

بسمه و زيتونه

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RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR
FEMALE AND MALE SYRIAN YOUTH
IN SHATILA AND BOURJ AL BARAJNEH

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Disclaimer

Basmeh & Zeitooneh made all possible efforts to represent only accurate data and crosscheck all the information in this report. This does not rule out the possibility of inaccuracies or oversights, for which the team hereby expresses its regrets.

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Introduction

13 year-old Yasmin: “I want to graduate from school with excellence and then become an interior designer and then I want to start working. I believe that if I excel in my education I can find a job. I am not thinking about marriage. Work is better. I’d rather find a job.”

15 year-old Abdallah: “I have to help out my family but when my dad goes back to work, I won’t have to work anymore. (...) My parents would love for me to be educated and they encourage me to pursue my aspirations. I too am motivated to continue my education and pursue my dream of becoming an actor. I practice my acting skills every day in front of a mirror.”

Education plays a critical role in providing people with social and economic opportunities, and should function as an equalizer and a means to end generational cycles of poverty. Since it can also provide recovery, healing and a sense of normalcy, it is one of the main priorities for the government, international organizations and the international donor community in their response to the Syria Crisis in Lebanon.

More than 50% of the estimated 1 to 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon are below the age of 18,⁽¹⁾ and the Syria Crisis has put a heavy strain on the Lebanese education system. In preparing for a comprehensive response, many international organizations, international non-governmental organizations and academics conducted studies to gauge the barriers to education facing Syrian refugees of school-going age. The findings of those studies are reflected in the Reaching All Children with Education plan that we will discuss in Chapter 1.

While access to education for Syrian refugees has been studied extensively, very few reports focus specifically on youth, or on the situation in Lebanon’s twelve Palestine refugee camps. In fact, Basmeh & Zeitooneh only found one study that includes the voices of Syrian youth,⁽²⁾ which incidentally is also the only study conducted by an organization that implements humanitarian programs and therefore has first-hand information on the broader context, and one 2014 study that includes the problems facing Syrian children in Palestine refugee camps.⁽³⁾ This report aims to fill that gap by representing the voices of 13 to 24 year-old Syrian youth living in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh camps. We did not include Palestine refugees from Syria in this study because they fall under a different system than other refugees from Syria, namely the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) system.

To identify the complex profiles that reflect the multiple deprivations Syrian youth face in relation to education we conducted 415 surveys, and talked to 72 youth in interviews and focus group discussions. Basmeh & Zeitooneh had access to these young people because it has been implementing relief and development programs in the two camps since 2012.

The Crisis heavily influenced the size and composition of the populations of Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh; the population has doubled and now consists for approximately 50% of refugees from Syria. Before the Crisis, the standard of living in the camps was already very poor; this has only been exacerbated by the population increase. The environmental health issues range from pollution to overcrowding, damp shelters and a provisional electricity network that leaves the walls in many

(1) USJ, “Analysis of Child Education Survey”, March 2016, p. 4

(2) NRC, “A Future in the Balance – Lebanon”, April 2016

(3) UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, UNHCR, “Situation Analysis of Youth in Lebanon Affected by the Syrian Crisis”, April 2014

shelters under a permanent electric current and that causes electrocution among residents. Syrian refugees predominantly settle in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh because they face significant obstacles in obtaining residence documents, which will be discussed in 1.2.1, and because the Lebanese security forces and police do not enter the camps. The difficulties with obtaining legal status also lead to high poverty levels in the Syrian community, which will be discussed in 1.2.2, this offers people few alternatives to the comparatively low rent in the camps.

The specific purpose of this study was twofold: to determine how barriers to education impact female and male Syrian youth differently, and to ensure that the specific situation of Syrian youth in urban camps does not continue to be excluded from recommendations advocating law and policy changes. The report is divided into two main sections. The first outlines the main obligations of the Lebanese state, the Reaching All Children with Education plan, and the barriers known to inhibit school participation for youth. The second comprises an analysis of our findings on youth-specific barriers to education in the camps; these findings have been disaggregated by sex to analyze the different impact of those barriers on female and male youth.

Definition of terms

Non-formal education: unaccredited and/or uncertified education programs that are run by non-state actors and that serve to prepare children for public school. Non-formal education includes Early Childhood Education (ECE), Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN), Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALP) and technical/vocational training.

Public school: state-run school, i.e. primary, intermediary and secondary schools that are run by the Lebanese government.

Youth: the UN and other international organizations define youth as people aged 15 to 24, in this study youth is defined as those aged 13 to 24. We chose to include 13 and 14 year olds because 13 year olds were of school-going age when the war in Syria started, and are likely to have faced significant hurdles entering the Lebanese school system. We also included them because our relief and development work in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh showed that the barriers facing youth aged 15 and older also tend to influence 13 and 14 year olds.

Methodology

The data collection started in May 2017 and finished in October 2017. To acquire a comprehensive understanding of the barriers to education faced by Syrian youth, we used both qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods.

Qualitative data

For the qualitative part of the research we conducted focus group discussions, interviews with youth and interviews with key informants. We talked to 72 Syrian youth, two key informants that work in Basmeh & Zeitooneh's non-formal learning center and two key informants that provide psycho-social support to female and male youth. The key informant interviews were used to inform our questionnaires. The focus group discussions and interviews were held with 45 youth who are out of school and 27 youth who are either studying in a public school or in a non-formal learning center. We held the focus group discussions with participants that fit the same profile; separating male youth from female youth, dividing them into age groups 13 to 18 and 19 to 24, and separating those in school from those out of school.

We found participants by walking around the camps and asking youth to come to Basmeh & Zeitooneh's community center at an agreed date and time. We also used the snowballing technique: we asked participants to recommend other youth that might be interested in participating, and used the contacts of Basmeh & Zeitooneh's field teams in both camps. It was difficult to find boys and young men that could make the time to participate in an interview or focus group discussion, as a result we were able to talk to more female youth, 46 in total, than male youth, 26 in total. To account for the fact that many boys and young men are working, we talked to them on Sundays and during their lunch breaks.

When addressing youth who are in school, the interviews and focus group discussions mainly aimed to explore the challenges faced in and on the way to school, parental support, and pressure the youth face in working to complete their education. When addressing youth out of school, the questions aimed to explore reasons for dropping out or not enrolling, and the consequences of not being in school.

After talking to 72 Syrian youth, we stopped interviewing more candidates because we reached data saturation.

Quantitative data

For the quantitative part of the research we surveyed 415 youth in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh. Outreach was done in teams of two: one man and one woman, one person from Shatila or Bourj al Barajneh and one from outside the community. The teams surveyed youth on the streets, paid home visits and went door to door. It cost less time to fill out the survey than to participate in an interview, and work was not an inhibiting factor. 208 males and 205 females filled out the survey (2 respondents did not fill out their sex), so female and male youth are equally represented in the quantitative data. However, since the surveys were taken during working hours, there is a possible bias to, predominantly, male respondents that are not employed or that are employed inside the camps. Due to security concerns, we could not account for this by taking the surveys in the evening, when those returning from work can be found in the camps.

It is difficult to find reliable data on the number of inhabitants in each camp, so we calculated the representativeness of the sample by looking at the highest estimates of the number of Syrian youth in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh. The highest estimate of the total population in Shatila is 40.000 people; Bourj al Barajneh is smaller but we do not have a reliable estimate of the total population, so we also capped it at 40.000. The Popular Councils⁽⁴⁾ in the camps estimate that Syrians comprise 25% of the population, with Palestine refugees from Syria comprising another 25%, and Palestine refugees from Lebanon 50%. This led to the estimate that the maximum total number of Syrians in the camps is 20.000. The population in both camps is young, so to ensure that the % of youth is not underestimated we calculated that 50% of the Syrian population in the camps are youth between the ages of 13 and 24. The topic of the research is not sensitive or deeply personal, so we estimated that the margin of error is 5% with a confidence level of 95%. Based on these estimates we needed a sample size of 370 youth for the data to be representative.⁽⁵⁾

Ethical considerations

We obtained written consent from participants in interviews and focus groups discussions, and verbal consent from the parents of participants under 16. For the surveys we obtained verbal consent, and handed out information leaflets on the purpose of the study. All participants in the study were informed that they have the right not to answer a question or to withdraw from the research at any point without repercussions.

Participants in interviews and focus group discussions were free to refrain from giving their first and last name, and could choose a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity. The surveys were anonymous.

To facilitate complaints and questions, all participants were provided with the phone number of the deputy manager of Basmeh & Zeitooneh's community centers in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh.

(4) Popular Councils function as the local government in the camps.

(5) <https://www.checkmarket.com/sample-size-calculator/>

1. Education provisions for youth

1.1 Lebanon's human rights obligations and the RACE plan

Lebanon is bound by several treaties obliging signatories to provide free education to all children without discrimination. Most notably, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁽⁶⁾ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),⁽⁷⁾ which outline the right of all children to free primary education and accessible secondary education. They hold the Government of Lebanon (hereafter: GoL) responsible for encouraging attendance and reducing dropout rates for all children under its jurisdiction. Furthermore, the Committee on the ICESCR emphasizes that good quality education should be available in adequate facilities and within safe physical reach.⁽⁸⁾

National Law No. 686 of 1998 and Decree No. 26 of 1955 as well as clauses of the Lebanese Constitution only grant the right to free education to children of Lebanese origin, but the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (hereafter: MEHE) took steps to comply with the above-mentioned treaty obligations when it comes to Syrian refugee children. For instance, the MEHE issued a memorandum in 2012 calling upon schools to “enroll Syrian students regardless of their legal status and to waive school and book fees”.⁽⁹⁾ In addition, in 2014, MEHE launched a strategy to fulfill Syrian children’s universal right to free education in line with the CRC. This strategy, called the Reaching All Children with Education (hereafter: RACE I) plan, aimed to ensure access to education for refugee children as well as children from vulnerable Lebanese communities. In the same year MEHE collaborated with the UN Refugee Agency (hereafter: UNHCR) to open an afternoon shift in designated public schools, the 2nd shift, to accommodate Syrian students.⁽¹⁰⁾ RACE I covered 2014-2016; the next phase was published at the end of 2016 and covers the academic years 2017-2021. RACE II is more comprehensive than RACE I but it sets the same goals: to further increase the enrollment of Syrian and vulnerable Lebanese children in formal and non-formal schools, to enhance the quality of learning, and to strengthen the overall education system in Lebanon.⁽¹¹⁾

1.1.1 Enrollment rates

The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon increased dramatically from 2013; by September of that year there were more Syrian children of school-going age in Lebanon than there were Lebanese children in public schools.⁽¹²⁾ Despite the efforts made under RACE I, the number of out-of-school Syrian children in proportion to the total population of children of school-going age remains very high. Estimates on the exact number vary, partly because there is no reliable data on the number of Syrian

(6) Lebanon became a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991.

(7) Lebanon became a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1972, article 13 pertains to education.

(8) The Committee on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 13 on the right to education, 1999

(9) Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon, “Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon R.A.C.E.”, June 2014, p. 20

(10) UNHCR, “UNHCR Lebanon: Back to school”, June 2016

(11) Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon, “Reaching All Children with Education: RACE II 2017-2021”, August 2016; Human Rights Watch, “Growing up Without an Education”, 2016

(12) In 2013, there were 310,558 students enrolled in public schools; USJ, “Analysis of Child Education Survey”, March 2016, p. 5, while 53% of 654,000 registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon were under 18; UNDP, “The Syrian Crisis: Implications for Development Indicators and development planning”, October 2012, pp. 6, 24

refugees in Lebanon, but recent comprehensive studies by the United Nations and Human Rights Watch state that about half of Syrian children in Lebanon are not in school⁽¹³⁾ putting the number of out-of-school children anywhere between 150.000 and 250.000.⁽¹⁴⁾ This figure may be an undercount as it is based on the number of people that were registered with UNHCR in early 2015, before UNCHR complied with the GoL's request to stop registering people. Current estimates on the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon lie anywhere between 1 million and 1.5 million.⁽¹⁵⁾ If the latter number is correct, the number of out-of-school children could be as high as 375.000.

To date there has been no impact assessment of RACE I; even for easily measurable indicators, like enrollment and dropout rates, there is no reliable information on the progress. As the chart on the next page shows, there is significant variation in the enrollment numbers cited by different actors.⁽¹⁶⁾ There is also disparity in the enrollment rates in different documents produced by the same actors. For instance, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (hereafter: LCRP) 2015-2016, states that 90.000 Syrian students were enrolled in 2013-2014, while the LCRP 2017-2020 states that the number was higher, namely 103.000. All the actors mentioned in the chart have a seat in the RACE Steering Committee, which consists of international donors, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, World Bank, and representatives of the MEHE. The Steering Committee is responsible for overseeing the financing and implementation of RACE, and excludes non-international NGOs.

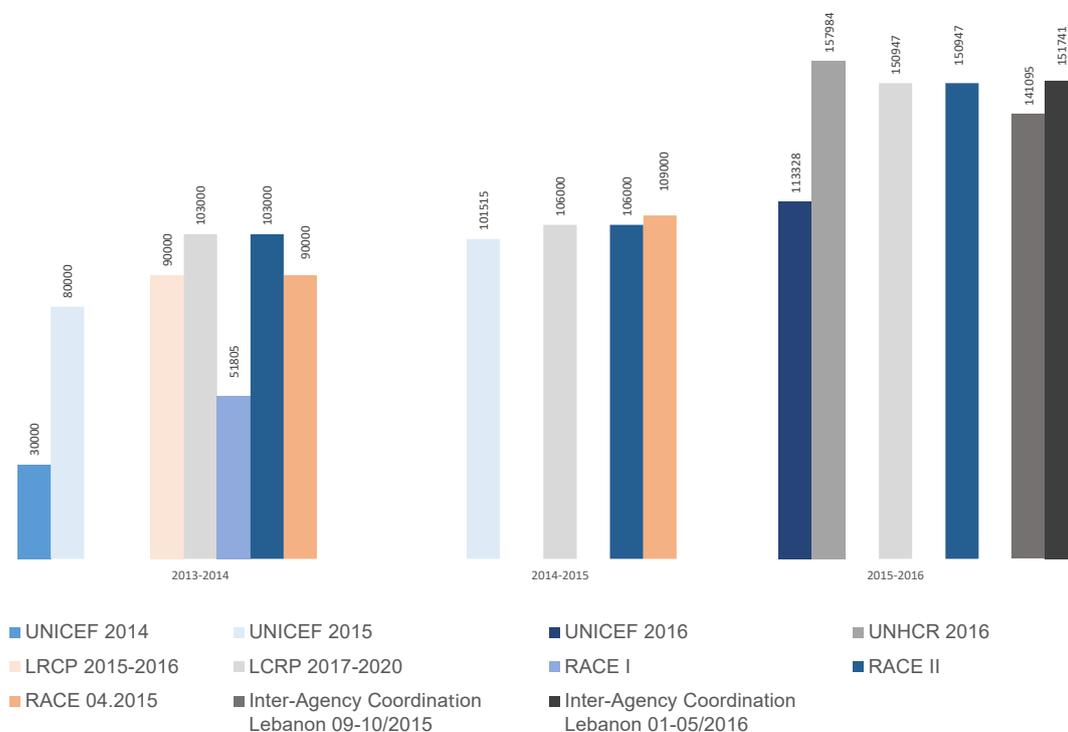
(13) Human Rights Watch puts the total number at 250.000 out of 500.000 children; Human Rights Watch, "Growing up Without an Education", 2016, p. 7, while the United Nations Vulnerability Assessment for 2016 states that 48% of 6-14 year olds are out of school; UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", 2016, p. 27

(14) This is a significantly higher number than the 126.732 out-of-school children mentioned by the Government of Lebanon at the Brussels Conference in April 2017; Supporting the future of Syria and the region Brussels Conference - April 2017, Annex: "Supporting resilience and development effort of host countries and refugees in the context of the Syrian crisis", Lebanon, p. 2

(15) There are 1.011.366 refugees registered with UNHCR; <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>, last accessed 04.05.2017, while the Government of Lebanon puts the number at approximately 1.500.000; Human Rights Watch, "Growing up Without an Education", 2016, p. 7

(16) UNICEF 2014: https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media_10274.html last accessed 2 November 2017; UNICEF 2015: "Curriculum, Accreditation, Certification for Syrian Children", 2015, pg. 59 and UNICEF Annual Report, 2015, p. 3 https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Lebanon_2015_COAR.pdf; UNICEF 2016: Annual Report Lebanon, 2016, p. 1 https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Lebanon_2016_COAR.pdf last accessed 30 November 2017; UNHCR 2016 <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Backtoschoolbrochure2016portal.pdf> last accessed 4 November 2017; LCRP 2015-2016: p. 9; LCRP 2017-2021: p. 53; RACE I: p. 20; RACE II: p. 6; RACE 04.2015: Ministry Of Education and Higher Education, Reaching All Children with Education, April 2015; Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon 09-10/2015: MEHE and UN, Dashboard September-October 2015; Inter-Agency Coordination 01-05/2016 MEHE and UN, Dashboard January-May 2015

ENROLLMENT RATES CITED BY DIFFERENT ACTORS



The lack of reliable information also makes it difficult to calculate the out-of-school rate of specific age groups, when it comes to 13 to 24 year olds this is exacerbated by the fact that they have often been out of school since they arrived in Lebanon and are unlikely to be enrolled at the grade level that corresponds to their age.

When looking at the enrollment rates, it is important to bear in mind that the actual number of Syrian children receiving an education is much lower than any of the above-mentioned numbers suggest. There is no reliable data on the number of Syrian students that drop out of school; the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace puts the dropout rate anywhere between 12 and 70%,⁽¹⁷⁾ while children that are in school are not always learning. Some of the most salient barriers to education include problems with understanding the language of instruction, English or French instead of Arabic, and the overall poor quality of the curriculum. This will be discussed further in the next section.

1.1.2 Quality of public education

The poor quality of public education has been a problem in Lebanon since before the Syria Crisis,⁽¹⁸⁾ and only 30% of Lebanese children were going to public schools in 2012. In the Bekaa Valley, the poor

(17) Carnegie endowment for international peace, "Educating Syrian refugees in Lebanon", 2016

(18) The Last Human Development report on Lebanon states that one third of teachers only had, at the most, a Baccalaureate secondary school degree; UNDP, "National Human Development Report Lebanon 2008-2009", pp. 132-133. Less than 1% of students in public schools passed the Baccalaureate exam without repeating one or more years while more than 25% of students in private schools managed this; MEHE, CRI, "Compulsory Education in Lebanon; The Need for Public Education, Final Report for the CERD", Beirut, Lebanon, 2000

quality of education is one of the main drivers of drop-out rates among both Lebanese and Syrian students,⁽¹⁹⁾ indicating that gains in improving access to education risk being undermined by losses caused by insufficient quality. The international community and the MEHE have purported to work on this problem since 2010,⁽²⁰⁾ but a forthcoming study by Basmeh & Zeitooneh in public schools in Beirut⁽²¹⁾ shows that little progress has been made with improving the curriculum and the quality of teaching. According to the LCRP this problem is compounded for Syrian students by the fact that newly hired teachers in the second shift “did not always meet optimal qualifications for managing classrooms, dealing with traumatized children, or working well for an extended number of teaching hours”.⁽²²⁾

While the idea of preventing a ‘lost generation’ is at the forefront of many discussions on education for refugee children in Lebanon,⁽²³⁾ RACE II makes almost no mention of the specific difficulties facing youth, who will have spent their formative years studying under a different school system and who need tailored accelerated learning programs to re-enter the school system with a view to finishing secondary school. Instead, RACE II focuses on education up until Grade 9 (age 15) and does not contain many provisions that tailor to the specific needs of youth. The plan briefly mentions increasing access to basic literacy and numeracy classes for ages 10 to 18 and creating a couple of thousand technical and vocational training places, raising the number of places for non-Lebanese students in state schools from 750 in the baseline to 2.505 by 2021, and creating an additional 20.000 places in regulated non-formal schools by the year 2021.⁽²⁴⁾

1.2 Youth-specific barriers to formal education

The analysis of barriers to education in RACE II mirrors the findings of studies conducted by academics, international organizations and international non-governmental organizations. This report will not outline all barriers discussed in those reports,⁽²⁵⁾ but will briefly describe the barriers that have the most direct and severe impact on Syrian youth.

1.2.1 Residency

Lebanon is neither a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor its 1967 Protocol and, except for article 26 of the 1962 Law Regulating the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Lebanon and their Exit from the Country, which deals with political asylum but has never been

(19) UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, “Out of school children in Lebanon, School attendance in Bekaa”, 2016

(20) In 2010, the UN-backed Education Sector Development Program for Lebanon was launched to improve the quality of public education:

<http://www.mehe.gov.lb/uploads/file/ESDP%20modified%20march%202010/ESDP%20English%20FINAL%20-p%201.pdf>.

last accessed 21 November 2017

(21) Expected January 2018.

(22) Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, “Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-2016 Year Two”, December 15, 2015

(23) <http://nolostgeneration.org/about>, last accessed 24 November 2017

(24) Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon, “Reaching All Children with Education ANNEX 1: RACE II LOGFRAME (2017-2021)”, August 2016

(25) For more information consult the following reports: HRW, “Growing up without an education: Barriers to education for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon”, 2016; AUB, “Responding to Crisis: Syrian Refugee Education in Lebanon”, 2016; UNICEF, “Curriculum, Accreditation and Certification for Syrian Children in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt”, 2015

implemented,⁽²⁶⁾ does not have any national legislation dealing with refugees. Despite this, the GoL upheld a *de facto* open border policy at the beginning of the Crisis. Since Lebanon predominantly considers itself a country of transit and not asylum,⁽²⁷⁾ the government left the management of the Crisis to UNHCR. It was not until the 2014 Council of Ministers' "Policy Paper on Syrian Refugee Displacement," that the GoL responded. Within the framework of that paper, several strict policies were issued to limit Syrian migration to Lebanon. Amongst other things, the Directorate General for General Security (hereafter: DGGs), the institution responsible for issuing non-Lebanese people with visa, entry permits and residence permits, restricted the admission for Syrians to those who can meet very specific requirements. Syrians now need to prove that they are looking to travel to Lebanon for such purposes as tourism, business, studying, embassy appointments or medical treatment, and need to provide two photographs stamped by the head of their village or neighbourhood (*mukhtar*), a pledge of housing confirming their place of residence, and a certified attestation that the landlord owns the property.⁽²⁸⁾ The new system makes it harder for Syrians without financial means to cross the border legally because, for example, those that wish to obtain a tourist visa must be able to show a hotel reservation and have one thousand dollars in cash to be granted entry.⁽²⁹⁾

In 2015, DGGs issued further regulations based on the 2014 Policy Paper. Syrians no longer have the option of renewing their residency for free by crossing the border and coming back. To renew residency, all Syrians aged 15 and above need a valid passport or identification card, an entry slip, and a return card.⁽³⁰⁾ Those that were registered with UNHCR before 2015 or obtained residency with their UNHCR registration at least once in 2015 or 2016 are exempt from paying the \$200 renewal fee.⁽³¹⁾ As stated in 1.1.1, the GoL instructed UNHCR to suspend the registration of Syrian refugees in May 2015,⁽³²⁾ so people that arrived in the last three years do not qualify for the exemption. Moreover only 37% of DGGs offices apply the waiver fully.⁽³³⁾

Syrians that are not registered with UNHCR can get a residence permit with a rent contract that fits all legal criteria or through a sponsor. Sponsorship for Syrian nationals was introduced in 2015. A Lebanese national has to sign a notarized 'pledge of responsibility', which can be for an employee or for a family. Even though it is unlawful, sponsors often ask for monetary or in-kind compensation.⁽³⁴⁾

The regulations that were implemented since 2014 have made it harder for Syrian people to obtain residence permits and led to an increase in the number of Syrian refugees without legal status. Currently an estimated 70% of them do not have valid documents.⁽³⁵⁾ People without valid documents risk being detained, harassed or served with a deportation order by the Lebanese security forces at

(26) PAX, ALEF, "Trapped in Lebanon, The Alarming Human Rights and Human Security Situation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", 2016, pp. 12-13

(27) Janmyr, Maja, "The legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2016, 35, p. 61

(28) Lebanon Support, "Formal Informality, Brokering Mechanisms, and Illegality. The Impact of the Lebanese State's Policies on Syrian Refugees' Daily Lives", 2016, p. 10

(29) Janmyr, Maja, "The legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2016, 35, p. 67

(30) Lebanon Support, "Formal Informality, Brokering Mechanisms, and Illegality. The Impact of the Lebanese State's Policies on Syrian Refugees' Daily Lives", 2016, p. 10

(31) <http://www.general-security.gov.lb/ar/posts/216> and <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/14/lebanon-new-refugee-policy-step-forward>, last accessed 7 June 2017

(32) Janmyr, Maja, "The legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2016, 35, p. 64

(33) Working Group for Persons Affected by the Syrian Displacement Crisis in Lebanon, "Right to a Future: Threat to Legal and Physical Safety", October 2017, p. 11

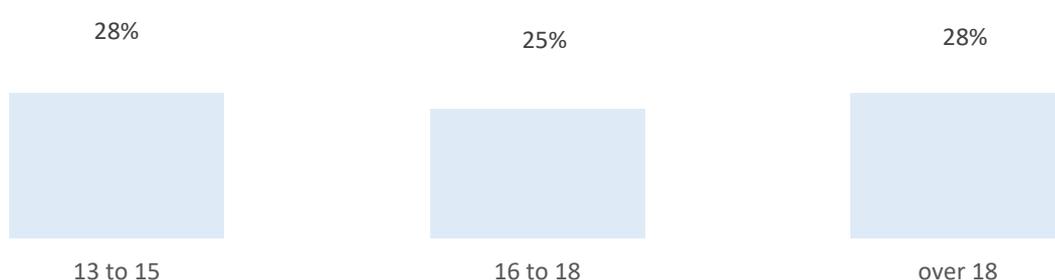
(34) IRC, "Sponsorship: widening the protection gap – examining protection risks created for Syrian refugees by the sponsorship system in Lebanon", November 2017

(35) Janmyr, Maja, "The legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2016, 35, p. 64

e.g. one of the many army checkpoints in the country. As such, the increase in the number of people without papers leads to a decrease in their mobility.

Since it is a legal requirement to carry an ID and proof of legal stay from age 15, these policies also have a direct effect on Syrian youth that are, or look like they are, 15. Both Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh are in heavily securitized and volatile parts of Beirut, and both are surrounded by army checkpoints. As can be seen in the chart below, most of the youth living in the camps are undocumented, making the reality of being surrounded by checkpoints particularly harsh.

RESPONDENTS WITH A RESIDENCE PERMIT



1.2.2 Poverty

Limited freedom of movement diminishes people's access to basic services and has a serious impact on their ability to generate an income. In 2014, before the introduction of stricter requirements to obtain a residence permit, the number of refugees living below the poverty line was 49%,⁽³⁶⁾ today it is 71%.⁽³⁷⁾

The influx of over a million Syrian refugees also had a significant effect on the Lebanese economy. The growth of the real GDP has been decreasing by 2.9% with each Crisis year⁽³⁸⁾ and the new border measures have disrupted the import of Syrian goods, which are cheaper than Lebanese commodities. Moreover, increased competition for employment led to a 60% reduction in daily wages in the informal labour market.⁽³⁹⁾ The informal sector accounts for a large portion of total employment in Lebanon; in 2011, the World Bank estimated that it accounted for 36.4% of the GDP and that 66.9% of employees did not contribute to any social security system.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Decreased income, coupled with increases in the prices of basic goods, heightened the vulnerability of the Lebanese community and pushed around 170.000 Lebanese people into poverty.⁽⁴¹⁾

Since 2013 Syrians are only allowed to work in three sectors: agriculture, construction and 'environment', which includes garbage collection and cleaning jobs.⁽⁴²⁾ Their employer has to apply

(36) UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", 2015, p. 5

(37) UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, "Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon", 2016, p. 2

(38) Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon, "Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon R.A.C.E.", June 2014, p. 14

(39) Save the Children, IRC, "Livelihoods assessment: Syrian refugees in Lebanon", 2012

(40) European Training Foundation, "Labour Market and Employment Policy in Lebanon", 2015, p. 3

(41) Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon, "Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon R.A.C.E.", June 2014, p. 14; Save the Children, IRC, "Livelihoods assessment: Syrian refugees in Lebanon", 2012

(42) Lebanon Support: "Formal Informality, Brokering Mechanisms, and Illegality. The Impact of the Lebanese State's Policies on Syrian Refugees' Daily Lives", 2016, p. 12

for a work permit, which requires legal residency. It is difficult to find an employer that is willing to go through this process and few Syrians have legal residency, so they are pushed into the informal sector. This leads to increased competition for low-skilled jobs and increased inter-communal tensions.⁽⁴³⁾ The effect this has on Syrian youth in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh will be analyzed in Chapter 2.

1.2.3 Certifying school transcripts and obtaining official diplomas

Several bureaucratic barriers make it difficult for Syrian youth to advance in the Lebanese education system. While enrollment in secondary schools does not require a residence permit, youth wishing to enroll in secondary or tertiary education with school transcripts or diplomas from Syria need a residence permit to get a certified equivalency statement from MEHE's Equivalence Committee.⁽⁴⁴⁾ 70% of Syrians do not have a residence permit, so this creates a barrier for those wishing to continue their studies in Lebanon.

Moreover, Syrian students often face difficulties getting their transcripts from Syria⁽⁴⁵⁾ and therefore face difficulties getting an official Brevet or Baccaalaureate diploma in Lebanon. Although they are exempt from providing official documentation about the grades they passed to sit these exams,⁽⁴⁶⁾ they do not get an official diploma if they cannot produce transcripts of the last three years of education. Instead they receive an 'evidence of success' document, the status of which is unclear.⁽⁴⁷⁾ A forthcoming study by Basmeh & Zeitooneh and Women Now for Development⁽⁴⁸⁾ found that 23% of surveyed youth in North, Bekaa and Beirut do not enroll in school because they know they will not be able to get the documents to get an official diploma.

(43) Mercy Corps, "From Tension to Violence: Understanding and Preventing Violence between Refugees and Host Communities in Lebanon", 2017, p. 2

(44) UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, Q&A for the 'Back to School' Campaign 2017/2018, August 2017, pp. 2-3

(45) Norwegian Refugee Council, "A Future in the Balance: Lebanon", 2016, p. 10

(46) UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, UNHCR, "Situation Analysis of Youth in Lebanon Affected by the Syrian Crisis", 2014, p. 83

(47) Council of Ministers Decree No. 40 dated 17.03.2016. In February of 2017 the Council of Ministers confirmed this decision; Council of Ministers, Decision number 4, Minutes of Meeting 10, 17.2.2017

(48) Expected December 2017.

2. Case study: Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh

As discussed in Chapter 1, Syrians' almost complete exclusion from the formal labour market and restrictive policies regarding residency and registration with UNHCR have caused staggering poverty levels in the refugee community. The effect this has on access to education is also clear in our survey results, with poverty being the main barrier to education mentioned by all age groups. In this chapter we will discuss how it affects female and male youth differently.

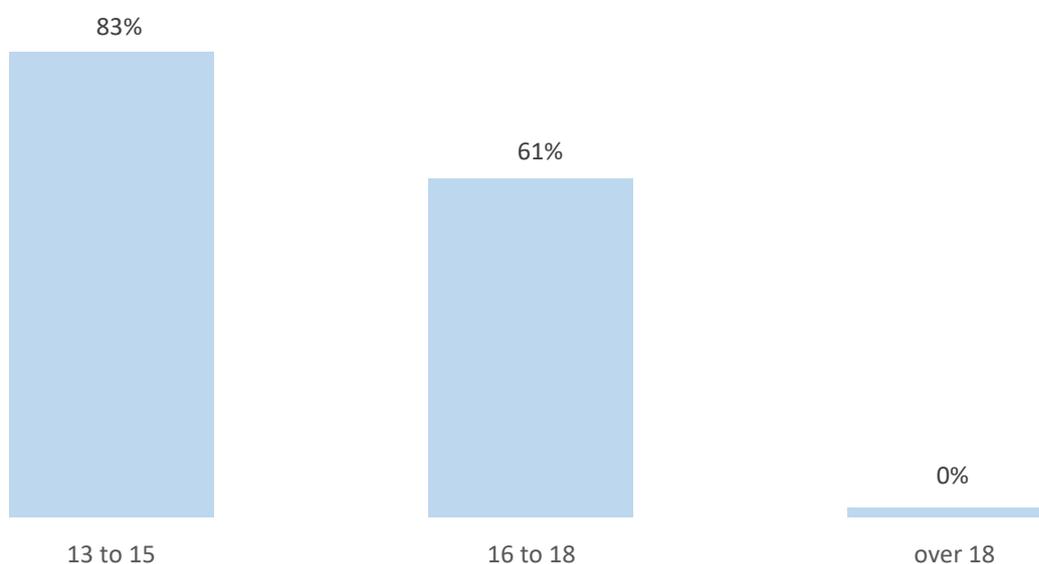
After discussing enrollment rates in 2.1, we will discuss how poverty influences boys and young men and girls and young women in 2.2 and 2.3. The analysis in this chapter is mostly based on quantitative data, but also includes the qualitative data collected during interviews and focus group discussions.

2.1 Enrollment rates and average last grade attended

To calculate the out-of-school rate, we looked at all respondents that stated that they are not in any kind of education. Therefore, the number of in-school respondents includes those in short-term vocational training courses, those in non-formal education and those in literacy classes.

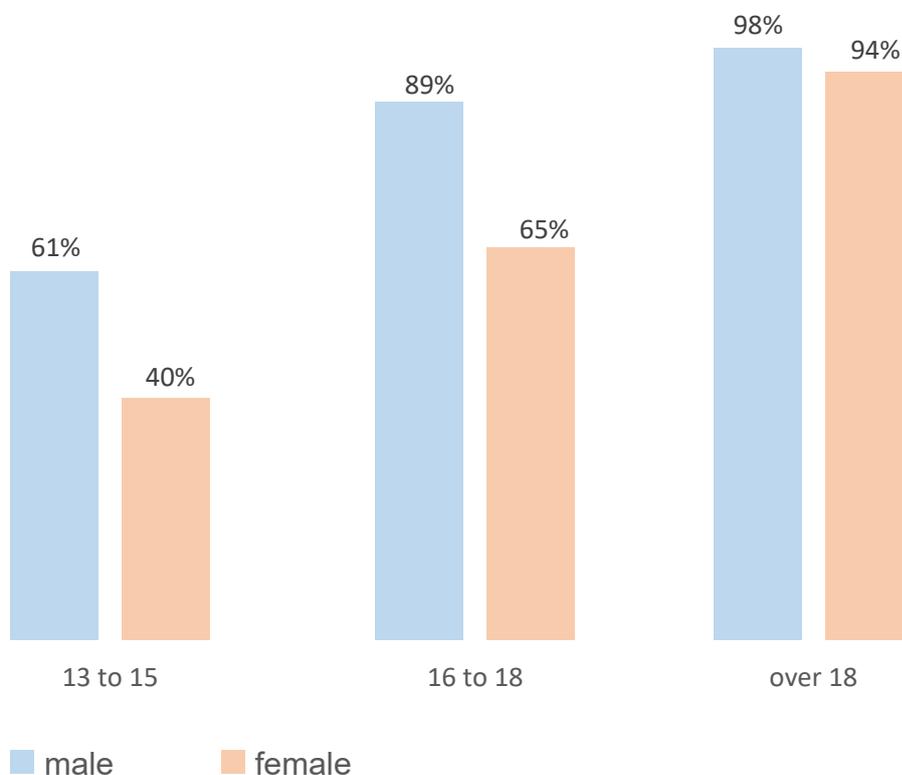
Of the 415 survey respondents aged 13 to 24, 72% are out of school, and of the 72 interviewees, 68% are not in school. Most of the surveyed youth that are in school are in public schools, but as they get older this number goes down.

ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOL OUT OF TOTAL % IN SCHOOL



The survey results on enrollment rates disaggregated by sex show the following:

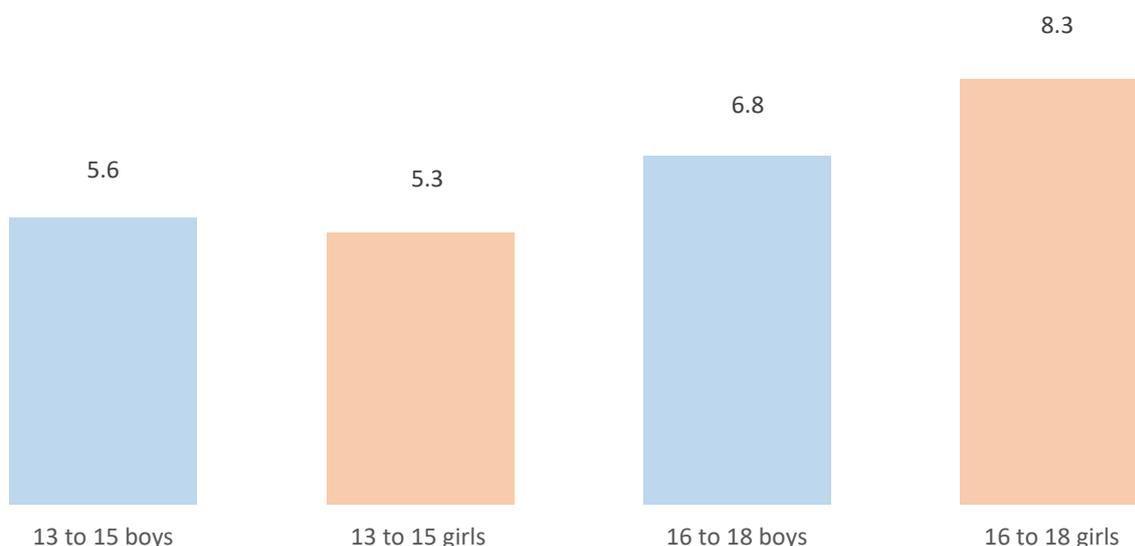
OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE



As the chart shows, the out-of-school rate of boys and young men is higher than that of girls and young women in each age category. This was corroborated in interviews and focus group discussions with 13 to 18 year-old girls that are in school. All of them stated that there are fewer boys than girls in their class, sometimes at a ratio of 8 to 1.

Moreover, as can be seen below, survey participants that are in school are, on average, learning at a grade level that is below the grade corresponding to their age. The structure of education in Lebanon is: primary education in Grades 1 to 6 from age 6 to 12, followed by three years of intermediary education in Grades 7 to 9 from age 13 to 15, followed by three years of secondary education in Grades 10 to 12 from age 16 to 18. After finishing Grade 9 students take the Brevet exam, after finishing Grade 12 students take the Bacallaureate exam.

AVERAGE LAST GRADE ATTENDED BY RESPONDENTS THAT ARE IN SCHOOL



In the 16 to 18 age category the difference between the last grade attended by girls that are in school is significant when compared to the average last grade attended by boys. Neither sex is learning at the grade level that corresponds with their age, and only 17% of 16 to 18 year-old boys and 23% of 16 to 18 year old girls took the Brevet exam. Of the girls that took the exam 57% passed versus 38% of the boys.

RACE II aims to provide accelerated learning and technical and vocational training for youth. Out of 415 respondents, only 14 are in a vocational training program, and 1 is in an accelerated learning program. None of them are in state-run programs.

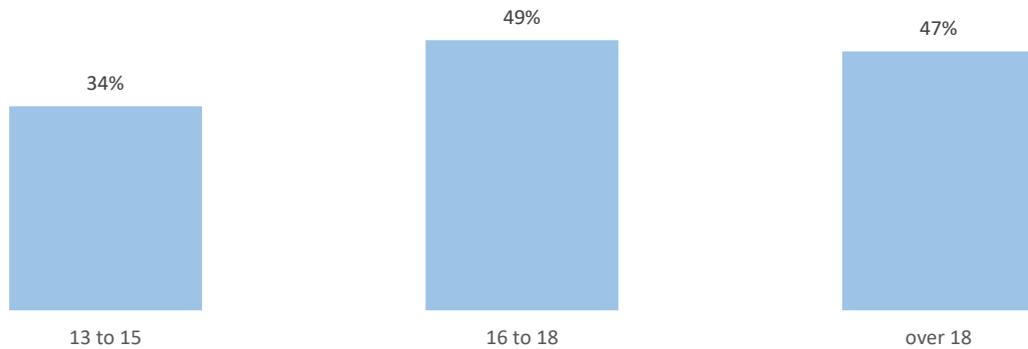
Boys and young men in Beirut's urban camps are significantly less likely to be in school than girls and young women. If they are in school, boys are also less likely to be close to learning at the grade corresponding to their age and less likely to take and pass the Brevet exam. Most respondents that are in school are in a public school, but this number decreases significantly as the youth get older. Out of 415 respondents 14 are in a non-formal vocational training program, and 1 is in a non-formal accelerated learning program.

2.2 Barriers to going to school

2.2.1 Barrier number 1: family cannot afford school

When asked why they are not enrolled in school, 34% of youth aged 13 to 15 said their families cannot afford to send them to school, compared to 49% of 16 to 18 year olds and 47% of those that are above 18. These percentages are heavily influenced by the perception of out-of-school boys and young men; as seen in 2.1, the number of out-of-school boys and young men is higher than the number of out-of-school girls and young women, thus weighing heavier on the total from which the percentage is taken.

RESPONDENTS THAT ARE OUT OF SCHOOL BECAUSE THEIR FAMILIES CANNOT AFFORD IT



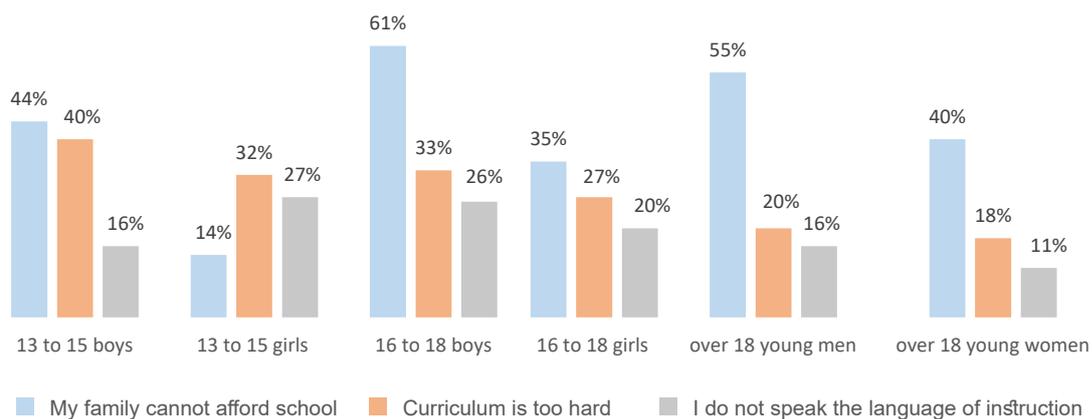
As the below chart shows, the most salient reasons for being out of school for both sexes are:

1. My family cannot afford school
2. The curriculum is too hard
3. I do not speak the language of instruction

Two groups stand out: 13 to 15 year-old girls are generally out of school because of problems with the curriculum, while 16 to 18 year-old boys are most likely to be out of school because their families cannot afford it.

MOST SALIENT REASONS FOR BEING OUT OF SCHOOL

NOTE: RESPONDENTS COULD SELECT MULTIPLE ANSWERS



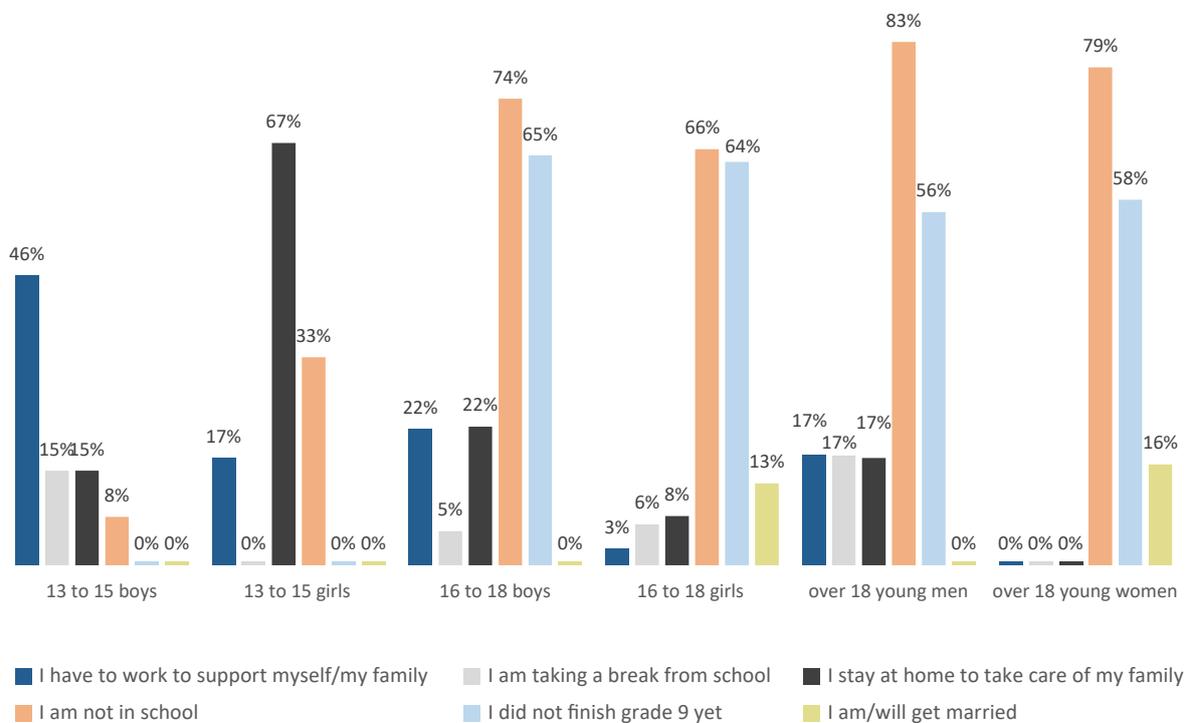
Boys and young men are most likely to be out of school because their families cannot afford it. This especially affects 16 to 18 year-old boys, while 13 to 15 year-old girls are the only group that cites another factor as the dominant reason for their being out of school.

2.2.2 Barrier number 2: work

79% of 13 to 15 year olds state that they intend to take the Brevet exam once they have finished Grade 9. For the remaining 21% the reasons that they do not expect to make it that far are different for boys and girls; 13 to 15 year-old boys state that the biggest inhibiting factor is that they have to work to support themselves and/or their families, while for 13 to 15 year-old girls the biggest barrier is that they have to stay at home to take care of their families.

In the older age groups the main reason that boys and young men and girls and young women did not take the Brevet exam is that they did not go to school or that they did not reach Grade 9 yet. For boys and young men, the third most inhibiting factor is that they have to work, whereas for girls and young women it is that they are married or will get married soon.

MOST SALIENT REASONS FOR NOT TAKING THE BREVET EXAM



There is a difference between the percentage of respondents that state that their families cannot afford to send them to school and the percentage that state that they have to work. This could be due to the limited opportunities for employment in and around the camps. Still, it is important to note that the percentages on employment are likely to be influenced by the fact that the surveys were taken during working hours. As explained in the methodology section, this leaves a possible bias to male respondents that are not employed or that are employed inside the camps, and excludes those working or looking for work outside the camps. Our interviews show that 13 to 18 year-old boys are more likely to be employed in the camps, while young men were either working outside of the camps or looking for employment outside of the camps.

15 year-old Omran, who came to Lebanon one month before the interview: “I stayed in school until I completed Grade 6. Then I had to drop out and find a job. I couldn’t afford to go to school anymore. I have been out of school for 4 years now. I haven’t tried to enroll in a school here [in Lebanon], hopefully I will be able to do that later. For now, I can’t afford to do that. (...) I don’t have a job yet. I couldn’t find one. My brothers are supporting me until I find a job. In Syria, I used to work in a stone factory after the war started and school closed. I was 12.”

21 year-old Sleiman, who came to Lebanon six weeks before the interview: “I came here because I want to survive and help my parents but I can’t afford to pay \$1000 for a sponsor. I would have to work for five months to be able to get that money. I had to quit going to university, I was studying economics and I had only one course left to graduate but I had to do what I did because I want to live. (...) I wanted to look for a university that offers the course I need to graduate but I didn’t have the chance to do that yet. I want to continue my education but I can’t afford it now. I am looking very hard for a job here but I couldn’t find one yet.”

The youth we interviewed were not able to enter Lebanon legally and therefore cannot obtain a residence or work permit. This makes their position in the informal labour market very precarious, and exposes them to exploitation. In our interviews, boys as young as 13 stated that they have to work twelve hours per day, seven days a week, for as little as \$200 per month, and several interviewees explained that they cannot complain about working conditions because they are easily replaced.

18 year-old Abdallah: “Our supervisor is very mean. Our job is very physically demanding; we build sidewalks and roads, and we plant trees. We get tired. Our boss mistreats us. If one of us is late, he makes us work the whole day for free.”

24 year-old Rayan: “The number of Syrians in Lebanon is constantly increasing. Of course, we are not willingly choosing to come here but we have to come here. And so whoever was content with his job because it paid well is now being threatened by the employers to be replaced by any other Syrian who would be willing to work longer hours for a lower salary. Also, rent is getting more expensive. Before, we were able to co-rent a big place outside the camp for \$400, but now any tiny place in Shatila would cost that much.”

For boys and young men, the fact that they have to work to support themselves and their families is a bigger inhibiting factor to education than for girls. Those that are undocumented face exploitation in the work place, which is exacerbated by the fact that they are easily replaced by someone that is willing to work for less money.

2.2.3 Barrier number 3: early marriage

The concern that there is a causal link between high poverty levels and girls marrying at a young age was confirmed in our study. In the 16 to 18 year-old age group, 20% of girls are married, compared to 3% of boys. The percentage of 16 to 18 year-old girls that are married is much higher than the average before the war in Syria. Some estimates state that the current rate of early marriage could be as much as four times higher.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In the over 18 age group 63% of young women are married,

(49) <http://www.unfpa.org/news/new-study-finds-child-marriage-rising-among-most-vulnerable-syrian-refugees#>, last accessed 23 November 2017

compared to 29% of young men. The fact that much fewer boys and young men are married indicates that girls are forced to marry older men.

24 year-old Ahmed: “Yes, people are getting married at an early age (...) parents are not asking for much from the spouse, they just need a shelter for their daughters. No dowry is requested from men.”

24 year-old Fatima: “Oh yes, girls as young as 14 are getting married. There is a rise in early marriage and there is also a rise in temporary marriage for sexual purposes; men from Kuwait and other Arab states are coming here, asking for our girls to marry them and promising them to get them out of Lebanon but they usually don’t take the girl with them. They don’t keep their word. If any problem arises between the couple the man abandons the girl and leaves.”

15% of married girls aged 16 to 18 are in some kind of education, compared to 34% of all girls in that age group, 9% of all the female respondents that are married are in school, compared to 35% of all female respondents. This suggests that there is a linkage between getting married and dropping out of school. In interviews with girls that are in school it became clear that they see education as a protection from early marriage. All of them stated that they want to complete their education and find a job before getting married.

16 year-old Batoul: “In our society, the female doesn’t have full rights and is known to belong to her husband. She is inferior. That’s why we should work on having a voice and an opinion. Maybe education is the only means through which we can guarantee our rights. It is our only weapon.”

15 year-old Lama: “I am too young [to get married] and I believe that a woman’s weapon is her education. If a girl is married and she is educated, she won’t fear anything. Not even divorce. She’d have a job and so she wouldn’t be stuck in a miserable marriage.”

The protection concerns related to early marriage go far beyond it leading to school dropouts. Early marriage exposes girls to, amongst other things, sexual violence and pregnancy, social isolation, restricted freedom of movement, and *de facto* servitude.⁽⁵⁰⁾

21 year-old Batoul, who got married when she was 16 but is now divorced: “A girl can be psychologically destroyed if married off at an early age. Normally, a young girl thinks of marriage as ‘the’ solution. She pictures it as heaven but only gets disappointment when she gets married and discovers that the spouse and his family have endless demands. The age difference between me and my ex was 18 years.”

The rate of early marriage of girls in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh is high, especially when compared to the early marriage rate of boys. This indicates that girls are forced to marry older men, which exacerbates existing protection concerns. Early marriage impacts dropout rates: only 9% of the married girls and young women are in school. The girls and young women we interviewed see education as a protection from early marriage.

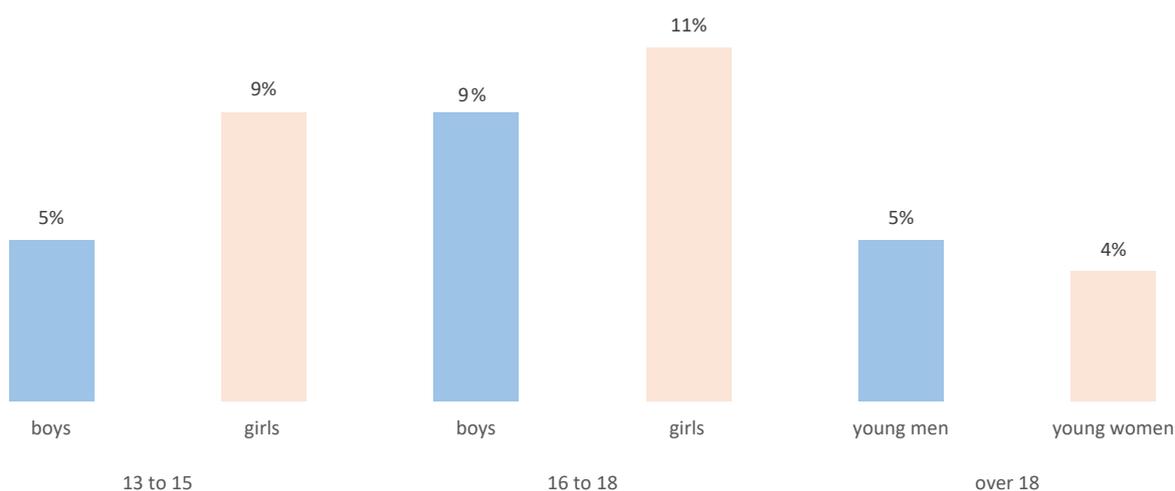
(50) Save the Children, “Too Young to Wed, The Growing Problem of Child Marriage Among Syrian Girls in Jordan”, 2014, p. 2

2.3 Attitudes to education

2.3.1 Family support for education

RACE II states that “demand-side barriers [to education] are clustered around perceptions of the value of education, cultural norms that prioritize immediate financial safety over long-term social security”.⁽⁵¹⁾ For as far as that is directed at the Syrian refugee community, the notion that cultural norms about education dictate whether Syrian children are going to school is not reflected in our findings. As can be seen in the chart below, very few survey respondents stated that they are not in school because their families do not think education is important. As discussed in 2.2.1, most Syrian youth are not in school because their families cannot afford it. Moreover, the 71% poverty rate in the refugee community indicates that both immediate financial safety and long-term social security are unattainable for Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

RESPONDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL BECAUSE FAMILIES DO NOT SUPPORT EDUCATION



Still, some Syrian families do not support their children’s education. 5 of the 20 out-of-school girls and young women that we interviewed said they are out of school because their families do not support their education, and that this would have been the same if they had stayed in Syria.

15 year-old Layla: “I reached Grade 4 and then quit. I really don’t like school and my parents pulled me out; I was able to read and write and that was enough for them.”

22 year-old Raya: “I reached Grade 4 and then my parents pulled me out, I didn’t like school anyways. They consider that education is for boys and not for girls.”

7 of the other 15 out-of-school girls and young women interviewed stated that their parents would be hesitant about letting them go to school if they had the means because of concerns for their safety. Personal safety is also a concern for the 26 girls attending school that participated in interviews and

(51) Ministry of Education and Higher Education Lebanon, “Reaching All Children with Education: RACE II 2017-2021”, August 2016, p. 12

focus group discussions; all of them reported facing harassment on the way to and from school, and by teachers and other school personnel. The fact that Syrian students study in the second shift means that, in the wintertime, they do not return home until after dark. This exposes them to added risks and increases their perception of danger, particularly considering the large number of armed individuals in the camps at night.

14 year-old Marwa: “Many times there are incidents when old sleazy men stop their car in front of our school and attempt to kidnap us. The janitor would be gone by the time we finish school at 18:30 and these guys would be out there calling us to go to them. It is scary, once we started crying and waited for my friend’s brother to come pick us up.”

13 year-old Sanaa: “The bus driver is aggressive. If you are late he hits you. This one time the bus driver choked a boy and placed him under the bus pretending to want to run him over. I started crying and begging him to have mercy. There was also this young girl who was a bit late to show up and the bus driver started hitting her so bad, her parents wouldn’t hit her that hard.”

15 year-old Rouba: “There’s the janitor who is always holding a stick and hitting us. He always hits us and he is very violent with us. He also takes a lot of pictures of us.”

None of the male participants in interviews and focus group discussions stated that they are out of school because their families do not support their education, but some feel pressure to drop out so that they can work to supplement the family income.

14 year-old Ali: “Of course [they support my education], it is the most important thing for them. They tell me ‘education is light and ignorance is destructive’.”

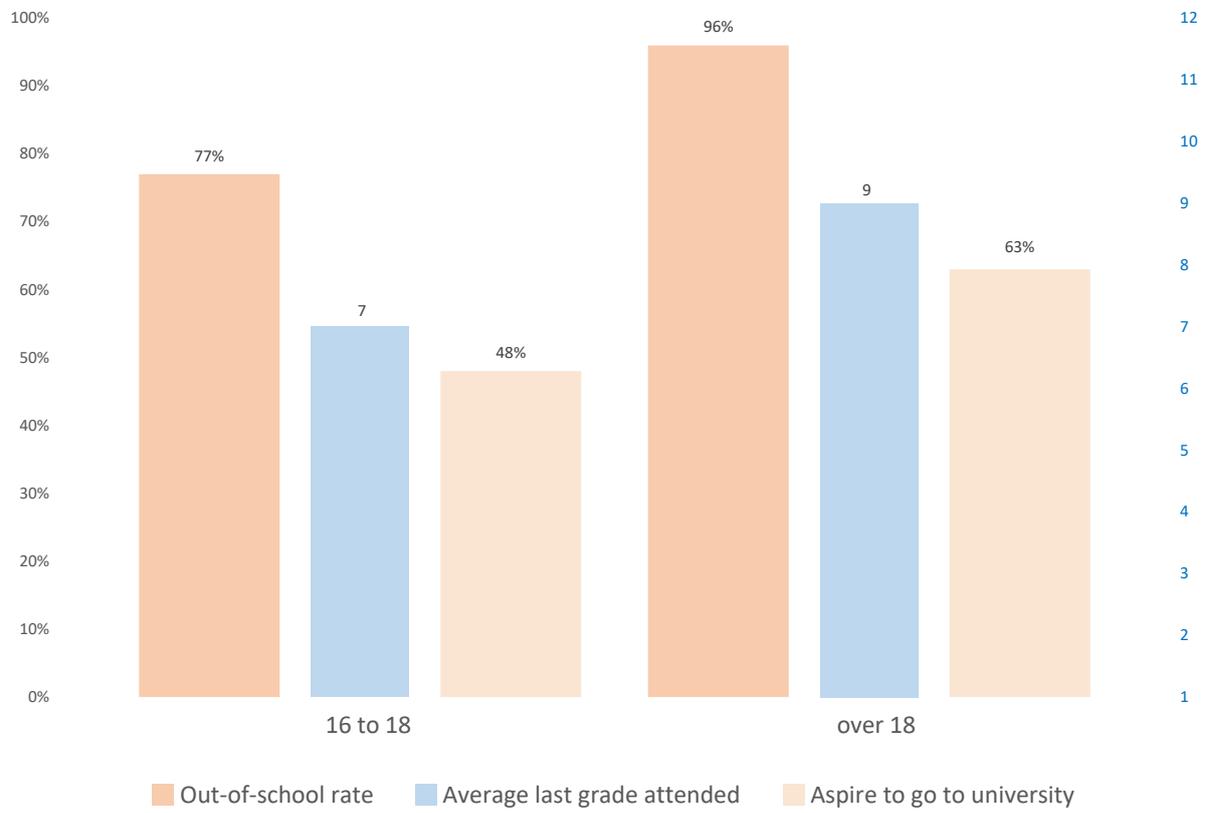
14 year-old Hussein: “Yes they do [support my education]. Sometimes they say I have to go to school but also sometimes at the end of the month when we run out of money they ask me to find a job. My dad doesn’t always get paid and it causes him headache when he has so much to pay for and we don’t have any money. His salary is spent on rent and electricity bills. At the end of the month, they tell me to look at how much my dad is making an effort to support us and they ask me to do the same.”

2.3.2 Educational aspirations of youth

The barriers that prevent youth in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh from going to school do not appear to have diminished their hope of getting an education. When asked what level of education they want to achieve, none of the survey respondents found a grade-level under Grade 9 sufficient. Just under 50% of all 13 to 18 year olds said that they want to go university, a number that is higher for the over 18 age category where 63% aspires to reach this level of education. None of the survey respondents over 15 stated that it will not make a difference in their lives to have a diploma or that they do not want to study anymore.

However, when comparing respondents’ aspirations with the out-of-school rate and average highest grade attended it looks unlikely that more than a few will be able to fulfill their goal of going to university.

ASPIRATION TO GO TO UNIVERSITY VERSUS OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE AND AVERAGE LAST GRADE ATTENDED



3. Conclusion

The Syria Crisis in Lebanon has put an estimated 500.000 to 750.000 Syrian refugee children of school-going age under the care of the Lebanese government and international donor community. While access to education for Syrian refugees has been studied extensively, Syrian youth living in Palestine refugee camps have largely been excluded from research on this issue. This report aims to address that gap, focusing specifically on the different barriers for female and male youth in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh camps. Basmeh & Zeitooneh conducted 415 surveys and talked to 72 youth in interviews and focus group discussions to gauge the impact of barriers to education on their lives.

Lebanon is bound by several treaties and its obligations under the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) plan to provide free education to all children within safe physical reach. By launching the RACE plan, the Lebanese government and international donor community have formulated a strategy to fulfill this obligation and ensure that Syrian refugee children can go to public schools. The RACE plan contains three pillars: 1) increase access to education, 2) improve the quality of public education, 3) enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's institutions.

The RACE plan was launched in 2014 but, to date, there has been no impact assessment of the progress that has been made. It is difficult to get reliable data on measurable indicators like enrollment and dropout rates, with different numbers being cited by the different actors that are overseeing the implementation. Moreover, the plan focuses on education for children until Grade 9 (age 15), and does not contain many provisions tailored to the needs of youth. The provisions that do exist are centered on vocational training and basic literacy and numeracy, while youth need accelerated learning programs to help them re-enter the public school system. Our research shows that, on average, the youth in the camps did not reach a grade level higher than Grade 9. Only 1 survey respondent is in an accelerated learning program, and only 14 out of 415 survey respondents are in vocational training. None of these 15 individuals are in a state-run program.

The biggest problems facing the Syrian refugee community, namely the lack of legal status and poverty, are also the biggest barriers to education for Syrian refugee youth in the camps. For all male out-of-school survey respondents, and all female out-of-school survey respondents over the age of 15, the fact that their families cannot afford to send them to school is the biggest barrier to education. For female survey respondents under the age of 15, the curriculum and language of instruction are bigger barriers. The out-of-school rate of boys is significantly higher than of girls: 61% of 13 to 15 year-old boys and 89% of 16 to 18 year-old boys are out of school, versus 40% of 13 to 15 year-old girls and 65% of 16 to 18 year old girls. For boys and young men, the biggest barrier to re-entering the school system is that they need to work to support themselves and/or their families. For girls and young women it is marriage: 20% of girls between the age of 16 to 18 in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh are married, compared to 3% of the boys. The girls that are married are predominantly not in school, only 9% of surveyed married girls and young women are in some kind of education, compared to 35% of all female respondents. Our findings indicate that girls are being forced to marry older men, which exacerbates protection concerns related to child marriage, such as sexual violence and social isolation. For out-of-school boys and young men the fact that they are undocumented workers in a highly competitive market exposes them to exploitation and job insecurity.

Our findings show that most Syrian youth feel that their families support their education, there is not a big difference between the number of female and male respondents that state that they are out of school because their families do not think education is important. In interviews and focus group discussions we came across more girls that stated that they are out of school because their families

do not think girls need to study beyond Grade 4, but most girls and young women we talked to relate being out of school to livelihood and security concerns. For female youth in school, security concerns are a daily reality; all the in-school girls we spoke to face discrimination and harassment on the way to school and in school.

The above-mentioned barriers have not diminished the youth's hope of getting an education, and the vast majority of our respondents hope to reach university level. For the youth in Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh the barriers to education go beyond the reach of the RACE plan: restrictive policies on legal entry and legal stay and all but complete exclusion from the formal labour market force families to keep their children out of school, which in turn forces boys to enter the informal labour market and girls to marry.

4. Recommendations

To the donors in the RACE Steering Committee:

- Prioritize the needs of youth and the specific protection problems facing female and male youth
- Earmark funding for teacher training and quality improvement
- Earmark funding for accelerated learning programs and secondary education
- Ensure that Steering Committee meetings focus equally on increasing enrollment and on improving the quality of public education
- Enhance collaboration with NGOs and regularly communicate the progress made with RACE
- Encourage the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Directorate General of General Security and Lebanese government to implement the recommendations of this report

To the Ministry of Education and Higher Education:

- Publish reliable data on measurable indicators of the progress made with RACE, such as enrollment and dropout rates
- Enhance coordination and cooperation with RACE donors to improve the quality of the curriculum and to train teachers
- Improve the coordination with NGOs providing non-formal education by instating the NGO sub-committee envisioned in the RACE plan
- Open accelerated learning programs specifically tailored to the needs of out-of-school youth over the age of 15
- Accept flexible regulations allowing Syrian students without a residence permit or official transcripts to sit for official exams and enroll in secondary schools
- Provide all Syrian students that passed the Brevet and Baccaureate exams with official diplomas instead of giving those that do not have official transcripts an 'evidence of success' document
- Lower the minimum age to apply independently for the Brevet and Baccaureate exams from 18 to 15 and 21 to 18 respectively
- Enhance complaint mechanisms to respond to incidents of abuse and acts of violence by administrators, teachers, and school bus drivers
- Ensure that school bus drivers are accountable for providing safe transportation, and that each school bus has trained staff on board to protect children from corporal punishment, harassment, and discrimination
- Strengthen child protection mechanisms in schools to ensure that allegations of corporal punishment, harassment, or discrimination against students are investigated, redressed, or prosecuted

To the Directorate General of General Security:

- Waive the \$200 residency renewal fee for all Syrians, and ensure implementation of the waiver in all General Security offices
- Cancel the sponsorship pledge for Syrians not registered with UNHCR and allow Syrians who do not have legal residency to regularize their status without imposing fines
- Raise the age for residency renewal without individual identification from 15 to 18

To the Government of Lebanon:

- Facilitate access to protection and legal documentation for all Syrians in Lebanon by reinstating the UNHCR registration framework
- Lift bureaucratic barriers for Syrians to enter the formal labour market and cancel employee sponsorship



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