



# SITUATION ANALYSIS OF YOUTH IN LEBANON AFFECTED BY THE SYRIAN CRISIS

APRIL 2014



## FOREWORD

The Syrian crisis entered its fourth year in 2014. Nearly 2.2 million refugees had been registered in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey by the end of 2013 - without including non-registered Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. With the continuing violence and insecurity in Syria, the number of refugees in the region is expected to reach over 4 million by the end of 2014.

Assessments have shown that this massive influx of refugees from Syria has affected the neighbouring countries on various levels; economic, social, political and as regards security.

In Lebanon alone, the registered number of Syrian refugees reached 1,030,413 persons by end-May 2014, with youth aged 15-24 years constituting approximately 16 per cent.

The impact of the humanitarian situation on affected adolescents and youth in Lebanon has not been documented or broadly addressed due to limitations on funding and capacity.

In a humanitarian context, both children - particularly unaccompanied children or those separated from their families - as well as adolescents and youth, especially young females, are among the most vulnerable. It is well documented globally, including in Lebanon, that humanitarian responses to a great extent focus on children below age 18 years, while adolescents and youth, however, are considered to be more resilient and, thus, of a lesser priority.

This study illustrates how youth are greatly affected by the crisis in various ways, especially when displaced from their homes. Challenges include separation from social and community networks, including family; discontinuation of formal and non-formal education; loss of livelihood; lack of, or weakened security and protection mechanisms and networks; disruption of, or decreased access to health services; adaptation to a new environment; and increase in daily free time - all of which may pose a risk for youth in the long run.

Adolescents and youth also have particular experiences within a humanitarian context. They sometimes feel humiliated from becoming dependent on external assistance. They experience being under extra pressure, especially female youth, to abide by traditional norms and roles, to marry early and be confined within the home. Feelings of fear, sadness, anger, idleness, boredom, despondency and pessimism, loss of control, frustration, imprisonment and discrimination arise, consequently affecting the psychosocial health and other conditions of youth.

The humanitarian setting exacerbates basic needs for social services, among others. Without access to such services, youth vulnerability to poverty and violence increases, including sexual violence and sexual abuse and exploitation. It obliges youth to assume the role of adults at an early age without being prepared for this, in the absence of positive adult role models or support networks. Sometimes, this leads to risky behaviour, including criminal activities, survival sex, unsafe sexual relationships, violence and substance use. For economic and protection reasons, some might drop out of school to work, enter into early or child marriage in return for food, protection and/or shelter to support themselves and their family.

The results of this situation analysis confirm the above-mentioned vulnerabilities and risks. The findings

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

determine the need to collectively address youth affected by the Syrian crisis across sectors; more precisely, shelter, education, livelihood, health, protection and social cohesion.

There are several dimensions that must be taken into consideration by humanitarian actors to enable the affected youth population - i.e. Syrian refugees aged 15-24, as well as youth in host communities - to live with dignity, fulfil their potentials and empower themselves in becoming 'positive-change agents'.

First - and while one cannot underestimate the many efforts deployed so far by various humanitarian actors - the strengthening and scaling-up of these successful interventions are priorities.

Second, multisectoral comprehensiveness of approaches is another essential aspect that must be adequately addressed by humanitarian relief agencies.

Last, but not least, coordination and partnership constitute one fundamental element that is necessary for ensuring synergy and complementarity.

As humanitarian agencies with a mandate to support the efforts of the Lebanese government in responding to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon, we are committed to continue addressing the needs of youth using a fully participatory approach, and applying a human rights-based approach and a culture lens in alignment with the Regional Response Plan, while building on the wealth of information generated by this landmark situation analysis.

**Situation Analysis of Youth in Lebanon Affected by the Syrian Crisis 2014** is the product of a seven-month collaboration between the research team, concerned international organizations and civil society organizations and members, on the one hand; and Syrian refugees, especially refugee youth, as well as Lebanese host communities, including youth, on the other.

This research would have not been possible without the field support of numerous individuals and organizations, including: Rowaida Ismail, Hiba Hamzi and Yasser Daoud of Development Action without Borders (Naba'a); Rami Shamma of Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA); Ward El-Hamwi and Ashraf Alhafny of Ward Team Psychosocial Support Program; Nael Bitari and Alaa Al-Ghazal of Sawa4Syria; the Lebanese Red Cross; Amel Association; and also Ali Waked, Kamal Shayya, Mohammad Deeb, Murad Ayyash, Mustapah el-ljel, Sara Abu Ghazal and Rabih Dandashli. The research team is also grateful for the patience and collaboration of members of organizations who agreed to be interviewed, as well as of participating Lebanese youth, Syrian refugee youth and their respective families.

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## UNESCO

As part of its response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, UNESCO has enhanced the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and partners through provision of training in quality “Education in Emergencies”. In this respect, the organization has been involved in data collection and analysis and in the training of over 200 trainers, school directors and partners across Lebanon. UNESCO also has developed accelerated-learning modules to assist out-of-school children to catch up and facilitate their reintegration into education, as well as provided training to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in that area. Moreover, UNESCO has been promoting freedom of expression and enabling access to information for Syrian refugees, mainly youth and females. In Lebanon, UNESCO provides youth with both access to information and a platform for free expression through the creation of school libraries, computer labs, and youth multimedia centres.

UNESCO is also working on peace-education activities for Syrian and Lebanese youth together with national partners - by promoting “Culture of Living Together among Youth” through workshops and training on radio editing, broadcasting and humanitarian reporting, as well as youth camps - in order to promote social cohesion between Syrian and Lebanese youth.

## UNFPA

In times of upheaval, pregnancy-related deaths and sexual violence soar. Reproductive-health (RH) services - including prenatal care, assisted delivery and emergency obstetric care - often become unavailable. Youth become more vulnerable to HIV infection and sexual exploitation, and many females lose access to family-planning services, exposing them to unwanted pregnancy in perilous conditions. During emergencies, UNFPA turns to protect RH of communities in crisis - mainly focusing on RH services, sexual violence, emergency obstetric care, HIV infections, family-planning services and data-collection activities - to provide detailed information for planning and rapid health assessments to allow for appropriate, effective and efficient relief.

UNFPA-Lebanon country office started its response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis early 2012 with a focus on RH and gender-based violence (GBV), targeting mostly youth and females. UNFPA is the lead agency for the RH inter-agency working group and is the co-lead agency for the GBV inter-agency working group.

Specifically, the response of UNFPA to the crisis in addressing youth needs aims to enable them to live their RH rights through the following action lines:

- a) Improve access to, and quality of comprehensive youth-friendly sexual and RH services, including sexually-transmitted infections/HIV services, through capacity development of

health - and social-care providers and the expansion of such comprehensive services nationwide, as well as establishing of youth safe spaces.

- b) Create and maintain an enabling environment in society and communities in relation to the demand for youth sexual and RH services through awareness-raising campaigns for young people.
- c) Empower young people in general - and young females in particular - to access humanitarian assistance, fully participate in peacebuilding and recovery, and engage as equal partners in development through the establishing and strengthening of safe spaces/ shelters for females to provide access to GBV response services, psychosocial support care and information, as well as the integration of livelihoods and economic empowerment activities for young people, including Syrian refugees and local communities, using recreational and interactive approaches.
- d) Reinforce positive social norms, attitudes and behaviour, and mitigate harmful practices by engaging media in support of GBV prevention/response at different levels, and promoting a culture of peace, resilience, social cohesion and tolerance using peer-to-peer approach among young people.
- e) Contribute to strengthening the political, legal and institutional will and capacity for effective GBV prevention, protection and response targeting young people; and - through continuous support to, and institutionalization of the roll-out of GBV standard operational procedures nationwide and in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, mainly the police force - enhance response to GBV in Lebanon, including in humanitarian settings.
- f) Reinforce the accessibility of young GBV survivors, both female and male, to safe, adequate, appropriate and comprehensive services through capacity development of service providers in addressing and dealing with GBV, and continuous provision of services addressing response and prevention of GBV.

To carry out these programmes and services, UNFPA partners with various such governmental and non-governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health, local and international NGOs and academic institutions, as well as with other United Nations agencies.

## UNHCR

UNHCR has established and sustained strategic engagement with refugees and host communities to empower and enhance the protection of refugees in Lebanon. Refugees, including youth, benefit from UNHCR programmes covering registration, documentation, protection and humanitarian assistance. In addition, UNHCR interventions targeting youth aim at addressing protection from violence, abuse and exploitation; economic empowerment; and the mitigation of risky behaviour and the adapting of healthy practices. Programmes on social cohesion, peaceful co-existence and promotion of resilience

among youth have been established to engage youth as 'agents of change' in their communities. UNHCR youth programmes in Lebanon are implemented in coordination with the government and implementing partners.

Major lines of actions of UNHCR to respond to youth concerns are as follows:

- a) Provide psychosocial counselling services for youth and their families through specialized organizations.
- b) Facilitate access to formal and non-formal education opportunities for youth in existing institutions, including support to youth aged 15-24 years enrolled in certified training programmes through local vocational-training institutions and community centres.
- c) Enhance access to livelihood opportunities through life-skills and vocational training to equip youth with knowledge and skills which contribute to mitigate the risks of exposure to abuse and exploitation.
- d) Promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities. UNHCR supports such projects as sports for peace and development to bring together Lebanese and Syrians. Youth across the country are trained on pedagogy, team building and leadership, as well as positive communication skills and tolerance.
- e) Support community centres to offer remedial classes and to become venues for socializing, learning and recreational activities, including music, drawing, art and sporting events, and also provide information and services relating to youth and adolescent reproductive health .
- f) Support outreach youth volunteers to identify community-based protection issues that are specific to youth and encourage youth mobilization in various activities.

## UNICEF

The strategic aim of the "Adolescent Programme" at UNICEF-Lebanon within the Syrian humanitarian crisis is to ensure that Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian adolescents aged 10-19 years have the abilities, skills, values and experience to perform the following:

- a) interact positively together for better social cohesion;
- b) protect themselves from violence, abuse and exploitation;
- c) become economically independent by the time they transit to adulthood;
- d) avoid risky behavior and adopt healthy practices, and
- e) participate positively in their community and family to become "actors of change".

The "Adolescent Programme" is prioritizing this age group from an education, protection, health, hygiene and economy angle - both in emergency and developmental perspectives, as well as in terms of social cohesion and stability - based on the children's rights. Programme services are provided to

the target population with the following aims:

- a) Ensuring access to formal and non-formal education opportunities for adolescents, both female and male, aged 10-18 years; and access to basic education opportunities through quality education, English-language sessions, numeracy, literacy, gender, life skills, and health and hygiene promotion.
- b) Ensuring access to basic life-skills services and opportunities towards personal empowerment through employability; civic engagement and conflict management; protection, psychosocial support and GBV; and health, RH and hygiene.
- c) Ensuring participatory engagement of adolescents, both female and male, through the provision of such programmes as sports for promoting self-esteem and social integration, and peer education to train peer educators as ‘agents of change’.
- d) Providing institutional support to the partner government counterparts and civil society through research and data analysis of the situation of adolescents in light of the Syrian humanitarian crisis, and capacity-building for sustainability and policy strengthening for stabilization.

To deliver the above programmes, UNICEF-Lebanon is collaborating with other United Nations agencies and a number of governmental and non-governmental partners, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Public Health, as well as municipalities and a range of NGOs.

## SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

Save the Children Lebanon is providing an integrated range of activities and services for vulnerable adolescents and youth from host and refugee communities which respond to their immediate needs, as well as building long-term skills and capacities to enable them to grow and develop positively and productively.

The overall strategy of SCI programming builds on a rights-based approach, ensuring that adolescents and youth become “empowered to act on their own behalf and enjoy their human rights as they gain access to relevant information, skills and opportunities”<sup>1</sup>, with a focus on the following priority areas of adolescents and youth to enable them to:

- a) participate in decisions that affect their lives;<sup>2</sup>
- b) develop capacities through “Life Skills-Based Education”<sup>3</sup> and access to formal or non-formal education;<sup>4</sup>
- c) acquire age-appropriate access to a range of services and opportunities to enhance their employability skills;<sup>5</sup>
- d) be able to live and learn in safe, healthy and supportive environments, with access to

appropriate health- care information and options;<sup>6</sup> and  
e) be protected from exploitation and abuse.

With a current focus on the Bekaa, Akkar, Tripoli, Greater Beirut, Mount Lebanon and the South, and building on consultations with young people and community members, some SCI core services and activities for youth include the following:

- a) psychosocial support, including recreational, social and life-skills activities and peer-to-peer support sessions;
- b) adolescent and sexual and RH and hygiene awareness sessions;
- c) youth-led community projects contributing to enhancing the communities in which youth live and promoting social cohesion, as well as building key life and livelihood skills;
- d) facilitation of access to formal and non-formal education for youth, including life skills, employability skills, financial literacy, vocational skills, English-language and information-technology (IT) skills; and
- e) improved access to livelihoods opportunities through vocational skills-building, life-skills development and mentoring designed to support a protective and age-appropriate transition from childhood to adulthood.

To ensure the sustainability and relevance of such programmes, building collaborative relationships with government partners, municipalities, community members and leaders, and other NGOs is crucial. Similarly, an important contributor is the increased emphasis on training and supporting youth as peer facilitators and educators to deliver activities and services within their own communities.

<sup>1</sup>UNFPA. Putting Rights into Practice: Supporting Adolescents and Youth. Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/youth.htm>.

<sup>2</sup>UNCRC. Article 12: Respect for the views of the child.

<sup>3</sup>As defined by WHO: “Abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. Available at: [http://www.who.int/school\\_youth\\_health/media/en/sch\\_skills4health\\_03.pdf](http://www.who.int/school_youth_health/media/en/sch_skills4health_03.pdf).

<sup>4</sup>UNCRC. Article 28: Right to education; and Article 29: Goals of education.

<sup>5</sup>UNCRC. Article 32: Child labour.

<sup>6</sup>UNCRC. Article 6: Survival and development; Article 19: Protection from all forms of violence; Article 36: Other forms of exploitation.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AIDS</b>	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
<b>CAS</b>	Central Administration of Statistics
<b>DMI</b>	Development Management International
<b>DPNA</b>	Development for People and Nature Association
<b>EMMA</b>	Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Certification of Education
<b>IT</b>	information technology
<b>ITS</b>	informal tented settlement
<b>IUD</b>	intrauterine device
<b>LBP</b>	Lebanese pound
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>RAS</b>	Regional Analysis of the Syrian Conflict
<b>RH</b>	reproductive health
<b>RRP</b>	Regional Response Plan
<b>SCI</b>	Save the Children International
<b>SEA</b>	sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SRH</b>	sexual and reproductive health
<b>STI</b>	sexually transmitted infection
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Educational Training
<b>UIS</b>	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNEVOC</b>	United Nations International Project on Technical and Vocational Education
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USD</b>	United States dollar
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	United Nations World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WRC</b>	Women's Refugee Commission

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes findings from a multisectoral assessment of the situation of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon in the age bracket 15-24 years and their relationship with Lebanese host communities. The assessment took place between August 2013 and January 2014 and covered youth all over Lebanon. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used, including a questionnaire covering a randomly-selected sample of 985 Syrian refugee youth, focus groups covering 218 Syrian and Lebanese youth, and 53 interviews with parents, service providers and key Lebanese and Syrian stakeholders.

In brief, the situation Syrian refugee youth are living in is impacting their personal lives and aspirations and could have long-term and profound negative impact on their future. They are entrapped by unemployment and limited opportunities to continue their education, and are vulnerable to exploitation and harassment. Almost 40 per cent of male youths are not in education and are looking for work; thus, they are exposed to risks associated with this idle situation, making them vulnerable to involvement in illegal, extremist and violent activities. Nearly one third of female youths are outside education, though they were studying in Syria. They have no other social or cultural avenues, and often are having restricted mobility. The refugee youth live in fear and insecurity, amidst tense relations with the Lebanese. At least half have never felt secure in Lebanon, and 41 per cent say they often or sometimes have contemplated suicide.

This large influx of Syrian refugees is a significant burden on the infrastructure and resources of the host country as the ratio constitutes approximately one refugee to every four Lebanese citizens<sup>7</sup>. Provision of support - whether in education, health, shelter or otherwise - for such a large refugee population with numbers increasing rapidly is no easy endeavour for the Lebanese authorities and the international community, and is made more difficult by internal political complexities and conflicts in Lebanon itself.

<sup>7</sup>The total number of registered refugees as of 31 March 2014 was 945,922, according to UNHCR.

## A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### SHELTER

Surveyed Syrian families have been in Lebanon for an average of 16 months, and 86 per cent entered through border crossings. They have come to Lebanon because of the deteriorating security situation in general, or out of fear of direct violence against them or members of their family, and have chosen to live in areas with which they are familiar, or where they have relatives and/or acquaintances.

Families depend on both wages from work and aid; the former constituting over half the household income, and the latter 44 per cent. The biggest household expenditure is on rent, on average accounting for 31 per cent of the household budget - an expense that 85 per cent of families have the burden of paying.

Out of the total Syrian refugee youth population, the ratio of females is significantly larger than that of males, especially in the age group 19-24 years. Slightly under half, or 46 per cent of female refugee youths are, or have been married; compared to only 11 per cent of male refugee youth. Just over one out of five, or the equivalent of 22 per cent of the Syrian youth surveyed have children. Around one third, or 30 per cent live in makeshift accommodation. Most stay in crowded dwellings, with an average eight residents in each unit, and where basic facilities often are unavailable; including no bathroom (24 per cent), no kitchen (21 per cent) and no heating (72 per cent).

### EDUCATION

A small minority of just 6 per cent of Syrian refugees aged 15-24 years are enrolled in education in Lebanon, constituting merely 16 per cent of the surveyed youth who used to study in Syria. The findings show that one third of those formerly studying in Syria have dropped out of education in Lebanon; the remainder, or just over 60 per cent had already done so in Syria. The age group 15-18 years is the most affected; 51 per cent among male and 44 per cent of young female refugee youths in that age bracket had been enrolled in formal education in Syria, but have dropped out since arriving in Lebanon.

A minority tried to enrol in schools in Lebanon, but have dropped out mainly due to cost of education and difficulty in meeting their own financial needs; and because of incompatibility of the school curriculum in Lebanon as compared to the syllabus used in Syria, as well as cost of transportation. Certification is another de-motivating hurdle. When asked for suggestions to facilitate reintegration into education, more than half of all surveyed refugee youth suggested adopting the Syrian curriculum in schools for refugees in Lebanon.

School enrolment rates were the highest in the North, where a number of local organizations and educational institutions have absorption capacity and are targeting enrolment of Syrian youth. Still, most of those enrolled across Lebanon are studying in public schools, accounting for 40 per cent, and among them over 65 per cent reported facing education-related difficulties.

## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Close to half the surveyed Syrian refugee youth are economically active, meaning they are either working or looking for work; yet, 50 per cent among them in fact are unemployed. The economically inactive constitute over half the sample youth population, with a female majority of as high as 86 per cent.

The vast majority of refugee youth in the workforce are either employees or casual labourers. Most youth workers have school education. The increased supply of Syrian refugees in the semi-skilled and unskilled labour market facilitates their exploitation.

Almost two thirds of those in employment are not satisfied with working conditions, primarily because of low wages. On average, workers get a monthly pay of around LBP 379,000, which is 44 per cent less than the minimum wage in Lebanon. The average monthly pay of females is 30 per cent lower than that of males. Often Syrian youth workers are willing to take on any work available due to their dire need.

Over 60 per cent of the unemployed are first-time job seekers. Due to high unemployment, 90 per cent of refugee youth searching for work are willing to take low-paid jobs. Unemployment among the Syrian refugee youth is affecting negatively their psychological status and their propensity to violence, as well as gender relations within households. The total pool of the unemployed consists of 72 per cent males and 28 per cent females. Over 80 per cent of the unemployed have school education, and 11 per cent have university education.

## HEALTH

Though often inaccessible due to cost, health services are available within a 30-minute walking distance for 96 per cent of the surveyed refugee youth. This is true also of pregnancy- and childbirth-related services. Use of contraception is not accepted by 39 per cent of Syrian refugee youth, and both female and male youth exhibit little knowledge of reproductive-health issues. Only 45 per cent state that they know about contraceptive methods, although knowledge of sexually-transmitted infections and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is more widespread. In terms of attitudes, only a small percentage of youth approved or practised sexual relationships outside marriage. Childbearing is a valued and necessary achievement, and 46 per cent of married youth intended to have children at the time of the survey, particularly among the younger age group.

## PROTECTION

On the psychosocial level, Syrian refugee youth and their families are trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of violence that is hard to break or escape from. Refugee youth are living in psychological

distress, with 41 per cent often or sometimes having thought of ending their own life - a percentage that is even higher among female youth. Tension in the family has increased, as stated by 62 per cent of the youth surveyed, and over half reported feeling insecure in Lebanon (figure 1).

Early marriage is prevalent at rates higher than the averages in Syria before the humanitarian crisis erupted; with 18 per cent of surveyed female youth aged 15-18 years being married. It is an accepted practice by both young refugees and their families if appropriate marriage opportunities arise and used by both as a coping strategy to current conditions.

Sexual harassment is also prevalent, mostly by men who control resources which females depend on for their livelihood - be it aid or income from work. As a result, female refugee youth bear double the burden as restriction on their mobility, in the name of protection, increases.

The state of displacement also has a profound impact on the daily life of youth, with over 70 per cent reporting lowered standard of personal care and hygiene, fewer number of meals and poorer quality food consumed, and decreased communication with friends and fewer opportunities to socialize and go out.

## SOCIAL COHESION

Historical, political, economic and demographic factors shape the relationship between Syrian refugee and Lebanese host. The dynamic repercussions of the Syrian humanitarian crisis on Lebanon - manifested in a massive and continuous refugee influx and an extended stay - have turned the willingness to help into resentment. Having a shared political affinity and/or religion has not changed much the attitude of Lebanese towards the Syrian refugee population.

Over half of Syrian refugee youth feel unsafe in Lebanon because of fear of harassment or indictment. Main drivers behind insecurity are the measures applied by local authorities, municipalities or political parties in restricting mobility and indicting some refugee youth. Under such conditions, they try to keep a low profile. Two thirds of refugee youth do not have Lebanese friends and, among those who do, such friendships often are based on superficial relations.

Syrian refugee youths believe that the attitude of the Lebanese towards them is both positive and negative. They regard the negative attitude as more prevalent and being due to deteriorating economic conditions in Lebanon, especially with regard to employment. In contrast, Lebanese youth express prejudice against their Syrian counterparts and harbour fear of them.

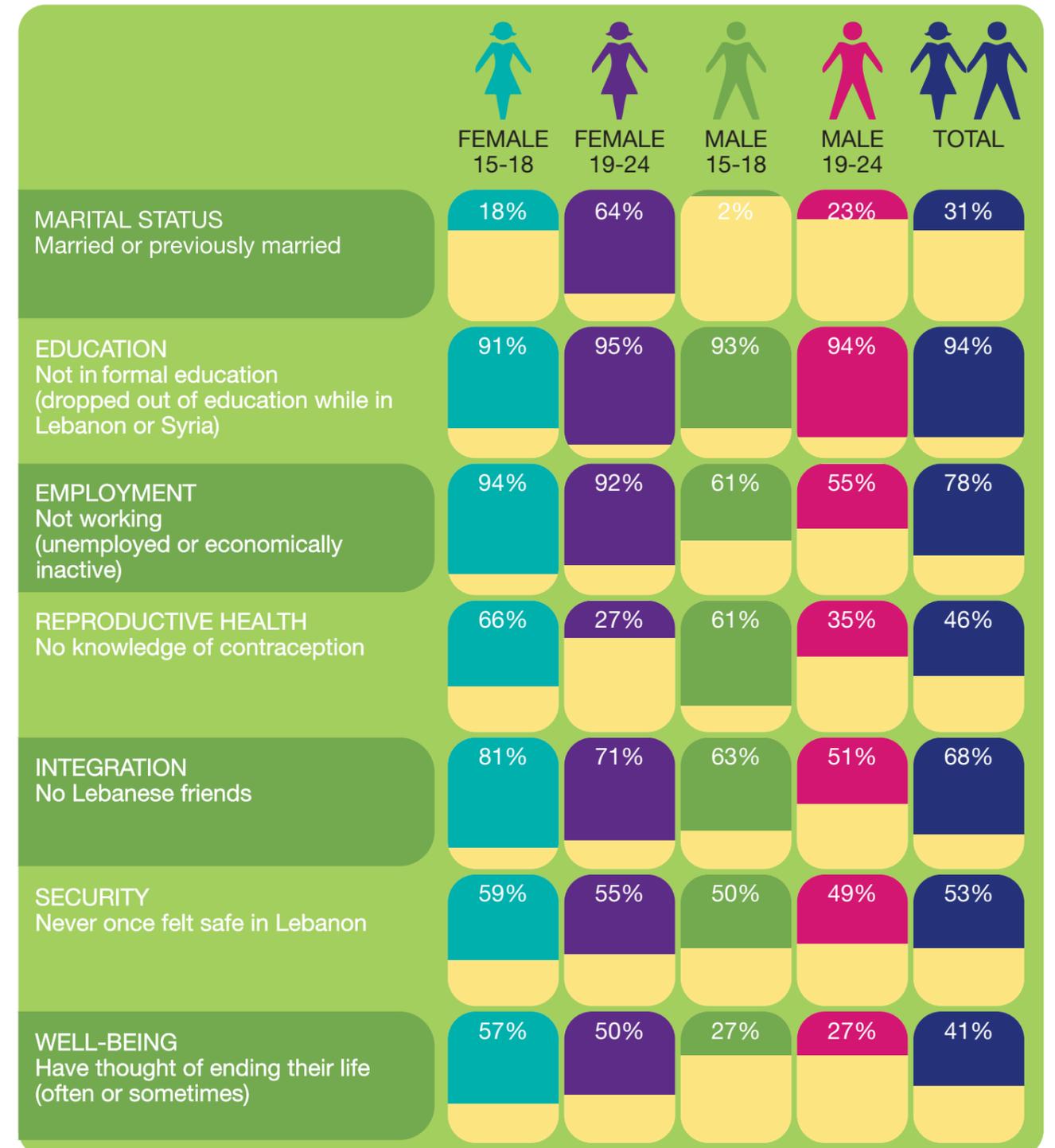
Beyond personal security, there is a type of collective fear related to the number and duration of stay of Syrian refugees. Nonetheless, despite an overall negative attitude, empathetic signs are also expressed.

## YOUTH PRIORITIES

Syrian refugee youth exhibit limited participation in social and civic activities, as well as in awareness-raising and recreation opportunities. While over 30 per cent express interest in taking part, conditions are that such activities be close to their place of residence and free of charge.

When asked what they regard as priority interventions for implementation by aid organizations, the vast majority of surveyed youth prioritized the provision of free shelter, employment and schooling. These are proposals which stem from the current major concerns and priorities of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, all of which are related to basic livelihood issues, including securing employment and being able to sustain and protect their families.

Figure 1: Key indicators on the situation of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, by sex and age group  
(Percentage)



## B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The comprehensive nature of this assessment and the cooperation of the agencies in its implementation provide a unique opportunity to gain a holistic perspective of needs and priorities of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon and devise integrated programming strategies. Based on the findings, a set of preliminary sectoral recommendations are provided below, along with suggestions on intervention and approach.

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS BY SECTOR

<b>SHELTER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure implementation of international humanitarian standards in the design and implementation of shelters for refugees, particularly in relation to safety and privacy of female youth.</li> <li>b) Support livelihood projects that link provision of financial assistance with youth continuing formal education.</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide learning opportunities that aim at supporting youth re-integration into formal education in Lebanon, including secondary and higher education.</li> <li>b) Lobby for more permissive policy vis-à-vis certification to allow youth entry into formal education and in partaking in official examinations, even if satisfactory documentation is not available.</li> <li>c) Assess the impact and outreach of non-formal education opportunities<sup>a</sup> for out-of-school youth and, accordingly, provide tailor-designed adequate non-formal education interventions based on their expressed needs.</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC ACTIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Expand livelihood or resource centres.</li> <li>b) Extend cash-for-work labour-intensive projects.</li> <li>c) Provide economic and self-reliance opportunities for female youth through training and income-generating activities both outside and inside the home.</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide comprehensive reproductive-health information and services, using a combined strategy of outreach services and community-based centres.</li> <li>b) Engage, empower and ensure the participation of refugee youth in health-related outreach programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>PROTECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Promote and ensure strict protection policy within humanitarian organizations (United Nations and non-United Nations related).</li> <li>b) Provide socially and culturally accepted activities that allow youth space out of the domestic sphere.</li> <li>c) Support awareness-raising and media campaigns for preventing gender-based violence.</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL COHESION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Build on existing cooperation between Lebanese and Syrian activists and charitable organizations.</li> <li>b) Support 'Track two' dialogue<sup>b</sup>.</li> <li>c) Partner with the media for improved representation of Syrian refugees in the media.</li> </ul>

a. Non-formal education is education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned by an education provider. Non-formal education could include Accelerated Learning Programmes, remedial education, self and home-based schooling, structured and developmental programmes on basic literacy and numeracy, life and professional development skills and vocational education. For precise definitions regarding education classifications of non-formal education and other forms of education, refer to: UNESCO/UIS International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011.

b. Track-two dialogue is about engaging community leaders in communication and dialogue, rather than focusing on people-to-people or grassroots levels; see <http://glossary.usip.org/resource/tracks-diplomacy>

### 2. PRIORITY AS SET BY YOUTH: EDUCATION AS THE WAY FORWARD

#### Support the return of out-of-education refugee youth into formal education

In the current situation, the majority of Syrian refugee youth are idle without work, education or other social engagement. Provision of support for their return to education is the number-one recommendation of female youth aged 15-18 years, and the number-four recommendation of male youth. Supporting return of youth into education also can have positive impact on a variety of life aspects, including reduced psychological distress, improved Syrian-Lebanese social cohesion and decreased propensity for early marriage.

### 3. INTERVENTION APPROACH

#### Support projects and services that are based in refugee communities and reach out to youth within their homes

Programmes and assistance need to come as a combination of (a) reaching out to refugee youth through recurrent visits to their homes; and (b) providing them with an open-door community service centre to build trusting relationships.

#### Design programmes with built-in mechanisms to involve youth and their families, as well as community leaders

Involving Syrian refugee youth in project intervention from the early stages of planning and throughout implementation can lead to more realistic needs assessment, engage youth socially and/or economically, and accelerate the process of trust building with peers. Participation of youth in such programmes should be respected as their right, and be sought with the purpose of their empowerment.

#### Mainstream youth refugee issues within existing humanitarian response

Consider the establishment of a youth working group as a mechanism to address, advocate for, and mainstream issues concerning refugee youth. In the case this is not feasible, activate the mainstreaming of youth issues within existing related groups involved in the humanitarian response.

#### Improve access of Syrian refugee youth to information and services

The loss of their community network, the need to adapt to new social and physical settings and geographies, and their limited financial resources - combined with a distressed psychological situation - make refugee youth more vulnerable, despondent and lost in terms of seeking services made available to them. Providing basic information on how and where to receive services or manage problems related to education, health, legal documentation and other basic livelihood issues sometimes can resolve many perceived hurdles and improve automatically the living conditions of refugee youth. Access could be provided via multisectoral information services in different regions that are at close proximity and rely on local community-based resource personnel to guide refugees to information and services pertaining to a wide spectrum of basic needs.

With three years having passed since the escalating Syrian crisis erupted, and with a rising influx of refugees to Lebanon, local and international organizations have carried out a series of rapid assessments to inform their interventions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has led other United Nations organizations and local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in coordinating interventions as laid out in the Regional Response Plans (RRPs). Following a similar exercise for the preceding year, RRP 6 was launched in December 2013 to set priorities and financing needs to tailor strategic interventions over the period January-December 2014. The plan acknowledges the need to focus equally on both the refugees and their host communities. Extensive data has been informing such programme planning, with the overall picture reflecting the multidimensional challenges facing Syrian refugees. The particular conditions pertaining to youth refugees, however, have as yet not been directly assessed and addressed.

Every young person has the right to a safe and successful transition from adolescence into healthy adulthood. Crisis situations and displacement conditions jeopardize proper investments and opportunities for a safe transition. During conflicts, family and social structures are disrupted and young people may be separated from their families or communities. The loss of livelihood, security and protection places the young at risk. Information on the specific challenges, vulnerabilities and opportunities that Syrian refugees aged 15-24 years face in Lebanon is lacking. Furthermore, the conditions of refugee youth from their own perspective have not been considered.

The objective of this assessment is to gain a holistic understanding of the situation and identify the vulnerabilities of young Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, both male and female, in the age groups 15-18 and 19-24. Though providing an overview of general health concerns, the multisectoral situation analysis focuses on reproductive health. It examines also the social, psychological, livelihood, economic and educational conditions of youth. Another objective is to provide an analysis of the relationship between Syrian refugee youth and the Lebanese in host communities, highlighting sources of tension and opportunities for cohesion. Moreover, the aim is to evaluate the situation of refugee youth through their participation - allowing them to voice their own concerns and perspectives. Based on the above, this assessment will identify gaps which can be addressed by specific stakeholders in order to provide effective protection to Syrian refugee youth and allow them to fulfil their basic human rights.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The impact of humanitarian emergencies, conflicts and crises on children and youth has been documented across the world. United Nations agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), have addressed youth in emergency situations, each from a different angle. It is important, however, to distinguish the youth population and differentiating this population group from those of children and adults as this stage in life has its own particularities.

The literature concurs that the youth are a highly vulnerable population. In situations of displacement, the youth lose their family and community network, as well as the services structures that used to support them during this stage of their lives. They lose their right to access education and health. They assume burdensome livelihood responsibilities that might exceed their capabilities. As they are deprived of the tools that would have equipped them to make a safe transition into adulthood, they become vulnerable to risks. These include risks of violence, abuse and forced involvement in delinquencies. Female youth, particularly, in addition face risks due to their special reproductive-health needs (UNFPA 2007). Refugee youth also live with uncertainty and instability which derail them from the path to a healthy future and jeopardize the rest of their life. While this is one side of the story, another research strand shows that the complex social, economic and political dynamics of the situation faced by refugee youth also could allow them to become active agents supporting their family and community, rather than becoming a vulnerable victim group (Chatty 2010).

Despite the vulnerabilities of this population group and its potential role, information and statistics specifically on this segment of the refugee population remain scarce and, thus, intervention by international organizations does not expressly target refugee youth as a group. The findings of *A Global Review: UNHCR's Engagement with Displaced Youth* (2013) show that "despite the compelling evidence for displaced youth's needs and the constraints they face in improving their present-day situation, and their hopes for long-term solutions, they represent an invisible majority within the population." The same source refers to a small number of documents available to guide refugee youth-targeted interventions. These include the UNFPA (2007) strategy for youth, *A Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth*, and the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) youth refugee action research (UNHCR 2013d).

In the Arab region, which has a young population, refugee youth have been addressed particularly in the context of the long-lasting occupation of Palestine and the spread of Palestinian refugees. The quick escalation of the Syrian crisis placed the influx of Syrian refugees on an unprecedented record-high for a decade. UNHCR has been gathering extensive data on its inter-agency information-sharing portal, introducing published assessments, reports and studies, and providing details on operations and financing by stakeholders. The Regional Analysis of the Syrian conflict (RAS - Part II) provides a holistic analysis of the overall Syrian crisis by country, based on results of periodic assessments by

local and international organizations of such areas as shelter, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, livelihood and food security, education, and protection, including gender-based violence and child protection (RAS - Part II 2013).

Other available studies reflect multidimensional challenges. Refugees are living in harsh shelter conditions, distributed across 1,400 known localities, with the government of Lebanon dismissing the idea of camps establishment or any structural intervention in informal tented settlements. Refugees have restricted mobility due to their legal status, feeling of insecurity and transportation costs. Families are either sharing rented apartments or staying in other forms of building structures, including shops, garages, unfinished construction sites, tents and even animal pens. Rent payments remain a heavy financial burden and a priority household expenditure. Access to water and sanitation is another challenge, with repercussions on health conditions. Primary and secondary health services are made available, but refugees still share a hefty out-of-pocket cost. Child and maternal health is a priority, with a high rate of pregnancies and a majority of refugees being women and children (DMI 2013).

A study conducted in 2012 on reproductive health presents health problems that women face and indicates issues related to gender-based violence (Usta and Masterson 2012). A series of consecutive studies on gender vulnerabilities highlights major concerns and risks that female refugees are facing, ranging from daily livelihood hardships to sexual exploitation (El-Masri, Harvey and Garwood 2013). All studies point to some form of violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, as well as survival sex and early marriage (UNFPA 2012).

Education and employment are two other areas that the literature on Syrian refugees reveals as being problematic. Refugee children are facing numerous obstacles to enrolment in schools, particularly in the higher education cycles. Obstacles also are related to curriculum differences, financial costs, certification problems, language of instruction, social pressures and others (UNICEF 2012; UNHCR 2013c). According to UNHCR, 19 per cent of school-age children were enrolled in formal education in 2013/2014 (RRP 5 2013). Very little information, however, is available on secondary school education, or on university, vocational and technical education. Likewise, employment and labour are established across assessments as key vulnerability areas. Available studies highlight difficulties in finding jobs and unfair working terms and conditions (Amel Association International 2013, Mercy Corps 2013, and DMI 2012). The limited and low-paid jobs drive economic insecurity, especially food insecurity, and increase dependency on aid. Though focusing only on the North and the Bekaa, a series of three *Emerging Market Mapping Analyses* on agriculture, construction and the services sector attempts to provide recommendations for employment to benefit host communities and refugees (IRC 2013a, 2013b, 2013c).

Indeed, most assessments target such specific high-vulnerability regions as the North, the Bekaa and the Beirut suburbs, as well as smaller communities within these areas. Only a few have a national

coverage and combine quantitative and qualitative data gathering. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), in coordination with other United Nations agencies, conducted a nationwide multisectoral household survey concentrating on general living conditions of Syrian refugees. These include housing, food consumption, household assets and debts, water, sanitation and similar services, education and health (Babille 2013).

A second nationwide assessment is a survey conducted by Mercy Corps on the impact of the Syrian crisis on political, economic and social stability in Lebanon and covers the interplay of economic, social and political factors. It aims to explain intergroup perceptions, security and propensity towards violence. The study findings relate economic security to a more positive perception of self and the other group, less propensity towards violence, and a general feeling of overall security (Mercy Corps 2013).

Rising tension between Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees has been signalled in increasing frequency in earlier qualitative assessments. Other reports have investigated the impact of the influx of refugees on relatively poor communities in Lebanon. Results indicate the primary threat according to the Lebanese as being job competition (DMI 2012).

Most assessments target refugee households as a unit of analysis, while a few focus on women and children as a social group for protection. One study deals with disabled refugees (WRC 2013). The literature review reveals no comprehensive research that examined the youth as a group; however, the review of the literature and the main findings guided the design of this assessment and the development of its research tools. Furthermore, the following sections will refer, where relevant, to the findings of previous research studies in analyzing the results.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

This assessment aims at gaining a holistic understanding of the situation of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon and their relationship with their Lebanese surroundings. The purpose is both to assess the situation of youth in various sectors as per set indicators, and to understand their needs and priorities as defined by refugee youth themselves. To achieve the above, both qualitative and quantitative data-collection tools were used, and a variety of stakeholders and gatekeepers were involved. In total, 1,121 Syrian youth, 83 Lebanese youth, and 53 Lebanese and Syrian stakeholders and gatekeepers participated in the assessment. Three main data-collection methods were used: (a) focus groups with Syrian refugee youth covering various aspects of their lives, and with Lebanese youth primarily focusing on their relationship with and the impact on their lives of the influx of Syrian refugees; (b) interviews with parents and stakeholders; and (c) a survey questionnaire with Syrian refugee youth.

Data collection started in September 2013 and ended in December 2013. Over half of the focus groups and interviews were completed before the actual survey was started, and their results helped in the designing of the questionnaire. Design of research tools, data collection and analysis were implemented by a team of Syrian and Lebanese women and men, with input and support of a technical committee composed of concerned organizations, including UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and Save the Children International (SCI). Figures in have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of component items and totals. All percentages have been calculated using unrounded figures.

## A. RESEARCH TEAM

A core team composed of four researchers with diverse expertise in qualitative and quantitative research, economic development, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as in youth and children's rights, led the research. Under the supervision of members of the core research team, the following additional team members - both Syrian and Lebanese - contributed to the implementation of the research:

- a) Field coordinators: Based in various regions of Lebanon and with knowledge of the areas, they helped in the recruitment of focus-group participants, the setting-up of interviews, and the recruitment of interviewers and data collectors for the questionnaire.
- b) Focus-group facilitators and interviewers: In addition to core team members, a total of seven researchers supported the implementation of the qualitative research, of which five were female and two male. All had expertise in implementing focus groups and interviews, as well as in one or more of the sectors covered by the assessment.
- c) Survey questionnaire teams: A total of 10 team leaders and 35 field researchers - of which 12 were Syrian refugee youths - were recruited to complete the questionnaire. All teams received a full one-day training session on administering the questionnaire, on substituting the sample where needed and on ethical considerations. The training was implemented regionally in the North, Bekaa and Beirut, and staged over three days. An additional training day was implemented with team leaders, all of whom had had previous experience in quantitative research and in leading survey teams. In addition, a technical and administrative team constituted of 10 persons controlled and entered data from the questionnaire and implemented the statistical analysis. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of team leaders and researchers.

**Table 1: Distribution of team leaders, field researchers and completed questionnaires, by region**  
(Number)

REGION	TEAM LEADERS	RESEARCHERS	COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES
Beirut & Mount Lebanon	3	9	183
North	3	12	307
Bekaa	2	9	368
South & Nabatieh	2	5	127
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>985</b>

A technical committee composed of concerned organizations - including UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and SCI - provided oversight, advice and quality assurance for the duration of the assessment. In addition, the technical committee provided input on sample selection and research tools, as well as on the analysis and reporting.

All research tools were tailor-designed for this assessment, following broadly the key themes reflected in the outline of the report: shelter; education; economic activity; health, including reproductive health; protection, including psychological status, marriage and early marriage, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and domestic violence; and social cohesion. For every theme, an objective assessment of the youth situation was sought, in addition to the understanding of needs and priorities as defined by refugee youths themselves. These tools included the following:

- a) focus group guide for Syrian youth;
- b) focus group guide for Lebanese youth;
- c) survey questionnaire for Syrian youth; and
- d) set of seven interview guides for gatekeepers and other stakeholders, including parents, Lebanese and Syrian NGOs, health centres, school administrators, municipalities, mayors and political groups, parents of Syrian youth, Syrian refugee representatives and coordinators of informal tented settlements.

All tools were tested in the field and reviewed by members of the technical committee before being finalized.

## 1. FOCUS GROUPS

In planning the focus groups, the sample was designed to represent fairly the distribution of the refugee population, taking into consideration the following variables:

- a) Geographical distribution: Focus groups were planned to ensure equal distribution among three geographic regions - the North, Bekaa and Beirut/Mount Lebanon/South - each of which hosts around one third of the total Syrian refugee population.
- b) Age: Focus groups were implemented with the two age groups - 15-18 years and 19-24 years - being separate. Both had equal representation in the sample; however, in order to fulfil the programming priorities of one commissioning organization, a planned adjustment of slightly more weight was allocated the age group 15-18 years, and also within the Lebanese sample population.
- c) Sex: Focus groups with Syrian refugee youths were segregated by sex, given the sensitivity of some of the issues discussed and the characteristics of the target group. More weight in deciding the number of focus groups was given to female youth to reflect their higher representation in the refugee population. Two focus groups with Lebanese youth in urban, less conservative areas were mixed.
- d) Situation of the host community: All focus groups took place with youth living in *cadastral*<sup>10</sup> assessed as belonging to the first quintile as per vulnerability assessment of UNICEF, UNHCR and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (2013).

Additional variables taken into consideration as preliminary results were collected included the following:

- a) Marital status: Two focus groups were implemented with married youth aged 19-24 years.
- b) Type of dwelling: Three focus groups were implemented with female youth staying in informal tented settlements and other makeshift accommodation.
- c) Registration: Effort was made to include unregistered youth in most focus groups, with one focus group implemented with predominantly unregistered refugees.

A total of 21 focus groups were implemented, covering 136 Syrian youth and 82 Lebanese youth, and distributed as detailed in table 2.

Recruitment of focus-group participants relied on a variety of individuals and organizations to ensure access to a diverse profile of youth. They included NGOs working in the fields of relief and protection, including Amel Association International, the Lebanese Red Cross, Naba'a Development Action without Borders, Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA), Sawa4Syria, and Ward Team Psychosocial Support Program, in addition to professional and personal contacts of the researchers and field officers recruited to support the project.

<sup>10</sup>Classified in Lebanon as the smallest administrative division; commonly includes details of ownership, tenure, precise location, dimensions, cultivations (if any) and value of individual parcels of land.

**Table 2: Distribution of focus groups by sample and by region, sex and age group**  
(Number)

		SYRIAN REFUGEE YOUTH	LEBANESE YOUTH	TOTAL
REGION	Beirut / Mount Lebanon / South	6	2	8
	North	3	2	5
	Bekaa	5	3	8
SEX	Male	6	2	8
	Female	8	3	11
	Mixed (male/female)	—	2	2
AGE	15-18	6	4	10
	19-24	7	3	10
	Mixed (15-18 / 19-24)	1	—	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>

## 2. INTERVIEWS

A total of 53 semi-structured interviews were implemented. They can be divided into the following four categories:

- interviews with parents of youth and youth themselves, predominantly with mothers as being more easily accessible and better informed about the difficulties of their children;
- interviews with NGOs and service providers, including representatives of Syrian, Lebanese and international NGOs providing services to youth in the fields of gender-based violence, education, health, youth development and relief; as well with NGOs engaged in joint Syrian-Lebanese activities. Also interviewed were service providers in schools, health dispensaries and at Ministry of Social Affairs social development centres;
- interviews with main stakeholders from Lebanese host communities, including mayors and representatives of political parties; and
- interviews with Syrian refugees who have a representational role, either through organizations or within particular Syrian gatherings or informal tented settlements.

Efforts were made to ensure distribution of interviews across the three geographic regions; the North, Bekaa and Beirut/Mount Lebanon/South.

## 3. QUESTIONNAIRE

A survey questionnaire with predominantly close-ended questions was administered through face-to-face interviews with 985 Syrian youth between the ages of 15-24 years. With the aim of reaching 1,000 youth, a computer-generated random sample of 1,100 youth was selected out of the total 622,249 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR as of 5 September 2013<sup>11</sup>. Interviews were conducted with substitutes for persons named on the original sample list in the following circumstances (table 3):

- When no more than two persons on the original sample were in an area distant from clusters of villages to be visited, a substitute was sought from a closer locality. A total of 12.3 per cent of the names on the sample were exchanged at this stage and before the start of data collection.
- When a person on the original sample could not be reached because the phone number given was out of service or incorrect, or when the person had moved and there were no means of contacting him/her.
- When the person on the original sample did not want to participate.
- In rare cases when the person on the original sample was aged under 15.

In total, 47.7 per cent of the names on the original sample of Syrian refugees were replaced. Contacts for the substitutes were taken either from lists of Syrian refugees registered with municipalities or provided by other Syrians interviewed. They were selected under the following conditions:

- All substitutions were within the same governorate as the original sample.
- The village or community from where a substitute interviewee was sought enjoyed geographic proximity and characteristics similar to that of the person in the original sample, including population, religious identity, political affiliation or inclination, and predominant economic activity.
- The substitute was of the same age and sex as the person on the original sample.

<sup>11</sup>Since the start of the assessment the number of registered refugees has increased rapidly, reaching 907,678 as of 5 March 2014. Up-to-date figures on registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon are available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.

**Table 3: Distribution of substitutions in questionnaire sample by region and reason for substitution**

(Number and percentage)

REGION	SUBSTITUTED IN ORIGINAL SAMPLE BEFORE DATA COLLECTION	PHONE OUT OF SERVICE OR NUMBER INCORRECT	PERSON MOVED OR ADDRESS NOT FOUND	PERSON REFUSED TO TAKE PART IN SURVEY	PERSON UNDER 15 YEARS OLD	TOTAL
Beirut / Mount Lebanon	29	45	19	1	0	94
North	30	93	31	5	2	161
Bekaa	32	99	32	7	0	170
South / Nabatieh	30	12	2	1	0	45
<b>Total (n)</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>470</b>
<b>(%)</b>	26	53	18	3	-	100 (48% of total sample)

The questionnaire was developed based on preliminary findings from qualitative research and desk review, with input from partner organizations. It was tested in the Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Bekaa regions and adapted accordingly. Once the data had been collected, all questionnaires were controlled and data entered and cleaned before being extracted and analyzed through SPSS statistical analysis software. Results were extracted from weighted data to avoid sampling bias, and post-stratification weight modifications were made to adjust actual sample administration by geographical area and age with distribution of overall Syrian refugee youth registered with UNHCR as of 5 September 2013.

The above research methods also were combined with ethnographic methods of participant observation and informal interviews. In one locality, methods were combined to gain a multidimensional perspective of the interplay between different Syrian and Lebanese actors, as well as cross-cutting issues within the same geographical area.

To guarantee ethical considerations and standards, the following measures were taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of the research:

- Informed consent of respondents was received prior to their participation in the data-gathering activity. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and their consent was taken before its start. Questionnaires administered to unmarried youth aged below 18 years required additional consent of their guardians. Focus groups with youth in the age category 15-18 years had the approval of their parents.
- Voluntary participation was respected, which refers to respecting the autonomy and self-determination of all respondents. The participating youth were given the choice to take part, and had the right to refuse to answer a question or to terminate their participation in the research at any stage without any repercussions.
- Minimized risks and ensured privacy were achieved by making certain the information collected ultimately would benefit refugee youth rather than putting them at risk or causing embarrassment, particularly when covering issues related to reproductive health and sexual and gender-based violence. For focus groups and interviews, data was collected in a setting which was comfortable and where privacy could be ensured for participants to be able to answer freely. Because privacy could not be ensured while administering the questionnaires as families of the surveyed youth often were present, especially given the crowded living conditions, sensitive issues were inquired about through indirect questions and only essential information was collected.
- Confidentiality was ensured throughout the study, from data collection, handling and analysis, to the dissemination of results. In practice, focus-group participants and questionnaire respondents were free to refrain from giving their first name or family name.
- Participation of members of the refugee community in the research process was sought where possible. Researchers whose tasks were to implement the data collection and organize focus groups were recruited from the Syrian refugee population, comprising approximately one quarter of the total number of members of the research team. They also were consulted in the designing of the questionnaire, in the analysis of the findings and in the drafting of the recommendations.
- Referral and protection of research participants and respondents who, in the course of data collection, shared experiences or problems that indicated they were in need of protection and/or expert support. In most cases, researchers made contact with youth experiencing violence only via existing service providers or psychosocial support teams, meaning that youth already were receiving the needed support. In other cases, and if the researcher deemed it necessary, participants were informed of existing service providers who would be able to offer protection and support.

## E. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

### The following challenges and limitations are noted:

- a) The presence of other family members when implementing the survey questionnaire with Syrian refugee youth might have affected their answers to some sensitive questions, especially those related to sexual practices, sexual and gender-based violence, and substance use. The quantitative results might reflect more conservative attitudes and practices than those actually held or practised by the youth.
- b) The sensitivity of certain topics related to sexual and reproductive health necessitated that researchers be of the same sex as the respondent. Yet, recruitment of female field researchers in remote rural areas of Akkar, North Lebanon - where the ratio of females to males in the sample was 2:1 - posed difficult and, though possible, required additional logistical and research support for the teams in the North.
- c) The nationality of the researchers had considerable impact on participants and respondents, with significantly higher disclosure to Syrian researchers especially in questions related to the relationship with their Lebanese surroundings. The research team sought to expand the ratio of Syrian to Lebanese researchers implementing the data collection as much as the limited mobility and higher vulnerability to risks, particularly of Syrian researchers, would allow.
- d) The intense and frequent research which has been conducted on Syrian refugee communities, often without their being able to see the value-added of such research endeavours on improving their situation. Where possible, participants in focus groups and interviews were recruited from areas where less research had been conducted.
- e) The security situation, particularly in the North, forced the postponement and/or cancelation of several focus groups and interviews, either by partner organizers in the area or because of fear for the safety of researchers. Where possible, local researchers able to more easily move around within the regions, or who did not need to travel across dangerous areas, were relied on.



SHELTER



EDUCATION



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



HEALTH



PROTECTION



SOCIAL COHESION



YOUTH PRIORITIES



SHELTER

## 1. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Of all Syrian refugees fleeing to Lebanon, the North and the Bekaa host nearly 67 per cent because of the proximity of these two regions to Syria. According to national statistics, the local population density in the North and the Bekaa is not high; standing at 20 and 13 per cent, respectively, of the total population in Lebanon<sup>12</sup>. The incoming refugees, however, have led to a significant increase in the population of these two regions, with the ratio of Syrian refugees to Lebanese citizens in the Bekaa almost reaching 1:2; and in the north, 1:4 (table 4).

**Table 4: Distribution of Syrian and Lebanese populations, by region**  
(Number and Percentage)

REGION	SYRIAN REFUGEE POPULATION <sup>a</sup> (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)		LEBANESE POPULATION <sup>b</sup> (NUMBER)	RATIO OF SYRIANS TO LEBANESE POPULATION
Beirut	14,903	2.4	361,366	1:24
Mount Lebanon	110,323	17.8	1,484,474	1:13
North	204,951	32.9	763,712	1:4
Bekaa	210,267	33.8	489,865	1:2
South & Nabatieh	81,805	13.1	659,718	1:8
<b>Total</b>	<b>622,249</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,759,135</b>	<b>1:6</b>

a. Syrian refugee population as of 5 Sep 2013, as provided by UNHCR at time of sample selection. Recent statistics are available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.

b. Source: Living Conditions Survey, Central Administration of Statistics (CAS), 2007.

As expected, the overall distribution of Syrian refugee youth across the regions is consistent with the refugee distribution in general, as illustrated in table 5.



**Table 5: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth and total Syrian refugee populations, by region and sex<sup>15</sup>**

(Percentage)

REGION	SYRIAN REFUGEE YOUTH POPULATION (TOTAL POPULATION = 115,987)			TOTAL SYRIAN REFUGEE POPULATION (TOTAL POPULATION = 622,249)		
	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Beirut	1.2	1.1	2.2	1.2	1.2	2.4
Mount Lebanon	9.3	7.2	16.5	8.9	8.9	17.8
North	19.0	15.6	34.5	16.8	16.1	32.9
Bekaa	19.6	14.5	34.1	17.5	16.3	33.8
South & Nabatieh	7.2	5.4	12.7	6.6	6.5	13.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On average, the surveyed Syrian refugee youth have been in Lebanon for 16 months and, in general, display relative stability in their area of residence; with 56 per cent residing in the same place as when they first arrived, and 25 per cent having moved only once. Male youth display slightly higher mobility than their female counterparts, while refugee youth in the South are the most stable.

The vast majority of youth surveyed, or 88 per cent said that they and their families had moved to Lebanon for security reasons, primarily because of the deteriorating security situation in general (78 per cent), although another significant security concern for male youth was the fear of direct violence against them or members of their family (16 per cent). None among those surveyed mentioned medical concerns or pregnancy as reasons for seeking refuge in Lebanon, and less than 10 per cent indicated economic or livelihood-related motivations.

In choosing the area of residence<sup>16</sup> in Lebanon, the key determining factor was familiarity with the place or with the people who reside there (table 6). Proximity to Syria was another determining factor, cited predominantly by refugee youth in the Bekaa and the North for obvious geographic reasons. Further, results from focus groups and interviews indicate that some refugees living nearer the border go back to Syria for work, or to seek medical services which are provided to them for free there. Livelihood-related factors - including cost of living and work opportunities - are less important, which could be explained by the fact that livelihood-related matters are perceived as dependent on knowledge of the area.



<sup>15</sup>Syrian refugee population as of 5 Sep 2013, as provided by UNHCR at time of sample selection.

<sup>16</sup>Selection of area of residence was determined by the family, not the youth. The interview question was: How, as a family, did you choose this place?

Political affiliation with the majority of Lebanese residents in an area does not play a significant role in determining where Syrian refugees choose to reside.

**Table 6: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by reason for selecting present area of residence, by sex (multiple answers)**

(Percentage)

REASON	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	
Relatives/acquaintances in area	38	29	34	Familiarity with the place or people
Prior knowledge of area	9	14	11	
Existence of informal tented settlement (ITS)	9	12.9	11	
Proximity to Syria	20	38	28	
Work opportunities	10	13	11	Livelihood-related reasons
Cost (area less expensive)	3	3	3	
Free residence	2	3	2	
Availability of aid	1	1	1	
Feeling of security	12	15	13	
Similar political affiliations	1	3	2	

Comfort in the area of living is widely felt among the youth, with 72 per cent of respondents expressing relative comfort in their area. Comfort within the area is relative to perceived possible comfort in other areas, and is different from satisfaction with living conditions within the shelter described in sections 2 and 4 of this chapter. Percentages are similar in the various regions with the exception of the North, where just over half are comfortable, in comparison to 88 per cent in the South and Nabatieh (table 7). No significant gender differences are noted, as male and female youth express similar levels of comfort in nearly all regions. The main reasons for discomfort as relayed by youth are political insecurity, scarce work opportunities and negative treatment by Lebanese host communities.





**Table 7: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth expressing comfort in their area of residence, by region and sex**

(Percentage)

REGION	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Beirut & Mount Lebanon	77	78	77
North	56	49	53
Bekaa	86	82	84
South & Nabatieh	84	94	88

## 2. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

The distribution of surveyed youth by sex shows patterns similar to those of the general refugee population, where the number of female youth is significantly higher than that of male, especially in the 19-24 age group. Out of the total 985 respondents to the questionnaire, 556 (56 per cent) were female and 420 (44 per cent) were male (table 8). Of youth aged 19 or above, only 36 per cent were male - nearly a 2:1 female-to-male ratio. Most likely, the lower number of male youth is due in significant part to the loss of young men in the fighting in Syria, with 13 per cent of the respondents indicating having lost at least one family member in the fighting, the vast majority of 88 per cent being male. In addition – as interviews with parents indicate – families sometimes take refuge in Lebanon, with male youth and young adult family members staying behind to earn a living or protect home and property. In some cases, young men are returning to Syria after only a short stay in Lebanon, either to join in the fighting or to search for economic opportunities not available in Lebanon.

**Table 8: Distribution of respondents by age and sex**

(Number and percentage)

AGE	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
15	51	5	62	6	113	12
16	48	5	67	7	115	12
17	64	6	58	6	122	12
18	58	6	53	5	111	11
19	47	5	32	4	79	8
20	52	6	30	3	82	9
21	53	6	28	3	81	9
22	60	6	28	3	88	8
23	48	4	30	3	78	7
24	75	7	41	4	116	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>100%</b>

Slightly less than half, or 46 per cent of female youth are or have been married, compared to only 11 per cent among male youth. Of those ever married, 18 per cent of females and 2 per cent of males are aged 18 or below. Table 9 shows the distribution of Syrian refugee by marital status. Of married youth, 11 per cent were married before the age of 15 years, with a lower age limit for marriage as young as 10 for females and 13 for males, although the average age of marriage is 17 years for females and 20 for males (table 10).



**Table 9: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by marital status, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

MARITAL STATUS	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Single	82	36	98	77	69
Married	17	63	2	23	30
Married with children	5	54	2	12	22
Widowed	1	1	—	—	1
Divorced	—	—	—	—	—
Separated	—	—	—	—	—

Just over one out of five young refugees, or 22 per cent have children. The number of children is two on average, but can go up to four children for some young females who are likely to have married early, and up to three for some males. The difference between the average age of the first child and the average age at the time of delivery indicates that most married couples had a child soon after marriage.

**Table 10: Average age at time of marriage and at time of birth of first child, by sex**  
(Years)

MARRIAGE-RELATED INDICATOR	FEMALE	MALE	OVERALL
Average age at time of marriage	17.1	20.0	17.6
Average age when first child was born	18.5	20.4	18.8

### 3. LEGAL STATUS

In general, most refugee youth interviewed arrived in Lebanon through authorized border crossings, representing 86 per cent (table 11). There appears to be no variation between female and male youth in this regard. The remaining minority who arrived through unauthorized points of entry live mainly in the Bekaa and the North and – as results from focus groups indicate – significantly limit their movements so as to avoid being stopped at checkpoints.

**Table 11: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by point of entry into Lebanon and region**  
(Percentage)

POINT OF ENTRY	BEIRUT/ MOUNT LEBANON	NORTH	BEKAA	SOUTH/ NABATIEH	TOTAL
Through authorized point of entry	98	82	81	98	86
Through unauthorized point of entry	2	18	19	2	13
No answer	—	—	1	—	—

Of those who arrived through authorized points of entry, 23 per cent have not renewed their entry card, which should be done twice a year at a cost of USD 200 per year. Failure to renew was due predominantly to the cost, according to 83 per cent.

Though only 33 per cent of Syrian refugee youth indicate that the municipality where they live require registration, and the vast majority among them, or 95 per cent, do register, representing 31 per cent of all surveyed youth (table 12).

Those who have not registered said that either they did not know how to or they recently had arrived and had yet to do so. That said, registration with the municipality appears to have little benefit for the refugees themselves, and the municipal councils generally are unable to provide much support given their limited resources.



**Table 12: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by legal status**

(Percentage)

LEGAL STATUS	PERCENTAGE
Entry through authorized point of entry	86
Valid entry card	67
Registration with municipality	31

**Registration with UNHCR is predominant, with 86 per cent of the surveyed youth confirming that they are registered** (table 13). Registration in the South and Nabatieh is relatively lower, possibly because of the location of the registration centre in the city of Tyre relative to some of the southern Lebanese villages close to the Syrian border, and also due to the relatively-recent arrival of refugees to some of these villages.

**Table 13: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by registration with UNHCR and region**

(Percentage)

REGISTRATION WITH UNHCR	BEIRUT/ MOUNT LEBANON	NORTH	BEKAA	SOUTH/ NABATIEH	TOTAL
Registered	87	90	88	65	86
Not registered	13	10	11	30	13
Unsure	—	—	—	5	1

It should be noted that registration figures are biased towards registration, given that 53 per cent of the surveyed refugee youth belong to a randomly-selected sample from UNHCR records. Notably, 8 per cent of those on UNHCR records claim not to be registered (table 14), despite them obviously being so as their contact details given to the researchers are from UNHCR records of registered refugees. This, as the focus groups indicate, could be because many refugee youth, especially among the lower age group, do not know if they are registered. In addition, some perceive the recent decrease in UNHCR aid<sup>17</sup> as a sign that they are “no longer registered” or that “UNHCR has taken us off its records”, and is a sign of poor understanding among refugee youth of the value and implications of registration besides receiving aid.

**Table 14: Distribution of UNHCR registration status of Syrian refugee youth, by sample and random selection**

(Percentage)

UNHCR REGISTRATION STATUS	RESPONDENTS FROM SAMPLE	RESPONDENTS FROM RANDOM SELECTION IN THE FIELD	OVERALL PERCENTAGE
Registered	91	80	86
Not registered	8	19	14
Unsure	1	1	1

Although the figures on legal entry to Lebanon and **registration** with UNHCR are similar, there appears to be no correlation between the two, and refugee youth who entered Lebanon through unauthorized channels are not shying away from registration. Those not registered mentioned **the following main reasons, in order of importance, for not doing so; recent arrival, time required for the registration process, perceived unimportance of registration and lack of knowledge how to register** (table 15). This is in line with what was reported also by participants in focus groups.



<sup>17</sup>At the time of the survey, UNHCR and partner organizations had just announced a shift towards targeted and selected aid of registered refugees, rather than blanket assistance. This might have caused confusion among refugees, who may have perceived cessation of aid as them having been removed from registration records.





**Table 15: Reason given by Syrian refugee youth for not registering with UNHCR (n=133)**  
(Percentage)

REASON	TOTAL
I have recently arrived	18
No answer	14
Registration procedures take a long time	13
Because it is useless	12
I do not know how to register	12
UNHCR refused my registration because I am alone	11
Registration office is far/inaccessible	5
I am afraid of registering	4
UNHCR refused my registration for other reasons	4
My registration was cancelled	2
I do not have time	2
I took an appointment	1
Other	3

The main source of information on legal procedures for 44 per cent of surveyed refugee youth is other Syrians, followed by the General Security Forces at 24 per cent, and municipalities at 16 per cent (table 16). Lebanese acquaintances and NGOs are of little value as a source of information, highlighting - as observed in focus groups - limited relationships with the Lebanese community and local outreach of NGOs.

**Table 16: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by source of information on registration, residency and other legal procedures, by sex and age group (multiple answers)**  
(Percentage)

SOURCE	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Other Syrians residing in Lebanon	50	46	37	45	44
General Security Forces	22	26	23	26	24
Municipality	13	16	19	14	16
UNHCR	9	11	22	18	14
Unsure who to ask	11	11	12	7	10
Lebanese acquaintances	5	1	5	9	4
Association	1	2	6	7	4
Other (border authorities, mukhtar, etc.)	3	3	1	2	2

#### 4. LIVING CONDITIONS

The section on living conditions captures issues related to housing, available facilities, density/crowdedness within the dwelling and satisfaction levels. When asked about the type of dwelling, **one third of surveyed youth, or 30 per cent report living in makeshift accommodation**, including tents and such rented spaces as garages and buildings still under construction; in comparison to 70 per cent living in regular houses or apartments.

**A large majority of surveyed youth, or 85 per cent, indicate that they or their families are paying for their accommodation**, an expense that takes at least one third of the family income, particularly that some of those living in makeshift accommodation also are incurring rent expenses. This is especially burdensome, as findings from focus groups and interviews reveal that most of these families – especially those from rural areas – previously had not been paying rent for their homes in Syria.



**Within the dwelling, data reveals that basic facilities are not available for many of those surveyed.** Based on observations of researchers conducting the interviews, the dwellings of 40 per cent of refugee youth do not provide safety against the risks of flooding and/or water leakage during the winter season.

Moreover, some very basic elements are not available for a significant percentage of dwellings occupied by refugee youth. As shown in table 17, for example, 23 per cent are without windows, 21 per cent have no kitchen and 17 per cent lack doors, external and/or internal. In addition, around one quarter of refugee dwellings do not have a bathroom and 16 per cent lack an indoor toilet. If available, each toilet is used by an average nine persons, and each bathroom by eight persons. Moreover, these facilities often are without a door that can be locked, which – as the qualitative element of this research reveals – is especially distressing to female respondents.

Even when a certain amenity is available, it is not necessarily adequate to meet the needs of the household members. When asked whether basic housing facilities are available and sufficient, the results show that only 8 per cent of dwellings enjoy adequate heating facilities, with 46 per cent having adequate supply of running water and 23 per cent sufficient hot water.

**Table 17: Distribution of lack of specified amenities in dwellings occupied by Syrian refugee youth, by region**  
(Percentage)

DWELLING WITHOUT THE FOLLOWING AMENITIES	BEIRUT/ MOUNT LEBANON	NORTH	BEKAA	SOUTH/ NABATIEH	OVERALL
Heating	89	75	56	86	72
Potable water	60	55	16	53	42
Hot water	33	40	47	25	39
Windows	16	31	25	9	23
Kitchen	5	21	33	10	21
External and internal doors	13	26	13	6	17
Running water	3	18	8	10	11
Electricity	9	13	9	2	10
Toilet	—	2	1	1	1
Toilet inside dwelling	5	13	27	5	16
Toilet with door that can be locked (inside or outside dwelling)	30	24	17	14	21
Bathroom	12	19	30	37	24
Bathroom inside dwelling	4	4	15	4	8
Bathroom with door that can be locked (inside or outside dwelling)	37	14	10	17	15

**On average, eight persons share each living space, with 10 per cent of the dwellings having more than 12 inhabitants.** Youth sleep in rooms shared by four persons on average, but this average goes up to six in informal tented settlements and makeshift accommodation. In certain cases, the sleeping area is shared by up to 20 other persons. Table 18 illustrates the share of persons sleeping in the same room.



**Table 18: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by number of persons sleeping in the same room**  
(Percentage)

NUMBER OF PERSONS	PERCENTAGE
4 or less	65
5-8	30
9 or more	4

The average of four persons sleeping in the same room is very close to the so-called crowding index - meaning the number of residents divided by the number of rooms in a dwelling - indicating that, in most cases, every room in a home is being used for sleeping. Table 19 illustrates the distribution of Syrian refugee youth by the crowding index.

**Table 19: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by crowding index**  
(Percentage)

NUMBER OF RESIDENTS / NUMBER OF ROOMS	PERCENTAGE
4 or less	59
5-8	33
9 or more	8

Besides sharing the sleeping space and living area with a relatively large number of persons, many refugee youths - accounting for 22 per cent - also have to share with non-relative adults of different sex, a matter that is distressing to both male and female youth. Many female refugee youths mention a lack of privacy in performing day-to-day tasks, including changing clothes and taking showers. As discussed in subsection E.3 on safety and security, this is especially problematic for veiled females, and even more so when the sleeping space is shared with non-relatives, as is the case for 8 per cent of the surveyed refugee youth (table 20).

**Table 20: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by type of sharing of dwelling and of sleeping area**  
(Percentage)

TYPE OF SHARING OF DWELLING AND SLEEPING AREA	PERCENTAGE
Dwelling shared with adult non-relatives of a different sex	22
Sleeping area shared with male and female family members	64
Sleeping area shared with male and female non-relatives	8

**Close to half, or 49 per cent, of refugee youth are not satisfied with their living conditions** (table 21). No significant difference between male and female youth was noted. Geographically, however, a higher level of dissatisfaction of 22 per cent was registered among those living in the North, compared to 16 per cent of the total Syrian refugee youth population.

**Table 21: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by level of satisfaction with living conditions, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Completely satisfied	4	2	4	4	3
Satisfied	44	49	47	50	47
Not satisfied	37	34	32	27	33
Not satisfied at all	15	15	15	18	16
No answer	1	—	2	1	1

## 5. COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

Surveyed refugee youth seem to have a moderate level of connectivity; 59 per cent have satellite or cable television connection, and 41 per cent have a personal cell phone (table 22), with a clear



discrepancy in favour of male to female, accounting for 50 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively. An even lower percentage has access to the Internet.

**Table 22: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by availability of communication means**  
(Percentage)

COMMUNICATION MEANS	PERCENTAGE
Satellite/cable television	59
Personal cell phone	41
Internet on personal cell phone	14
Public Internet	7

These results are consistent with the qualitative research, which indicates that - despite television still being the main source of information - the use of smart phones is widespread and, although only a small percentage of young refugees have full Internet service on their phones, many make use of packages that, for a small subscription fee, allow Internet use of some such applications as WhatsApp.

## 6. SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The main sources of household income are wages and aid. Of refugee youth able to detail sources of income of their family, **84 per cent said they relied on wages, 57 per cent on food aid, 44 per cent on non-food aid**. In addition, 8 per cent say that their family is using savings, and 5 per cent indicate their family has resorted to taking out loans. Moreover, 87 per cent believe sources of family income are insufficient to cover expenditures; while less than 1 per cent considers the sources of income sufficient, and 9 per cent regard them as almost sufficient.

**The biggest household expenditure is rent, accounting for 31 per cent on average of the total household budget**, followed by food and such basic utilities as electricity and water. Payment of rent is especially distressing to the family, and demands on the household income are compromised to ensure payment. Of note is that these estimates are recounted by the refugee youth themselves, some of whom might not have accurate knowledge of the distribution of household income and expenditure. Another bias worth mentioning is that, on average, spending on education is as low as 1 per cent of the household budget, the reason being that the vast majority of refugee children and youth are not enrolled in school. Hence, these estimates probably describe regular and recurring expenses, while such one-off or occasional payments as health costs are not considered.

## CASE STUDY 1

### A glimpse of the life of young refugees in a Lebanese village on the Lebanese-Syrian border

A small Lebanese village is situated on the border between Lebanon and Syria. Just like many other similar border villages, its inhabitants have developed historical, commercial and familial relations with their Syrian neighbours. As a result, and as the Syrian crisis became aggravated, Syrians started seeking refuge in the village, comforted by the fact that they share the same religion and political affiliations, as well as a history, with its inhabitants. With very few personal belongings and some cattle, the Syrians walked through long and mountainous roads to escape the violence and entered the village through non-official channels. The villagers were hospitable and charitable at the start of the crisis. They provided shelter and basic needs. As the number of refugees increased, the villagers offered their properties - ranging from housing units to such makeshift properties as garages and animal pens - against rent.

A local faith-based organization provided around 200 refugee shelters in a two-storey property complex. One storey was been divided into ten rooms, one toilet and a kitchenette. Each family took a room. The other storey consists of a big hall and one toilet. Tents were set in the hall to accommodate families, with one family per tent. The complex clearly is not equipped for residency. Rooms and tents have only mattresses and blankets. The kitchen is not equipped for cooking, so food preparation takes place outdoors. The residents of the complex, i.e., the refugees, queue for the toilet. Each person is allowed to use it for no more than three consecutive minutes. Men at peak times are allowed to use the toilet facility at the mosque, located within the complex. Water is not sufficient. Heating is only available for the few who arrived first. Electricity is available, with the charges covered by the faith-based organization. A few refugees have mobile phones with Internet connection. The refugees say they feel crowded within the compound and, while during summer they enjoy the outdoors, they fear the winter. The complex is managed by one of the refugees, who has connections with the mayor of the village, and who is the contact point between the refugees and aid organizations.

For the refugees, mobility within the village is limited due to restrictions by the municipality and a ban on them driving cars and motorbikes. Outside the village, mobility also is restricted because few refugees have valid entry cards and documentation proving arrival in Lebanon.

Two local faith-based associations and a few other local and international organizations offer mainly food and health services. Aid from Gulf countries occasionally is distributed. The refugees are thankful: *“We are grateful for receiving food and medical aid, but fear cold winters because we are unprepared.”* The type of aid received is not always appropriate as, in many cases, aid is not coordinated and duplications occur. *“They all offer food aid, whereas housing and education are more needed,”* says a local Lebanese working in refugee assistance. The refugees sell their food vouchers to the locals for 75 per cent of their value.

Young refugees are worried about their education and, if parents themselves, also about that of their children. In the village, there is no school which can accommodate them. They have been promised educational facilities providing the Syrian curriculum; however, according to a staff member of a local organization, schooling for the Brevet level and above (15-18-year-olds) requires approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, which complicates the process.

Young female refugees feel insecure under the prevailing living conditions, particularly the crowded shelter conditions. They need to be escorted when they move around and keep their veils at all times. For example, those living in the complex are not allowed to go out alone. The remoteness of the complex further complicates their mobility and hampers them from participating in any outside activity. They enjoyed a one-time participation in organizing entertainment activities for the younger children. A local organization offers computer courses, but most young females living in the complex cannot attend as they are unable to go outside. In contrast, they all participate in religious sessions offered within the complex.

The male refugee youth keep a low profile, especially after two young refugees, in separate incidents, were attacked by Lebanese in the village. They feel the Lebanese are exploiting them, particularly property owners who raise rents and employers who make them work for long hours for half the pay they used to get in Lebanon before becoming refugees.

Jobs are scarce. *“We sit idle all day and when someone asks for labour, we offer it to the person among us most in need.”* They work in construction and related activities, in agriculture or in any job available. They wish they could move around to work in other villages. As a young refugee explains: *“If we are to choose between permanent aid and work, we choose work.”*

The villagers complain of the large number of refugees. They say the refugees have many children and that they are noisy and making the village crowded. *“Each refugee woman drags five children behind [her]. They have taken our blessings. It seems they will stay here long, since they are having a good life - much better than what they had in Syria.”* Some villagers think that refugee women have rented one property and turned it into a brothel. When asked about the location of this property, no one could locate it or knew the property owner even though, in a small village, people generally are very familiar with everybody. The villagers ‘know about’ this, simply because *“everyone is talking about it”*.

Most of all, the young refugees wish to return to Syria. They express it clearly, saying: *“Instead of offering us aid, we wish the United Nations organizations would resolve the matter in Syria and get us back home.”*





EDUCATION



## B. EDUCATION

This section mainly targets refugee youth enrolled in schools in Lebanon - representing around 6 per cent of the total sample population of Syrian refugee youth - and also those who were enrolled in Syria but had their education disrupted by their displacement, accounting for around one third of the survey sample. The small number of refugee youth enrolled in Lebanon constrains the analysis of their situation and could be statistically insignificant. The impact of displacement is considerable for those who had been enrolled in Syria prior to arriving in Lebanon. They see formal education as a top priority, especially among female refugee youth and, more specifically, those females aged 15-18 years. The barriers to education in Lebanon for refugee youth relate to academic issues, certification problems and cost barriers, both direct cost and opportunity cost.

### 1. SITUATION ANALYSIS

**Only 6 per cent of the surveyed Syrian refugee youth are enrolled in formal education in Lebanon, even though more than one third of the youth sample had been enrolled in Syria before displacement** (table 23). Obstacles related to livelihood and displacement, along with limited specific targeting of the youth group by concerned authorities and organizations, hamper refugee youth from pursuing learning opportunities and from using the school as a support system to make a safe transition into adulthood. The gravity of the situation is illustrated when comparing the estimated 72 per cent of youth enrolled in Syria in 2010 and the transition to the secondary cycle of 95 per cent in 2010 (UNESCO 2012), with the mere 8 per cent of 15-18-year-old Syrian refugees enrolled in schools in Lebanon.

**Table 23: Enrolment rates of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, and in Syria prior to arrival, by age group**  
(Percentage)

94%			
are not enrolled in formal education in Lebanon			
35%		65%	
were enrolled in Syria		were not enrolled in Syria	
68%	32%	34%	66%
are 15-18 years old	are 19-24 years old	are 15-18 years old	are 19-24 years old

**The out-of-school refugee youth who would like to resume their education account for 30 per cent of the surveyed youth.** Of the 94 per cent who are not enrolled in Lebanon, 35 per cent were enrolled in Syria and, among them, 87 per cent would like to study in Lebanon if they had the opportunity (table 24). The remaining say they do not want to pursue their education in Lebanon even if given the chance to do so (8 per cent); or they do not know whether they would or nor (5 per cent), reflecting the uncertainty they live in. These 13 per cent mostly are working or looking for work, while all of the out-of-school female refugee youths not interested in education anymore neither working nor looking for work. Interviews with parents and focus groups with refugee youth show that, in general, parents have no objections to education; however, refugee youth face a multitude of barriers to their integration in education.





**Table 24: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth enrolled in Syria willing to pursue education in Lebanon, by sex and age group (n = 321)**

(Percentage)

WILLINGNESS TO PURSUE EDUCATION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Enrolled in Syria and would have continued education had they stayed there	97	91	95	94	95
Willing to continue education in Lebanon if available	91	88	81	90	87
Indecisive about continuing education in Lebanon if available	4	4	8	1	5
Not willing to continue education in Lebanon if available	5	9	12	8	8

## 2. RECENT MEASURES

In order to pursue their formal education, Syrian refugee children and youth, in principle, have to integrate into the Lebanese education system. The system in Lebanon is divided into elementary and intermediate education, catering for the age group 6-15; and secondary education, catering for those 16-18 years old.<sup>18</sup> The education system consists of: a) a large number of private general-education schools, technical institutes and universities; b) public general-education schools and technical institutes, as well as the publicly-administered Lebanese University; and c) free general-education schools and technical institutes subsidized and run mostly by faith-based organizations. Private education provisioning and financing in Lebanon is quite developed and accounts for more than half the enrolment of Lebanese students, but the public and subsidized institutions tend to be more accessible and affordable to low-income households and, similarly, to refugees. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education oversees the public and private education sector in Lebanon. All schools offer the Lebanese curriculum, which combines Arabic and one foreign language of instruction for math and sciences; unlike the Syrian curriculum, which is exclusively in Arabic.

The magnitude of the Syrian refugee influx is putting pressure on the public education system, which is unable to accommodate the increasing number of refugee children and youth. As the 2013/2014 school year was beginning, the Lebanese public-school system was catering for 300,000

children in regular schools (UN 2014). In addition, Lebanon is host to approximately 280,000 Syrian 3-18-year-old refugee children registered with UNHCR, and 20,000 Palestinian children from Syria, the majority of whom in need of schooling (ibid). The pressure is mainly in elementary and intermediate cycles. To accommodate Syrian refugee children - and with the support of international organizations - many public schools have introduced a second shift of schooling in the afternoon, in addition to their regular teaching hours. Understandably, the capacity of the public education system has become somewhat stretched.

**The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has issued a number of circulars to facilitate and manage enrolment of Syrian refugee children and youth in public and private schools.** According to these circulars, refugee students need to provide identification and certification documents from their last year of schooling. If the latter are not available, they can enrol - on a temporary basis until required documents are available - based on their age and an assessment of their level. Supported by United Nations organizations, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education added to the regular morning teaching hours also an afternoon shift to exclusively accommodate recently-arrived Syrian students. The afternoon shift offers a modified syllabus which is close to the official Lebanese curriculum but with slight adjustments, including condensing basic subjects or removing sports classes. These measures have proved relatively-more effective for younger children, while the education for 15-18-year-olds remains problematic despite the relatively-greater capacity available in public secondary schools compared to those catering for primary levels.

**A main problem is education certification, with refugee youth having to sit for exams to obtain the official certification required to advance to the next cycle, according to the Lebanese education system.** At the end of the elementary cycle at the age of 14, students in Lebanon must pass the Brevet exam. Likewise, at the end of the secondary cycle at the age of 18, they are required to sit for the Baccalaureate exam. In principle, refugee youth are allowed to sit for these exams but cannot obtain the certifications without presenting official documentation from Syria - a task which is both rather complicated and costly.

**In addition to formal education in public schools, non-formal education options are available for Syrian refugee youth.** A number of faith-based local organizations are providing a non-formal Syrian curriculum slightly modified and excluding certain sections otherwise taught and covered in schools in Syria. Moreover, local and international organizations are providing brief educational courses, including accelerated-learning courses and community-based learning. Very few, or just 5 per cent of refugee youths say they have participated in life skills or similar training, and just 9 per cent in cultural/sports training. In parallel, an interview with the director of a well-established local organization working on education and youth protection highlights significant difficulties in attracting 15-18-year-olds to enrol in alternative forms of learning; while, on the other hand, the quantitative data provided by refugee youths themselves reflect a demand for formal education.





### 3. OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

**Around 35 per cent of the out-of-school refugee youth in Lebanon dropped out due to displacement**, 40 per cent among male and 31 per cent among female youth. More than half of those aged 15-18 years cannot pursue their education in Lebanon.

As addressed in this section, unless otherwise stated, the out-of-school Syrian refugee youth - comprising 94 per cent of the sample - consist of those who already had dropped out of school in Syria, namely around two thirds; and of those who had their education disrupted due to displacement, representing around one third.

#### (a) Characteristics of out-of-school youth

**The majority of those out of school already have achieved some basic form of education, especially that over one third had been studying in Syria.** In fact, 71 per cent of refugee youth not enrolled in Lebanon had completed elementary or intermediate education in Syria prior to arrival. Around 16 per cent have secondary education, including a minority with vocational education, while just over 5 per cent have university-level education (table 25).

**Table 25: Distribution of education level of out-of-school Syrian refugee youth, by sex and age group (n=925)**  
(Percentage)

EDUCATION LEVEL	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Illiterate	7	5	5	5	5
Can read and write	2	2	1	1	1
Elementary	24	31	42	35	33
Intermediate	48	40	37	26	38
Secondary	17	15	14	15	15
Vocational - intermediate	—	—	—	2	—
Vocational - secondary	—	1	—	3	1
University	2	7	—	12	5



**A minority of 5 per cent is illiterate, with illiteracy among females being slightly higher at 6 per cent.** Beirut and Mount Lebanon, being regions with more prospects for employment, host the largest share of male out-of-school refugee youth with some university-level education (9 per cent). In contrast, the share of illiterate refugee youth is the highest in the North, at around 9 per cent.

**Only 11 per cent of those who had been enrolled in Syria but are not in Lebanon - accounting for one third of the out-of-school youth - have attempted to resume their education in Lebanon, yet have been unable to continue.** A slightly larger proportion among male (13 per cent) as compared to female youth (10 per cent) have attempted to continue education in Lebanon. In Beirut and Mount Lebanon, only 4 per cent of out-of-school refugee youth have tried and failed to continue, compared to almost 20 per cent in the North.

**Almost one quarter of unemployed out-of-school refugee youth are looking for work, and they are mainly male.** Around half out-of-school refugee youth are neither working nor looking for work (economically inactive), among whom most are female. The remaining refugee youth population is employed.

#### (b) Barriers to retention in education

**The main cause behind school dropout of surveyed Syrian refugee youth is financial.** Just over 43 per cent say tuition fees are the reason for discontinuing education in Lebanon, and 21 per cent claim it is financial need in general. As most need to work long hours for pay that does not cover basic physical needs, education becomes a luxury. *“I cannot go back to school because it will increase the cost for [my] family; I need to work to help my father,”* explained a refugee youth staying in Tripoli, North Lebanon.

While the tuition cost received the highest response rate across all regions, the proportions of respondents who considered it as a barrier to their enrolment ranged from almost 70 per cent in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, where the cost of living is higher than other region, to around 24 per cent in the North, where the financial need to work received the highest response. Over 26 per cent in the North dropped out of school to work, while 24 per cent claim the high cost of tuition have made them discontinue their education.

**Other key reasons include difficulty of curriculum and transportation cost.** Around 22 per cent consider the difficulty of the curriculum as the main challenge, and 15 per cent attribute their inability to continue education to transportation costs (table 26). This is the case mainly of those staying in remote areas in the Bekaa, the North and the South, where they cannot afford public transport and need to walk often more than 15-20 minutes - at times under difficult weather conditions - to get to a service centre, including a school. Walking for long distances raises concerns about getting lost





and jeopardizing safety, particularly of female refugee youth. It is worth highlighting that the share of the female refugee youth attributing the disruption of school to parental restrictions, marriage or pregnancy is insignificant.

**Table 26: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by reasons given for dropping out of school, by sex and age group (n=321; multiple answers)**

(Percentage)

REASON	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Tuition fees	49	42	37	45	43
Difficulty of Lebanese curriculum	34	28	15	6	22
Financial need for work	6	6	34	37	21
High transportation costs	21	12	9	16	15
Degree/diploma not recognized	11	13	10	13	11
Studies interrupted during the crisis	11	10	10	10	10
Lack of openings/places	10	5	11	12	10
Difficulty of foreign language	5	11	8	13	8
No desire to continue	5	7	9	1	6
No school in near vicinity	9	—	2	6	5

**In relation to the financial burden from tuition and registration fees and from transportation costs, there are hidden expenses that emerge, particularly for those who have reached an end-of-cycle educational level - the primary cycle for 15-year-olds and the secondary cycle for those aged 18 years.** To continue their education and move up to the next cycle, students need an official certification of completion. For refugee youth who did not bring such certification when displaced, the process of getting their documents validated and sent from Syria and then certified in Lebanon in order to make the equivalence may mean a lengthy and costly process which they themselves must pay for. The costs depend on the state and location of their last school in Syria, and also under

what military influence it falls. Around 11 per cent of those who were enrolled in Syria cannot pursue their education because they are unable to obtain equivalence to their Syrian certification to enter the Lebanese education system, while many others have not even attempted to start this process.

**The difficulties related to obtaining official certification compound the financial and academic barriers and de-motivate younger refugees from pursuing education.** The fact that many in their late teens reach certification levels but cannot overcome this hurdle sends discouraging signals on the value and benefits of education to the younger segment of the refugee population. An 18-year-old youth explained to younger refugees: *“You will study for a year and then they will tell you that your results are not accredited.”*

**In contrast, such social factors as the treatment by Lebanese teachers and fellow students do not seem to be significant reasons that lead to dropout among Syrian refugee youth.** Less than 2 per cent said they dropped out because they were not coping, with the proportion in the Bekaa being slightly higher at 3 per cent than that of other regions. Likewise, less than 1 per cent stated the treatment by Lebanese teachers and fellow students had driven them leave. In fact, Syrian refugee youth enrolled in educational institutions usually have more Lebanese friends than those who are not; 67 per cent have Lebanese friends, compared to only 30 per cent of those not in education.

**The impediments in education have pushed some of the male and female refugee youth towards the labour market.** Almost 25 per cent of refugee youth, both male and female, are working for the first time - in other words they had not been working in Syria before coming to Lebanon. They claim to be working in Lebanon because of their inability to enrol in education. In contrast, less than 1 per cent said they are working because they have no desire to pursue education.

**The younger age group seems to have become more detached from, and discouraged by the pursuit education.** Over two thirds of those who are unsure or do not want to continue their education are in the age group 15-18 years, equally divided between male and female. Likewise, the percentage of those aged 15 and 16 years who tried to resume their schooling but dropped out is the lowest among all youth at just 7 per cent. Almost 93 per cent of those aged between 15 and 16 did not even try, versus around 83 per cent among those aged 17-20 years. All female refugee youths not willing to pursue their studies again in Lebanon are economically inactive - on other words, neither working nor looking for work. In contrast, two thirds of male refugee youths are either working or looking for a job.

**(c) Suggestions to resume education**

**When asked for suggestions that would contribute to reintegration into education in Lebanon, over half, or 55 per cent, proposed adopting the Syrian curriculum in the teaching of refugee youth** (table 27). This reflects the difficulties refugee youth are facing in adapting to a curriculum that



uses a foreign language of instruction in the teaching of math and science. For some, following the Syrian curriculum could solve the problem of certification, as one participant studying in a Lebanese school under this curriculum said: *“I will study here and then go to Syria to sit for the official exam - there is no other way.”* This is the case for those who do not face security threats when travelling back to Syria. Establishing separate schools is another frequently-mentioned suggestion, put forward by 42 per cent of the youth. Using a modified Lebanese curriculum is the least-mentioned proposal, suggested by just 9 per cent, as many seem to feel unable to assimilate under that syllabus.

**Table 27: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by suggestions provided to increase enrolment in Lebanon, by sex and age group (n=321; multiple answers)**

(Percentage)

SUGGESTION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Follow Syrian curriculum	61	51	51	50	55
Establish schools for Syrians only	45	39	43	37	42
Give certification equivalence attestation	18	26	14	24	19
Other	26	24	7	12	17
Employ Syrian teachers	8	11	9	13	10
Follow modified Lebanese curriculum	8	14	6	13	9

#### 4. ENROLLED YOUTH<sup>19</sup>

Only 16 per cent of surveyed youth who used to study in Syria have been able to enrol in Lebanon. This is equivalent to only 6 per cent of the total sample population (table 28). The enrolment rate of young Syrian refugees in Lebanon does not vary significantly when comparing female to male among the total sample; however, there seems to be a gender bias against males in the younger age group, with around 9 per cent of female 15-18-year-olds being enrolled in Lebanon, versus 7 per cent among males the same age. In contrast, no gender bias exists when considering the enrolment rates in Syria of this age group. This can be explained by an earlier entry to the labour force of males when families face hardship.



<sup>19</sup>It is important to bear in mind that due to the small size of the ‘enrolled youth’ sub-population, percentages might not be an accurate reflection of the situation of enrolled youth and generalizations on the total enrolled youth population cannot be accurately made.

**Table 28: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by enrolment in Lebanon, by sex and age group (Percentage)**

	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Refugee youth enrolled in Lebanon	9	5	7	6	6

**Enrolment rates of refugee youth are higher in the North, compared to other regions.** Around 9 per cent of refugee youth are enrolled in the North, versus 6 per cent for the refugee youth sample across Lebanon. Of those who had been enrolled in Syria, refugees living in the North account for 22 per cent of those re-enrolled, versus 16 per cent for the total sample in Lebanon. As the North is a widespread area - with varying Lebanese population densities and, likewise, unequal clustering of Syrian refugees - it would be difficult to find an exact explanation for this rate, especially given the initial low number of those enrolled. It is worth highlighting, however, that in an earlier survey 58 per cent of the schools of the North reported to be operating below capacity - the largest share compared to other regions in Lebanon (UNICEF 2012). Furthermore, interviews confirm that two private universities in the North are providing reduced tuition to Syrian students.

**Qualitative data also suggests that there are local organizations in the North which support the education of Syrian refugee youth and facilitate their enrolment process.** One organization, for example, is providing a wide variety of educational assistance. These services include providing books and stationery, equipping schools and teachers with teaching material, connecting Syrian teachers to private schools, offering a modified Syrian curriculum, and offering guidance and advice to students and their parents. The organization also facilitates the process of obtaining official certification from Syria, and of completing the process of providing official equivalence attestation for Lebanon. For those students who did not bring official educational certification from Syria, the process is cumbersome and requires using unofficial channels and paying additional and high fees to secure such documents from Syria. Though the financing of the process of securing documents is usually borne by the students or their families, the organization funds other operations from individual donors, local and regional associations and faith-based organizations.

#### (a) Characteristics of enrolled youth

**Being enrolled in education does not necessarily imply economic inactivity.** Of the 6 per cent enrolled in Lebanon, 30 per cent are also economically active - in other words, working or looking for a job. They are of all ages between 15 and 24 years. Refugee youths who are working while studying account for 12 per cent of enrolled youth, while another 18 per cent are looking for work while studying.





Among refugee youth, the largest share is enrolled in public schools, accounting for 40 per cent of the enrolled youth. Twelve per cent attend private schools, and 9 per cent attend free private schools (table 29). Sixteen per cent of refugee youths are enrolled in private universities, mostly in the North where some provide reduced tuition fees, while 13 per cent are at the Lebanese University. Around 4 per cent are attending vocational institutes and 3 per cent study in religious schools.

**Table 29: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth enrolled in Lebanon by educational institution, by sex and age group (n=60)**  
(Percentage)

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Public school	64	5	59	19	40
Private university	6	37	—	31	16
The Lebanese University	—	37	—	21	13
Private school	21	8	12	—	12
Free private school	10	6	12	7	9
Vocational institute	—	—	—	23	4
Religious school	—	6	6	—	3
Private institution	—	—	12	—	3

**The Lebanese curriculum is the most common syllabus followed by enrolled refugee youth.** Almost two thirds of those 15-18 years old are following the Lebanese curriculum, just over one quarter the Syrian curriculum, and the remainder a modified Lebanese syllabus (table 30). The Syrian curriculum is most prevalent in schools in the North since 36 per cent of the enrolled Syrian refugee youth living there report following it, while it is not at all the case in the Beirut/Mount Lebanon and the South/Nabatieh regions. In contrast, the modified Lebanese curriculum is most prevalent in the Bekaa, where 17 per cent of the enrolled youth study under it.

**Table 30: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth enrolled in Lebanon by type of curriculum followed, by sex and age group (n=60)**  
(Percentage)

TYPE OF CURRICULUM	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Lebanese curriculum	39	80	64	90	65
Syrian curriculum	40	20	24	10	26
Modified Lebanese curriculum	21	—	12	—	10

**In the North and the Bekaa, local organizations are providing alternatives to the Lebanese curriculum.** Local organizations and Syrian associations are finding ways around adopting the Syrian curriculum. Private schools are offering afternoon shifts with special programmes for Syrian refugee youth, applying either the Syrian curriculum adjusted to exclude any reference to the ruling regime or a modified Lebanese syllabus. For official examinations, some NGOs are arranging for transportation of refugee youth to border towns in Syria for them to complete the exams and return.

#### (b) Education expenses

**Enrolled Syrian refugee youth rely either on their parents or on themselves to cover the bulk of education and related expenses** (table 31). Tuition fees of more than two fifths of youth in education are fully covered by the youths themselves or their parents. Among them, the majority are not in public schools. On average, parents cover 44 per cent of tuition fees, 52 per cent of books and stationery costs, 65 per cent of expenses for school uniform and 64 per cent of transportation cost. Enrolled refugee youth also contribute, covering partly their education expenses with as much as 15 per cent of tuition and 20 to 30 per cent of other related expenses as books, school uniform and transportation.



**Table 31: Average percentage contribution to tuition fees by source of funding, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)

SOURCE	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Parents	37	35	48	59	44
Local and/or international organizations	53	48	43	2	40
Refugee student himself/herself	10	16	6	36	15
Individual donor(s)	—	—	3	2	1

**International and local organizations pay around half the tuition fees for 15-18-year-olds.** While international organizations cover full tuition for public schools and part of the transportation costs, this partial rate reported by respondents can be attributed to the fact that many refugee youths are attending other schools due to limited access, or that they are enrolled in higher education. Local associations pay over one fifth of the tuition costs on average. Transportation costs remain a burden, with 15 per cent of refugee youth who had been enrolled in Syria and tried to continue their education in Lebanon dropping out for this reason. The qualitative research confirms the problem of transportation, an issue voiced particularly by the refugee youth themselves.

### (c) Challenges in education

**Over 65 per cent of enrolled Syrian refugee youth are facing education-related difficulties in Lebanon.** Of those, over 55 per cent are between 15 and 18 years old. Across the older youth aged 19-24 years, there seems to be fewer issues with regard to education. This is because these students already would have passed the critical period of transition from primary to secondary education, and then to university level.

**Indeed, 40 per cent of those facing difficulties in education attribute this to poor understanding of the foreign language used in teaching** (table 32). Likewise, around 36 per cent pointed to difficulty of the Lebanese curriculum. Over 23 per cent mentioned the relatively high tuition cost and 12 per cent said they suffer from mistreatment by educational staff and 7 per cent from mistreatment by Lebanese

fellow-students. In addition, 13 per cent do not feel secure in commuting from their residence to the educational institution. One quarter of male refugee youths feel insecure due to harassment on the streets or at checkpoints, while less than 5 per cent among female youth say they feel insecure. The least problematic issue for Syrian refugee youth in education is attending mixed schools or classes, mentioned by just 2 per cent of those enrolled.

**Table 32: Distribution of enrolled Syrian refugee youth by reported difficulties at school/university in Lebanon, by sex and age group (n=60; multiple answers)**

(Percentage)

DIFFICULTY	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Foreign language	41	42	39	40	40
Lebanese curriculum	35	29	48	36	36
Tuition and/or registration fees	13	24	38	26	23
Transportation	6	12	50	12	17
Distance between school and place of residence	13	—	37	26	17
Feeling of insecurity	—	12	25	26	13
Cost of uniform	7	—	38	12	12
Mistreatment by teachers	13	10	12	12	12
Alienation	7	12	12	12	10
Cost of books and stationery	7	—	25	12	10
Adaptation	—	12	—	26	8
Treatment by Lebanese students	6	—	12	12	7
Mixed male/female class	—	—	—	12	2



#### (d) Suggestions and aspirations of youth

**The refugee youth who managed to continue their education in Lebanon, notwithstanding challenges arising from displacement, believe in the value of education for learning and generally improving prospects in life.** In a focus group in Tripoli, North Lebanon, a male refugee youth studying under the Syrian curriculum stated: *“Education is better than learning a skill - it is a safer choice for my future.”* Among enrolled refugee youth, 41 per cent are pursuing education to create a better future, while 36 per cent have a desire to learn. Only 7 per cent, mainly refugee youth staying in the North, think education specifically will improve their job-finding prospects. Nobody reported attending school or university for the reason of wanting to get out of the house or to find a spouse.

**Parents of Syrian refugee youth appear to be encouraging education of their children and, while financial pressure exists, those presently in education expressed in focus groups the insistence of their family for them to stay on.** The aspirations of Syrian refugee youth who have the chance to pursue their education in Lebanon are not very different from those of any other youth group. The majority of enrolled Syrian refugee youth, representing 86 per cent, hope to reach university or other higher education level. Upon completion of their education, 68 per cent aim to find a job and almost 20 per cent of enrolled Syrian refugee youth would like to emigrate.

**Employing Syrian teachers and adopting the Syrian curriculum are the most frequent suggestions for pursuing education proposed by refugee youth.** The 38 per cent who suggested having a Syrian curriculum are both female and male and mostly between 15 and 18 years old. In addition, 41 per cent - out of whom two thirds are female - suggested employing Syrian teachers. These proposals reflect the difficulty facing Syrian refugee youth in adapting to the Lebanese curriculum and are indicative of a need to support academically the presently-enrolled and potential students with the specific objective of reintegrating them into the formal education system.





ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



## C. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

### 1. SITUATION ANALYSIS

**Lebanon is not a signatory of the United Nations 1951 Convention on Refugees relating to the status and standards of treatment of refugees.** While certain international standards regarding protection and rights of refugees can apply as Lebanon is a signatory of such other international human rights instruments as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Covenants, the right of refugees to work in the country is not explicitly one of them. In principle, national laws govern the legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon; however, international treaties stipulate the basic right also for persons seeking refuge in a second country to earn an income and live in dignity. Moreover, Lebanon and Syria have a bilateral agreement allowing nationals of both countries freedom of stay, work/employment and practice of economic activity. Syrian nationals have the right to work in Lebanon. They need a work permit, as is the case for other non-citizens; however, they pay only 25 per cent of the standard work-permit fee that is a function of the type of job they are pursuing, and they do not need a work contract or a sponsor.

**The vast majority of Syrian labourers work in the informal sector and without work permits.** They have been providing Lebanon with a cheap source of labour since the early 1990s. With the eruption of the Syrian crisis, this pool of workers has expanded enormously, while the Lebanese economy has been undergoing a slowdown and, thus, not been able to fully absorb the influx of additional workers. The qualitative research shows that this situation has allowed employers to benefit from an oversupply of labour, mainly unskilled and poorer workers willing to accept jobs under difficult conditions and for relatively low remuneration. Workers suffer from pay discrimination (greater for females), harassment (physical or sexual for females), employment instability and poor working conditions (physically demanding and long hours). At the same time, the Lebanese host communities at large, in a context of limited job creation in peripheral areas, feel threatened by what is considered competition. This situation varies across sectors and according to the socioeconomic class and profile of the employed refugee youth.

**The refugee youth labour force surveyed consists of around 22 per cent working and almost 25 per cent unemployed.<sup>20</sup>** Thus, close to 47 per cent of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon are economically active<sup>21</sup> (table 33). Males make up over three quarters of the labour force, with just under half between the age of 15 and 18 years. Of working females, one third of them are between 15 and 18 years old, versus 52 per cent of working males. Of unemployed females, 29 per cent are aged 15-18 years, while 54 per cent of unemployed males are in that age group.

<sup>20</sup>For those –working, the survey does not distinguish between formal work and informal work arrangements. Likewise, for those considered unemployed, the survey did not adopt the standard definition of employment, but rather considered as unemployed those who declared themselves looking for work at the time of the distribution of the questionnaire.

<sup>21</sup>The economically active population comprises all persons who engage actively in the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services, as defined by the United Nations systems of national accounts. In other words, it consists of all those working or looking for work and, thus, is equivalent to the labour force, usually for those aged 15 years and above.



**Table 33: Distribution of economically active and inactive Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
<b>ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE (LABOUR FORCE)</b>					
Working	6	8	39	45	22
Looking for a job	9	14	39	43	25
<b>ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE</b>					
Unemployed and not looking work	85	77	22	12	53

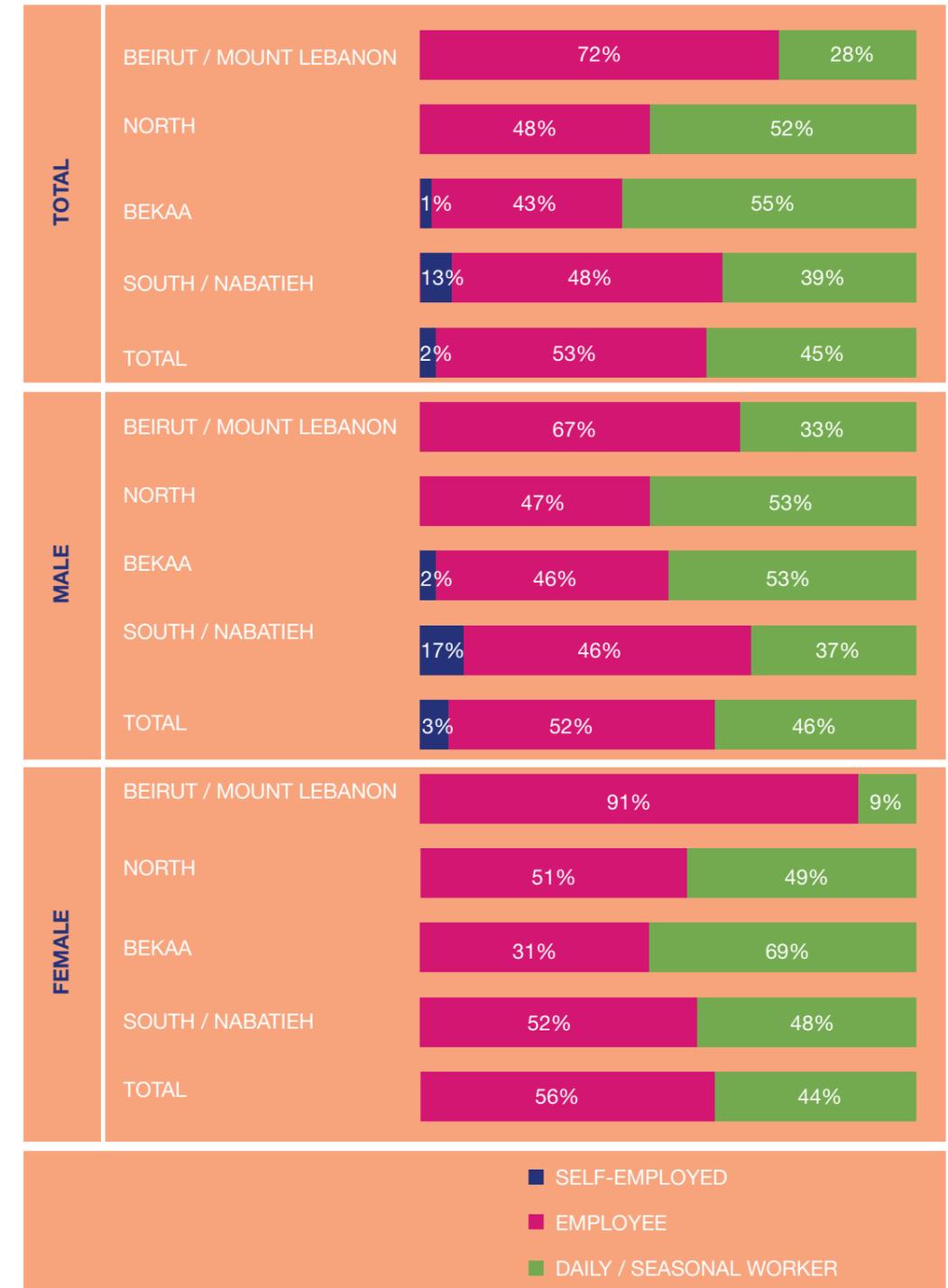
Almost half of refugee youths in the labour force in Lebanon were not working in Syria, but presently are working or looking for work primarily because of financial need. The vast majority has been pushed into the labour force because of deteriorating economic conditions. The second main reason driving refugee youth to become economically active is their inability to continue their education. Almost none of the surveyed refugee youths expressed having being forced to work or pushed into the labour force and, thus, ending up being outside of the education system. As several Syrian representatives and parents said, the conditions of displacement are pushing the refugee youth to take on responsibilities usually ascribed to an older age group; in their words: *“They are growing up before their time.”*

## 2. WORKING YOUTH

### (a) Characteristics of youth in the labour force

The vast majority of surveyed working youth are either employees or casual workers. Over half of young refugees in the workforce are employees; around 45 per cent are daily and/or seasonal workers, mostly in agriculture and construction. Around 2 per cent are self-employed. Nearly half of the refugee youth workers are 15-18 years. In Beirut and Mount Lebanon, 72 per cent are employees, with 91 per cent employees among the working females; whereas, in the Bekaa, refugee youths are mainly daily and/or seasonal workers (55%) in line with the type of jobs offered by the two different local economies (figure 2). Overall, both males and females are employed as daily and seasonal workers in rural areas, especially close to the border with Syria.

**Figure 2: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by type of employment by region**  
(Percentage)



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY





**The surveyed refugee youth are in elementary occupations. Casual work is the predominant category, accounting for one quarter or more of working male refugee youth.** Among youth workers, those employed in bakeries and factories make up 14 per cent, while construction workers account for 10 per cent (table 34). Youth occupations are somewhat gender-segregated, with jobs of females predominantly being in agriculture, bakeries and factories, and in childcare. The overall picture remains of refugee youth workers being in precarious employment that is highly insecure due to the seasonal nature of casual work in agriculture and construction.

**Table 34: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth in the workforce by trade/profession, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

TRADE/PROFESSION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Casual labourer	—	3	25	29	22
Worker (bakery/factory)	20	14	13	14	14
Construction worker	—	—	10	15	10
Agricultural worker	36	21	8	—	8
Retail worker (supermarket/shop)	7	12	8	6	8
Mechanic (car repair)	—	3	7	9	7
Carpenter	—	—	8	6	6
Restaurant worker	7	—	6	4	5
Teacher/childcare worker	15	15	—	2	3
Cleaner	—	17	2	—	3
Other	15	15	13	15	14

**Most refugee youth workers have school education,** with 64 per cent having elementary or intermediate education and 17 per cent secondary education. Female workers have a larger share of

university education (19 per cent) than their male counterparts (5 per cent), but also have the larger share of illiteracy at 16 per cent, whereas only 2 per cent of the working males are illiterate (table 35). Beirut and Mount Lebanon have the best-educated refugee youth workers; 19 per cent have secondary education and 13 per cent university education. In contrast, in the Bekaa over half have attained only basic reading and writing skills or elementary education, with 9 per cent being illiterate.

**Table 35: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth in the workforce by education level and sex**  
(Percentage)

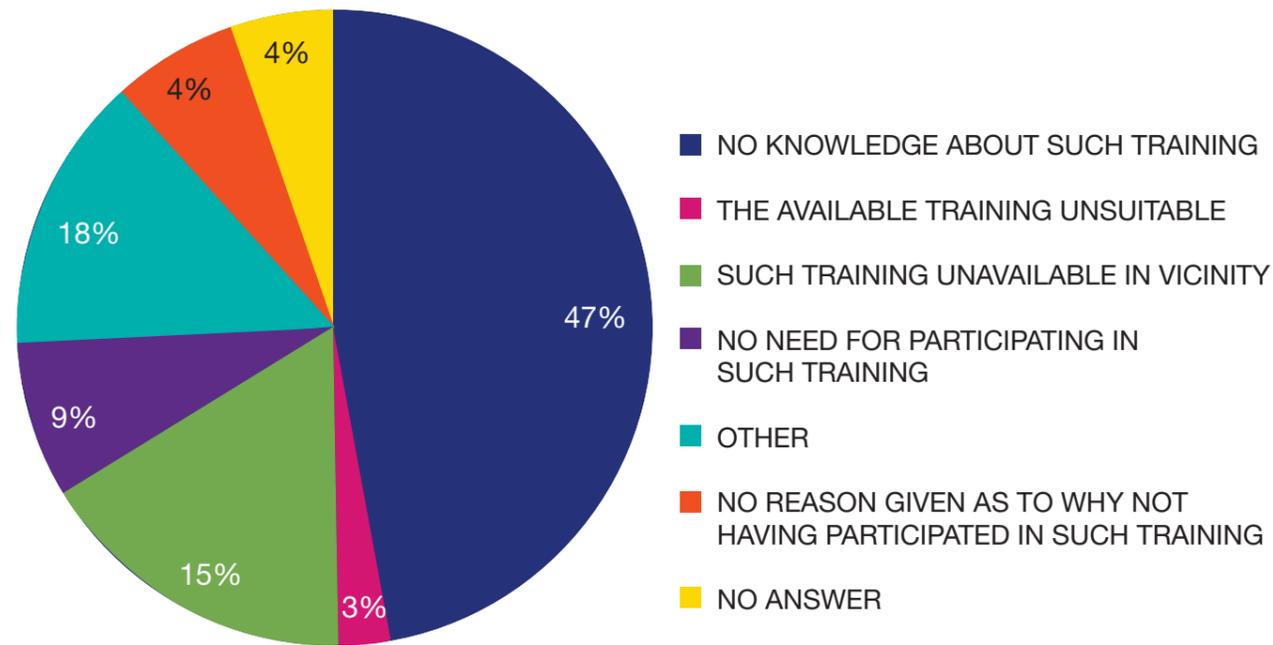
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Elementary/intermediate schooling	39	70	64
Secondary schooling	22	16	17
University	19	5	8
Illiterate	16	2	5
Can read and write	4	1	2
Vocational - intermediate	—	3	2
Vocational - secondary	—	2	2

**Only 6 per cent of Syrian refugee youth working in Lebanon (female and male equally) have participated in any form of vocational training.** The training that females have taken is related primarily to computer skills, first aid and beauty, including hairdressing and makeup. Males also have attended computer and computer-maintenance training, as well as industrial courses in mechanics, heating maintenance, etc. Most of those with training (64 per cent) are 19-24 years old, while only 36 per cent are aged 15-18 years. Of the vast majority who have not received any training, 47 per cent did not know that such training opportunities were offered, and 15 per cent said they are not available where they live (figure 3), with one third of the latter residing in the North.





**Figure 3: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by reasons for not attending vocational training**  
(Percentage)



When asked about the types of training working refugee youth could benefit from, less than half provided suggestions; the rest did not know or did not answer. The main topics suggested include all types of vocational training in carpentry, electrical and mechanical skills training, and telecommunications. Females proposed mainly hairdressing and sewing. Likewise, training in basic commercial and business-management skills was suggested.

**(b) Working conditions**

**The increased supply of Syrian refugee workers in the semi-skilled and unskilled labour market has facilitated further the exploitation by employers of this category of workers.** The qualitative research suggests that most Syrian youth workers feel exploited and discriminated against. Females express sexual harassment or exploitation at work, while most males complain of economic and physical exploitation, including not receiving remuneration on time or as agreed, or working very long hours in physically-challenging jobs. The counter perspective generally prevailing among Lebanese - as indicated in the qualitative research - considers Syrian refugees as taking job opportunities from the Lebanese. In fact, this has led some municipalities to close small Syrian-owned businesses for not complying with the formal requirements for operating a commercial enterprise in Lebanon. This step has been replicated in other municipalities.

**On average, refugee youth workers get a monthly pay of around LBP 379,000, which is 44 per cent less than the minimum wage in Lebanon.** Syrian refugee youth work almost 22 days per month for an average of eight to nine hours a day. Working hours can reach up to 20 hours a day, while working days can go from four to 30 days a month. Averages describing working conditions, as such, disguise wide differences and must be read with caution. The lowest pay and longest working hours are associated mainly with seasonal/daily work in construction and agriculture undertaken by those in the relatively-poor segment of the refugee population. In contrast - though themselves feeling somewhat exploited at work, as expressed in their statements in focus groups - more skilled, upper middle-income refugee workers enjoy relatively better terms.

**The average monthly pay of female refugee youth is 30 per cent less than that of male youth (a mean of LBP 282,000 for females, versus over LBP 400,000 for males).** The average wage of female refugee youth is equivalent to a mere 26 per cent of the minimum wage in Lebanon. In focus groups, most female youth employed on a daily basis as agricultural workers claimed they are being paid at most half the rate of Lebanese females doing the same job. The daily rate quoted in qualitative research by females hovered around LBP 6,000-LBP 7,000.

**With such working conditions, almost 73 per cent are not satisfied with their work.** There are no notable differences across age categories or regions with the exception for the South and Nabatieh, where a relatively larger share of refugee youth workers (over 37 per cent) are content with their jobs, which probably is due to the smaller number of Syrian refugees there and, thus, less competition for work and potential for exploitation.

**The primary reason for job dissatisfaction is low wages (83 per cent)** (table 36). The second most-mentioned reasons relate to the issue of protection and stability; for example, due to intermittent work availability (24 per cent), and absence of contract and health insurance (6 and 14 per cent, respectively). The nature of work - long hours (19 per cent), work exceeding physical ability (15 per cent) and no rest (9 per cent) - is third among reasons. Indeed, 20 per cent of those 15-18 years old are dissatisfied because the physical requirements of the work exceed their abilities. Around 7 per cent mentioned the treatment of employers. This reason was raised during the qualitative research, with a widespread feeling of humiliation at work expressed. It is worth highlighting that 7 per cent of female youth in the age group 19-24 dissatisfied with work attributed this situation to sexual harassment.



**Table 36: Distribution of employed Syrian refugee youth by most common reasons for dissatisfaction in the workplace, by sex and age group (multiple answers)**

(Percentage)

REASON	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Low wages	100	91	80	82	83
Intermittent work and no continuity	18	6	32	22	24
Long working hours	26	24	12	23	19
Work not compatible with physical abilities	19	4	21	12	15
No health insurance	9	24	16	9	14
No rest days	—	7	12	7	9
Work not guaranteed	17	11	10	4	9
Work not compatible with qualifications	—	13	4	13	8
Employer treatment	9	4	10	4	7
No contract	—	9	4	8	6

**The qualitative research reconfirms the weak employment protection of Syrian refugee youth workers, particularly among casual workers.** Syrian refugees are unable to access processes and mechanisms to protect themselves against work exploitation in the absence of a legal system or capacity to organize. Refugee youth believe they are being exploited, working for long hours (often exceeding 12 hours per day), with employers delaying payment or not meeting their wage agreement, as low as they are. The problem of employers not fulfilling their payment obligation on time recurred in focus groups in various regions. For example in the Bekaa, a male refugee youth said he had worked for an electrician for two days, but was paid only after six weeks. Female workers express discrimination against those who do not flirt with male employers, while females who do enjoy better treatment.



**Despite the above, Syrian refugee youth workers are willing to take any job available due to their dire need.** A male youth residing in the southern village of Chebaa expressed this clearly: *“Whatever work is offered I take because I need to support my family in Syria.”* This was echoed in other regions; for example, in the Bekaa, participants stated: *“We are willing to do any job, including that of a porter.”*

**(c) Outlook of working youth**

**The working youth have very basic job aspirations, with close to half simply hoping for better conditions at work.** One fifth wish to find work more suited to their physical abilities or educational qualifications; among the latter, almost half are aged 15-18 years.

**Around 7 per cent of refugee youth workers would like to go back to formal education, of which 72 per cent are aged 15-18 years.** In the North, those wishing to return to education are highest at 15 per cent. This can be read with the fact that the North reported also the highest school dropout rate among the surveyed Syrian refugee youth at 19 per cent, as compared to other regions.

**Along the same lines, over one fifth of working refugee youths believe continuing education would help them get a better job.** In addition, over one third think that if they had better knowledge of where to search for work, they would have greater opportunities. Assistance of international organizations and networking with local communities were proposed by 16 per cent of youth workers as useful means of securing better job opportunities.

**(d) Job seeking**

**The most successful way to get a job, as suggested by working refugee youth, is resorting to acquaintances.** Almost 59 per cent have used this way; while 45 per cent just used a door-to-door approach, turning up at potential work sites and inquiring about openings. The mean time spent to find work was reported at 3.8 months; with 6.1 months for females being almost double the 3.2 months for males. This average, however, includes waiting periods exceeding 18 months in some cases. In general, the reported average time for the 15-18-year-olds was shorter than that for those aged 19-24, particularly for females. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, landing a job does not necessarily provide security for Syrian refugee workers. The qualitative research shows that those who can afford to be selective are declining jobs because of unfair terms. A male refugee youth in Tripoli, North Lebanon, said: *“Why should I work, if all I am making I spend on transportation?”*





### 3. UNEMPLOYED YOUTH

Of the surveyed Syrian refugee youth in the labour force, around 52 per cent are unemployed and 61 per cent of the unemployed are first-time job seekers; in other words, they had not been working before their displacement. The rate of youth unemployment among female refugees is estimated at 62 per cent, as compared to that of their male counterparts at slightly less than 50 per cent.

#### (a) Characteristics of unemployed youth

Out of the total pool of unemployed, 72 per cent are male and 28 per cent are female. The unemployed are almost equally spread across Lebanon. Around 11 per cent of the unemployed are married, with some having up to three children.

More than 80 per cent of the unemployed have school education and 11 per cent are university educated. Unemployed female youth registered some school-level education, with none being illiterate; versus 5 per cent illiteracy among unemployed males. Around 80 per cent of unemployed female youth have had schooling, with 20 per cent having attained secondary education (table 37). Females with university-level education account for 17 per cent of unemployed female youth.

Table 37: Distribution of unemployed Syrian refugee youth by education level and sex (Percentage)

EDUCATION LEVEL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Elementary/intermediate schooling	59	69	66
Secondary schooling	20	13	15
University	17	9	11
Illiterate	—	5	4
Vocational - secondary	4	1	2
Can read and write	—	1	1
Vocational - intermediate	—	1	1

Almost all unemployed refugee youth, or 94 per cent, have never participated in vocational training in Lebanon. It is obvious that Syrian refugee youth lack information and have limited access and exposure to the services offered by various organizations, including NGOs. This is reflected by the reasons provided by the surveyed youth when asked why they had not participated. As many as 47 per cent said they did not know about such training, 16 per cent said this was not available where they lived, and 15 per cent simply did not know why they never had participated.

#### (b) Accessing the labour market

At the time of the survey, unemployed refugee youth had been looking for work for an average of close to six months. Around 64 per cent said they search for work mainly by visiting potential employers. The input from the qualitative research suggests that, in some cases, employers reject work candidates once they know they are Syrians. Another search method used by the unemployed is asking acquaintances, accounting for 56 per cent and the most-used search mode chosen by those who actually got hired. Some 21 per cent wait with other Syrian workers in gathering areas to get hired for a day's labour or for a specific job. They are mostly the 15-18-year-olds, with 70 per cent among them choosing this job-search method.

With such a high unemployment rate, and in order to find a job, 90 per cent of unemployed refugee youth are willing to take a low-wage position, and 80 per cent are willing to take a job that does not meet their qualifications and abilities. The remainder have income-generating family members supporting them and, thus, can afford to wait to find a suitable position or to leave work if they feel exploited.

Unemployed refugee youth consider that access to information could improve their chances of finding work. In fact, 35 per cent believe they need more information on job availability, with 30 per cent suggesting international organizations could help in getting them work. In contrast, 26 per cent think that finishing their education would increase their chances.

#### (c) Repercussions of unemployment

Unemployment is affecting the psychological and emotional health of Syrian refugee youth. Two thirds of the unemployed state the overall mood in their residence is continuously dark and tense. Over half express a feeling of hopelessness and believe their conditions never will improve. Two thirds of the unemployed describe themselves feeling anxious and depressed; while over 41 per cent sometimes or frequently have considered ending their own life, with unemployed female refugees between 15 and 18 years old reporting the highest share, reflecting the high vulnerability of this group.

The qualitative research suggests a further negative impact on gender relations within households. Female refugee youths in focus groups conducted in the Bekaa stated clearly that they



receive more frequent beatings by their husbands who, in turn, have nothing to do and feel idle or tense. These females are living in informal tented settlements supervised by local organizations. Each family has a prefabricated one-room unit. Some are equipped with a television. Families are receiving assistance through local organizations. The settlements are located somewhat far from the village centre, and most males stay in all day without much to do except *“inflicting physical and verbal violence”*, as one female stated. These female implored organizations working in response to the Syrian humanitarian crisis to get their husbands outside the domestic sphere and find them work to reduce domestic violence and tension.

#### 4. ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE YOUTH

The economically inactive comprise 53 per cent of the surveyed Syrian refugee youth, the majority of 86 per cent being female (table 38). Around 38 per cent of the females are assuming family care or being housewives. The vast majority of the economically inactive refugee youth have school education level. Of the females, 73 per cent have elementary or intermediate education, as compared to 66 per cent of the males. Likewise, 16 per cent of the economically inactive females have university education, as compared to 15 per cent of males. Another 16 per cent either are pursuing their education, or would like to do so. Some 11 per cent feel they do not have the skills or education to allow them to work. The qualitative research shows that some female refugee youths would like to work and generate income in order to support their families; however, they feel that they either have no skills to offer or cannot due to domestic and childcare responsibilities.

**Table 38: Distribution of economically inactive Syrian refugee youth by enrolment in education and sex**

(Percentage)

86% Female		14% Male	
53% Economically inactive (outside labour force)			
92% Not enrolled in education		8% Enrolled in education	
88% Female	12% Male	59% Female	41% Male

Interestingly, a good 14 per cent of refugee youth are inactive because of family restrictions, 95 per cent of them female. It is also worth mentioning that 1.3 per cent have a disability or medical condition preventing them from working. Of the economically inactive, 4 per cent are discouraged unemployed youth - almost equally divided between males and females - who have given up looking for work. Over two thirds of the economically inactive live on the income of immediate family members, including husband, brothers or sisters.





HEALTH



## D. HEALTH

Generally, health services are available, although sometimes inaccessible because of cost. Knowledge about contraception is relatively limited, though often it is the attitudes of refugee youth in favour of childbearing that discourage and limit the use of contraception. Knowledge about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) appears adequate.

### 1. HEALTH CONDITIONS AND SERVICES

Other than pregnancy- and delivery-related medical consultation, **only 31 per cent of refugee youth aged 15-24 have sought health services**, most commonly at dispensaries and hospitals, as illustrated in table 39. In terms of location, services are accessible to most youth surveyed, among whom only 4 per cent lack a health-service facility within a 30-minute walking distance - in fact, most have more than one service facility close by.

**Table 39: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by type of health-care facility consulted at last visit, by sex and age group (n=299)**  
(Percentage)

HEALTH-CARE FACILITY	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Dispensary/health-care centre	44	48	44	48	46
Hospital	19	22	20	30	23
Private clinic	16	20	19	10	16
Pharmacy	15	6	17	9	11
Mobile clinic	2	2	—	4	2
Social service centre	3	1	—	—	1
Other	2	1	—	—	1

**The health services received were satisfactory to 56 per cent of those who had used them.** Although main reasons for dissatisfaction are cost-related (table 40), the median cost of medical visits is LBP 75,000 (USD 50), meaning that 50 per cent of all visits cost USD 50 or less. In fact, 75 per cent



of refugee youth consulting medical services pay no more than LBP 300,000 (USD 200). The majority of expensive medical services are paid by international organizations and are often treatments for major or chronic medical problems. Other contributing factors to dissatisfaction with health services are treatment by medical staff and long waiting time, factors also brought up in the qualitative research where some refugee youth and parents claimed discrimination against them in health facilities.

**Table 40: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by reasons for dissatisfaction with medical services, by sex and age group (n=121)**  
(Percentage)

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
High cost of medication	68	68	66	60	66
High cost of service	68	45	65	50	55
Poor quality of medical service	24	38	22	32	29
Poor treatment by medical staff	21	24	15	21	22
Long waiting time	6	18	21	30	18
Difficulty reaching health-care facility	—	5	14	13	7
Lack of medical specialty required	3	3	—	10	4
Lack of privacy	3	4	—	6	4
Inconvenient hours of service	3	—	—	—	1
Medics and staff of opposite sex	—	—	—	—	—

**Both male and female refugee youth indicate a preference for consulting same-sex health-care providers,** although none of the participants in the qualitative research indicated that the sex of the health-care provider would prevent them from consulting him or her if no other option was available. Among female refugee youths, just over half prefer to see a female doctor or nurse, while around one third or less of male youth indicated a preference (table 41).

**Table 41: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by preference in relation to sex of medical professional consulted, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

PREFERENCE	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
No preference	35	30	60	65	45
Female doctor/nurse	56	58	5	3	34
Male doctor/nurse	4	7	32	29	16
No answer	6	5	4	3	5

## 2. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

### (a) Knowledge and practice

**Both female and male refugee youth exhibit little knowledge of reproductive health issues.** Only 45 per cent state that they know about contraceptive methods, and while knowledge increases with age and marriage, there remains **18 per cent of married youth who do not know about contraception.** This self-declared knowledge often is also inadequate; while the majority of those who claim knowledge of contraception can list one or two methods, one quarter listed early withdrawal as a contraceptive method (table 42) and 85 per cent of all refugee youth surveyed do not know at what time during her monthly cycle a woman can become pregnant. That said - and as mentioned earlier - abstinence appears to be the choice of the majority of unmarried female and male youth, despite it not being listed by any of the refugee youth surveyed as a method of contraception.





**Table 42: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by familiarity with method of contraception out of youth with self-declared knowledge of contraception, by sex and age group (n=461)**  
(Percentage)

METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Pill	87	87	56	65	77
IUD	36	51	10	29	38
Condom	19	15	66	61	34
Withdrawal	8	30	18	28	25
Calendar/Rhythm method	11	20	10	18	17
Breastfeeding	5	9	1	2	6
Hormones	—	1	—	1	1

Surprisingly, **self-declared knowledge of sexually-transmitted infections at 59 per cent is greater than that of contraception, and is significantly higher among male youth.** Yet, among those who claim to know about STIs, 11 per cent do not know about methods of protection. Methods of protection given by around half the surveyed youth knowledgeable about STIs are abstinence and being faithful to one partner, which is in line with the trend to have sex only within marital relations, as illustrated in figure 4 and discussed later in this section. Condoms as another method of protection was given by 29 per cent, yet only 8 per cent of all respondents said condoms are easily available and free and 20 per cent claimed they are not - an indicator that they have sought condoms and not found them. The conclusion that no less than 20 per cent of refugee youths are indeed using condoms is supported by the response to the question on youth perception of the use of condoms by peers (table 43). The discrepancy between the perception of use of condoms on the one hand, and its availability, on the other, might be an indicator that condoms are used by some even if the users themselves have to pay for them.

**Table 43: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by perception of condom use among male and female youth, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

DO YOU THINK THAT MALE AND FEMALE YOUTH YOUR AGE ARE USING CONDOMS?	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Yes	6	18	19	39	20
No	9	9	17	13	12
I do not know	77	65	57	44	62
No answer	9	8	6	4	7

**Knowledge about HIV/AIDS is significantly higher, with 81 per cent stating that they know about it, and over 67 per cent giving accurate answers of how it is transmitted.** This knowledge is higher among the older age group and is widespread because of a series<sup>22</sup> which had been aired on Syrian television.

**The primary source of information on sexual and reproductive health for refugee youth is their parents,** particularly for females, while males rely also on friends (table 44). Over one third of youth surveyed claim to have no questions related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH), or lack interest in the subject; and only 2 per cent say they have no access to any source of information. Reliance on health workers is limited (3 per cent), as is the use of such reference material as books (2 per cent).



<sup>22</sup>The drama series is called "حاجز الصمت" ('The Silence Barrier') - <http://bit.ly/1iASOCV>.





**Table 44: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by primary sources of information on sexual and reproductive health, by sex and age group (multiple answers)**

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Parents	58	57	29	32	45
Friends	10	13	28	31	19
I have no questions	12	14	24	20	17
Relatives	7	12	9	11	10
I am not interested	10	2	15	12	9
Internet	2	2	5	9	4
Health workers	—	5	1	4	3
Accessible references (books and magazines)	2	2	2	3	2
No one	—	4	2	1	2
Other	1	1	—	1	1

Only 41 per cent of female and 30 per cent of male youth have had somebody discuss reproductive-health issues with them, more often when older and married, or soon-to-be married. Mothers, relatives and siblings are the ones to take the initiative to discuss SRH issues with youth, and less than 2 per cent of youth surveyed mentioned learning about SRH from teachers and health workers or at awareness sessions.

Research estimates that no more than 20 per cent of Syrian unmarried refugee youth aged 15-24 are sexually active, while it is very difficult to ascertain this number as it is based on the estimates of the youth themselves. Since it would have been difficult for cultural reasons to ask unmarried Syrian refugee youths about their own sexual activity, youth surveyed instead were asked if they thought other Syrian youth of their age were sexually active. For example, only 20 per cent of males aged 19-24 thought there could be some unmarried male youth who were sexually active (table 45). Logically, if the surveyed youth themselves are sexually active, they would answer this question with a 'yes' and

the estimated percentages of sexually-active youth would be higher. The percentage is definitely lower for female youth and for the younger age group of both males and females.

**Table 45: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by perception of sexual activity among fellow-Syrian youth, by sex and age group (Percentage)**

PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL	
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24		
Do you think there are unmarried Syrian male youth of your age having sex?	I do not think so	16	22	20	15	19
	Could be	10	18	23	30	20
	Of course	4	8	13	20	10
	I do not know	66	47	40	33	47
Do you think there are unmarried Syrian female youth of your age having sex?	No answer	5	5	5	1	4
	I do not think so	19	24	22	24	22
	Could be	9	16	20	24	17
	Of course	1	4	7	12	6
	I do not know	67	51	49	40	52
	No answer	5	5	2	1	3

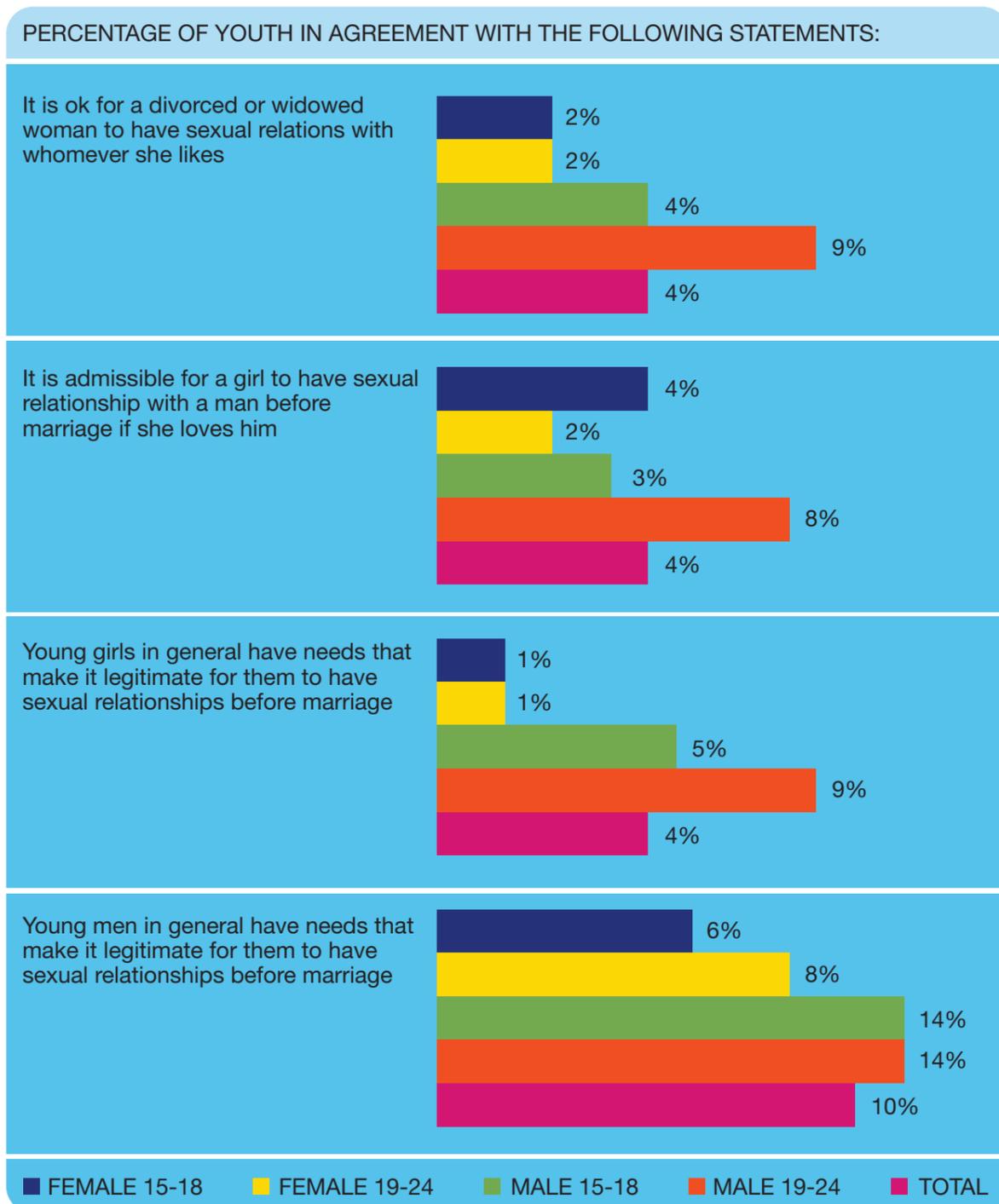
At least 90 per cent of refugee youth do not find it acceptable to have sexual relationships outside marriage. As one participant in a focus group in the Bekaa put it: "Syrians do not act in such a manner; boys do not touch girls if they are not married." Female refugee youths are stricter in their condemnation of sexual relations, although both male and female youth are slightly more permissive of male youth having sexual relationships outside marriage (figure 4).





**Figure 4: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by attitude towards extramarital relationships, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)



**(b) Family planning and childbearing**

**Family planning is not a priority for either male or female youth. Childbearing is a valued and necessary achievement, and the use of contraception is often not accepted.** In practice, once a couple does have children, contraception is sought despite the negative attitudes towards it and additional obstacles to successful child-spacing becomes apparent, including lack of knowledge about and access to contraception.

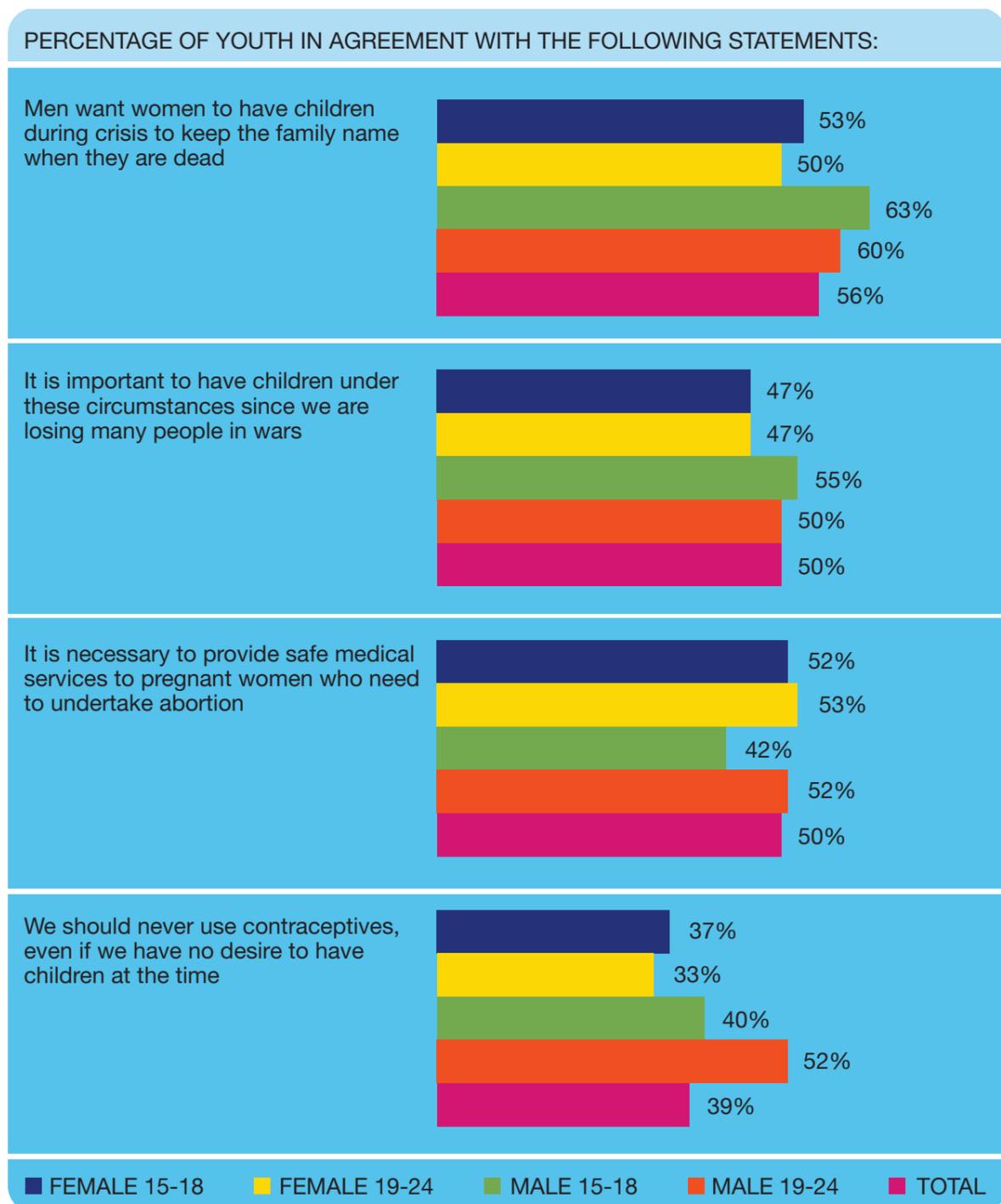
The above explains why **46 per cent of married refugee couples intend to have children, particularly younger youth of which 78 per cent were planning to have children at the time of the survey.** The majority, or 87 per cent, of those who do not intend to have children in fact already have one child or more. The roots for this again are cultural and the humanitarian crisis in Syria is not by necessity discouraging childbearing, as over half of those surveyed find it essential to have more children to compensate for the loss of life in the fighting (figure 5). In one case in the Bekaa, for example, health workers doing awareness sessions on contraception were chased out by older men who saw in the promotion of child-spacing a threat to the community as dangerous as the fighting taking place in Syria.





**Figure 5 : Distribution of Syrian refugees by attitude towards contraceptive use and childbearing, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)



Attitudes towards contraceptive use are in line with those towards childbearing as **39 per cent of those surveyed think that contraceptives should not be used** which, as the research suggests, also stem from religious and cultural beliefs, although female refugee youth are more permissive of their use. Because of that, among those married and not intending to have children, around 19 per cent practise natural birth-control methods, or none at all. Table 46 illustrates the distribution of married youth not intending to have children by method of contraception used.

**Table 46: Distribution of married Syrian refugee youth not intending to have children by method of contraception used (n=155; multiple answers)**

(Percentage)

METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION	PERCENTAGE
Pill	46
IUD	26
Early withdrawal	22
Calendar/Rhythm method	10
Condoms	9
Abstinence	8
Breastfeeding	6
None	5

Once a couple does have children, many females try to avoid pregnancy due to the present situation but face several obstacles. In fact, **of those who have had children since arriving in Lebanon, 41 per cent do not intend to have more children but are not on any form of contraception.** The common reason listed by refugee youth for not using contraceptive methods is fate - meaning, they will be given what is predestined. Other reasons are that contraception is forbidden according to religion, and that they or their spouse do not approve of its use. The above indicates that the barriers to contraceptive use are related mainly to attitudes of youth. This subject requires further investigation as there appears to be issues of inter-household disagreement preventing either spouse - though predominantly the wife - from using contraception.



Only 10 per cent of refugee youth surveyed indicated lack of knowledge or access as a barrier to contraceptive use. This, however, does not mean that knowledge of contraception is adequate – as shown by answers to a preceding question, it is not – nor is it an indicator that contraceptives are readily accessible. While free contraception in principle is available to Syrian refugees through UNFPA- and UNHCR-supported clinics, including pills and free IUD insertion, female focus-group participants did report unavailability of free contraception, claiming that they have to buy it. This again highlights the need for improved outreach programmes and sharing of information on available services.

**Based on feedback from qualitative interviews with health-service providers and married female refugee youth, it is evident that, once pregnant, abortion is a sought option by some females with unwanted pregnancies.** Although **abortion is illegal in Lebanon**, health and gender-based violence (GBV) workers across the different regions mention requests for abortion – whether these centres provide such services for legally-approved medical reasons or not. Through interviews with mothers and female youth, researchers encountered at least two incidents of abortion; one through ‘traditional method’ without medical supervision, and another with medical supervision. When married female youth fail to prevent pregnancy because of unavailability of contraceptive methods or objection of husband to their use, abortion – although **generally perceived as prohibited by religion and regarded as ‘haram’** – is one option that female youth can carry out and is within their control, especially through ‘traditional methods’.<sup>23</sup>

**Surveyed youth are divided on their attitude towards abortion generally; 51 per cent agree that safe medical services should be available to pregnant females who need to undergo an abortion.** The attitude in favour of provision of safe medical services is motivated probably by an understanding that abortion is required for health reasons, and there seems to be little difference in attitude between female and male youth.

**Ten per cent of married female youths have become pregnant since arriving in Lebanon, and 50 per cent of them were pregnant at the time of the survey,** with 39 per cent being without medical supervision by a specialized health-care provider primarily because of cost and difficulty of reaching medical services. When medical supervision is available it is adequate, with two visits to a doctor every three months on average. The majority of those who had become pregnant gave birth in Lebanon, a third of them through Caesarean section. Those who gave birth through Caesarean section either were first-time mothers or previously had delivered through Caesarean section; however, the number of the surveyed refugee population is too small to draw conclusions about childbirth experience. Delivery was in a hospital for 92 per cent of the cases, costing on average LBP 574,000 (USD 383), 49 per cent of which was covered by the refugee youth themselves, 37 per cent by UNHCR and the remaining through NGOs and individual donations.





PROTECTION



## E. PROTECTION

**Syrian refugee youth are living in distress and general insecurity, and are trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of violence in both the public and private space that is hard to break or escape from.** Female refugee youth in particular suffer from their living conditions and from sexual harassment, factors that are restricting their mobility and encouraging early marriage as a coping strategy. Such harassment is common, daily and pervasive. Many male refugee youths entrapped by these living conditions and a tense relationship with their surroundings, as section 5a of this chapter explains, prefer to return to Syria and join the fighting. The state of displacement also has significantly impacted the social life of refugee youth, decreasing communication with friends and participation in leisure activities, as well as negatively impacting nutrition and personal hygiene, while slightly increasing substance use.

### 1. PSYCHOLOGICAL STATUS

Most Syrian refugee youth describe themselves as feeling depressed, anxious or afraid most of the time, and only 11 per cent maintain that positive feelings describe their state of mind (table 47).

**Table 47: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by emotional state, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

EMOTIONAL STATE		FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
		15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Negative feelings	Anxious	22	24	35	45	30
	Depressed	34	35	24	26	30
	Afraid	28	30	18	7	22
	Despondent	5	2	9	8	6
	Guilt-ridden	1	1	1	1	1
Positive feelings	Satisfied	5	6	7	7	6
	Optimistic	4	2	5	5	4
	Happy	1	—	—	1	1





That Syrian refugee youth are living in psychological distress is one of the major findings of the qualitative research and runs across age groups and geographical areas. Many female refugee youths in the younger age group speak of often crying and even wishing to die. In the words of one female of the 15-18-year age group in the North: *“I wish a car would run me over and I would die because I just hate this life I am living.”* Male youth complain of clashes within the family, in particular with their parents, and often express feeling nervous and anxious. One 18-year-old gave an example of an argument in his home: *“Once I suspended myself over the balcony [railing] because I couldn't tolerate the tension.”* As he explained, he had had no intention of ending his life, but dangling over the balcony railing was the only space available that he had away from the tense atmosphere in his home.

Many reasons conspire to cause this psychological distress. Aside from the concerns that accompany the humanitarian crisis in Syria and the situation of displacement, such reasons include shared and uncomfortable living conditions and lack of economic opportunities, as well as being forced out of education, being subject to physical and sexual violence and, more broadly, the limited outlook that these conditions might improve. It is not surprising then, that **17 per cent of refugee youths interviewed often have thought of ending their own life, and 24 per cent thought of doing so sometimes** (table 48) - a percentage that is even higher among female youth.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 48: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by desire to end their own life, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF ENDING YOUR OWN LIFE?	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Often	21	24	9	13	17
Sometimes	36	26	18	14	24
Rarely	14	14	14	20	15
Never	22	31	56	49	39
No answer	6	5	4	4	5

<sup>24</sup>Youth were asked if they had ever considered ending their life, and were given the option to describe, subjectively, the recurrence, if any, of such thoughts on a four-degree scale; never, rarely, sometimes and often. The answers were not objectively quantified, nor were they time-bound. Thus, it can be argued that some suicidal thoughts might not be related directly to their state of displacement in Lebanon. That said, considering that the preceding questions were about their situation in Lebanon and that, on average, respondents at the time of the study had been in the country for 16 months, their answers are likely to be in relation to their present stay in Lebanon.

Coping strategies of youth with this pressure are limited. While 45 per cent manage to find solace in the company of family or friends, and 11 per cent resort to more proactive solutions like exercise or going out for a walk, others stay alone, sleep, cry, smoke or eat (table 49).

**Table 49: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by method of coping with pressure, by sex and age group (multiple answers)**  
(Percentage)

METHOD OF COPING	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Stay alone	45	38	34	37	38
Spend time with family	34	33	33	26	32
Sleep	18	22	20	18	20
Spend time with friends	5	4	22	23	13
Go for a walk	8	7	11	11	9
Smoke	—	4	11	21	8
Cry	12	12	1	1	7
Eat	9	6	4	4	6
Get into a fight / argue	3	3	1	2	2
Exercise	1	2	2	2	2
Use tranquilizers	1	1	1	1	1





## 2. MARRIAGE AND EARLY MARRIAGE<sup>25</sup>

A high percentage of refugee youths are married, with 46 per cent of females and 11 per cent of males being or having been married at some point. The percentages increase by age and are significantly higher than those of the Lebanese population and figures for Syria prior to the crisis (table 50). The discrepancy between the figures in Syria and the results of this study could be due to the characteristics of the refugee population, the majority of which is assumed to belong to a lower income group with possibly a higher representation of Syrians from rural and Bedouin backgrounds, all variables that correlate with a higher rate of early marriage. In addition, and concerning male youth in particular, it is probable that those who sought refuge in Lebanon are married youth responsible for their families, the others choosing to stay behind.

**Table 50: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth, and Lebanese and Syrian youth ever married, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)

POPULATION	FEMALE		MALE	
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24
Syrian refugee youth	18	64	2	23
Syrian population 2001 <sup>a</sup> .	11	43	—	9
Lebanese population 2009 <sup>b</sup> .	3	12	—	2

a. Rashad, Hoda, Magued Osman, and Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi (2005). "Marriage in the Arab World". Population Reference Bureau.

b. The Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey - round 3 (2009). Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children in Lebanon. CAS and UNICEF.

While qualitative research indicates that **cultural reasons contribute to the high percentage of early marriage, this alone does not explain the rise in the percentages among the refugee population.**

<sup>25</sup>The term 'early marriage' as used in this report describes "a legal or customary union between two people, of whom one or both spouses is below the age of 18. While boys can be subjected to child marriage, the practice affects girls in greater numbers and with graver consequences. Child marriage is often referred to as "early" and/or "forced" marriage since children, given their age, are not able to give free, prior and informed consent to their marriage partner or to the timing of their marriage. Many girls, for example, may have little understanding of or exposure to other life options. They may "willingly" accept marriage as their allotted fate. An element of coercion may also be involved if families apply social or emotional pressure or urge marriage for economic reasons, or further advocate marriage in the (misguided) belief that such a union will keep their daughters safe." (UNFPA 2012, p. 11).



Aspirations of parents for their daughters always are for them to marry and bear children, and **youth surveyed gave 19 years as the average marriage age most appropriate for females and 25 for males.**

From the perspective of youth, while the desired marriage age is 19 for females and a large percentage of refugee youth surveyed agree that a girl should not be married under the age of 18 years, **continued prevalence of early marriage is not by necessity enforced on girls by their parents, but accepted by both if appropriate marriage opportunities arise because of cultural reasons and as a coping strategy to current conditions.**

*"We feel that we are a burden on our families," one young female refugee in the age bracket 15-18 years in Akkar, North Lebanon, said. "They cannot marry us off because they are too scared to wed us to somebody they do not know well and trust while, at the same time, they are unable to provide for us."*

Both male and female refugee youth surveyed expressed a willingness to obey their parents in matters of marriage (figure 6) and see it understandable that a female marries somebody who can take care of her financially.

The willingness and desire to marry on the part of refugee youths themselves is also high, with 32 per cent of single females and 23 per cent of single males expressing willingness to marry if they have the opportunity.

This is influenced by the state of displacement, where **many female refugee youths - now forced out of education, unable to find work and with limited mobility - describe marriage as an opportunity for them to have their own space or to escape crowded and stressful living conditions.**

As one female refugee youth in the southern village of Chebaa commented on a fellow-Syrian who recently got married to a Lebanese: *"She might have made the right decision; at least this way she would feel that she is in her own home."*

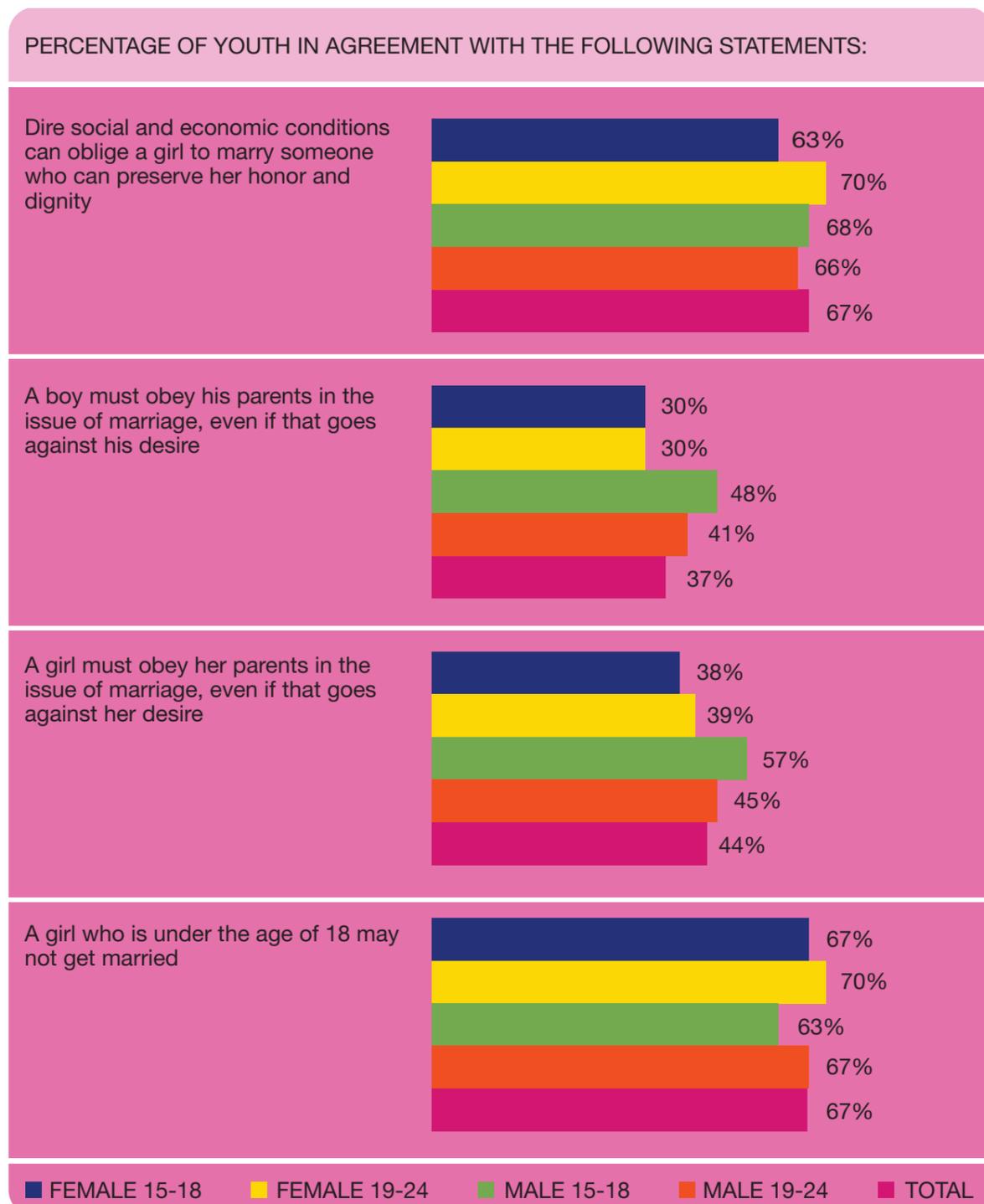
Another comment indicates the contradictory emotion that accompanies such a decision: *"If the situation becomes worse, a lot of the girls would do the same. They would marry men they do not love; but maybe that is not the wrong thing to do."*

**The vast majority of refugee youth also find it acceptable that a husband is older than his wife by up to seven years. In contrast, only 17 per cent accept a wife to be older than her husband, and the acceptable age difference is no more than three years,** noting that a higher percentage of male refugee youths accept that the wife be older than her husband and accept a higher age difference as compared to their female counterparts.





**Figure 6: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by attitude towards early marriage, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)



Parents also are more willing to accept marriage at an earlier age because of the dire economic situation, and as a way of shifting the financial responsibility of their daughter onto somebody else, often a fellow-Syrian who is not much older than her.

This is a practice implemented to protect female youth and guarantee that they are taken care of. Most parents are seeking suitable husbands for their daughters and rarely do they accept to marry her to an older or inappropriate man for economic reasons only. One mother described her decision not to marry her 13-year-old daughter to a suitor in his thirties: *“I would not marry her off even if they gave me the equivalent of this camp full of money - haram, she is too young.”* According to female refugee youth who participated in focus groups, parents are less willing to accept non-Syrian suitors - about whom they would know very little and do not trust - to marry their daughters.

This is confirmed by the quantitative results, which show that none of the females surveyed who had married since arriving to Lebanon had done so to a non-Syrian.

While some media have reported on incidents of early marriage being forms of human trafficking, a phenomenon documented among Syrian refugees in other host countries, findings do not confirm such reports. This raises the issue of early marriage possibly masking more prevalent forms of exploitation of female Syrian refugees. **Qualitative research shows that it is marriage proposals from men who are in close and daily contact with the refugees that are exploitative of the economic situation of the family.** This includes proposals from landlords, neighbours and aid workers<sup>28</sup> and which often are accompanied by financial promises or threats, including reducing the monthly rent if marriage is accepted or decreasing aid if not.

In one example from the city of Sidon, South Lebanon, a female refugee youth received persistent marriage proposals from the coordinator of a faith-based charity who wished to marry her to his son. When she and her family refused, they were denied aid and, eventually, they preferred to move out of the area to avoid these unwelcome proposals. In this regard, it is important to note that the **nature of the exploitation of the vulnerability of female youth is becoming common and pervasive.**

### 3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT<sup>29</sup>, EXPLOITATION<sup>30</sup> AND ABUSE

Syrian refugee youth, especially females, do not feel safe in Lebanon, be it in the domestic or public space. **To quantify that, 50 per cent of refugee youth surveyed agree with the statement “I have not once felt safe since I came to Lebanon”,** and this is only one of many indicators of the prevailing feeling of insecurity.

<sup>28</sup>The term ‘aid worker’ refers to any person providing relief support to the affected population, including Syrian, Lebanese and international workers in local and international governmental organizations and NGOs, as well as representatives of religious institutions, local communities hosting refugees, and members of the Syrian refugee population taking on formal or informal coordination or representational role.

<sup>29</sup>The term ‘sexual harassment’ as defined by the United Nations Secretary General Bulletin (ST/AI/379) includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

<sup>30</sup>The term ‘sexual exploitation’ is defined by the United Nations Secretary General (ST/2003/13) as any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. It defines the term “sexual abuse” as the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.





Section F elaborates on issues of safety and security generally and in relation to social cohesion and the host community, while this section will discuss feelings of insecurity related to sexual harassment.

**Feelings of insecurity affect female youth in the domestic space**, with as many as 19 per cent of female refugee youths in the younger age group not feeling safe when using the toilet at night, for example; and 17 per cent not feeling safe while they sleep (table 51). The number is greater in the Bekaa region, primarily because of the higher percentage of refugee youth living in makeshift accommodation. As many as 32 per cent of female refugee youths in the Bekaa do not feel safe when using the toilet at night, and 23 per cent do not feel safe when showering or while sleeping.

**Table 51: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by feeling of insecurity in the domestic/private space, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

FEELING OF INSECURITY WHEN:	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Moving within the residential unit	22	22	15	13	19
Using the toilet at night	19	17	8	4	13
Sleeping	17	14	10	8	12
Taking a shower	16	13	7	6	11
Changing clothes/getting dressed	14	12	6	5	9
Using the toilet during the day	13	9	6	3	8
Other	4	6	—	5	4

**This insecurity is a major source of discomfort for female refugee youth and one of the main highlights of the qualitative research.** A major reason for discomfort is the mixed male-female living areas, especially since most refugee youth come from conservative societies and many females are veiled. Females keep their headscarves on even when sleep areas are separated by sex, and go to the toilet in groups to guard the door for one another (table 52). They complain of not having any privacy and of being closely monitored day and night by family and those who inhabit the space with them.

**Table 52: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by need of being escorted in the domestic/private space, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

NEED TO BE ESCORTED WHEN:	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Going to the toilet during the day	7	5	5	—	3
Going to the toilet at night	21	13	5	1	11

Sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are also widespread. When mentioned as first-hand accounts of such acts, they predominantly are identified as having been perpetrated by four sources: a) aid workers; b) Lebanese and Syrian coordinators of informal tented settlements; c) employers at work; and d) public transport drivers. The latter involves mainly unwelcome sexual advances by drivers or requests for sexual favours in exchange for money - an issue that female refugee youth complained of in the majority of the focus groups. To avoid such harassment, many female refugee youth choose to walk long distances and not take public transport, or to restrict their movements altogether.

**Sexual harassment by employers and sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers are greater concerns as they are performed by men who control resources which female refugees depend on for their livelihood, be it aid or income from work.** In practice, it takes the form of withholding aid from female youth or their families if the wishes of the perpetrator are not complied with. Another practice is the favouritism for prettier and younger girls. This is illustrated by the examples provided during the research that “prettier” females are given priority in the queues of aid distribution, or assigned easier work tasks by employers. *“If you are not responsive,”* one female refugee youth who works in the agriculture sector in the Bekaa said, *“you are not allowed a break or not given water to drink while working.”*

Despite all female youth being subjected to such practices, those divorced or widowed are especially vulnerable. This also is more widespread in gatherings of refugees, informal tented settlements where coordinators take on the responsibility of the community there and play the role of liaison with aid organizations. All the cases of SEA reported allegedly had been perpetrated by aid workers in close and daily contact with the refugees, including representatives of faith-based organizations, local staff of international organizations, and representatives of community and political groups who are managing certain settlements or gatherings.





Although sexual harassment and SEA - disguised as favouritism - was reported mostly as discrimination based on looks and age, it is widespread and dictates the relationship between female refugee youths and those who posit themselves as supporters or aid providers. In addition, and because of the prevalence of sexual harassment and SEA, **female refugee youth are subjected to increased restriction on their mobility by parents, who see in it a way to protect their daughters and their reputation.**

While female refugee youth have given many accounts of the above, **only a few have found the opportunity to complain and for their complaints to be heard.** Refugee youth and families interviewed did not know of existing systems to monitor such practices or to hold those in charge accountable. In all cases, results of focus groups indicate that the majority not only refrained from reporting sexual harassment and SEA, but also hesitated relaying it to family and friends, either out of fear of further restriction on their movements or because they perceived it as secondary to other problems. In their words, *“each has worries; who am I to complain?”*

The reluctance to report incidents of GBV and harassment that refugee youth are subjected to is evident in their limited response to questions about cases of GBV that they or somebody they know have experienced. A total of 116 incidents of violence were shared by only 10 per cent of the total refugee youth surveyed. Only 30 per cent who did relay incidents of GBV were willing to share details about what they themselves had been subjected to, or possibly admit that they are survivors of such violence; and 61 per cent had not reported the type of GBV they had experienced to anybody. Of those who had reported the incident, 44 per cent said that such reporting had not made any positive difference.

## CASE STUDY 2

### Youmna

Youmna is a married woman with two children and her husband is missing. She has been subject of unwelcome sexual advances by one of the persons responsible for the informal tented settlement where she lives. She has no source of income and, before complying with this person's requests for sexual favours, she had been threatened by him to be moved to a lower-standard living space. She described the difficulty of handling pressure from this person, the financial need to care for her two children, and the loneliness of being a pretty and young woman who used to enjoy much better living conditions. Under these pressures, she started a relationship with the above-mentioned person and has since received significantly more aid. Even though their relationship is not public, she is being shamed and criticized within the settlement, including by members of her extended family although they, at the same time, are happy to receive a share of the aid she is being allocated. Other young females in the same settlement face similar pressures, with one family having chosen to move away in order to avoid the pressure and many others restricting completely their movements to avoid being accused of similar practices and to protect their reputation.

The media and most Lebanese interviewed reported prevalence of provision of sexual services for money. This has contributed to a view of Syrian females being “cheap” or “easily bought”, and further exacerbates the harassment they are subjected to. The findings suggest that **claims of widespread survival sex are hugely exaggerated**, as confirmed also by some NGOs working on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Less than 4 per cent of the surveyed refugee youth reported knowing somebody who, because of the economic conditions, has offered sexual services for money. Focus-group participants and mothers of young refugees also said they “heard” of Syrian women offering sexual services for money. When probed, it was always through second-hand sources and the research team could not find leads to such claims made by the media. **The exaggerated approach used by the media to report on this topic contributes to making females even more vulnerable by directing attention away from the more prevalent types of violence and abuse female refugees are exposed to.**

## 4. DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Increased tension within the family - whether between married youth and their spouse or unmarried youth and their parents - was a complaint repeated in most focus groups and interviews, and among 62 per cent of the refugee youth surveyed.** The reasons for this are many; one is the increased economic burden, primarily the payment of the monthly rent for most families. The second is the crowded living conditions and lack of privacy. The third is the disruption of life course, be it loss of work or being forced out of education. Another factor leading to increased tension in the family is the loss of supportive social networks which would have lent practical support, like help in childcare, for example; and emotional support, like lending an ear when there is a problem or mitigating in conflicts between members of the family. **Refugee youth and their families are trapped in a self-perpetuating and closed cycle of violence that is hard to break or escape from**, including the toll of the crisis in Syria; the instability and precarious living conditions in Lebanon; and the daily physical, sexual and verbal violence in interpersonal relations. These circumstances combined affect the psychological well-being of youth, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, but also increase the responsibilities imposed on refugee youth within their families and augment violence within the home.

*“We are given too big a responsibility that we are still too young to bear”* is how one female focus-group participant summed up the problems of Syrian refugee youth. Indeed, **74 per cent of youth state that their family responsibilities have increased since seeking refuge in Lebanon** (table 53); and 54 per cent think that, at their age, they should share in the responsibility for their family. The responsibilities that refugee youths are taking on are wide in scope and consist of taking care of other members of the family, including younger siblings; working to improve the family income; and managing legal and aid-related matters.





**Table 53: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by attitude towards family relations since arriving in Lebanon, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)

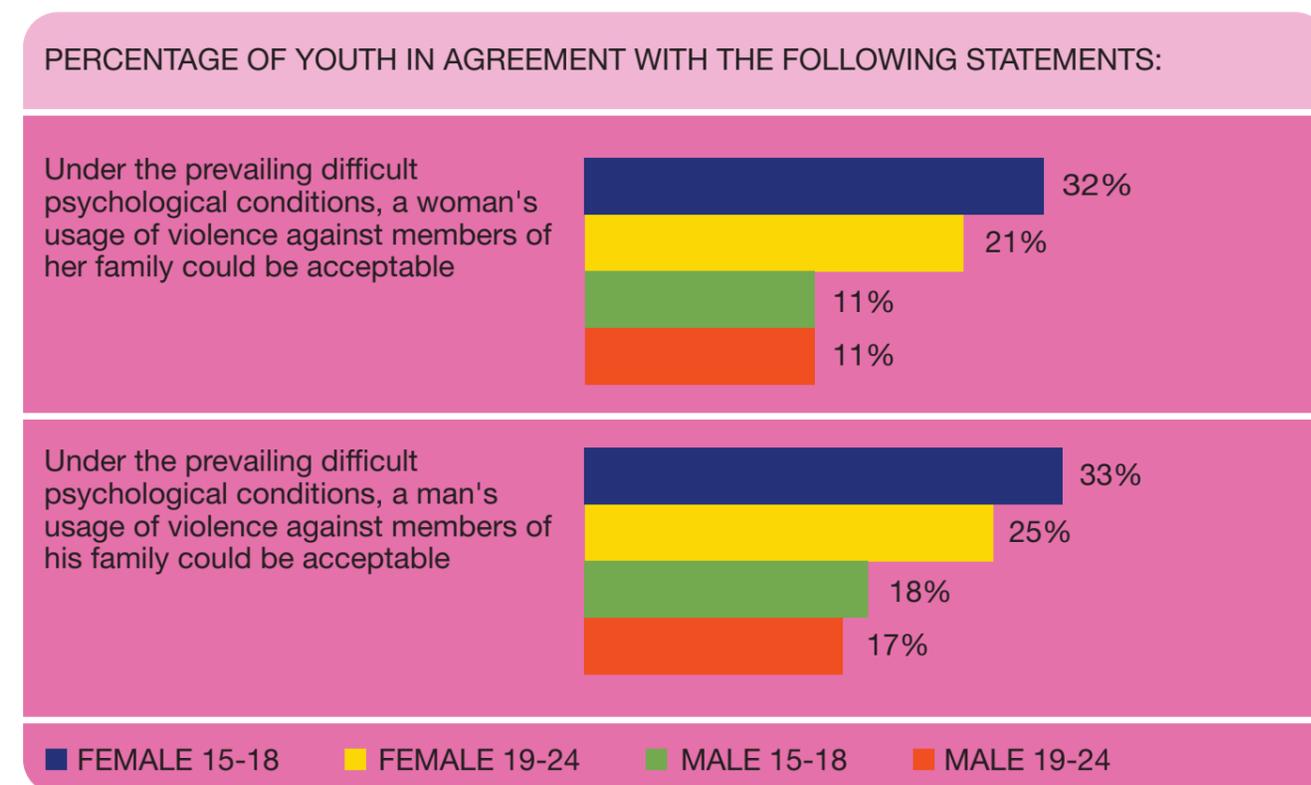
PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH WHO AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Increased family responsibilities laid upon the youth	67	77	72	80	74
Increased tension between family members	63	65	55	61	62
Increased solidarity between family members	58	56	48	53	54

The increase in tension clearly has augmented the violence within the family, often perpetuated by several members of the family. Given the nature of this research and its short duration, it was not possible to gain insight into sexual abuse within the family or home beyond physical abuse. Yet, of the 44 cases of violence reported by female refugee youth surveyed, 21 per cent had taken place in the home, 44 per cent of which had been perpetrated by a family member or an acquaintance. Still, domestic and family violence remains hard to quantify since, as one mother puts it, “*houses have their secrets*”; yet, examples collected in the interviews and feedback from health-care providers confirm its prevalence. One mother stated clearly: “*They all use violence, be it a slap or a whip ...; they all do.*” Of note is the **widespread use of violence by various members of the family and, especially, by male youth against various female family members, not only the wife. Also of note is that 22 per cent of refugee youth accept the use of violence within the family**, particularly female youth (figure 7).

Despite this prevailing tension, the family remains a space of refuge for most youth, with 54 per cent of young refugees reporting that solidarity within the family has increased since they arrived in Lebanon, and 32 per cent of them choosing to spend time with their family as a way of coping with external pressure and tension.

**Figure 7: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by attitude towards violence within the family, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)



## 5. OTHER VULNERABILITIES AND RISKS

### (a) Safety and security

In addition to the tension within the family mentioned in the previous section, **the inability to find work and the limited prospects for the future in Lebanon, as well as pressure from the host community, encourage many male refugee youths to return to Syria and join in the fighting.** This was relayed by male youth in the focus groups, with 32 per cent aged 19-24 saying they know persons who have returned to Syria to join the fighting because of the economic conditions (table 54). Mothers of refugee youth complain of this being the mantra of their young sons every time tension rises within the household.





**Table 54: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by vulnerability due to financial situation, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE YOUR AGE WHO, DUE TO FINANCIAL SITUATION, HAS BEEN FORCED TO:	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
	Return to Syria to fight	20	24	27	
Beg	12	16	16	17	15
Steal	7	9	8	9	8
Join a political or religious party in Lebanon	4	4	5	7	5
Offer sexual services for money	4	2	4	5	4

Refugee youth surveyed indicated that they know of others exposed to additional vulnerabilities due to the economic situation, including having to resort to the theft or begging.

**(b) Substance use**

**Smoking - of both cigarettes and narghile (water pipe) - is prevalent among male refugee youth and increases significantly with age,** with 51 per cent of male youth aged 19-24 years smoking cigarettes and 28 per cent narghile (table 55). The percentage of female users is significantly lower, although the numbers could be slightly misleading as more females would hesitate to declare publicly their smoking habits. The current crisis, as results of focus groups indicate, might have increased consumption of tobacco, though the quantitative results do not show a significant change in use of any of the above, considering that while some expressed increased use, others expressed decreased use, probably for financial reasons.

**Table 55: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by substance use, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)

SUBSTANCE USE	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Cigarettes	1	8	24	51	19
Narghile / water pipe	4	10	17	28	14
Tranquillizers	1	2	2	3	2
Alcohol	—	—	2	3	1

When asked if they know somebody who uses drugs or alcohol, **4 per cent said they know users of hashish and other drugs, and 13 per cent know consumers of alcohol** (table 56), despite only 1 per cent saying that they themselves consume alcohol. It is estimated that 13 and 4 per cent, respectively, are better indicators of the percentage of youth consumers of alcohol and drugs, and that the number of users is higher for older male youth. **Only 2 per cent expressed having been offered drugs, the majority of whom also male youth.** A similar percentage said they know somebody who has resorted to dealing in drugs because of their economic situation.

**Table 56: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by knowledge of alcohol and drug use among fellow-Syrians, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE YOUR AGE WHO USES:	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Alcohol	6	6	19	26	13
Hashish	2	6	3	4	4
Drugs	2	6	4	3	4





Interviews indicate two other trends that require further investigation. As regards substance use, **the problems that refugee youth are dealing with are similar to those of the community within which they are living.** For example, several cases of drug consumption and addiction - particularly tranquilizers and prescription drugs by female youth, and such stimulants as Captagon by male youth - were reported by Syrian refugees residing within the Palestinian refugee camps of Shatila in Beirut and Ein El-Helweh in Sidon, South Lebanon, and in the southern suburbs of Beirut - all places that suffer from drug-use problems among youth living there. The other issue **is an attitude permissive of the use of prescription drugs and tranquilizers.** Qualitative research indicates greater use of tranquilizers than the responses of refugee youth in this survey reveal, often without knowledge of the potentially harmful effects and possibility of addiction attached to such drugs. Refugee youth seem to echo this attitude, as 3 per cent of those surveyed think tranquilizers are not harmful, compared to 0.5 per cent who believe hashish, for example, is not harmful. **In general though, young refugees seem aware of the harm of tobacco, drugs and alcohol, with no less than 95 per cent describing them as harmful or very harmful.**

### (c) Lifestyle changes and leisure time

Besides major changes related to education, work and family life, the state of displacement has profound impact on the daily life of young refugees, where 77 per cent report decrease in personal care and hygiene (table 57). Young female refugees report not having enough money to buy detergent to wash their clothes as often as they desire, and living conditions do not allow them to bathe as frequently as they used to. "I have forgotten myself," one young female refugee said.

Food consumption is also affected, with **more than two thirds reporting decreased number of meals and poorer quality of food** consumed compared to food quality and consumption while in Syria. With the financial burden that young refugees and their families live under, personal care, personal hygiene and food often become luxury commodities and compromised because of the burden of rent, which accounts for the greatest expenditure of the family income.

**Table 57: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by impact of state of displacement on daily life, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

LIFESTYLE CHANGE SINCE ARRIVING IN LEBANON	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Less social interaction/going out	89	85	83	80	84
Lower personal hygiene	74	79	80	72	77
Less communication with friends	80	73	77	78	76
Poorer quality of food consumed	76	79	66	66	73
Less participation in cultural and sports activities	71	65	78	76	72
Fewer number of meals	70	73	64	65	69
Less interest in social interaction	64	61	60	61	62

Friendships and leisure time are other areas where major change is observed, as 84 per cent of young refugees go out less frequently, 76 per cent have decreased their communication with friends, and 72 per cent have reduced their participation in social activities. **Most young refugees spend their time at home with their family or watching television, especially female youth who rarely spend time with friends or go out because of family and security-related restrictions on their mobility** (table 58). One group of male refugee youth described that their reduced financial resources have forced them to cut down on sports activities, beach trips and time spent playing football, either because they cannot pay transportation to get to such activities, or because they have to work during whatever free time they have available. Young female refugees also describe how little they go out, that even visits to family and friends are limited, either because no other family members live close by, or because their movements are restricted by the security situation or family restrictions, or their lack of knowledge of the geographical areas in Lebanon,.



**Table 58: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by leisure activities, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

ACTIVITY	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Spend time with family	66	60	49	42	55
Watch television	22	22	29	30	25
Spend time with friends	3	4	25	21	12
Visit family/friends	7	12	14	14	12
Spend time on mobile phone	6	6	6	10	7
Go out	4	3	8	10	6
Play cards	1	1	6	5	3
Spend time on computer/Internet	1	1	3	5	2





SOCIAL COHESION



## F. SOCIAL COHESION

**The relationship between Syrian refugee youth and host communities can be described as ambivalent. Sources of tension based on negative perceptions of both sides and underlying realities prevail; yet, opportunities for cohesion also exist, at the least at the personal level.** Host-refugee relations are shaped by a power imbalance whereby Syrian refugee youths feel disempowered, highly insecure and unsafe, and often are subject to exploitation; while the Lebanese have the power, yet feel threatened by a massive and unexpected influx of refugees.

When measured on a scale from “just feeling safe” within the community and mixing with the host community, including work or other shared or social activities, to “a sense of belonging” through family, committed friendships and a sense of respect and shared values, Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon generally do not go beyond the first level.

While this observation applies to the majority of Syrian refugees, it is especially prevalent among the lower-income classes which are the main target of this study. Among the middle- to upper-level social classes and considering the type and nature of interpersonal relationships and the relative openness and tolerance of the area hosting the refugees, the relations could differ.

The Syrian-Lebanese relationships range from a variety of interpersonal social relations (recent marriages and friendships), business relations (including tenancy and employment) and interactions at such institutions as schools and work places, to relationships with power authorities like government structures and political parties. Sections B and C of this chapter looked into education and employment relations, demonstrating that integration of Syrian refugee youth in learning and work institutions are subject to structural and institutional barriers. This section will discuss other relationships.

### 1. GENERAL FACTORS AFFECTING RELATIONS WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

**Historical, political, economic and demographic factors shape the refugee-host relationship.** At the onset of the crisis, host communities viewed Syrian refugees as their guests who soon would return and, thus, treated them with humanity. With time, however, the relationship has become more complicated and tense.

**The dynamic repercussions of the Syrian humanitarian crisis on Lebanon manifested in an extended refugee stay and a massive and a continuous influx of refugees have turned the willingness to help into resentment.** The Lebanese feel threatened by competition over employment and assistance targeting Syrians, as the qualitative research and literature confirm. Municipalities also complain of pressure on such physical infrastructure resources as the demand for water and increased solid waste driving up the management costs borne by them. At the same time, the belief in the temporariness of the situation is dissipating and allusions to the Lebanese history with the Palestinian refugees are looming. The extended-time element has led to the blaming of refugees for a number



of pre-existing deficiencies of the Lebanese economy and public-services provisions. The attitude of host communities has changed from being ‘helpful’ to ‘resentful’, with such attitude being observed mainly where there is a high density of refugees.

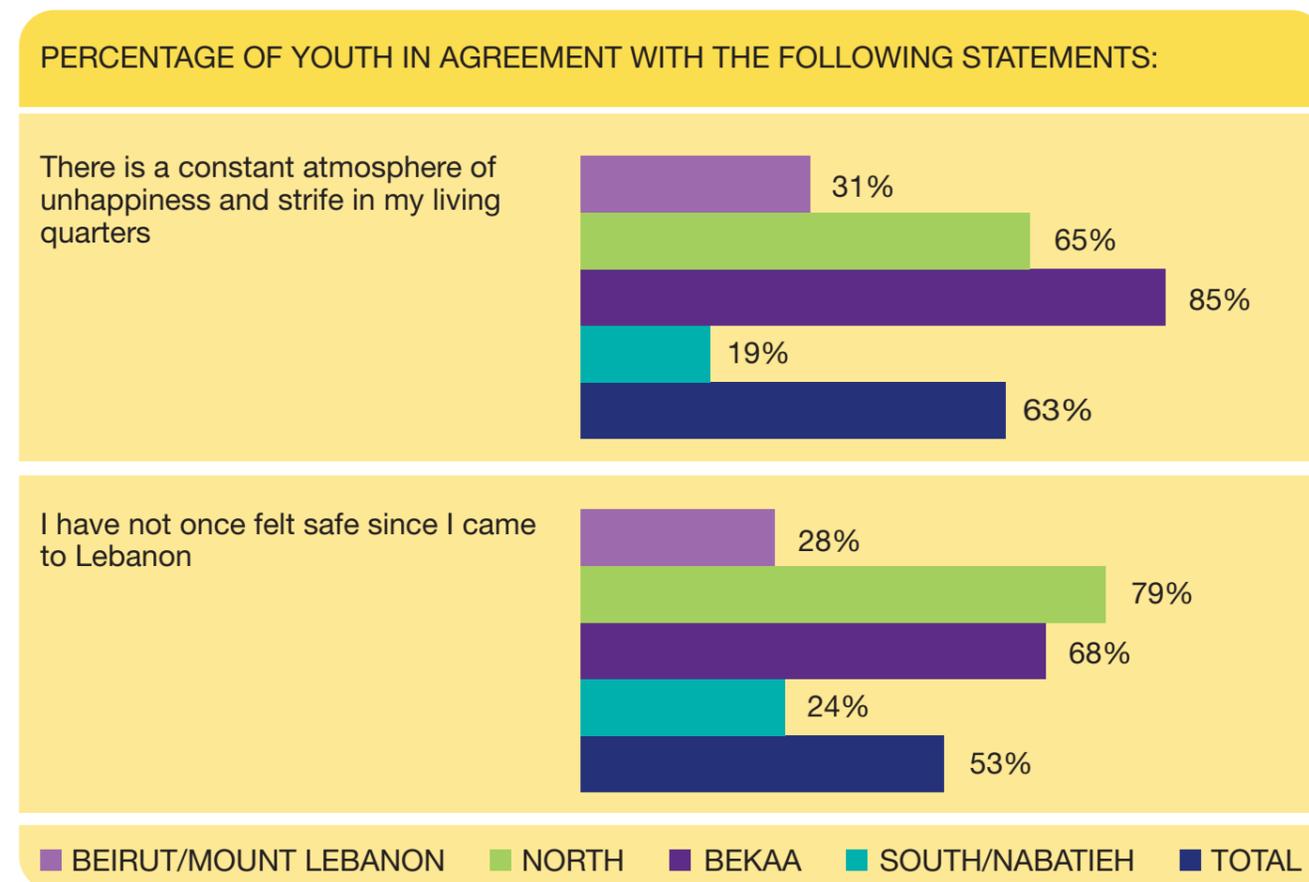
**Having a shared political affinity and/or religion does not change much the attitude towards Syrian refugee youth.** More complex factors shape the attitude of the Lebanese and the links of affinity should not be over-emphasized. According to a male refugee youth staying in Chehim, Mount Lebanon: *“You are Syrian means you are rejected by all Lebanese, even if you are on the same side politically.”*

**Prejudice has historical roots emanating from pre-crisis Syrian-Lebanese relations and is being reinforced at present.** According to Syrian refugee youth, the pre-2005 period of Syrian army presence in Lebanon still weighs over the host-refugee relation. In addition, the fact that Lebanon received a significant number of Syrian low-skilled casual labourers before the humanitarian crisis has shaped the view among Lebanese of Syrian refugees, leading to a categorizing of all as being the same and belonging to one uniform group. As a Syrian middle-class refugee youth explained: *“The Lebanese think we are all the same, but we are different. The daily workers come from rural areas and are uneducated.”*

## 2. CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS AFFECTING RELATIONS WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

**Over half of Syrian refugee youth feel unsafe in Lebanon.** This is more so in the North and the Bekaa, where 79 and 68 per cent, respectively, of the surveyed youth state they have not once felt safe since their arrival in Lebanon; with numbers in the North being particularly high mainly due to the general security situation in the city of Tripoli (figure 8).

**Figure 8: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by perception of living conditions and security, by region**  
(Percentage)



**The main reasons for feeling unsafe are the lack of security and fear of harassment or indictment.** Over 45 per cent of Syrian refugee youth feel insecure when they cross military or security checkpoints, even though more than three quarters have a valid entry card. Also, 43 per cent feel unsafe within their respective neighbourhood (table 59), and one third when going to such service centres as shops and medical clinics. When considering whether this feeling of insecurity is related to the personal conditions of Syrian refugee youth - including being unemployed or being single - there seems to be no trend, thus, suggesting that it is connected to external factors relating to their surroundings. The overarching feeling of insecurity does not seem to relate to the legal status of being a refugee, with a good 86 per cent being registered with UNHCR and in possession of a valid entry card. Indeed, none of the surveyed refugee youth considered not having an identity card as a reason for not going out at night.





**The majority of those lacking a feeling of security live in the North and the Bekaa.** Family restrictions are most apparent in the Bekaa - preventing 51 per cent of male refugee youth from going out at night - and indicate that restrictions are driven as much by security concerns as by culturally conservative restrictions, especially on the movement of females as detailed in section E on sexual harassment and abuse. The security concerns, as the qualitative research indicates, relate to fear of Syrian refugee youth of being targeted or harassed because of their nationality or in reaction to incidents of theft and assault in an area that is very sparsely populated. The qualitative information also suggests that, in the Bekaa, the insecurity is derived more from a fear of prosecution because their identity as Syrian refugees; whereas in the North, it is more a general feeling of insecurity due to violent incidents. In the South and Nabatieh, 76 per cent of male refugee youth who are unable to move at night ascribed this to official measures, including curfews by government-concerned authorities or political parties.

**Indeed, the measures applied by local authorities, municipalities and/or political parties to control security in neighbourhoods by restricting and indicting Syrian refugees are a main cause behind the feeling of insecurity among refugee youth.** Interviews with municipalities of host communities reveal that their role ranges from a complete laissez-faire due to the technical and financial incapacity of local authorities in their management of livelihoods of the new inhabitants, particularly at the beginning of the influx; to coordinated efforts with local civil-society organizations and political parties to allocate public services and aid, as well as to administer informal settlements. Across all, however, the predominant concern is containment of any source of tension or conflict that could arise. Accordingly, Syrian refugee youth remain under the spotlight and, at times, have been accused of crime or delinquency in their community, as they themselves disclosed in the focus groups.

**The relationship with political parties depends on the position of each party vis-à-vis the crisis in Syria, although most political parties are involved in providing relief for refugees.** In certain areas, many male refugee youths complain of restrictions by security apparatuses, often at checkpoints, and, in some cases, of being called in for investigation. Syrian male youth are treated as suspects, a possible threat that needs to be contained. The official attitude of leaders of political parties - and frequently also reflected in the media - trickles down to the constituency of their respective party and contributes to popular mistreatment of refugees. Security forces of political parties, as well as those under government control, are not held accountable for lack of compliance with due process in the treatment of Syrian refugees. For example, while buying groceries, two of the male refugee youths interviewed for this study had been apprehended by the security apparatus of a political party and held for two hours under investigation and torture before being released. They said that usually this happened to Syrian youth when someone suspected them. Likewise, another refugee youth explained that he had been blackmailed by a Lebanese who had threatened to report him to the security of the political party in power in that area.

## SOCIAL COHESION

**Table 59: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by locality in which they do not feel safe, by region, sex and age group (multiple answers)**  
(Percentage)

LOCALITY	FEMALE					MALE					TOTAL				
	Beirut / Mount Lebanon	North	Bekaa	South / Nabatieh	Beirut / Mount Lebanon	North	Bekaa	South / Nabatieh	Beirut / Mount Lebanon	North	Bekaa	South / Nabatieh	Total		
At security checkpoints	27	45	55	26	42	54	47	28	35	49	52	27	45		
Outside the neighbourhood	26	48	58	37	39	47	36	15	32	48	49	28	43		
On way to main service centre (market, health clinic, work place, etc.)	24	39	37	26	32	43	25	10	28	41	32	19	33		
In company with young Lebanese males	19	27	34	10	42	34	17	7	36	31	21	8	26		
At school/educational institute	14	16	22	—	23	31	34	—	20	23	30	—	22		
In the workplace	17	27	20	17	19	32	15	—	19	31	16	5	20		
In company with young Syrian males	16	25	12	15	31	32	6	8	23	29	8	12	19		
In the neighbourhood	27	32	11	20	14	26	7	2	21	29	9	12	18		





**As a result, almost one third of refugee youth need to be escorted when going outside their residential area during the day.** Over half feel they are prevented from going out at night. This was reported by one third of male and two thirds of female refugee youth, mainly in the younger age group 15-18 years. Around 63 per cent of male youth who have restrictions on going out at night attribute these to a general lack of security; while almost 20 per cent refer to restrictions by a government authority or political entity as, in some neighbourhoods, curfews are imposed on Syrians. Almost 39 per cent of young females also attribute restricted mobility at night to a feeling of insecurity, and 61 per cent say they need to be escorted if they go out at night.

**Syrian refugee youth report having been subject to sexual or physical violence, with half of such incidents having taken place in the street.** Of the cases reported, around 55 per cent are attacks committed by strangers; i.e., persons who are neither family nor friends or acquaintances. These proportions are based on incidents that refugee youth reported about themselves or about fellow-Syrian refugees they know. The sensitivity of this issue and the weak trust in a data-collection setting in general do not allow an estimation of the proportion of Syrian refugee youth subjected to such situations. Several incidents of assault and harassment, however, were relayed to the research team through qualitative research. The fact that the most referred-to were street attacks by strangers further underlines the feeling of insecurity Syrian refugee youth have in public areas.

**Another relation that influences the feeling of security or insecurity is the Lebanese landlord-Syrian tenant relationship that oscillates between a charitable to an exploitative relation.** Shelter is a basic human need for safety. When landlords - who have the power to deprive the refugees of this need - exploit this situation, the feeling of insecurity is exacerbated. The qualitative information indicates that some landlords have provided refugees with free shelter or donations to equip shelters, especially at the beginning of the crisis and upon their arrival. For example, in Sidon, South Lebanon, an unfinished commercial centre was offered for free to accommodate around 50 refugee families. In contrast, as time passed, other landlords raised rents and started charging fees for any additional family sharing the same unit. The landlords justified these increases by considering rent being too low when compared to the number of individual tenants. On average, there are eight Syrian refugees sharing each dwelling, with 10 per cent of the dwellings having more than 12 occupants. One young refugee living in the South describes how he and his family had rented an animal pen and, at their own expense, had renovated to make it habitable. As a consequence, the landlord doubled the rent.

### 3. ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS HOST COMMUNITY

**Overall, under such conditions young refugees try to keep a low profile within the community.** The qualitative research shows that they try to avoid any confrontation, even if this means sacrificing their rights. For example, a young male refugee in Sidon, South Lebanon, explained: *“If we were harassed in Syria in the same way we are harassed here, we would have reacted, but here we*

*are avoiding problems so that we are not kicked out and forced to return to Syria.”* Another young male refugee in the village of Chebaa, South Lebanon, said: *“If someone attacks me, I usually react; but now I tolerate it because I do not want problems, especially since the implications would be that [they would] fire all fellow-Syrians from work.”* In a Beirut suburb, the father of a young Syrian refugee narrated that he had paid the thieves who had stolen his bicycle to return it, rather than going through the formal channels to claim his right. This is in line with more than 61 per cent of the cases of crime and violence - physical and/or sexual - recounted by Syrian refugee youth going unreported to the authorities. Less than 10 per cent of these cases had been reported to the police, among which almost 44 per cent had not resulted in any action or indictment of the perpetrators.

**The feeling of insecurity makes it hard to reach out to refugee youth.** According to the director of a well-established local organization working on youth protection of 15-18-year-olds, trust is lacking and is a significant barrier to reaching out to them. It needs to be bridged to target this sensitive age group.

**Less than one third of refugee youths have Lebanese friends, with males having more friendships with their Lebanese peers than females** (figure 9). More than 70 per cent of Syrian refugee youth met their Lebanese friends in the neighbourhood, and 26 per cent at work. Educational institutions are the places where friendships are harnessed. Two thirds of refugee youth enrolled in educational institutions in Lebanon have friends, compared to 30 per cent among out-of-school youth.

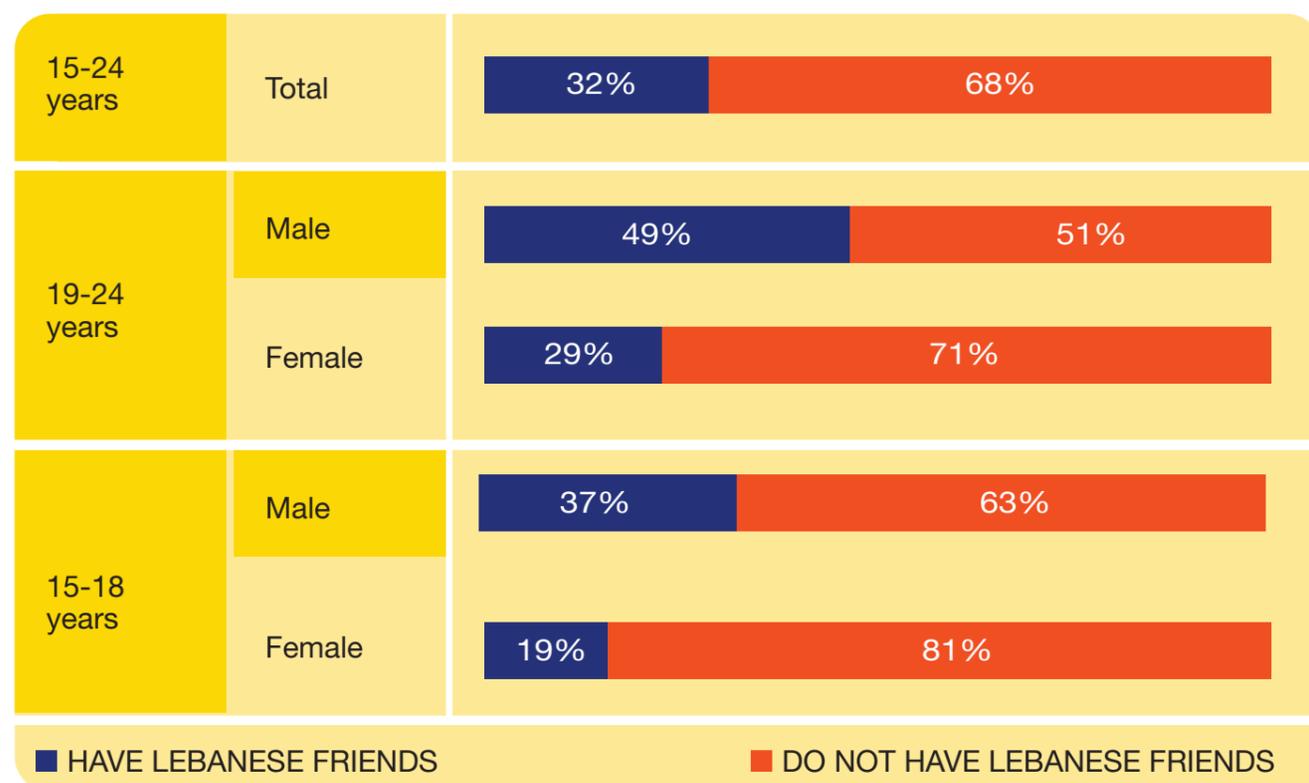
Syrian refugee youth visit and chat with their Lebanese friends, but very few do other forms of social or sports activities together. The qualitative data confirms that some young refugees have developed friendships with their Lebanese neighbours, especially with those who are helpful and kind. Around 42 per cent of male refugee youths have Lebanese friends, versus 25 per cent among female Syrian youth.

The general picture, however, reflects relatively weak bonding. As explained by one male refugee youth, he has a Lebanese friend but would not rely on him for anything. These relations cannot break the stereotypical barriers, as one youth said: “I have a couple of Lebanese good friends who I do not consider ‘Lebanese’.” Interviews with Syrian parents show that they are relatively cautious about allowing their children to bond with Lebanese, mainly due to lack of trust and familiarity with the neighbourhood and, secondly, because of the generally conservative attitude of Syrians, especially towards their daughters.





**Figure 9: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by friendship with Lebanese, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)



The common reason for not befriending the Lebanese is often simply a lack of opportunity, as stated by 28 per cent. Findings suggest a possible segregation between the lives of refugees and of Lebanese in host communities, and the fact that they feel Lebanese look down at them, as mentioned by 27 per cent (table 60). Syrian refugee youth and their parents, however, try not to generalize about the Lebanese in their discussions, pointing out that some are good, helpful and kind. Around 75 per cent of youth aged 15-18 years do not have Lebanese friends, as compared to almost 58 per cent among the 19-24-year-olds. Close to half of the surveyed youth, or 47 per cent, agree that coexistence with the Lebanese is almost impossible; with this share rising to a high of 85 per cent of Syrian refugee youth in the North, reflecting a strong feeling of segregation there, versus a low of 25 per cent in the South and Nabatieh.

**Table 60: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by reasons restricting friendship with Lebanese, by sex and age group**  
(Percentage)

REASON	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Lack of opportunity to meet Lebanese	28	32	29	24	28
Superior attitude of Lebanese towards Syrians	33	23	27	25	27
Diverging viewpoints between Syrians and Lebanese	12	24	13	30	18
Reluctance of Lebanese to socialize with and befriend Syrians	8	17	6	18	11
Distrust of Lebanese	6	8	5	11	7
Objection of parents to befriending Lebanese	8	7	3	8	6

Syrian refugee youth think that the Lebanese attitude combines both the positive and the negative, with negative attitudes being more prevalent. Half the surveyed refugee youth think it is an attitude of disdain, hate or exploitation; however, 24 per cent describe the behaviour of Lebanese as “normal” (figure 10), and 6 per cent think the Lebanese are indifferent towards them. Just 5 per cent regard the Lebanese as having feelings of solidarity with, and sympathy towards Syrians.

The qualitative data also shows mixed views. The attributes that Syrian youth and their parents use in describing the Lebanese attitude include despising, exploiting, intimidating, pressuring, harassing, rejecting, etc. *“The Lebanese treat us like rubbish,”* a male Syrian youth in Sidon, South Lebanon, said. Some think the Lebanese are not reciprocating the treatment many received in Syria when escaping during the 2006 war on Lebanon. Syrian refugee youth mention that the Lebanese attitude makes them feel inferior. The main advice they give the Lebanese, as articulated by a Syrian youth in Tripoli, North Lebanon, is: *“Treat us the way you like to be treated.”* It is worth highlighting that only 1 per cent thinks the Lebanese fear the Syrians.

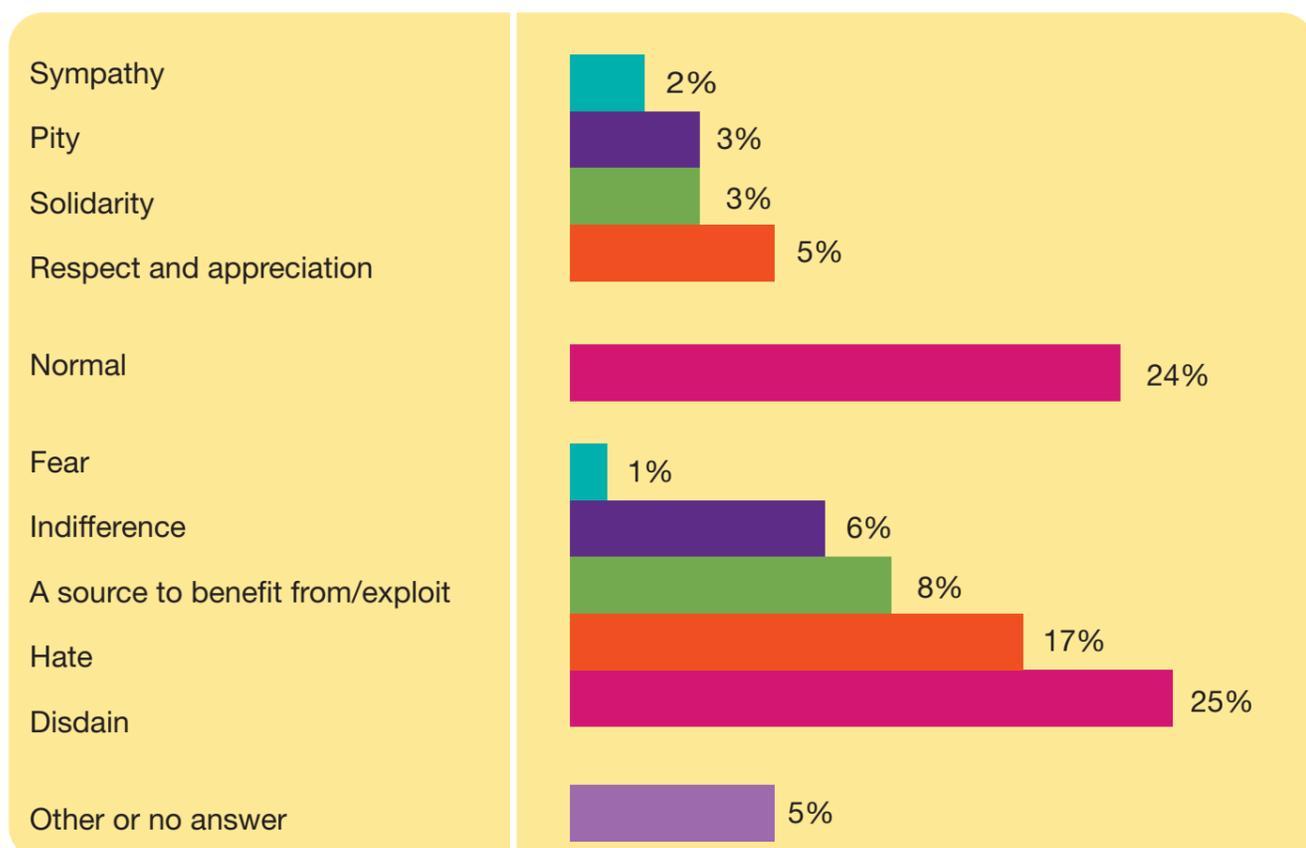




In contrast, some Syrian refugee youth do understand the negative attitude of the Lebanese, creating an opportunity to build on in order to break the prejudice. As a Syrian female refugee youth residing in the Bekaa village of Jeb Jenine explained that it, the difficult situation was “*understandable, because we are actually living in their country.*”

**Figure 10: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by impression of attitude held by the Lebanese towards them**

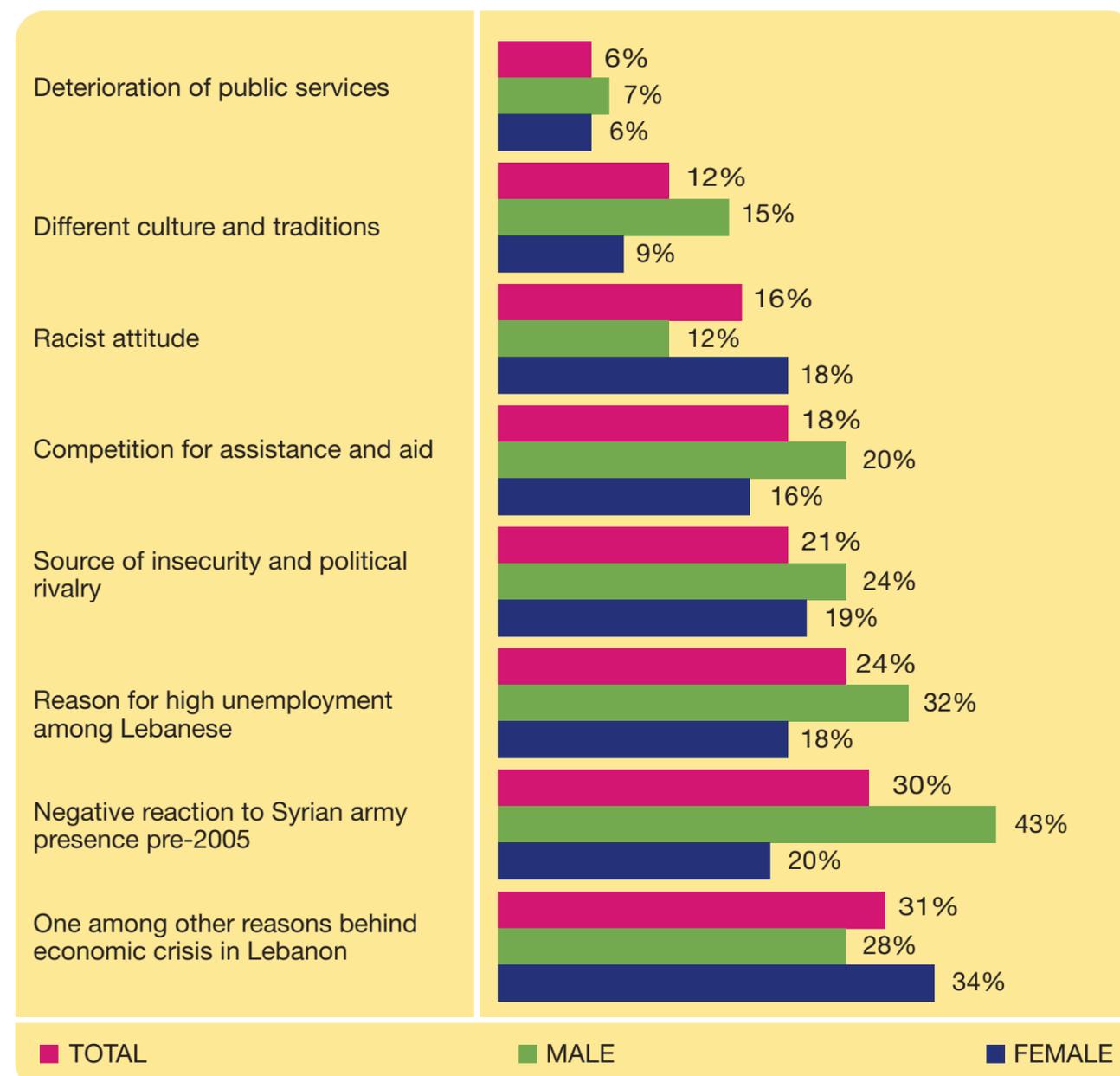
(Percentage)



Syrian refugee youth explain the negative attitude of Lebanese as being due to the deteriorating economic conditions, namely unemployment. Furthermore, 30 per cent, mainly male youth, also attribute this attitude to the history of Syrian presence through its army in Lebanon pre-2005. One fifth of refugee youth believe the Lebanese perceive them as a source of political rivalry and insecurity (figure 11).

**Figure 11: Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by their assumed reasons behind negative attitudes of Lebanese towards them, by sex and age group**

(Percentage)



SOCIAL COHESION





#### 4. ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF LEBANESE YOUTH TOWARDS REFUGEE YOUTH

**The qualitative research shows signs of prejudice among Lebanese youth towards Syrian refugee youth.** Statements during focus groups of Lebanese youth indicate that Lebanese see Syrian refugees as inferior. It is more the younger age group of Lebanese youth who have pre-conceived opinions. *“They brought us diseases. It is hard to accept them among us. Let them improve their health and education status first, so we can mix with them. They are close-minded.”* These were among the first reactions expressed in a focus group in the South, when Lebanese youth participants were asked about their perception of Syrian refugees. On the other hand, when discussing the perceptions held by Syrian refugee youth towards them, most young Lebanese insisted they would not like the refugees to generalize about them.

**The Lebanese have various fears as regards Syrian refugees. They have personal fears of security from an increase in delinquency and crime which refugees are assumed to be committing.** This includes a fear of sexual harassment of Lebanese women by Syrian refugees. Lebanese female participants living in the Bekaa state that they feel they cannot move freely as the security situation is deteriorating: *“We used to walk in the orchards or on the streets alone. Now we feel scared because of the crumbling security situation – there are many Syrians, [though] not all of them are bad. The cases of kidnappings are increasing; we just do not feel safe and we cannot act freely like before.”* In villages, locals who used to be familiar with all inhabitants in the community feel they are being infiltrated by “strangers” who may commit crimes and go unnoticed.

**Beyond personal security, there is another type of collective fear related to the number and duration of stay of Syrian refugees and the historical experience with refugees in general in Lebanon.** At community and national levels, the Lebanese feel a threat on their social, economic and infrastructure resources. Lebanese think Syrian refugees are taking their jobs. They also believe Syrians are diverting aid away from Lebanese; a few even claim that Syrian refugees are better off than needy Lebanese because they get free services and do not pay taxes. Furthermore, in some focus groups Lebanese youth expressed that public spaces are no more theirs and that they feel they are being “invaded”. A Lebanese female participant said: *“They are becoming the dominant population.”* Another added: *“You cannot get to the corniche anymore.”* Many Lebanese also think that the presence of Syrian refugee youth is accentuating the political divide in Lebanon. The collective fear is heightened by insinuations to the recurrence of the experience in Lebanon of Palestinian refugees. Some Lebanese cannot understand why male Syrian youths are seeking asylum in Lebanon; according to them, *“Syrian male youth should be fighting for their land, otherwise they will lose it.”*

**Despite this general negative attitude, however, empathetic signs also are reported, particularly among Lebanese female youth and the relatively-better educated.** Some Lebanese female youth look at the refugees from a humanitarian perspective, trying to overcome their prejudice. A Lebanese

female youth attempting to provide advice to her peers in dealing with the refugees suggested: *“Look at them as they are humans and not Syrians; maybe the relation will improve and the sensitivities be reduced.”* Lebanese female youth, in fact, expressed interest in participating in projects that could drive positive change.

**Suggestions of the Lebanese as regards dealing with Syrian refugee youth vary from requiring interventions at the macro level, to actions on the personal level.** Young Lebanese suggested to the authorities and the international community at large to deal with such structural factors as managing and organizing the overall presence and return of refugees, controlling security, and engaging further in the management and containment of the refugee influx.

**In contrast, at community and personal levels, suggestions of Lebanese youth for interventions ranged from providing refugees with basic needs for survival to starting a positive dialogue aimed at accepting one another.** These suggestions, provided mainly by Lebanese enrolled at school or university, are proof of a willingness to challenge the inconsistencies in personal beliefs and search for mutually-beneficial relationships. The emergence of Lebanese-Syrian joint relief and support is one example of how change can begin.

#### 5. CROSS-CHECK OF OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

**Based on the above analysis of the actual opinions of “the other” - in other words, Lebanese opinion of Syrians, and vice versa - it can be concluded that perceptions are aligned but negative on both sides** (table 61). At the interpersonal level, opportunities exist and can be captured. The problem is rather more deeply entrenched in the intergroup context in Lebanon between the Syrian refugees and the Lebanese which has bred prejudice.





**Table 61: Refugee-host relationship: Summary of actual opinions and perceived attitudes of Syrian refugee youth and Lebanese youth**

	ACTUAL OPINION OF THE OTHER	PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER'S OPINION
<b>SYRIAN YOUTH</b>	<p><i>WHAT DO YOU THINK OF LEBANESE YOUTH?</i></p> <p>They harass, indict and prosecute us.</p> <p>We do not get along/limited friendships; and if such friendships exist, they are superficial and cannot be relied upon.</p> <p>They are “irresponsible” as they do not accept difficult working conditions and they are not satisfied with what is being offered.</p> <p>We think they are hard on us; they discriminate against us.</p> <p>We think they hate, disdain and exploit us.</p> <p>Some are good and charitable.</p>	<p><i>WHAT DO YOU THINK LEBANESE YOUTH THINK OF YOU?</i></p> <p>They think all of us are casual workers.</p> <p>They think we are responsible for the economic problems in Lebanon and are taking jobs from them.</p> <p>They do not care if we share political affinity or belong to the same religion as them.</p>
<b>LEBANESE YOUTH</b>	<p><i>WHAT DO YOU THINK OF SYRIAN YOUTH?</i></p> <p>They are inferior.</p> <p>They increase delinquency and crime.</p> <p>They are pressuring social and economic services and taking away assistance from us.</p> <p>Syrian male refugees are “irresponsible”; they left their country and the battle and sought refuge in Lebanon.</p> <p>They are better off than the needy Lebanese.</p> <p>They are needy people who should be treated humanely.</p>	<p><i>WHAT DO YOU THINK SYRIAN YOUTH THINK OF YOU?</i></p> <p>They look up to us.</p> <p>They think we are more powerful; we sometimes harass them.</p> <p>They think we are more liberal, better educated and less religious.</p> <p>They generalize about the attitudes held by Lebanese.</p>

**While some of the barriers are real and structural which justify fear and insecurity, others are psychological.** In fact, focus groups with Lebanese youth started off with significant stereotyping; nonetheless, towards the end of these discussions, the participants relaxed and began questioning those stereotypes. Willingness to challenge prejudice also was reflected in Lebanese and Syrians trying to avoid generalizations when discussing the views of “the other”. While such windows of opportunity clearly exist among both populations at large, the general political environment in Lebanon and the media most of the time operate in the opposite direction and contribute to reinforcing stereotypes.

**In addition, there is evidence of success stories on youth-initiated grassroots relations, especially between the educated and socially-engaged Syrian refugee youth and Lebanese youth.** These efforts have led to organizational set-ups for relief work. One example of such an initiative includes a joint Syrian-Lebanese youth project in Tripoli, North Lebanon, in response to the direct needs of refugees there, providing relief work and social support. Similar grassroots initiatives have emerged among activists in urban areas, namely Beirut and Tripoli. Building on such initiatives, and on the fact that barriers are sometimes not real, could provide avenues for positive change.





# YOUTH PRIORITIES



## G. YOUTH PRIORITIES

**The main concern of Syrian refugee youths is, unsurprisingly, securing basic livelihood needs.**

This concern recurs most when youth - across both age groups and sexes - are asked about their present worries. The second-greatest concern is the weak security conditions in Lebanon (table 62), and the third anxiety regards work and employment conditions. In contrast, among the younger age group of female refugee youth their third most-common concern relates to education, while for females aged 19-24 years it is protecting and preserving their family.

**Table 62: Most recurrent concerns of Syrian refugee youth, by sex and age group**

(1 = most recurrent; 10 = least recurrent)

CONCERN	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Securing of basic livelihood <sup>a</sup>	1	1	1	1	1
Security conditions in Lebanon	2	2	2	2	2
Difficulty in finding employment or work with better conditions	7	4	3	3	3
General feeling of insecurity	6	5	4	5	4
Care and protection of family	5	3	7	7	5
Security conditions in Syria	4	7	5	4	6
Deteriorating housing conditions/inability to pay rent	9	6	6	6	7
Inability to pursue education (self and family)	3	10	8	8	8
Inability to return to Syria	8	8	9	10	9
Anxiety about family and friends in Syria	10	9	10	9	10

a. This is a general concern about meeting basic household needs. It is different from the expressed concern about finding work, as it could have been suggested by any household member who might not be necessarily searching for work or working; rather, it is concern about meeting household requirements not necessarily only through income from work, but also through aid or means to reduce the cost of living, among others.



In line with the above concerns, the second-most commonly stated priority for the Syrian refugee youth, following ensuring general stability and security conditions in Lebanon, is finding work or securing a better job (table 63). The findings indicate that, among male youth, over 55 per cent chose work as a priority, versus 20 per cent of female refugee youth. Continuing education is the most-mentioned priority among female youth.

**Table 63: Most recurrent priorities of Syrian refugee youth, by sex and age group**

(1 = most recurrent; 10 = least recurrent)

PRIORITY	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Ensuring stable security conditions	2	1	3	2	1
Finding a better work	5	3	1	1	2
Returning to Syria	3	2	2	3	3
Continuing education	1	5	4	4	4
Reuniting with family and living together	8	4	5	5	5
Improving livelihood	6	6	6	6	6
Emigrating	4	7	7	7	7
Securing health services/coverage	7	8	10	10	8
Securing winterization	10	9	8	9	9
Getting married	9	10	9	8	10

The most common suggestion of Syrian refugee youth to overcome their concerns, after their overarching wish to return to Syria, relates to work conditions and employment (table 64). Many suggestions proposed by refugee youths reflect a hope to return to normality and go back to their home country, or to leave to another county, i.e., emigrate. The desire to return to Syria is an expected natural response as the only solution to drastically relieve them from their entire problem. Other common

suggestions relate to the improving of their stay in Lebanon, with 19-24-year-old males focusing on employment and work conditions, while the suggestions of 15-18-year-old females relate to increasing school enrolment and resolving related hurdles. Providing more extensive free health-care services and legal assistance are other suggestions expressed by the refugee youth to improve their situation.

**Table 64: Most recurrent suggestions of Syrian refugee youth to overcome concerns, by sex and age group**

(1 = most recurrent; 10 = least recurrent)

SUGGESTION	FEMALE		MALE		TOTAL
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Return to Syria	1	1	1	2	1
Support employment (create opportunities, capacity-building)	9	3	2	1	2
Get family out of Syria	3	2	3	3	3
Provide free health-care services	6	4	5	4	4
Provide legal assistance	5	7	4	5	5
Support Syrians to emigrate	4	6	6	6	6
Provide education solutions (certification equivalence, free education, establishing special schools for Syrians)	2	10	10	7	7
Provide protection of Syrians (Lebanese army and government, international organizations)	7	5	9	10	8
Improve security conditions in Lebanon	10	8	8	8	9
Provide food and cash assistance	8	9	11	9	10
Improve relations between Lebanese and Syrians	11	11	7	11	11

YOUTH PRIORITIES





When designing and planning programmes for Syrian refugee youth, the concerns and priorities listed above need to be taken into consideration. In Lebanon so far, **only a small percentage of refugee youth seem to be involved in any voluntary, development or civic engagement**; moreover, their participation as beneficiaries in projects tailored for them is minimal. This has been relayed by several NGOs working with refugee youth and by refugee youth themselves, among whom no more than 9 per cent have participated in any form of activity, with the highest participation being in recreational, cultural and sports activities. Such low participation does not reflect the desire of youth for playing an active role in bettering their own situation and that of their community. At least one third of both males and females are interested in taking part in a wide array of activities if opportunities arise (figure 12 ).

For refugee youth to take part in any activity, it needs to fulfil the following three conditions:

- a) Proximity to place of residence:** The mobility of Syrian refugee youth is restricted by several factors, including cost of transportation; lack of knowledge of different geographic areas and the best way to travel; family restrictions, especially for younger females; and fear of movement between different areas and across checkpoints, especially for those who lack legal and current travel documents. Programmes with refugee youth need to be not only easily accessible, but also within the community’s gaze. They need to be based on building relationships with community members in order for the refugee youth and their families to trust and feel safe.
- b) No cost:** It is evident that refugee youth have no money to spare; thus, any activity requiring monetary contribution would deem it inaccessible.
- c) Segregated male and female activities:** Suggested by both male and female youth, though more of a priority for females. This may at times be related to the nature of the topics that youth want to engage in, as example reproductive health, but more often concerns social constrains.

When provided with a set of programme interventions to be ranked by importance on a scale of three levels, **Syrian refugee youth gave the highest score of 2.05 out of 3 to provision of free shelter** (table 65). The lowest score was assigned a programme on improving sexual and reproductive health (0.07/3.00). **The second-most important programme intervention according to refugee youth was provision of employment opportunities (1.73/3.00), while schooling received the third-highest score.**

**Table 65: Ranking of programme interventions by priority for Syrian refugee youth, by sex and age group**

(3 = highest; 0 = lowest)

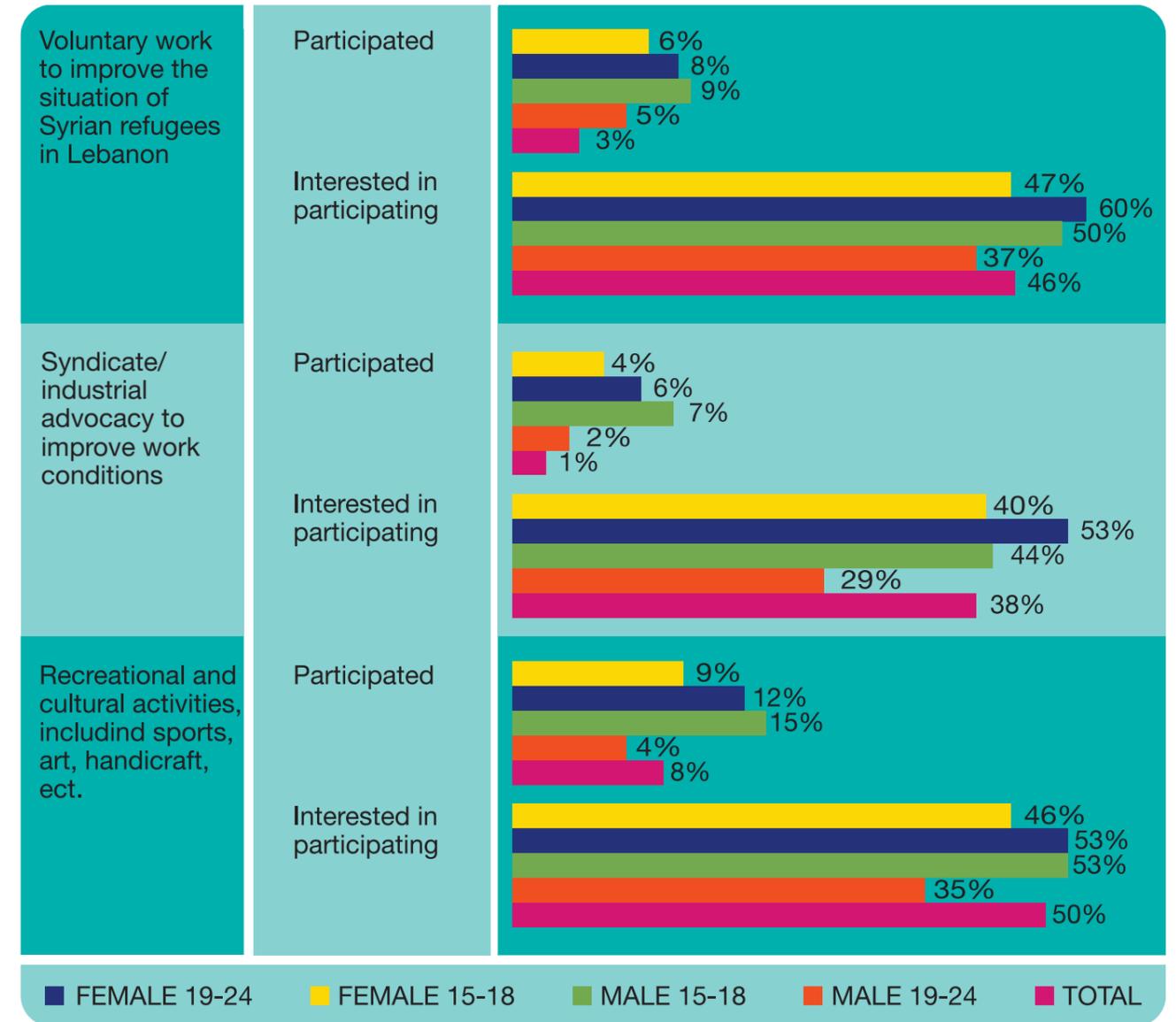
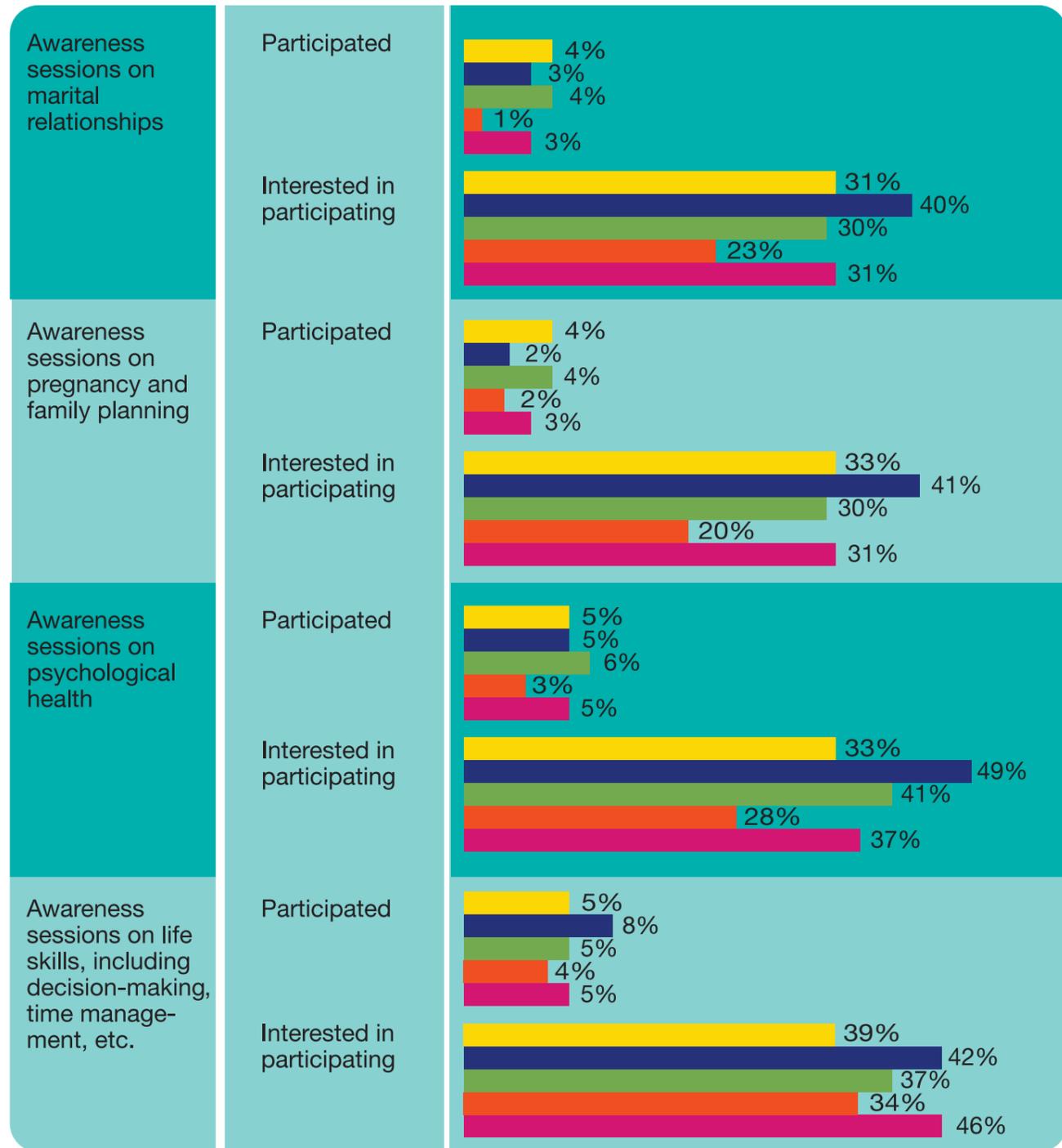
PROGRAMME INTERVENTION	FEMALE		MALE		OVERALL SCORE
	15-18	19-24	15-18	19-24	
Provide free shelter	1.99	2.19	2.00	1.93	2.05
Provide employment opportunities	1.38	1.73	1.90	1.90	1.73
Provide improved opportunities for school and university education	1.24	0.73	0.60	0.82	0.83
Provide improved security conditions and protection against physical violence (harassment, rape, etc.)	0.38	0.37	0.28	0.37	0.35
Provide vocational and skills training	0.27	0.32	0.33	0.36	0.32
Provide improved vocational education	0.18	0.13	0.27	0.14	0.18
Provide improved relations with Lebanese youth	0.12	0.13	0.19	0.16	0.15
Provide youth clubs and recreational activities	0.12	0.10	0.18	0.12	0.12
Provide awareness-raising programmes on social and health-related issues	0.10	0.12	0.09	0.10	0.10
Provide improved sexual and reproductive health care	0.11	0.09	0.01	0.05	0.07

In conclusion, the worries, priorities and suggestions of Syrian refugee youth to improve their situation reflect, in different ways, unsatisfied basic needs. Such deprivations need to be met before alleviating other higher-level needs in order to avoid negative and harmful consequences on the Syrian refugee youth themselves and on their surroundings.





**Figure 12 : Distribution of Syrian refugee youth by actual and desired participation in awareness sessions, voluntary and advocacy work and recreational activities, by sex and age group (Percentage)**



YOUTH PRIORITIES



## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The comprehensive nature of this assessment and the cooperation of agencies in its implementation provide a unique opportunity to reflect on the needs and priorities of youth from a holistic perspective and devise integrated programming strategies better capable of making significant impact on the lives of young Syrian refugees.

Based on the analysis of the findings, a set of preliminary sectoral recommendations are provided below, along with suggestions on the interventions approach. The following recommendations build on three factors, as listed as follows:

- a) the findings of the assessment;
- b) the priorities and concerns as set by refugee youth themselves; and
- c) a strategic targeting in order to achieve greatest impact with existing resources and capacity.

## A. RECOMMENDATIONS BY SECTOR

### 1. SHELTER

Two priority issues emerge from the findings on shelter; namely, the high cost of rent burdening families, and the conditions of discomfort and security that young female refugees living in makeshift accommodation experience.

Thus, the following measures are recommended:

**a) Ensure implementation of international humanitarian standards in the design and implementation of shelters for refugees, particularly in relation to safety and privacy of female youth**

The international standards emphasize that humanitarian actors ensure minimum standards of privacy and safety in designing shelter and water and sanitation facilities. According to Sphere Minimum Standards<sup>32</sup> and the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) working groups, the design of water and sanitation facilities emphasizes the need of refugees for space to bathe in privacy and with dignity.

The number, location, design, safety, appropriateness and convenience of facilities should be decided in consultation with the users, particularly women, adolescent girls and persons with disabilities. The location of facilities in central, accessible and well-lit areas with good visibility of the surrounding vicinity can contribute to ensuring the safety of the users. While planning settlements, the design and construction should enable safe separation and privacy as required between the sexes, between different age groups and between separate families within a given household. Practically, this includes:

- i. training aid workers involved in shelter design and implementation on international standards, as well as on the links between infrastructure-related problems and increased vulnerability of females to sexual and gender-based violence; and
- ii. supporting mechanisms that ensure participation of female youth in the shelter-design process.

**b) Support livelihood projects that link provision of financial support with youth continuing formal education**

Livelihood projects that satisfy the immediate requirements of Syrian refugee youth need to be better linked with their medium-term and strategic priorities, particularly enrolment of male and female refugee youth in formal education. For example, support in the payment of rent could be conditional on at least one family member continuing formal education.

<sup>32</sup> Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

## 2. EDUCATION

According to the study, there are three main challenges that need to be overcome with regard to education: a) the financial aspect, including fees and transportation, in addition to the pressure on refugee youths to work and contribute to family income; b) the certification of the learning outcomes by officially-recognized sources; and c) the difficulties as regards the curriculum and the language of instruction/teaching, and academic hurdles.

Educational opportunities that have been provided so far, however, rarely concern or target youth, higher education, secondary education, TVET<sup>33</sup> or the acquisition of the skills necessary for a productive life. Despite the clear gap identified through the existing data, youth learning opportunities in general - and secondary education in particular - remain marginal both in terms of response, and also in terms of funding, thus putting this segment of the refugee population at risk.

While re-integrating the age group 15-18 years into the education system could seem more challenging than for other segments of Syrian refugee children and youth, it also is an area where opportunities can be found; namely, in terms of capacity of Lebanese public schools at the secondary level that could take on additional students at minimal additional expense.

The following measures are recommended:

### a) Provide learning opportunities that aim at supporting youth re-integration into formal education in Lebanon, including secondary and higher education

The available formal and non-formal learning opportunities or programmes for youth remain ineffective in increasing access to formal education. In fact, catch-up programmes tailor-designed to meet the specific academic needs of refugee youth according to each age within the 15-18-year segment that could facilitate their re-integration into the formal education system are almost non-existent in Lebanon at present. Such educational interventions and programmes are needed and must be relevant, age-specific, gender-sensitive, needs-based and targeted to youth groups with different needs than those of children.

### b) Lobby for more permissive policy vis-à-vis certification to allow refugee youth entry into formal education

This includes their partaking in official examinations even if satisfactory documentation is not available. All stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in both Lebanon and Syria, as well as across the region, should be involved in addressing this particular issue of curricula and certification, as it may provide a low-cost window to solving

the immense problem of young out-of-school refugees in Lebanon.

### c) Assess the impact and outreach of non-formal education opportunities<sup>34</sup> for out-of-school refugee youth and, accordingly, provide tailor-designed adequate non-formal education interventions based on their expressed needs

Most refugee youths believe that education is valuable for their future and voiced their willingness to pursue their education in Lebanon. Non-formal educational activities considered in the current situation as one of the pathways to alleviate the problem of youth education need to be reassessed. Non-formal education often can bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education, bringing out-of-school youth back into the formal tracks. Yet, although non-formal education is necessary and needed in times of crisis, it should not be an excuse for replacing formal education. The definition and scope of non-formal education and what it constitutes still need to be clearly defined in the context of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon and, ideally, also for neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees, with the aim to harmonize the definition and tools for non-formal education. Furthermore, the value and benefit of such forms of education need to be evaluated in light of the specific needs of the youth and the ultimate objective of reintegrating refugee youths into formal education.

## 3. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The following measures are recommended:

### a) Expand livelihood or resource centres

The loss of their social network as a result of displacement requires the strengthening of networking channels for searching for and finding jobs. Expanding employment livelihood or employment centres - or supporting existing community-based centres to perform such roles - do not necessarily have to be limited to linking job seekers to work vacancies, but also could support in training and skills development for better marketability and self-employment, as well as vocational and skills-building activities. In addition, such centres could have a positive impact on reducing the exploitation of Syrian workers and subjecting them to unfair conditions, and can include training on the rights of Syrian refugee youth in terms of their earnings and income and their protection in the workspace. Primary focus should be on first-time job seekers, both male and female. Given their high unemployment rates, Lebanese women and youth also would be able to benefit from such centres. Lastly, these livelihood skills could be developed within a wider package of life skills to be made available in the centres.

<sup>34</sup>Non-formal education is education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned by an education provider. It could include accelerated learning programmes, remedial education, self and home-based schooling, structured and developmental programmes on basic literacy and numeracy, life and professional development skills, and vocational education. Precise definitions regarding education classifications of non-formal education and other forms of education are available through UNESCO/UIS and International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011.

### **b) Extend cash-for-work labour-intensive projects**

A traditional, but generally efficient response in humanitarian emergencies is cash for work that can alleviate some of the financial and psychological repercussions of unemployment. Male refugee youths can work in public infrastructure at both the national and community levels. Cash for work also can be gender-sensitive and, as example, allow females to do community work for an income. Experience and lessons learned from humanitarian contexts in other countries on how to ensure success of such programmes abound. In the case of Lebanon, the critical success factor for cash-for-work projects is related to the acceptance of the Lebanese community for Syrian labour, rather than perceiving them as competition threatening Lebanese employment. The projects need to be community-based, involving both Lebanese and the Syrian refugees, in order to avoid the tension and sensitivity related to job competition.

### **c) Provide economic and self-reliance opportunities for female youth through training and income generating activities both outside and inside the home**

Provide self-reliance economic opportunities for female refugee youth, both outside and within the home. This includes training opportunities, income-generating activities and home-based work. Such interventions need to be sensitive to the traditions of the receiving community and family responsibilities of targeted female youth while, at the same time, empowering female youth within and outside the home. While the success of such interventions is not guaranteed, as other experiences show, the needs and the demand of Syrian female youth make it worth exploring.

## 4. HEALTH

The following measures are recommended:

### **a) Provide comprehensive reproductive-health information and services using a combined strategy of outreach services and community-based centres**

The strategy should include the following actions:

- i. Map existing youth-oriented reproductive-health programmes and services and plan interventions accordingly so as to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize reach, in addition to identifying 'best practices' with the purpose to expand on these.
- ii. Support grassroots efforts and invest in building relationships of trust with community members; make resources, information and services available both in community and

health services, and in the privacy of the home of the youth, and delivered by culturally-sensitive health practitioners.

- iii. Consider availing reproductive-health services within a recreational and/or livelihood service package to minimize any stigmatization of youth wishing to seek those services.
- iv. Provide comprehensive life skills-based reproductive-health training that includes, besides family planning and reproductive health, additional topics that are perceived to be more pertinent to youth, including child health and safety, and pre-marital/marital counselling and preparation targeting mainly newly-married youth and those about to be married.
- v. Partner with, and involve adult and trusted female members of the refugee population in supporting awareness-raising efforts and dissemination of information about reproductive health.
- vi. Develop and use culturally-sensitive material and messages through media channels to increase the awareness of Syrian refugee youth and their parents about health issues in general, and reproductive-health issues in particular.

### **b) Engage, empower and ensure the participation of refugee youth in health-related outreach programmes** by listening actively to their needs and as trained peer educators through the following actions:

- i. Engage and empower youth as peer educators and train them on a range of issues, including reproductive health, so that they transmit this knowledge to their peers.
- ii. Ensure youth participation in health-related outreach programmes to make certain that their needs are well addressed and views adequately taken into consideration.

## 5. PROTECTION

The following measures are recommended:

### **a) Promote and ensure strict protection policy within humanitarian organizations (United Nations-related and non-related)**

All efforts to ensure female and male refugee youth are safe from abuse from aid workers should be strengthened through the existing protection system, ranging from monitoring and reporting to holding perpetrators accountable. Ongoing efforts should be supported, including training of aid workers - particularly field-based staff and coordinators of informal tented settlements - on prevention of sexual harassment through the following strategies:

- i. Monitor implementation of protection-related procedures and codes of conduct for preventing sexual and gender harassment within humanitarian organizations.
- ii. Reinforce current engagement with the Ministry of Social Affairs to mainstream the code of conduct in its interventions, especially with non-contracted organizations working in the humanitarian response.
- iii. Ensure availability of reporting procedures of sexual exploitation that are confidential and accessible to Syrian refugee youth in terms of simplicity, language, use, reach and cost.
- iv. Continue dissemination of information on procedures and guidelines for aid distribution for Syrian refugees within broader efforts to improve access of youth to information and services.
- v. Involve local female refugees, as well as Lebanese females in host communities, in the planning and implementation of projects and, where possible, ensure local teams are composed of both male and female workers.

**b) Provide socially and culturally accepted activities that allow refugee youth space out of the domestic sphere**

These activities should aim at the following:

- i. Strengthen existing recreational, educational or other social activities in safe spaces within proximity of the dwelling and offered by trusted organizations and workers to help refugee youth relieve stress and dissipate the propensity to violence, while allowing for friendship, networking and creativity.
- ii. Target primarily female refugee youth to allow them an opportunity to vent or escape domestic-related stress and discourage the tendency to seek early marriage as a form of escape and coping mechanism for financial burden. Ideally, this would be combined with efforts for reintegration of female youth into formal education and/or providing them with livelihood opportunities.
- iii. Provide opportunities for Syrian refugee youth to volunteer and contribute to the improvement of the situation of their community and that of the Lebanese host community.
- iv. Provide activities to prevent domestic violence. This could include problem-solving skills sessions to diffuse tension within the family as part of empowerment activities of women and girls. In parallel, target men and boys by providing them with anger- and stress-management skills and messages of zero tolerance and acceptance of violence and abuse.

**c) Support awareness-raising and media campaigns for preventing gender-based violence**

This could be achieved through the following actions:

- i. Disseminate information about existing gender-based violence services – including safe spaces and shelters - to Syrian refugees through outreach efforts and as part of aid-distribution programmes.
- ii. Support awareness-raising campaigns in areas with high concentration of refugees to promote respect for female refugees and deter sexual harassment.
- iii. Sensitize media personnel on impact of exaggerated and sensational reporting about early marriage, survival sex and gender-based reporting; and encourage reporting of positive images of female refugees.

**6. SOCIAL COHESION**

Efforts within this sector, and aiming at reducing tension between Lebanese host communities and the Syrian refugee population, should seek specifically to improve the feeling of security across the board. Over half of Syrian refugee youth report not once having felt safe in Lebanon. These feelings of insecurity in response to threats - real or perceived - within the political and social spaces on the one hand, and the private and domestic spheres, on the other, have significant negative influence on the lives of refugee youth.

Thus, the following measures are recommended:

**a) Build on existing cooperation between Lebanese and Syrian activists and charitable organizations**

In the absence of any form of representation of Syrian refugees and limited participation within the work of humanitarian organizations, youth activists in the civic and humanitarian domains are those best suited as counterparts and partners in joint Syrian-Lebanese efforts. Existing initiatives involving both Lebanese and Syrian youth could be used as an entry point into wider Syrian-Lebanese youth cooperation, seeking their involvement to expand the circles of collaboration around them. Practically, partnership with such initiatives for joint programme implementation and interventions need to be structured in a way that they lead to tangible and desirable outcomes for both communities and, at the same time, draw Lebanese and Syrian youth to each other through dialogue. Most importantly is to ensure a participatory approach between Syrian and Lebanese youth when developing, expanding and/or scaling up youth initiatives to guarantee common understanding and agreement of their involvement as leaders and beneficiaries.

### b) Support track-two dialogue<sup>35</sup>

Track-two dialogue involving political, social, religious and civil-society leaders - as opposed to what is called track-three, or people-to-people dialogue - is recommended and should be implemented with the aim of improving the living and security conditions of Syrian youth. Engaging politically-active youth at decision-making levels within their parties in dialogue and joint activities with Syrian youth can have more significant impact on Syrian-Lebanese relations than engaging in grassroots-level initiatives. Practically, this includes benefiting from existing Lebanese dialogue initiatives which are bringing together young political leaders and include active Syrian refugee youth. Some members among politically-active Lebanese youth have clearly expressed interest in participating in a dialogue with Syrian refugees. Getting Syrian youth representatives in dialogue with them also will alleviate some negative perceptions and reduce the incidence of possible violence, tension and harassment.

### c) Partner with the media for improved representation of Syrian refugees in the media

The media can play a critical role in both building awareness in supporting the promotion of a more accurate and positive representation of Syrian refugees. The image of Syrian refugees in the media oscillates between that of perpetrators of violence and crime, and that of impoverished victims of neglect and abuse. The negative impact of such an image on mobility and relationship with the Lebanese surroundings of female and male refugee youth has been examined in this report. Practically, this can include the following actions:

- i. Support for youth-led media initiatives where air time is given to radio and television programmes developed jointly by Syrian and Lebanese youth groups.
- ii. Support for media production that presents contentious issues related to social cohesion in story-telling, dramatized or animated productions.
- iii. Launching of awareness-raising campaigns in areas with high concentration of refugees to promote respect for Syrian girls and women and deter sexual harassment.

## B. PRIORITY AS SET BY YOUTH: EDUCATION AS THE WAY FORWARD

Provision of support for reintegration into formal education of refugee youth was the number-one recommendation of female youth aged 15-18 years old and the number-four recommendation for male youth.

The ongoing crisis in Syria and the state of displacement have significantly disrupted the lives of female and male Syrian refugee youth. The threats this segment of the refugee population face do not only affect their life at present, but can have long-term negative ramifications that would harm their future.

Today, the majority of refugee youth are either missing education opportunities or spending idle time without work or any social engagement, leaving them with no productive opportunities whatsoever - a state that can lead to harmful behaviour. One third of the youth surveyed are deprived of the possibility of being in education due to their current refugee situation. The survey shows also that the majority, mostly females, either are staying at home due to restricted mobility or are facing huge pressure to work and to earn income in order to support their family despite limited job opportunities - a matter which, ultimately, is compelling many female youth into forced marriage. These constraints have been identified as a priority in the Regional Response Plan, and efforts are urgently called to help prevent a lost generation.

Within this context, supporting the return of the most vulnerable youth into education - particularly females and the 15-18-year-olds who have been forced to drop out of school - will allow them to resume learning while also having effects on a variety of life aspects, including reduced psychological distress and anxiety, improved Syrian-Lebanese social cohesion and decreased propensity for early marriage, among others. It also could provide refugee youth with access to safe spaces that can be used as a hub or centre to address a multitude of problems. Enrolling youth in educational programmes should be considered as a top priority, because such an intervention would have multidimensional implications on currently-emerging risks and problems and, at the same time, provide hope and equip young refugees for the future.

## C. INTERVENTION APPROACH

The following measures are recommended:

### a) Support projects and services that are based in the refugee communities and reach out to youth within their homes

The findings of this study suggest a weak trust relationship and overarching feeling of insecurity between refugee youth on the one hand, and host communities and aid organizations on the other. Successful interventions that reach the most vulnerable require in particular a gradual building of trust with refugee youth and their families. Programmes and assistance need to come as a combination of reaching out to the youth through recurrent visits at their homes, as well providing them an open-door community service/safe centre where the same resource staff who built up this relationship are available. Having aid and service providers of Syrian nationality and the same sex, especially for females, would further accelerate the process of trust building.

### b) Design programmes with built-in mechanisms to involve youth, their families and community leaders

Involving Syrian refugee youth in project intervention from the early stages of a project and throughout implementation and assessment can have multiple favourable effects, whether in terms of a more realistic needs and priorities assessment, in allowing young refugees to be socially and/or economically engaged, and in accelerating the process of trust building with their peers. Participation of refugee youth in such programmes should be respected as a right and sought with the purpose of empowering them. Successful cases of joint efforts between refugee youth and local organizations have been alluded to in the findings. A first step could be sharing the knowledge gained and recommendations presented in this report in an accessible, youth-friendly Arabic-language format.

### c) Mainstream refugee youth issues within existing humanitarian response

Consider the establishment of a youth working group as a mechanism to address, advocate for and mainstream refugee youth issues. In cases when this is not feasible, activate the mainstreaming of youth issues within the existing related groups involved in the humanitarian response.

### d) Improve access of Syrian refugee youth to information and services

The loss of the social network, the need to adapt to new social and physical settings and geographies, and the limited financial resources combined with a distressed psychological situation make refugee youth more vulnerable, despondent and lost in terms of seeking services made available to them. Providing basic information on how and where to receive services or manage problems related to education, health, legal documentation or other basic livelihood issues sometimes can resolve many perceived hurdles and improve automatically the living conditions of refugee youth. Access could be provided via multisectoral information services in various regions that are at close proximity and which rely on local community-based resource personnel to guide refugees to a wide spectrum of basic needs.

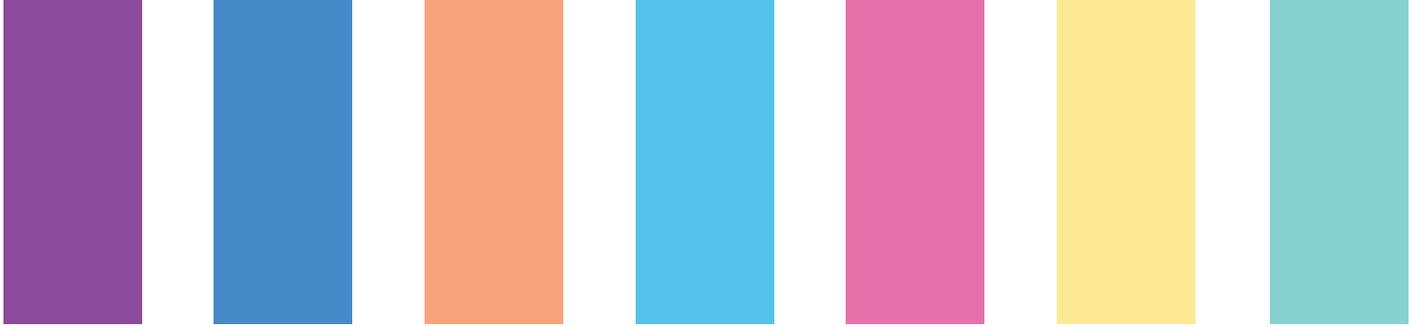
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