes, but may also have negatively impacted students' motivation. Though project staff later clarified the extent of travel support available and demonstrated that it was comprehensive and informed by student need, a lesson here is the importance of prioritising and clearly communicating what travel support is available for students attending in-person course elements, especially in areas with well-known travel infrastructure issues.

4.6.3 Language support

Opinions around the choice of language of instruction were mixed, with some students noting that their access to PADILEIA courses suffered due to not understanding the course content. This was despite many students being motivated to study with PADILEIA by the prospect of improving their English. However, English language support proved instrumental to overcoming these barriers and ensuring student access to the courses, with a strong majority of students reporting that the course language was accessible to them. Students and staff generally attributed this ease of access to the support of bilingual explanations from delivery staff, Arabic subtitles on English MOOCs, and peer-to-peer English mentoring. Furthermore, many students reported gains in their English language skills, which they attribute to a combination of the above supports. Though English mentoring was identified as valuable by staff, it was less frequently mentioned by students, and some students appeared unaware of the language mentoring support that was available to them. A lesson here is the importance of ensuring that the support available is communicated clearly to all students, and to expand access to English language services. In particular, the conversations with native English speakers is a service that could be expanded to great student benefit.

4.6.4 Psychosocial support

Though few students commented on the value of psychosocial support services in the qualitative data, this emerged as an important factor in ensuring student access in the quantitative data. This could be attributed to the sensitive nature of the subject, which students may not have felt comfortable discussing at interview, although some students and staff did comment on the benefits of being in a university environment on their mental health. Other staff members deemed psychosocial support, in the form of one-to-one counselling and group sessions, an important tool in ensuring student access, and it could be inferred that better mental health may also lead to students having more confidence to apply for education and employment opportunities beyond the course, thereby increasing access to onward transitions. A lesson here is the importance of having psychosocial support available to students, and making the university environment available to students to boost their self-esteem and mental wellbeing more generally. Also, it is important to note the importance of incidental psychosocial support through the academic support provided by the delivery team and personal relationships students have with them.

4.6.5 Onward transition support

Course providers' support for students' onward transitions emerged as a central enabling factor for students' successful progression to higher education or employment beyond their PADILEIA course. One of the most valuable of these was the application support provided by all course providers, with many students directly attributing their successful university and scholarship applications to the support that their course providers have given them with this process. Students also felt that providers had played an important part in their onward transitions by making them aware of which opportunities were available. Notably in the case of Kiron, this support was highly tailored to individual students, and led to students securing internships which then resulted in employment. These findings indicate the potency of having this kind of support available for students, and suggests that it should be prioritised to ensure successful exit pathways.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Following on from the findings presented in Chapter 3 and key lessons outlined in Chapter 4, this chapter sets out a number of targeted recommendations. The recommendations aim to provide guidance for future iterations of the PADILEIA project and are tailored to three specific audiences: future iterations of the PADILEIA partnership, the delivery partners of the PADILEIA partnership, and funders, policy-makers and implementers in the refugee education and connected learning sectors.

5.1 Recommendations for the PADILEIA partnership

- Commit to raising additional funds to support the provision of an increased number of scholarships, or complement existing scholarship funds, alongside supporting other exit pathways (see below) and engage in strategic expectation management with students.** The evidence demonstrates that students are highly motivated to study so that they can access scholarships and that scholarships are highly valued opportunities to access higher education and, subsequently, better employment opportunities. This is reflective of attitudes in the region, particularly in refugee communities in light of scholarship opportunities for Palestinian refugees, but the scale of the Syrian refugee crisis outstrips the availability of scholarships for refugees. As such, it is recommended that the PADILEIA partnership commit to raising additional funds and recruit dedicated personnel to identify funding opportunities to address the immediate scholarship issue. Alongside this, it is recommended that the partnership engage in strategic expectation management with students regarding access to scholarships and present other pathways, such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or apprenticeships, as being of equal value for students for their long-term futures.
- Develop linkages to a greater selection of exit pathways and promote these through support services and transfer opportunities.** The findings reveal that many students are looking for work or study opportunities, but only a small proportion achieve employment. The recruitment of a Stakeholder Engagement Officer (SEO) was beneficial for the project in beginning to establish links to exit pathways, although the impact was limited as the role was created midway through the project. As such, it is recommended that a local SEO is recruited at the outset of any future iteration of the PADILEIA project and that they have dedicated resources to map the employment market and develop a network of connections with local businesses and NGOs to support students' transitions through a range of exit pathways.
- Define the PADILEIA connected learning approach.** Due to the agile design of the partnership and the responsiveness to student feedback and disruption caused by Covid-19, the connected learning approach employed by PADILEIA has continually developed since 2017. Changes to implementation in every year of the project have

made it difficult to define or identify a singular PADILEIA connected learning approach. It is recommended, therefore, that in future iterations, the partnership defines the core principles underpinning the connected learning approach so that the unique 'PADILEIA approach' is identifiable and clearly communicated.

- **Ensure clarity of communication among staff and students regarding the scope of the project, including the project aims and expected outcomes.** Qualitative data revealed that there were some differences in definition and expectations regarding university acceptance, and whether this entailed ensuring that students successfully enrolled in a university course or simply preparing students to apply to, and succeed at, university. Different partners having different focuses and definitions in this respect (eg, Kiron's unique focus upon transfer credits) may have led to confusion, frustration and disappointment among partners and students. It is therefore recommended that project objectives and scope are clearly defined at the outset, and that these are clearly communicated to all staff and students to ensure realistic expectations for all.
- **Create a centralised database for project data.** The lack of a centralised database for fundamental information related to the project implementation (such as: course dates, course names and cohort names and numbers) has resulted in confusion between partners, inconsistencies in reporting and difficulty with tracking data. It is therefore recommended that the PADILEIA project management team set up a database that all partners feed into, detailing all course dates, course names, and student numbers for all courses that have run/are currently running under the PADILEIA project. It is also recommended that this database is set up to allow for consistent reporting of data across all partners for key metrics such as enrolments and completions.
- **Collect data on student transitions to assess project impact.** There is data on the numbers of PADILEIA students who have enrolled on university courses and who have received scholarships, but there is no systematic tracking of other student transitions, such as transitions into employment. Going forward with future project iterations, it is recommended that delivery partners engage in alumni tracking, perhaps through an annual alumni survey, to gather data on student's post-PADILEIA activities in order to better gauge the project's impact.
- **Prioritise contextual knowledge and lead partner presence in the region.** The qualitative data revealed how valuable locally based staff in Jordan and Lebanon were for ensuring the project design and delivery were contextually appropriate and meeting students' needs. The data also revealed that there were challenges associated with not having a representative from the lead partner, KCL, based in the region. Therefore, it is recommended that the project allocate more time and budget to gathering contextual knowledge in the planning stages, and potentially explore positioning a staff member from KCL in the region.
- **Increase skills and experience-sharing opportunities for consortium members.** Qualitative data highlights the issue of consortium efforts becoming siloed, which may have at times led to some members feeling excluded from decision-making and also to missed opportunities for collaboration. Future project iterations should therefore

include more frequent opportunities for partners to meet to discuss ideas and share experiences, separate from other project meetings.

- **Share details of PADILEIA's positive impact on students' self-efficacy and aspirations.** Evaluation findings suggest that project activities, including course delivery and support structures, had a significant impact on what students felt they were capable of. The kinds of aspirations students reported post-course indicate that students' own increased self-efficacy may also result in positive ripple effects within their communities. These self-efficacy gains and their associated impacts should therefore be shared widely within the sector in order to replicate this effect elsewhere.

5.2 Recommendations for delivery partners of the PADILEIA partnership

- **Increase facilitation of online courses to ensure students are supported when learning remotely.** The evidence reveals that facilitation was crucial to ensuring that students had a positive learning experience on PADILEIA courses, and to ensuring the success of the blended learning model. Furthermore, students reported benefits to studying online, such as greater flexibility to study and reduced transport issues. As such, it is recommended that facilitation, both online and in-person, continues to be a priority in course delivery. Though the limitations of teaching and learning online must be acknowledged, it is suggested that facilitation of online courses is increased to bypass the issue of students feeling unsupported when learning remotely.
- **Increase support for in-person study.** This evaluation revealed the continued importance of and, in many cases, preference for in-person delivery for both staff and students, due to its power to increase sociability, support and therefore access to quality education. It is therefore recommended that PADILEIA prioritise supporting students to attend in-person course aspects to the extent possible, potentially by increasing the budget allocation for travel assistance.
- **Further develop and expand access to the existing English language support services, especially English conversation sessions.** The data emphasised the importance of English language support for students and that they particularly value conversations with English speakers to improve their proficiency and confidence, although survey data suggests that access to these beneficial services could be greater. It is recommended therefore that these English language services are further developed and access expanded, rather than creating new English language support services.
- **Consider how to facilitate the provision of internet-enabled devices and access to the internet for students studying online.** Poor connectivity and difficulty accessing internet-enabled devices were significant challenges that students faced while studying online. These were highest among non-Foundation Course students, which suggests that the provision of devices and data cards was effective in reducing barriers to studying online. Taking into account the logistical challenges of providing devices, it

is recommended that delivery partners consider how to facilitate the provision of internet-enabled devices among students studying online.

- **University partners enable PADILEIA students to transfer to further study at their institutions.** There were very few transfers of PADILEIA students to university partners within the partnership. It is recommended that university partners work to enable PADILEIA students to transfer to further study at their own institutions using credit from their PADILEIA study to increase overall transfer numbers.
- **Conduct regular needs assessments to ensure that PADILEIA courses are appropriate and relevant for students.** The evidence shows that PADILEIA were successful at gathering and responding to student feedback and tailoring the course delivery to students needs. However, the decision on course topics was based on a needs assessment conducted in 2016 which was not repeated throughout the course lifespan. Given the rapidly changing situation in Jordan and Lebanon, especially for refugees, it is recommended that the partnership conduct regular needs assessments to ensure that the course topics remain relevant and beneficial for the student population.
- **Continue to prioritise psycho-social support, including incidental support provided through academic support and relationships with the delivery team.** While students may not have articulated their need for psycho-social support, the psycho-social services provided are valuable and should continue to be provided. Data revealed that students highly valued the academic support they provided, which included encouragement and personal support from the delivery team that could be considered informal psycho-social support. As such, it is recommended that psycho-social support, both formal and informal, continue to be prioritised by the partnership.
- **Prioritise the rigorous recruitment and training of delivery staff to maintain the high standard of teaching and facilitation.** The data emphasised that the quality of teaching and facilitation on PADILEIA courses was high, and a considerable strength of the project overall. It is recommended that the partnership continue to prioritise the rigorous recruitment and training of delivery staff to maintain this high standard of teaching and facilitation.
- **Streamline and centralise communications with students across delivery partners.** The qualitative data revealed that communication with students can be challenging in a multi-partner consortium structure. In the earlier stages of the project, this resulted in miscommunications with students during course recruitment and difficulties getting students to engage across multiple platforms and course providers. Centralising this process appears to have proven highly effective in terms of smoothening student communications. As such, it is recommended that recruitment communications with students continue to be streamlined and centralised across the delivery partners, and that this centralisation be extended to all support offerings.
- **Create a social media presence for the PADILEIA project to increase the reach and scale of the project, especially the MOOCs.** The target population for PADILEIA are highly engaged in social media platforms, and the qualitative data revealed that some

project staff felt the reach of PADILEIA could have been increased with social media marketing. It is recommended that PADILEIA create a social media presence to promote the courses and increase the reach.

5.3 Recommendations for the wider refugee education and connected learning sectors

- Recognise the wider societal benefits of scholarships and university study among refugees.** In light of the decrease in ring-fenced money for scholarships in the region, it is recommended that the sector promote the wider societal benefits of scholarships and university study, especially among refugees. Doing this will strengthen the higher education ecosystem in the region more broadly, which is in the interests of both refugees and host communities and will lead to greater resilience.
- Continue to advance recognition of online learning courses by universities to facilitate students' transition from online learning to further and higher education.** Partners detailed the issues faced with getting universities to recognise online courses, which in turn hampered students' transition to higher education. This is an issue across the connected learning sector, and it is recommended that advocacy efforts be redoubled in the interests of increasing recognition of online learning credits by higher education institutions.
- Advocate for investment in internet infrastructure for refugees in camps.** Poor connectivity is experienced as a challenge more by refugees than host community, which is in part due to the poor connectivity in refugee camps. For example, the rapid evaluation found that internet connectivity is reported to be slower and less reliable in Zaatari Camp than in Mafraq city which indicates a lack of investment in the necessary internet infrastructure within the camp. Given this digital divide, it is worth exploring the feasibility of targeting funding or fostering public-private partnerships to improve the internet infrastructure in the camp. There are examples of this already within Zaatari Camp that could be drawn upon for learning.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ahram Online (2016) 'Connected Solar School: Improving education at Zaatari Refugee Camp' Available from: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/217368.aspx> Accessed 1/12/2020

Annexes

Annex A: Definition of evaluation objectives

To ensure full clarity with regard to the evaluation objectives and the direction of enquiry, the key terms of 'access' and 'transitions' were defined in the inception report as follows:

'Access'. This term is used to refer to refugee and disadvantaged host community members' ability to attend PADILEIA courses as a form of higher education (where the course they are studying is a recognised Level 4 qualification), as well as a bridge through which to access to further higher education following completion of PADILEIA courses.

Within this, and in line with the fact that 'distance learning only leads to supporting educational retention or acquisition of learners and educators if users are successfully accessing the content AND utilizing it as intended'⁴⁵, it will be beneficial to examine the concept of access according to three metrics: (i) reach, (ii) engagement, and (iii) completion rates. Details regarding which data will be used to shed light on each of these aspects will be given in the Methodological Approach section.

'Transitions'. Transitions are defined as progression from PADILEIA courses to further higher education study, or to employment. It should be noted that there must be careful consideration of what constitutes *successful* transition into employment in contexts where precarious labour and exploitation are rife, as is often the case in Jordan and Lebanon. Details of how these circumstances will be accounted for, as well as details of barriers to transition beyond the scope of the PADILEIA project to mitigate, will be given in the Methodological Approach section.

'Self-efficacy'. Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as 'people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances'.⁴⁶ Drawing from this, student self-efficacy is defined as individual students' belief in their own personal ability to exercise control over their actions and the circumstances that affect their lives.⁴⁷ In essence, self-efficacy is students' belief in their ability to succeed in their chosen academic or professional pathway. As such, self-efficacy as a concept encompasses other concepts such as confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

'Agency'. Agency is defined as 'the capacity of an individual to actively and independently choose and to affect change'.⁴⁸ As such, consideration will be given to how students navigate the structures and circumstances that influence their ability to make decisions and actions of their free will.

⁴⁵ https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/Measuring%20Impact%20and%20Outcomes_Final_01.20.2021-508%20%281%29.pdf

⁴⁶ Bandura, A. (1986). The social foundation of thought and action. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

⁴⁷ <https://www.simplypsychology.org/self-efficacy.html>

⁴⁸ <https://sociologydictionary.org/agency/>

Please note, as this report is not a psychological assessment, it was not possible for the evaluation to scientifically determine or measure students' self-efficacy or agency. However, these concepts were explored within the constraints of the evaluation.

Annex B: Extended methodology

This annex outlines an extended methodology of the summative evaluation, with a detailed breakdown of the sampling strategies designed for data collection and the approach employed for research ethics, risk assessment and quality assurance.

Overview of evaluation design

The evaluation employs a mixed methods design, incorporating: relevant available project data; a digital student survey; interviews with students, delivery team members, and project staff. The approach was based on a fully distance-based methodology. This was due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 upon international travel, which severely limited scope for in-person data collection for the duration of the evaluation.

The methodological approach encompassed the following three phases: (i) inception, (ii) project data analysis and sequential quantitative and qualitative data collection, (iii) and analysis and write-up. The data sources were triangulated to provide a foundation for rigorous analysis.

Inception

The evaluation started with an inception phase, in which the evaluation objectives, methodology, work plan and deliverables were finalised. An inception report was produced and signed off by PADILEIA. At this point in the evaluation it was decided to implement a sequential approach to data collection, with the digital student survey conducted first and qualitative data collected second. The rationale for sequential data collection was that it allowed for initial quantitative data to inform and enrich the subsequent qualitative data collection. Survey responses were monitored for trends, which were addressed with interview participants in the next stage. The key informant interview templates were informed by the initial analysis of the student survey, and student interviewees recruited from survey participants.

Data collection

Data collection was conducted sequentially, with an initial project document review in June and July 2021, the digital student survey deployed in August 2021 followed by qualitative data collection with students, delivery team and project management staff in September 2021. The data collections are presented in summary below. For a detailed breakdown of the samples, see chapter 2.2.

Data collection samples

Data collection method	Target sample size	Final clean sample size
Digital student survey	94 (minimum)	447
KIIs with students	27	27
KIIs with delivery team members	10	9 interviews with a total of 10 interviewees
KIIs with project staff	10	11 interviews with a total of 14 interviewees

Project document review and analysis

A number of project data sources were drawn upon for the evaluation, including the Theory of Change, Logical Framework, Results Framework and mid and end of year reports to the fund manager. A full list of the project data sources reviewed and analysed for the evaluation are included in Annex C. Project data was primarily used to address research question 1, and was also used to triangulate findings relevant to research questions 2 and 3.

Quantitative data collection

The first methodological component was a digital student survey. This approach was selected as it allows a large number of students to contribute to the evaluation, providing a broad range of student opinions and experiences, and can be completed remotely. There were 85 survey questions split across six sections: 1) about you (sample demographics), 2) course details, 3) course experiences, 4) student support, 5) access and barriers, and 6) onward transitions. Three versions were created in order for the survey to be tailored to students across PADILEIA's three offerings: blended foundational courses, online study tracks made up of Kiron MOOCs, and online short courses. The survey contained questions relating to all three research questions and the majority of questions are the same across the three survey versions for comparability. Questions related to the relevance and effectiveness of student support structures, learning platforms and learning delivery were also included to engage with aspects of research question 3. The student survey tools are included in Annex D.

The surveys were distributed through the Zoho platform and were available in Arabic, as the language that the majority of students are most comfortable using. The survey was live from 9th-21st August 2021 and responses were monitored to ensure distribution among the course offerings, country, gender and refugee status. Convenience sampling was used as the survey was open to all contactable PADILEIA students who were able and willing to participate. Once the survey was closed, an initial analysis was conducted to inform and enrich the subsequent qualitative data collection, with tools updated to reflect trends and questions arising from the student survey. Contact lists were also created with survey respondents who consented to be contacted for an interview, and included their contact details and demographic information.

Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data collection took place in September 2021 and consisted of key informant interviews (KIIs) with students, delivery team and project management staff. All templates are available in Annex D.

The student interviews were designed to answer all research questions, with a focus on questions 1 and 2 as well as aspects of research question 3 relating in particular to student support structures, learning platforms and learning delivery. A sampling strategy was created that ensured students were selected from each year of implementation and course provider, as well as having a representative proportion of students by gender and refugee status. The student interviews were conducted in Arabic over phone or video calls, depending on individual preference, and detailed notes were captured during the interview and then translated into English.

Interviews were also conducted with delivery team members, including facilitators and instructors, primarily to address research question 3 but also to gain supplementary data to be used for triangulation purposes in research question 2. The sampling strategy aimed to ensure that each pathway was represented in the sample, and delivery team members with experience of both online and in-person facilitation and experience of both course design and delivery were targeted where possible. Finally, KIIs were conducted with project management staff, primarily to address research question 3. The interviews targeted representatives from each of the project partners or organisations. These interviews were conducted in English over video calls, and detailed notes were taken.

Data analysis

The survey datasets were downloaded and the data was cleaned. This included removing incomplete entries, entries without consent, duplicates, any entries from participants who did not meet the eligibility criteria, and re-coding any 'other, please specify' variables. The clean dataset was anonymised, with participants' names, contact details and location information removed. Once the data was clean, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted in Microsoft Excel. Contingency tables were constructed to explore frequencies and patterns between different variables.

KIIs were analysed thematically in a rigorous and systematic manner, using a deductive coding process to link back to the key evaluation questions, and an inductive process to ensure additional key findings were captured effectively. The analysis codebook is included in Annex D. This approach ensured that the analysis engaged with the substance and weighting of interviewee responses rather than relying solely on anecdotal feedback and enabled a structure to be imposed on the analysis so that it is representative, clear and accessible for the reader. Qualitative analysis was carried out in MaxQDA.

Lastly, project data was analysed to triangulate findings. The list of project data sources was gathered in communication with PADILEIA consortium staff. The specific documents and data drawn upon for the evaluation are listed in Annex C. All data was disaggregated by location, gender and refugee status where possible to allow for insights into how different students have experienced PADILEIA courses.

Research ethics, risk assessment and quality assurance

It was imperative that the evaluation adhered to a rigorous ethical framework, mitigated risk and followed quality assurance processes. This sub-section outlines the ethical framework guiding the research methods and data collection processes, as well as the risk assessment and planned responses to mitigate risk. The quality assurance processes are also outlined. Additional information about Jigsaw processes are provided in Annex E (Jigsaw Code of Conduct) and Annex F (safeguarding referral process).

The research team is trained on how to obtain informed consent, respond to safeguarding concerns, and to encourage and calm the participants such that they feel able to respond to the interviews freely. Before administering the data collection tools, the research team explained the objectives of the study to participants and how their information would be used. Participants were asked if they would like to participate. It was made clear that participants could choose to end the survey or interview without giving a reason. Basic elements of good research practices were maintained, including remaining objective, offering empathy without advice, and practicing active listening.

While names were collected to track participants, the research team made clear to participants that their name would not be reported and their individual answers would not be disclosed to anyone inside or outside the PADILEIA partnership, unless the person is identified as being at risk of harm. No individual's names are used in the final report and all datasets shared with PADILEIA will be anonymised.

Research ethics framework

Jigsaw Consult seeks to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in the research. The table below details the ethical framework, including the general protocols followed and the risk assessment specific to the project. This ethical risk assessment was considered a living document and was amended and updated throughout the life-cycle of the research, as needed. It was the responsibility of the entire research team to uphold and maintain the ethical standards set out in this framework. It was the responsibility of the Project Manager to follow up on reported incidents of ethical breaches, and to amend and update the risk assessment.

Ethical consideration	Jigsaw protocol	Project details
Consent	Informed, ongoing and voluntary consent is sought from all research participants. Children and adults at risk can	Adults at risk are present within the research sample. It is important to Jigsaw that adequate time is taken to inform

	<p>provide consent where appropriate. Participants are able to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research.</p>	<p>participants of the purpose of the research and how their information will be used before consent is given.</p> <p>To that end, the project is responsible for informing participants of the research before they are contacted by the Jigsaw team. The Jigsaw team will obtain consent before starting the interview, following a script similar to this:</p> <p><i>Hello, my name is XX and I would like to ask for your permission to interview you on behalf of the Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access, also known as PADILEIA.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to ask you some questions about you and your experience of studying in a course run by PADILEIA.</i></p> <p><i>If you choose to take part, the information you tell me will not be shared with your university and will not affect your grades. It is your choice to take part or not. If you choose to take part, you can refuse to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with, and can choose to stop the process at any time. We will record your answers to use them in our research but we will not mention you by name or share your personal details with anybody outside of our team. However, if I believe that you or another person might be at risk, it is my duty to report this to somebody. Do you have any questions? Is that acceptable and do you agree to take part in our evaluation?</i></p> <p>Informed consent will also be sought at the beginning of student surveys and interviews.</p>
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Training	Jigsaw staff are trained in research ethics and current best practice in research. Contracted enumerators are trained in ethics for data collection.	The Jigsaw staff are trained in research ethics and experienced in applying these to remote data collection scenarios. If any external researchers or translators participate in data collection, they will be informed of the ethical considerations.
Data collection tools	Jigsaw uses innovative and project-appropriate data collection methods. Data collection is often participatory. The tools are developed to be inclusive and accessible to all participants. Data collection tools are appropriate to the local context.	Best practice for remote data collection will be incorporated into the tool design. The tools will be sense-checked for the local context by PADILEIA project staff and translated into Arabic where necessary, as this is the language the majority of respondents will be most comfortable using during data collection.
External evaluators and enumerators	Jigsaw regularly works with externally contracted enumerators. The recruitment process ensures that only candidates with the appropriate and relevant expertise are selected. If enumerators are contracted directly, the recruitment process follows all Jigsaw procedures. Where external evaluators are not recruited directly by Jigsaw, the recruitment process of the supplier is reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements of the project.	<p>An external researcher may be subcontracted for translation and data collection services for the evaluation.</p> <p>Jigsaw has a pool of experienced Arabic-speaking researchers it may draw from for the evaluation, including those who have been involved in refugee and/or education research in the MENA region previously.</p>
Data protection	Jigsaw has a comprehensive data protection policy. Data is stored on a secure server, and access is restricted to staff who require it.	Documents which contain personal information about participants e.g. names, date of birth, contact details will be stored securely. Anonymised datasets will be shared with PADILEIA.

Confidentiality and anonymity	<p>All information provided in data collection is treated confidentially and anonymously, except when safeguarding procedures are triggered. Participants are made aware of this exception.</p>	<p>The script for informed consent contains information on confidentiality and anonymity, including the exception for safeguarding (exact wording to be determined during tool development).</p> <p><i>We will record your answers to use them in our research but we will not mention you by name or share your personal details with anybody outside of our team. However, if I believe that you or another person might be at risk, it is my duty to report this to somebody.</i></p>
Location selection	<p>Research is conducted in a location accessible to all participants, including participants with disabilities and people living in hard-to-reach areas.</p> <p>Location selection also considers potential local cultural factors which may impact accessibility, and best practice conducting research with children and adults at risk.</p>	<p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all data collection will be collected remotely over the phone or via video-conferencing software. As such, participants, researchers and translators will not be required to travel to a location for the research.</p>
Responsibility	<p>It is the responsibility of the entire research team to uphold and maintain the ethical standards set out in this framework. This includes the enumerators and supervisors. All members of the research team are required to sign a Code of Conduct. For each project, a member of the evaluation team is assigned overall responsibility for ethics.</p>	<p>The Code of Conduct includes 'dos and don'ts' for behaviour. All Jigsaw staff are committed to upholding the Code of Conduct, and any external researchers who engage on the project will have to sign the Code of Conduct (see Annex A).</p>

Incident reporting	<p>Jigsaw works with its clients to decide on incident reporting pathways for a project. Jigsaw has reporting procedures for safeguarding issues related to children and adults at risk. In case of a breach of ethics, there is a named person on each evaluation team for reporting purposes.</p> <p>Enumerator training includes information on incident reporting procedures, including for a breach of: ethics, the Code of Conduct, and the children and adults at risk safeguarding policy.</p>	<p>In the case of a safeguarding issue, the Jigsaw team will fill out the safeguarding referral form (see Annex B) and send it to Hajera Begum at hajera.begum@kcl.ac.uk (PADILEIA Programme Manager at King's College London) for the project to address.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of Jigsaw to refer any safeguarding issues to PADILEIA, and it is the responsibility of PADILEIA to address the issue appropriately. If the safeguarding issue relates to a breach of the ethical framework committed by the Jigsaw research team, it is the responsibility of Jigsaw to address this internally.</p>
Research dissemination	<p>At a minimum, research participants are informed about the dissemination plan for the research. Jigsaw encourages the dissemination of research findings to its participants.</p>	<p>Jigsaw will produce a short Community Report with an accessible summary of key findings from the evaluation. This will be appropriate to be shared with research participants.</p>

Risk assessment framework

The risk assessment outlined the potential risks that could impact the research. Each risk was accompanied by an assessment of the probability of the risk occurring, the impact on the research should the risk occur, and a suitable mitigation and correction strategy.

Remote data collection due to Covid-19 is a challenging area that researchers are currently facing globally, particularly for those collecting in-depth qualitative data. The research team utilised best current practices for remote data collection (e.g. Ravitch, 2020⁴⁹; 'Doing fieldwork in a pandemic', 2020⁵⁰; etc.) including careful consideration of sampling and data collection risks, as discussed below.

⁴⁹ Ravitch, S. (2020, March 23). The Best Laid Plans... Qualitative Research Design During Covid-19. MethodSpace. <https://www.methodspace.com/the-best-laid-plans-qualitative-research-design-during-covid-19/>

⁵⁰ Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic: Crowdsourced document initiated by Deborah Lupton on 17 March 2020. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfqribHmog9B6PONvMgVuiHZCl8/preview#heading=h.eatymcy9n56>

Risk category	Probability (low / medium / high)	Potential impact (low / medium / high)	Planned mitigation / corrective actions
<p>Harm to research participants - psychological</p> <p>Questions may touch upon some sensitive topics, such as participants' experiences of education during the Covid-19 pandemic, or the recent political and economic turbulence in Lebanon. Some students may also have been affected by the recent violence in Gaza. Speaking about these subjects could potentially be traumatic for participants.</p> <p>As data collection is remote, it will not be possible for researchers to be completely confident that the participant is in a safe location where they can speak freely. This means participants may not feel able to speak freely or be at risk of negative consequences if their answers are overheard by others. It can also be more difficult for researchers to build rapport and trust with participants when conducting research remotely.</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>The informed consent script will be informed by trauma methodology. This includes being upfront about the fact that there might be some difficult questions, and emphasising that there are no right or wrong answers. There will be a particular emphasis at the beginning of interviews on building rapport and trust.</p> <p>Questions will be worded to prevent triggering participants, and researchers are trained in how to ask sensitive questions, e.g. how to react when participants are uncomfortable or upset. Where possible questions will be open-ended and researchers will take care not to probe unnecessarily into sensitive topics. All interviews with students will be conducted in the preferred language of the participant (assumed to be Arabic).</p> <p>Researchers will begin the interview by asking participants to go somewhere they are safe and cannot be overheard. Researchers check that the participant is comfortable before starting the interview. Every effort will be made to schedule interviews around the needs of the</p>

			participants.
Harm to research participants - physical There is low risk to participants of accidents or physical harm during data collection due to remote data collection.	Low	Medium	As all data collection will be conducted remotely, participants will not have to travel to participate in the research or be in the same location as researchers. This also means the participants will not experience additional exposure to Covid-19 as a result of participating in the research.
Harm to researchers - psychological The content of the surveys and qualitative templates does not include many sensitive topics. There is a small risk of psychological harm from stress associated with data collection.	Low	Low	Researchers are aware of good self-care while conducting data collection.
Harm to researchers - physical There is low risk to researchers of accidents or physical harm during data collection due to remote data collection.	Low	Low	There is minimal risk of physical harm to researchers as no travel is involved in data collection.
Change in socio-political context Covid-19 cases are prevalent in the MENA region, especially in Lebanon. Both Jordan and Lebanon have restrictions in place to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, Lebanon is experiencing a political and economic crisis and is recovering from the blast in Beirut in August 2020. There is a risk of socio-political unrest.	Low	Medium	Data collection is taking place in a challenging socio-political context, and researchers will be sensitive to this. As data collection is remote, there is a low risk that a change in the socio-political context will disrupt data collection. However, if there is a worsening of the context the Jigsaw team will discuss the most appropriate course of action with project staff at PADILEIA.
Difficulty contacting research	Medium	High	Researchers will be

<p>participants</p> <p>As many of the research participants are at-risk adults, there is a high likelihood that they are using a shared phone or internet-enabled device. This may lead to difficulty contacting participants. Also, there is a likelihood of poor network coverage and calls dropping during interviews. This is inconvenient for the research participant, who may choose not to participate, and creates additional workload for researchers.</p>			<p>provided with more contact details of respondents than the required sample size to provide a buffer for losing participants due to contact difficulties. Time for scheduling interviews with participants is included in the budget, but if there are widespread issues contacting participants, additional data collection time and costs will be incurred. This may result in reduced sample sizes.</p> <p>PADILEIA partners will contact participants ahead of data collection and will provide them information about the research. This should reduce the risk of incorrect or invalid contact details.</p>
<p>Inconsistencies in data collection</p> <p>The small size of the research team and design of the tools poses a low risk of errors in data and uneven data collection.</p>	Low	High	<p>Data will be collected by a small team of researchers and data checks will be carried out to ensure that there is internal consistency in data collection processes.</p>
<p>Misuse of data</p> <p>Personal details of participants will be collected, including names, DOBs, phone numbers and location information. This could be misused by any of the researchers or a third party.</p>	Low	High	<p>Researchers are trained in the importance of data protection and confidentiality.</p> <p>All datasets shared with PADILEIA will be anonymised and with no identifying information.</p> <p>External researchers will not have access to data after it has been collected and submitted.</p> <p>Jigsaw has a GDPR compliant Data Protection Policy that will be followed</p>

			(this can be shared upon request).
Problems with technology The data collection relies heavily on electronic equipment, such as mobile phones and tablets, which could disrupt data collection if there are technical issues.	Medium	High	The Jigsaw team has access to the appropriate technology to conduct remote data collection. However, research participants may not have reliable access to functioning devices or connectivity, which could negatively impact on their ability to participate in the research.

Quality assurance procedures

Established academic standards of good practice were adhered to throughout the study in relation to informed consent, confidentiality, protection, and research ethics.

The Jigsaw team is trained to a high level, both academically and through practical experience, in social science research methods and qualitative and quantitative data analysis and is accustomed to undertaking participatory research in a range of environments. This level of experience contributed to the quality of the work produced and ensured a high level of rigour throughout the process. Jigsaw approaches all research and evaluation studies as a team, with each member contributing their strengths and collectively developing a stronger output.

In addition to the expertise within the team, all elements of the work benefitted from an agile approach and adaptability to changing requirements and context. Jigsaw utilised co-design sessions throughout to ensure that the activities are fully aligned with the priorities of the programme. Rapid learning cycles ensured that the findings were relevant and that the lessons could be embedded into partnership activities.

Jigsaw's standard operating procedures ensured more than one individual was assigned to each task for collaboration and support, as well as for review and improvement. All work was further reviewed before completion by Jigsaw's Head of Technical and Head of Delivery to ensure it met the high quality standards expected. All draft deliverables were subject to client review and feedback before they are finalised.

Annex C: List of project data sources

The following is a list of the project data sources Jigsaw analysed during the evaluation:

- AABU: PADILEIA students at universities
-
- AABU pre- and post-course test scores:

- Year 4 PreTest_and_PostTest_Results IT_Skills
- Year 4 PreTest_and_PostTest_English_Skills
- IT_and English_PreTest_and_PostTest_ThirdYear-2019-2020
- IT_and English_PreTest_and_PostTest_SecondYear-2018-2019
- AABU: Transportation survey 2020
- Annual Report 2019-20
- FutureLearn: Closed run data
- FutureLearn: Open run data: subject enrolments
- Kiron: Completion rates blended learning cohorts_PADILEIA
- Kiron Metabase
- PADILEIA: Plan of Work and Budget
- PADILEIA Rapid Evaluation, February 2021
- PADILEIA: USPs and Programme Features, v10 June 2021
- Results Framework
- Scholarships graduates at universities - AUB year 1-4

Annex D: Data collection and analysis documentation

The following data collection and analysis tools will be provided as separate documents in the submission email:

- Foundation Course survey questionnaire and anonymised dataset
- Kiron survey questionnaire and anonymised dataset
- KCL/FL MOOCs survey questionnaire and anonymised dataset
- Student KII template
- Delivery team KII template
- Project management staff KII template
- Coding framework

Annex E: Jigsaw Code of Conduct

Note that all Jigsaw researchers adhere to the Code of Conduct and any external researchers will be required to sign this before starting data collection.

The rights, wellbeing and safety of all research participants, especially children and adults at risk, are of paramount importance.

This code of conduct applies to the full study team – including all enumerators, supervisors and Jigsaw Consult staff.

Enumerators and supervisors should:

- Treat all participants equally, as individuals, with dignity, sensitivity and respect, regardless of personal characteristics or beliefs.
- Ensure that research participants are aware of the safeguarding referral process.
- Be inclusive of people with special needs.
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability).
- Listen carefully to what the research participants says, and wants to say.
- Respect each person's boundaries, personal space and privacy.
- Seek informed consent in line with the project requirements.
- Use an open door policy when alone with a research participant.
- Conduct research in a room very close to open areas or rooms where other people are present.
- Report and respond to any concerns, suspicions, incidents or allegations of actual or potential abuse in line with the project's referral pathway.
- Cooperate fully in investigations of abuse.

Enumerators and supervisors should not:

- Carry out their duties whilst under the impact of alcohol or illegal substances.
- Smoke or vape in the presence of research participants.
- Ask for or accept personal contact details or invitations to share personal contact details (this includes email, phone numbers, social media handles, address, Skype), nor provide their personal contact details, except where this has been explicitly authorised by Jigsaw Consult for work purposes.
- Use language or behaviour of a sexual, suggestive or inappropriate nature.
- Take photos of the research participants.
- Physically punish or verbally abuse a research participant, or act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Use sarcasm, discrimination, negative criticism, or labelling.
- Have physical contact with research participants.
- Disclose, or support the disclosure of, information that identifies research participants.

The above is not an exhaustive list. All members of a research team should consider related actions and behaviour which may compromise the rights and safeguarding of participants. Actions that are taken outside of work hours which contradict the above will be considered a violation of this policy.

I confirm that I have read and understood Jigsaw Consult's code of conduct for research. I understand that a breach of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action, including possible termination of my contract.

Date	Printed name	Signature

Annex F: Safeguarding referral process

Note: This form will be filled out and sent to Hajera Begum (hajera.begum@kcl.ac.uk) in the event of a safeguarding concern arising during data collection. Keep Bethany Sikes (Jigsaw Project Manager) in copy (b.sikes@jigsawconsult.com).

Part 1: Background

Your name	
Your role	
Date	
Name of person involved	
University or course of person involved	
Is the person a child? (aged 17 or under)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the person have a disability? (If yes, please state)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Gender of person	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other/prefer not to say
Are you:	<input type="checkbox"/> A. Recording my own concerns (no disclosure made) (Go to Part 2) <input type="checkbox"/> B. Responding to a disclosure made by the person (Go to Part 3) <input type="checkbox"/> C. Responding to a concern raised by someone else (such as a instructor, project staff, student or another researcher) (Go to Part 4) If C, who raised this concern (name and position):

Part 2: Recording my own concerns (if no disclosure has been made, often when concerning behaviour is witnessed)

What I saw or heard and why I am concerned	
When did the incident take place? Include month or date, and time of day if possible	
Has the person shared their concerns with anyone else?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes → What actions were taken? <input type="checkbox"/> No → Why was no one told? NB this is a very sensitive question and it needs to be asked very carefully.
If reporting an incident about another student or teacher: Does the student currently go to this university / course?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No → Where is the student now?
Do you feel that the child or young person is still at risk?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes:..... Now go to Part 5

Part 3: Responding to a disclosure made by someone

<p>Person's account of the incident:</p> <p>Ask the person to describe what happened and record their own words</p> <p>Do not ask any leading questions - simply, is there anything else you would like to say about this?</p>	
<p>When did the incident take place?</p> <p>Include month or date, and time of day if possible</p>	
<p>Has the person shared their concerns with anyone else?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes → What actions were taken?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No → Why was no one told? NB this is a very sensitive question and it needs to be asked very carefully.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If reporting an incident about another student or teacher:</p> <p>Does the student currently go to this university / course?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No → Where is the student or teacher now?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Do you feel that the person is still at risk?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Notes:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Now go to Part 5</p>

Part 4: Responding to a concern raised by someone else

Third party's account of the incident:

Ask the third party to describe their concerns in their own words.

Do not ask any leading questions - simply, is there anything else you would like to say about this?

When did the incident take place?

Include month or date, and time of day if possible

Has the third party shared their concerns with anyone else?

☐ Yes → What actions were taken?

.....
.....

☐ No → Why was no one told? NB this is a very sensitive question (can easily imply blame) and it needs to be asked very carefully.

.....
.....

If reporting an incident about another student or teacher:

☐ Yes

☐ No → Where is the student or teacher now?

Does the teacher or student currently teach at/go to this university / course?

.....
.....

Do you feel that the person is still at risk?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Notes:.....

	<p>.....</p> <p>Now go to Part 5</p>
--	--------------------------------------

Part 5: Signature

Your signature

Print name

Submit the form to Hajera Begum at hajera.begum@kcl.ac.uk with Bethany sikes (b.sikes@jigsawconsult.com) in copy. Thank you.