UNCOVERING RISKS DURING COMPOUNDED CRISES IN LEBANON:

Findings from an Education Risk Analysis

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Presenters:

Paulette Assaf, Chief of Party, RTI International

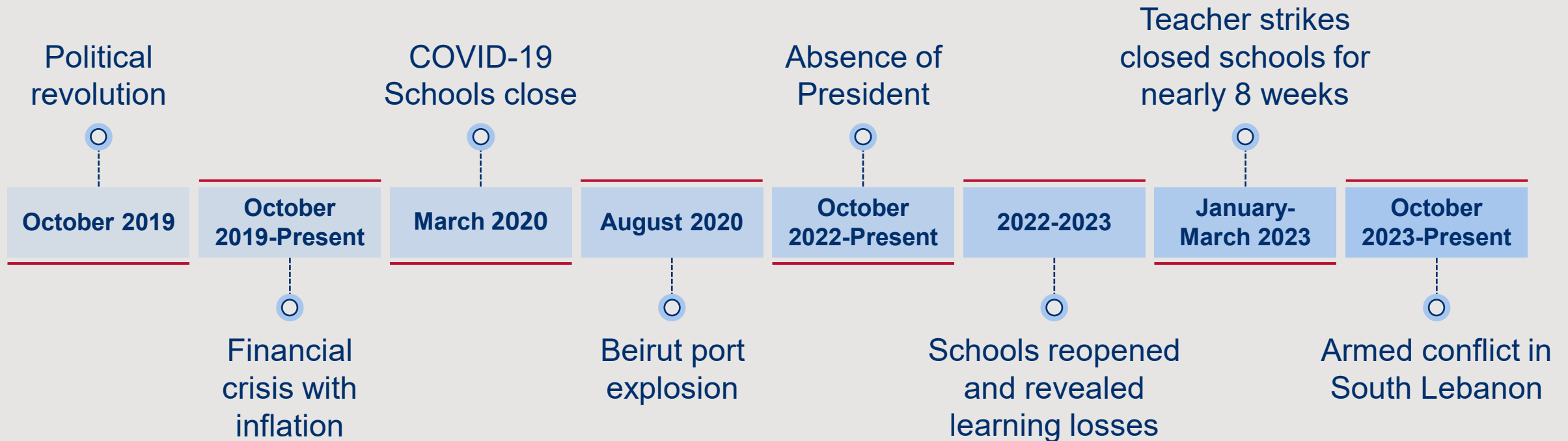Rajani Shrestha, Senior Education Specialist, RTI International

All Photos in this PPT by QITABI 2

Outline

- Context
- State of Education
- Research Method
- Conceptual Framework
- Findings and Risk Sources

Context: Compounded Crises: 2019-2024

Political revolution

October 2019

Financial crisis with inflation

October 2019-Present

COVID-19 Schools close

March 2020

Beirut port explosion

August 2020

Absence of President

October 2022-Present

Schools reopened and revealed learning losses

2022-2023

Teacher strikes closed schools for nearly 8 weeks

January-March 2023

Armed conflict in South Lebanon

October 2023-Present
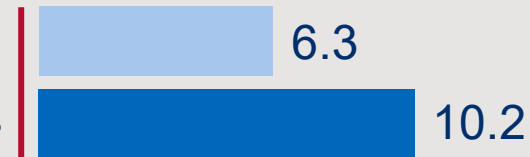
State of Education

- **270** days of in-person teaching compared with the **600** days – across 4 typical academic years.

  270

  600
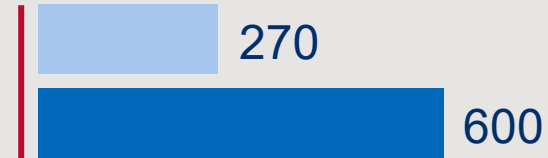
- Reading comprehension scores of only **2.8** percent of grade 2 students, in 2022 compared to **11.0** percent in April-May 2018.

  2.8%

  11.0%
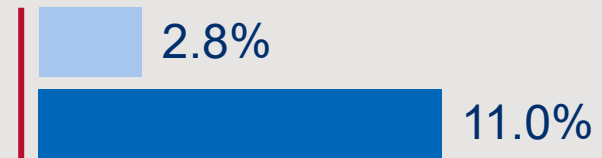
- Average of only **6.3** learning adjusted years of schooling – pre-COVID an average of **10.2** years of schooling.

  6.3

  10.2

Research Questions

What crises have amplified or introduced education stakeholder' vulnerabilities to marginalization?

What consequences have crises had on provisions of access to and availability of quality education?

How have actors and stakeholders responded to crises to mitigate risks of marginalizing learners and other vulnerable stakeholders?
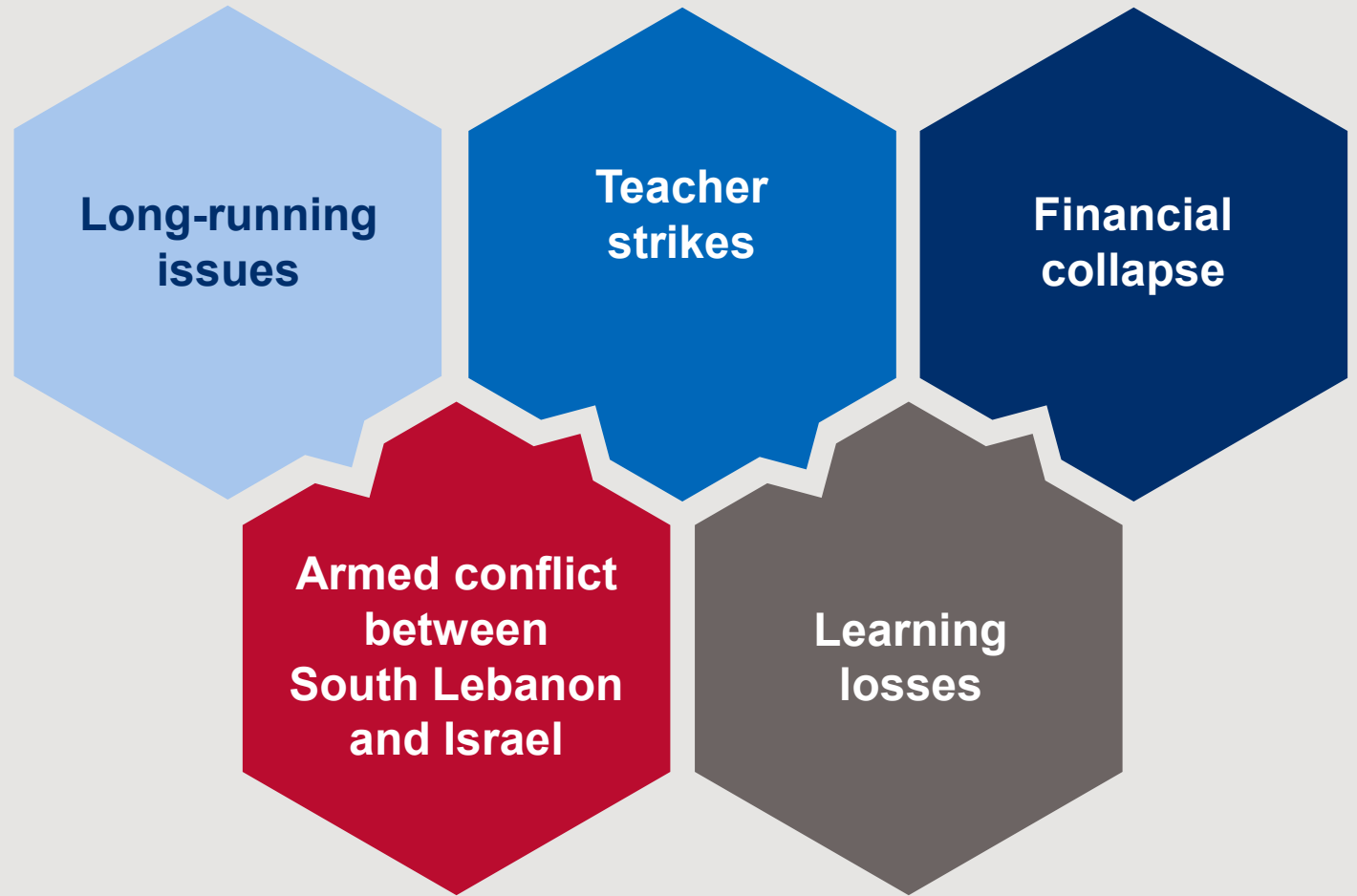
Methodology - Qualitative Approach

Public Schools	Seven schools in five geographic locations, including a school in the South that is closed	▪ Interviews with school principals ▪ Interviews with teachers ▪ Small discussions with students
Low-Cost Private Schools	Five schools in five geographic locations	▪ Interviews with school principals ▪ Interviews with teachers ▪ Small discussions with students
Non-Formal Education Organizations	Five organizations in five geographic locations	▪ Interviews with facility supervisor ▪ Interviews with teachers ▪ Small discussions with students
Education Sector Representatives	MEHE and CERD Personnel	▪ Key Informant Interviews with Ministry of Education and Higher Education Staff ▪ Key Informant Interviews with Center for Education Research and Development Staff
Inputs of Community	Caregivers in five geographic locations	▪ Focus Group Discussions with caregivers in each of the five geographic locations
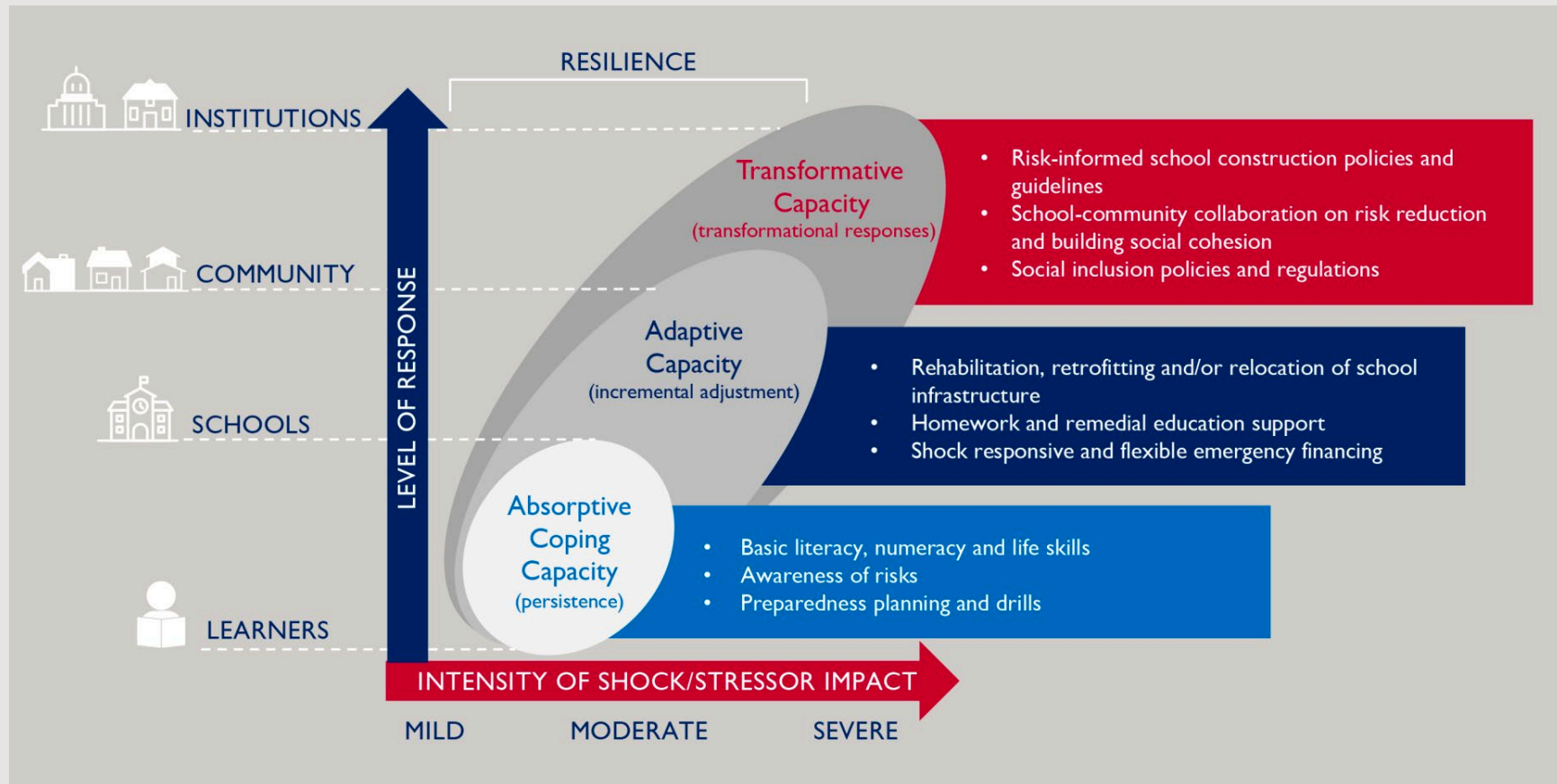
Resilience Framework

Shah (2019) adapted from Béné, Heady et al. (2016)

Stressors and Shocks:

Identifying Crises and Vulnerable Stakeholders

Long-running issues

Teacher strikes

Financial collapse

Armed conflict between South Lebanon and Israel

Learning losses

Long-Running Issues

Issues and Consequences

- Overburdened and underfunded
- Poor quality teaching and learning
- Inadequate learning environment
- Data either unavailable or inaccessible
- Violence and bullying

Responses

- Curriculum reform
- Recruitment of specialists through donor support
- Interactive teaching and learning materials (digitized content)
- Efforts to align information management systems across ministry units

"Whether they learn or not, the teacher keeps going"
(parent)

"…assigning us huge paragraphs to memorize overnight"
(student)

Financial Collapse

Consequences

- Children moving from private schooling to public schooling
- Teachers went into poverty earning between 50-100 USD/month
- Loss of motivation to work across the board
- High acute food insecurity
- Transportation becoming the biggest barrier to accessing education

Responses

- Community-level response – free transportation for children
- Teacher workdays reduced to 4/week
- Humanitarian response from development projects (food parcels)
- Educational boxes for students with non-perishable items

"Sometimes I can't send extra food anymore" (parent)

"We take our problems to work" (teacher)

Teacher Strikes

Consequences

- Education not only inaccessible but unavailable altogether
- Learning loss
- Increased vulnerabilities to drop out

Responses

- Salary formula: 7-fold (300 USD) + social support (300 USD)
- Social support loan from Central Bank: No strategy to repay
- Parents supporting learning at home
- Community support and funding in some schools

"The kids were bored. They stayed home and did nothing. Sometimes, I got them to copy something, but that was it" (parent)

"We didn't study anything" (student)

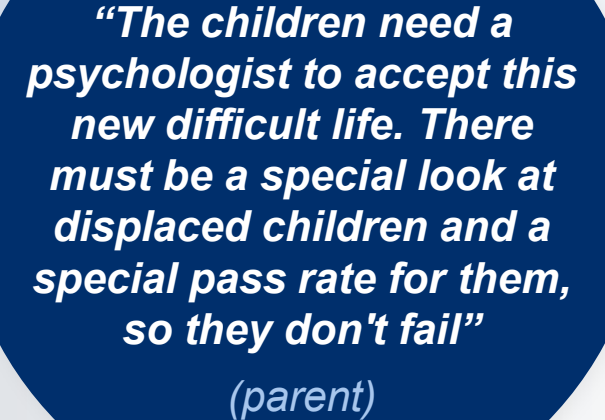*"There was no support from anyone"* (parents, students)

Armed Conflict

Consequences

- Closure of 44 public schools
- Forced migration for families
- Toll on mental health for parents and children
- NGOs closing programs
- Bullying in new schools

Responses

- MEHE emergency response plan (limited dissemination)
- Circular to schools to enroll displaced students
- Adapting official exams for displaced students
- Distribution of tablets for online learning

"The children need a psychologist to accept this new difficult life. There must be a special look at displaced children and a special pass rate for them, so they don't fail"

(parent)

Learning Loss

Consequences

- Stress to the system
- Lasting negative effect on student performance
- Impact on social skills due to limited interaction
- Increased dropout – student enrollment dropped from 63%

In AY 2020-21 to 43% in AY 2021-22 (UNICEF)

Responses

- National Learning Recovery (cycle 1 and 2)
- Summer remediation and catch-up programming
- Focus on social emotional learning
- Teacher well-being
- Hiring tutors (student)

"Since the time of COVID and online education, they have been experiencing educational delays, and this weakness continues until now." (parent)
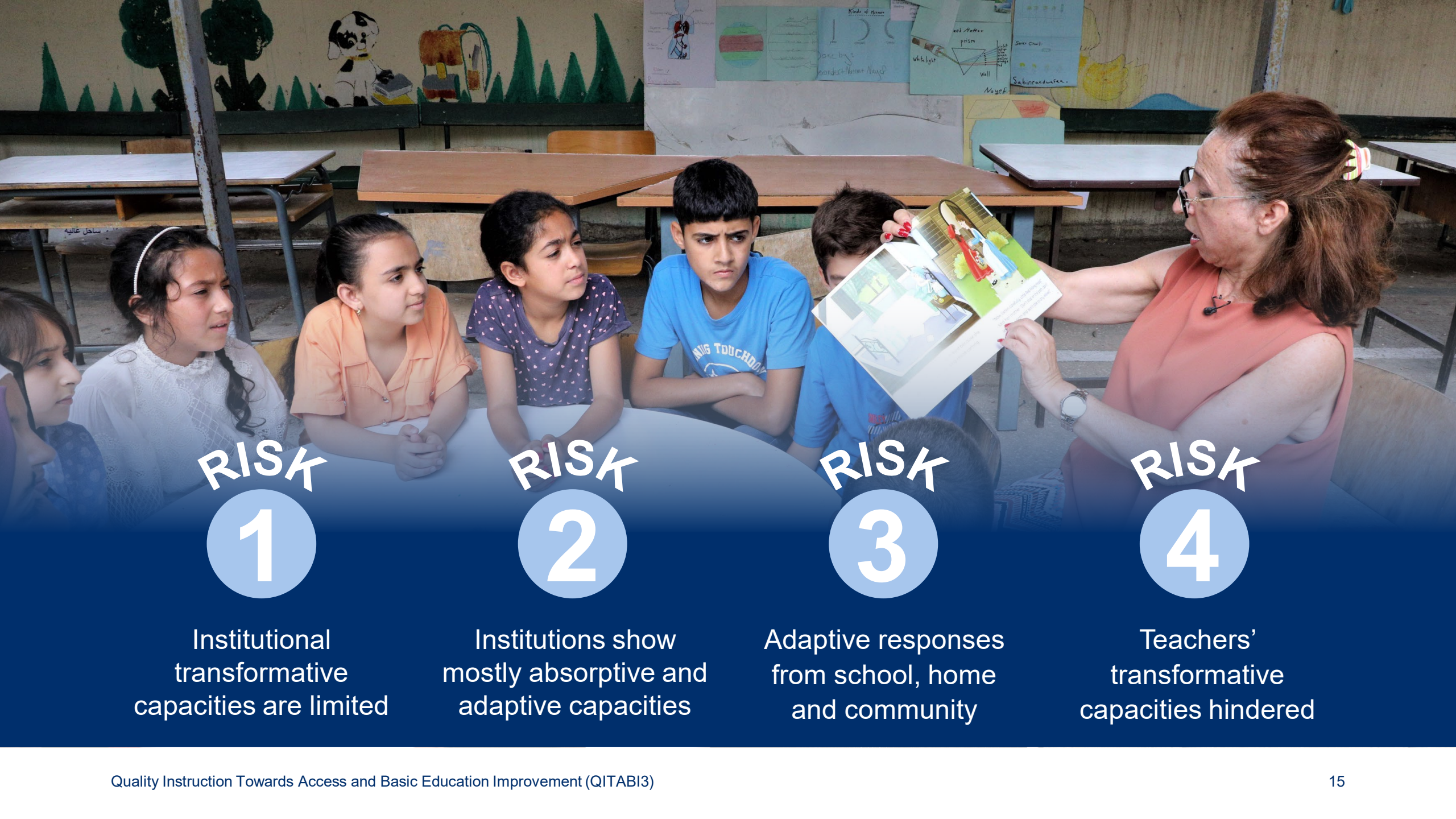
"[We were] very behind in everything" (student)

"Circumstances delayed us from enrolling the children" (parent)

Risks to Resilience

Responses and the capacities to respond illustrate risks of **weakening the resilience** of an education system.

RISK
1
Institutional transformative capacities are limited

RISK
2
Institutions show mostly absorptive and adaptive capacities

RISK
3
Adaptive responses from school, home and community

RISK
4
Teachers' transformative capacities hindered

Thank You!

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Learn more about RTI's work in International Education:

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