

LEBANON | Beirut, August, 2014

# SYRIAN REFUGEE SITUATION ANALYSIS OF YOUTH IN LEBANON



22 August 2014

#FutureOfSyria



LEBANON

*Agencies and the Government of Lebanon had requested US\$1.89 billion in the inter-agency funding appeal.*

*The mid-year review in June resulted in a downward revision of these requirements to US\$ 1.68 billion. US\$ 526.6 million - 31 per cent - has been received as of 5 August.*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY

Through interviews and focus groups with more than 1,220 Lebanese and Syrian youths (aged 15-24 years) and 53 stakeholders, the situation analysis published in April 2014 determined that:

- 41 per cent of Syrian youths are feeling depressed and hopeless;
- 6 per cent are enrolled in schools;
- 78 per cent are unemployed;
- 46 per cent do not have knowledge of contraception;
- 31 per cent are already married

The impact of the humanitarian situation in Lebanon is affecting both the refugee and host population but mostly youth aged 15-24 years. It has imposed on youth the role of adults at an early age

The **Situation Analysis of Youth in Lebanon Affected by the Syrian Crisis 2014** was initiated and led by UNFPA with the support of partner agencies. It is the product of collaboration between the research team, international and civil society organizations, as well as Syria refugees and Lebanese host communities between September and December 2013.

The analysis provided:

- A holistic understanding of the situation and vulnerabilities of Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon;
- An analysis of the relationships between Syrian refugees youth and Lebanese in host communities;
- Refugee youth concerns and perspectives;
- Gaps that can be addressed by specific stakeholders as well as precise recommendations as basis for the way forward.

### *Methodology*

Surveyed Syrian youths have been in Lebanon for around 16 months. They left Syria because of the deteriorating security situation.

Both qualitative and quantitative components were used to collect data from youth and a variety of stakeholders. Findings in the report were based on:

- A survey questionnaire covering a random sample of 985 Syrian refugee youths;
- Focus group discussions with 135 Syrian refugee youths and 83 Lebanese youths;
- Interviews with 53 key Lebanese and Syrian stakeholders.

The study's technical committee included UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR and Save the Children International (SCI).

*Key Findings*

	FEMALE 15- 18	FEMALE 19- 24	MALE 15- 18	MALE 19- 24
MARITAL STATUS	18%	64%	2%	23%
OUT OF SCHOOL	91%	95%	93%	94%
UNEMPLOYED	94%	92%	61%	55%
NO KNOWLEDGE OF CONTRACEPTION	66%	27%	61%	35%
NO LEBANESE FRIENDS	81%	71%	63%	51%
DON'T FEEL SAFE	59%	55%	50%	49%
DEPRESSED	57%	50%	27%	27%

*Results***Youth Priorities**

- Securing basic livelihoods needs. This is a general concern about meeting basic household needs and not about finding work. Youth want to be able to meet household requirements not only through work income but also through aid or means to reduce or cover living costs;
- Finding work in a generally stable and secure environment in Lebanon;
- Returning to Syria.

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 to free shelter, followed by employment opportunities and education.

Support to reintegrate into formal education was the number one recommendation of female youth (15- 18 years) as this gives more hope in a better future.

*With all his potential and passion for the world, Hany spends his days in the small shelter with his phone and occasional internet connection as his only means of escape.*

*The monotony burdens him deeply and it is with a heavy sadness that he adds, "I'm wasting a lot of time here, I cannot achieve my dreams."*

## Hany's Story

"If I am not a student, I am nothing."



Hani is 20 years old, and a refugee. Lost, in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. "I am wasting time here."

Hany is missing out on his dreams. Hany was determined to graduate. He went to school every day, but the relentless sound of shooting made it hard to concentrate on his exams. Still, he excelled. Read his full story at [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/melissa-fleming/syria-conflict-3rd-anniversary\\_b\\_4964260.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/melissa-fleming/syria-conflict-3rd-anniversary_b_4964260.html).

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## Protection

Out of the total Syrian refugee youth population, the ratio of females is significantly larger than that of males.

## Early Marriage

A high percentage of refugee youth are married: 46 per cent females compared to 11 per cent males. Of those married, 18 per cent of females and 2 per cent of males are under 18.

*“She might have made the right decision [by getting married]”, said a Lebanese female youth, “at least this way she would feel she is in her own house”.*

*A female youth said “Most males stay in all day without much to do except inflicting physical and verbal violence”.*

Marriage proposals from men such as landlords, neighbors and others are often accompanied by financial promises or threats – although the prevalence of early marriage is not necessarily enforced on girls by their parents.

Partners are supporting those most vulnerable financially and through other means (including education, vocational training, awareness sessions, etc.) to help prevent early marriage amongst youth. These efforts will be reinforced through comprehensive recommendations based on the findings of this report.

### ***Sexual and Gender-Based Violence***

Sexual harassment and exploitation are predominantly identified by refugee youth as perpetrated by: (1) Lebanese and Syrian coordinators of informal settlements, (2) employers at work and (3) public transport drivers.

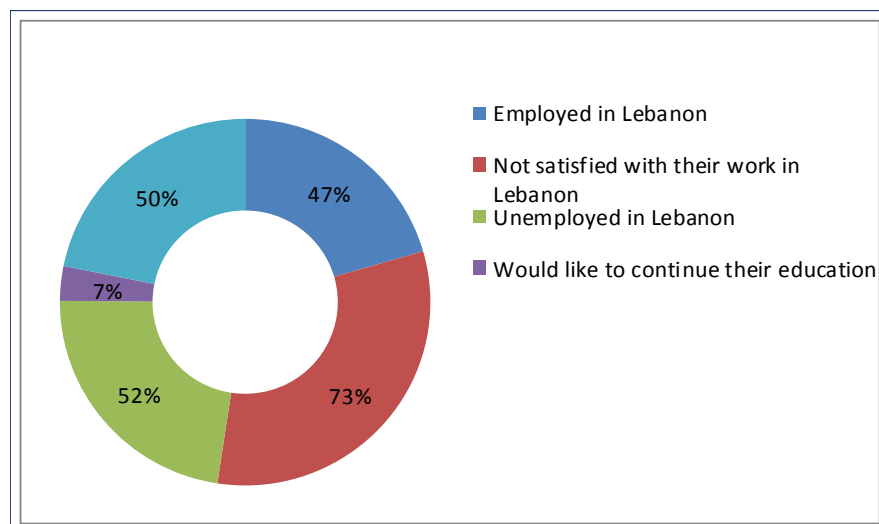
Consequently, female refugee youth are subjected to increased restriction on their mobility by parents.

Increased tension within the family – whether between married youth and their spouse or unmarried youth and their parents- was mentioned in most focus groups and interviews.

Refugee women and girls are being provided with economic and self-reliance opportunities through training and income-generating activities. Partners have also inaugurated safe shelters for survivors where health and psychosocial services are provided. The SGBV response encompasses efforts related to shelter improvements and water, hygiene and sanitation services. These include separations in improvised shelters between male and female sections, provision of lighting in substandard accommodation, separated lockable latrines and showers, etc. The SGBV response also includes the distribution of dignity kits which include torch lights, women’s hygiene kits, scarves, and other items.

### ***Employment***

The main sources of household income are wages and aid: 84 per cent of refugee youth say their families rely on wages as well as food and non-food aid. The biggest household expenditure is rent.



73 per cent of working refugee youth are not satisfied with their work because of low wages, lack of protection and stability, long working hours, and bad attitude at work.

Unemployment is affecting the psychological and emotional health of Syrian refugee youth. Many feel hopeless and believe their conditions will never improve.

Skills' training is being provided across Lebanon to both Lebanese and Syrian youth to expand livelihoods and improve the youth's access to the job market.

## Education

Only 6 per cent of the surveyed Syrian refugee youth are enrolled in schools in Lebanon. Around 35 per cent dropped out because of displacement and lack of money. Other reasons included the difficulty of the curriculum, transportation costs and the need to work.

Although more female youth are found to be enrolled in university (19 per cent) than their male counterparts (5 per cent), the illiteracy rate was found to be higher amongst females (16 per cent) compared to males (2 per cent).

94% are not enrolled in formal education in Lebanon

35% were enrolled in Syria		65% were not enrolled in Syria	
68%	32%	34%	66%
15- 18 years	19- 24 years	15- 18 years	19- 24 years

## Health

Health services are available within a 30- minute walking distance for 96 per cent of youth, although service costs remained prohibitive.

### Mental Health

Syrian refugee youth describe themselves as feeling depressed (30 per cent), anxious (30 per cent) or afraid (22 per cent) while only 11 per cent expressed positive feelings.

Reasons include:

- 1 The crisis in Syria and displacement
- 2 Uncomfortable living conditions
- 3 Lack of economic opportunities
- 4 No education
- 5 Physical and Sexual violence
- 6 Situation not improving

A wide range of specialized actors are providing psychosocial support and one-on-one counseling services at health care center level as well as through home visits. Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) have also played an instrumental role in referring refugees in need of help to specialized actors.

### Sexual and Reproductive Health

Only 45 per cent of youth said they know about contraceptive methods. 59 per cent claim knowledge of sexually transmitted infections - the percentage being higher among male youth.

Parents are the primary source of information on sexual and reproductive health for refugee youth particularly for females, while

*50 per cent of youth mentioned abstinence and being faithful to one partner as protection methods.*



males rely also on friends.

46 per cent of married refugee couples were planning to have children, with 39 per cent female partners pregnant at the time of the survey. 37 per cent will have their deliveries covered by UNHCR.

52 per cent of Syrian refugee youth interviewed were against the use of contraceptives. When asked about unwanted pregnancies, 51 per cent agree that safe medical services should be available to pregnant females who want to undergo an abortion.

### Social Cohesion

At the onset of the crisis, host communities viewed the Syrian refugees as their temporary guests and offered them assistance. Almost four years after, the relationship has become more complicated and tense as the pressure increases on the country's economy and infrastructure.

The Lebanese youth participating in the survey had various fears with regards to Syrian refugees but mostly they were concerned with the increasing number of refugees in the country and the duration of their stay.

The Syrian youth were being cautious and keeping a low profile within the community as they sense the increasing tension between the two populations. Some of them explained that they do understand the general resentment and worry as Lebanon's resources are overstretched to capacity.

Efforts to address rising tensions between the Syrian and Lebanese communities are ongoing. These include institutional support projects (drilling boreholes in overstretched areas, provision of equipment to health care centers, etc.), social cohesion programmes involving both communities in joint awareness/livelihoods/social projects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the report findings, a list of recommendations was developed by UNFPA and partners. This includes:



- Provide socially and culturally-accepted activities for youth that allow refugee youth out of the domestic sphere;
- Further supporting dialogue between the Lebanese and Syrian youth;
- Reinforce the provision of reproductive health information;
- Continue the support of youth reintegration into formal education at the secondary and tertiary levels.

UNFPA, UNICEF and partners are following-up on these report recommendations.

## DONORS

USA, UK, EU, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Slovak Republic, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Poland, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands, Mexico, Luxembourg, Kuwait, Japan, Italy, Ireland, Holy See, Germany, France, Estonia, Ecuador, Denmark, China, Canada and Australia.

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## AGENCIES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT

