The Potential of Palestinian Youth and Young Adults in Lebanon

A Quantitative and Qualitative Research Study

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1) Executive Summary

In recent decades, the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has justifiably attracted the focus of researchers, social development practitioners and advocacy groups. It is depicted as a highly vulnerable, socially excluded community, one that is denied basic civil rights, suffering from protracted poverty and with low educational qualifications. Yet research studies have also indicated progress in educational attainment and in employment levels among the younger and better educated segments of the population, in line with regional trends. These positive indicators are reinforced by the experiences and observations of many field practitioners who interact with Palestinian refugee youth and draw upon their knowledge and skills to develop and implement a range of projects and community interventions.

This study is therefore based on the thesis that many Palestinian youth in Lebanon, despite the discrimination and hardships described above, have acquired a range of assets and, given the opportunity, possess the potential of advancing their own situations and that of their community. A comprehensive literature review details the common denominators affecting all youth in the Arab region in terms of social and economic participation, followed by an overview of the specific conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and their legal status, as well as socio-economic data relevant to the youth population.

The research methodology was based on quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The study gathered data on educational levels, employment/volunteer work experience and perceptions of skills acquisition. It also collected information on the type and scope of contributions to family and community, and on attitudes and aspirations regarding education and work. The findings construct the profile of 522Palestinian refugee youth and young adults aged 18-29 years, with at least an intermediate education, from nine refugee camps and several gatherings. It examines the extent to which youth educational and employment characteristics are likely to differ from the overall population, gauges their skills and contribution to family and community, and explores their motivations and attitudes in coping with challenges and obstacles.

Commissioned by Association Najdeh for the Right to Work Campaign, the results of this study will be used as an advocacy tool highlighting the potential of Palestinian youth, promoting an alternative image of Palestinians in general and influencing the strategies of concerned policy makers and stakeholders toward strengthening existing Palestinian assets and accelerating the adoption of measures that will expand their access to opportunities.

Main Findings

Education: The quantitative findings indicate that educational attainment among Palestinian youth is likely to be significantly higher than that of the overall population. Two-thirds of the randomly selected youth in this survey were either university educated or had obtained semi-professional education (Vocational Education Training –VET) of an extended duration, lasting

one to two years or more. Young women led in both educational tracks. Short-term VET training, lasting under one year was least frequent.

Semi-professional training was sought by youths of different educational levels, including one-third of intermediate level respondents, two-thirds of those with secondary education and 7 percent of those with university education.

Although UNRWA is the main provider of basic and secondary education, the most frequented venues for advanced education are Lebanese institutions. The Lebanese University was the most attended among universities, mainly by young women, followed by the Beirut Arab University, attended mainly by young men. Lebanese technical schools were the main provider of VET, slightly ahead of the UNRWA Sibline Technical School.

In general, areas of study and specialization conformed to mainstream Palestinian perceptions of employment opportunities for professionals in education and social care, as well as opportunities for managerial and clerical positions.

Most university youths in this study relied on non-assistive resources to continue their education, suggesting that some may belong to higher income households. A minority of university-level respondents, 28 percent, received scholarships, loans or assistance and 11 percent work to cover tuition.

Employment: The quantitative findings indicate that while youth employment rates are comparable to the overall Palestinian population, they are likely to be twice as high for young women. The rate of employment among university-educated young women was more than double that of young men. There was a clear correlation between employment and education: half of employed respondents had obtained semi-professional education and one quarter was university educated; one-fifth, mostly young men, had only intermediate or secondary schooling.

The proportion of professional-level occupations was higher than the overall Palestinian population: with at least three out of ten working youths employed as teachers, social or health workers, engineers, computer specialists (hardware and software) and accountants. Among young working females, the percentage of professional occupations (at 66%) was more than twice that of working males (29%) and appears to substantially exceed the rate of professional and associate professional women in the overall population.

UN Agencies and NGOs were the main employers of teachers and social workers, while the private sector employed most other professionals and semi-professionals, including engineers, technicians, health workers and accountants.

Very few employees had applied for work permits, however, of the twelve who did, seven (5M, 2F) were successful in 2005 – 2010, including four nurses, one teacher and two ICT specialists. Five are still pursuing semi-professional or higher studies.

Reported monthly wages are very low across occupations and employers, with a slight advantage in the private sector; 88.3percent of earnings were below the Lebanese minimum wage, (USD 467) and 10% percent ranged from USD 467 to USD600.

Performance and competencies: Survey results show that the pursuit of education after the intermediate and secondary levels is not limited to high scholastic performers, but rather encompasses average and low-ranking students. Opportunity(household income and/or remittances) may be a determining factor, although not confirmed in this report as one-fifth of students with only an "acceptable" ranking at school had obtained (or were obtaining) semi-professional and university education degrees.

Competency development in the form of internships and volunteer work is prevalent and appears to promote employability. More than half of the employed and two-fifths of all respondents had participated in at least one job internship and 33 percent of the employed had engaged in volunteer work compared to 29% of all respondents. Among the employed good competency levels were not infrequent since one third had been promoted and/or received salary increases.

Computer literacy is prevalent across educational levels. Seven out of ten were familiar with at least one standard computer software program (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.). Half practiced their computer skills regularly, and one-third had a computer at home. Half declared that they were skilled Facebook users, and almost as many were adept at Twitter. Nevertheless, general and specialized computer skills were the most frequently mentioned needs for skills development.

Most Palestinian youth in this study pursued a range of extracurricular activities that contribute to enhancing their social and personal skills. The majority enjoyed participation in debates and discussions, and a quarter practiced a favored hobby outside the home in the company of friends and acquaintances. The majority of young men were involved in sports, whereas most young women espoused hobbies of a cultural and artistic nature.

Contribution to Family and Society: Most working youths contribute financially to the family although a minority are main income earners, while many students and non-workers contribute indirectly by alleviating family expenses. Expense reduction measures included working to cover tuition and/or personal expenses, securing scholarships and loans, tutoring siblings and helping in the family business. The majority of young women (employees and students) engaged in a significant share of household chores, more frequently among the youngest as well as among those who were not studying and not working.

Nearly half of respondents have been involved in community work, emergency relief and campaign activities. Service to the community took the form of volunteer work with NGOs, charities and scouts groups, and to a lesser extent through advocacy work for Palestinian rights.

Attitudes: Education and work were highly valued as a path to economic security as well as a "weapon" to maintain national and personal dignity, self-respect and identity. Two out of three

students planned to complete their education before working and the majority of non-workers (unemployed or not searching for a job) aspired to resume their education. Two out of three employees aimed to keep their present jobs. However, of the non-workers (including students), two out of three appeared discouraged and did not intend to search for a job, with near parity between genders.

Low salaries, followed by the scarcity of jobs, are considered the main employment challenges in the Lebanese and Palestinian job markets, followed by discrimination against Palestinians in the former and *wasta* [clientelism] in the latter.

Detailed knowledge of the recent Lebanese Labor Law amendment was weak at the time of interview. The amendment was judged ineffective by 41 percent of respondents, but viewed as positive for youth education/employment by 21 percent. It was considered "possibly positive" by 37 percent, who felt that it might benefit Palestinians and reduce out-migration. Relations with Lebanese youths were felt to be not unduly affected by official Lebanese policies. The interaction was rated as largely positive and/or "ordinary" although few cited durable friendships. A minority stated that the relationship was marred by sectarianism or related discriminatory attitudes, as well as cultural differences.

Acceptance of traditional gender roles is widespread among young men and women in terms of attitudes on household chores and occupational choices; however, the majority considered they were sole decision-makers on education, marriage and work, although less frequently among females than among males

Conclusions

Given the recurrent practical and attitudinal correlation between education and economic security, education emerges as the principle coping strategy of the sample group under observation. It suggests that segments of Palestinian youth and society possess the resilience to contemplate breaking the confinement of social exclusion and poverty. They have adopted education as their main approach to countering legal employment restrictions and have reduced their dependency on aid for securing post-secondary education by resorting to affordable options. Women in particular have chosen less prestigious educational institutions and have made gains in employment at the professional level.

Most youth have selected occupations with a reasonable likelihood of employment, even if informal and for women, limited to socially acceptable occupations (teacher, social workers, etc.) Many are determined to use multiple venues to develop their skills and competencies in order to adapt to the labor market. Some have attended more than one educational institution, combining university and technical training, or two successive technical institutions along with one or several internships, mostly lasting several months but often up to one year without pay.

They also cope by accepting low wages, exploring options for self-employment and envisaging temporary travel or emigration.

The recommendations at the end of the report focus in part on practical, realizable mid-term objectives in the context of the broader aims of the Right to Work Campaign. These include:

- Promotion of coordinated participatory interventions with unemployed youths holding Brevet (intermediate level), Baccalaureate (secondary level), semi-professional and university degrees to develop their employability and occupational skills, including labor market knowledge and adaptability and career management, among others;
- Dissemination of the results of this study among the youngest of Palestinian youth (15-18 years) and their families, in order to combat discouragement and demoralization as well as to promote the education and economic participation of young women.

Other recommendations address the need for active participation by youth in the development of advocacy strategies for the Right to Work Campaign that target public opinion in their schools, universities and in the private sector.

2) Introduction

2.1. A brief regional perspective

Due to high population growth in Arab countries during the second half of the 20th century, children and young people under the age of 25 currently comprise 60 percent of the population, while the 15-24 age group (youth)is estimated to represent one-fifth of the Arab population (AHDR 2009). The region is projected to experience above average population growth for some years to come, with the 15-24 age group expected "to reach 78 million (18.2%) in 2020" (MDG 2007). Therein lies the urgency for the region to accomplish progress towards the Millennium Development target of "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people" (MDG Target 1 B). There is consensus among scholars and policy makers that this "demographic pressure" is one of the major challenges facing the region, especially since youth are disproportionately disadvantaged through exclusion from effective participation in society as a whole, and the economic sphere in particular. In addition, traditional roles continue to marginalize young (as well as adult) women, despite improvement in educational attainment for both genders in recent decades.

> In 2005, around 25% of Arab youth were unemployed, a rate three times higher than that for adults. The situation is particularly grave for young women, whereby the unemployment rate for females aged 15 – 24 was estimated at around 34% in 2005. (MDG 2007, p. 25)

By 2006 youth unemployment rates had risen to 30 percent and "the youth share among the unemployed exceeded 50 per cent for most Arab countries" (MDG 2010, p 114).

The disadvantages preventing Arab youth from reaching their full potential are linked to the chronic structural obstacles that have hindered overall human development in the region, including the denial of basic freedoms and the marginalization of women. Scholars have warned that exclusion leads to frustration, demoralization and an escalation of social problems, such as crime, violence and extremism. Few had predicted that the "Arab Spring," the non-violent youth revolt, would storm the Arab world overnight from Maghreb to Mashreq in the latter part of 2010. The fact that Arab youth have become more educated is certainly a factor for consideration, as well as the spread of the information revolution, which has infiltrated all levels of society, albeit at varying degrees. For these two reasons alone, many believe that it has become increasingly difficult to manipulate and intimidate public opinion and that investing in youth potential has become an immediate and urgent priority. (AHDR 2004)

2.2 Palestinian Refugee Youth in Lebanon: Multiple Marginalization

Palestinian refugee youth in Lebanon combine the vulnerabilities that characterize youth across the region and the liabilities of their stateless refugee status. The Arab Human Development Report 2009 on human security identified youth, women and refugees as the three most susceptible sectors in the region: "Human insecurity is palpable and present in the alienation of the region's rising cohort of unemployed youth and in the predicaments of its

subordinated women, and dispossessed refugees" (AHDR 2009, p.2). Although signs of progress in the educational attainment of Palestinian youth in Lebanon are manifest, legal restrictions, social exclusion and the quality of affordable educational services are the foremost obstacles that curtail their advancement.

2.2.1 Legally Restricted Access to the Labor Market

Half of the Palestinian population in Lebanon is below the age of 25 (Chaaban 2010), while the25-29 age group is reported to be diminishing, with out-migration being one of the likely causes (FAFO 2003, ILO 2010). Due to the denial of work rights, overall unemployment rates are higher than the regional average at 37 percent of the working age population (Chaaban 2010),with more than 40 percent of youths aged 15 to 24 years reported to be "unemployed, underemployed or discouraged workers" (FAFO 2005). Many surveys have highlighted the widespread demoralization within Palestinian youth ranks in Lebanon, due to obstructions to the right to work, the limited professions that can be practiced and a general feeling that education is pointless under such immutable decade-long legal constraints (FAFO 2005).

> …the exclusion of the refugees from the Lebanese labour market … puts households in general, but young refugee men in particular, in a unique position compared to refugees elsewhere. Those that can, leave the country. Those that cannot, are forming a large group of young men who are leaving school or performing poorly there, and have little hope or ambition for the future. Thus both processes contribute to seriously undermine the stock of human capital in these communities not only for today, but perhaps more importantly for the future (FAFO 2005, p.10).

An amendment to the Labor Law was passed by Lebanese Parliament in August 2010, exempting Palestinians from a reciprocity condition applied to foreigners wishing to work in Lebanon. It also exempted Palestinians from paying work permit fees. The amendment is perceived as having a limited effect because it applies to a narrow range of professions, and does not address the overall legal status of Palestinians in Lebanon. Being stateless, the reciprocity ruling had excluded Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon from the right to work both as Palestinians and as aliens. In fact, statelessness remains the principal legal argument of the 2001 Lebanese Law that prohibits Palestinian refugees from owning property in Lebanon. Thus the Labor Law amendment is viewed by Palestinians and human rights experts as incomplete and ineffective, because the legal framework governing the status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon remains discriminatory and violates international human rights codes, including: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).The Labor Law amendment continued to deny Palestinian workers access to social security benefits that are available to Lebanese workers. It established a special "End of Service Indemnity Fund"for Palestinian employees who pay a full social security contribution to the Lebanese National Social Security Fund (NSSF), but who are not allowed to benefit from it like the Lebanese, for coverage of sickness, maternity leave or family allowances (Geha, 2011). Thus Palestinian refugee families will continue to be denied access to social protection in contravention of Articles 9

and10 of the ICESCR, which stipulate the recognition of "the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance" and the provision of the "widest possible protection and assistance" for families, including "special protection" for mothers before and after childbirth.

Furthermore, the Labor Law amendment is considered cosmetic since it does not address the exclusion of Palestinian refugees from 30 syndicated professions, falling in two categories:

> First, those [professions]that are subject to the reciprocity clause (medical doctors, pharmacists, travel agents, news editors, hospital owners, insurance and re-insurance agents, topographers, engineers and architects, nurses, drug warehouse and medical laboratory workers, certified accountants, dentists, veterinarians, dental laboratory workers, physiotherapists and teachers at all school levels); second, those that are restricted to Lebanese citizens (professions in the law, journalists, technicians, owners of , tourist companies, managers of publishing companies, hairdressers, professions in currency exchange, real estate agents, taxi drivers or driving instructors, publishers and printing presses) (Chaaban 2010 p.13).

As such, despite the amendment to the Labor Law, hiring practices are not likely to change as Palestinian refugees are still not able access the majority of white collar "liberal' professions and will not benefit from fair working conditions and social protection.

These legal restrictions, coupled with the prevalence of traditional gender roles, have a multiplier effect on the marginalization of Palestinian women in Lebanon. Similar to regional trends, their overall participation in the labor force is poor, at 17 percent compared to 69 percent among men, while noting that the rates are only slightly lower than the labor force participation of Lebanese women at 19.2 percent (FAFO 2003). According to the most recent population-based study, of economically active Palestinian women, only 13 percent are employed compared to 65 percent among Palestinian men (AUB 2010). Of the economically active young women, the unemployment rates are reportedly higher due to the general lack of job opportunities, but also due to the "gender segregation" of occupations, with women mainly working in services (FAFO 2003a, p. 86) and, within that constraint, unable to pursue socially acceptable professions such as law and journalism because they are syndicated and banned by Lebanese law.

2.2.2 Limited Educational Resources; High Expectations

All surveys on the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon confirm that the population suffers from low educational levels in comparison to the overall Palestinian refugee population in Jordan, Syria and the Occupied Territory, as well as to regional and Lebanese trends. With poverty rates affecting two-thirds[1] of the population, it is extremely difficult for families to afford private sector technical school and universities. In the 25-29 age group, 19 percent are

[1] According to Shaaban et al (2010) the majority of the Palestinian population in Lebanon cannot meet its basic food and non-food needs, with 66.4 percent classified as poor and 6.6 percent as extremely poor.

reported to have completed their secondary education compared to one-third of young refugee adults in Jordan and Syria (FAFO 2005). By all estimates, for Palestinians in Lebanon, the rate drops to 11 percent at the post-secondary level compared to 24 percent among Lebanese. Only 3.8 percent of the Palestinian population aged 25 and above are university educated and there is a significant gap between economically active university-level Lebanese and Palestinians. At 20 percent of Lebanese compared to6 percent among Palestinians (Hanafi &Tiltnes 2008).

Given the high out-migration rates since the 1980s, estimated at one-quarter to one-third of the registered refugee population, it is likely that many educated Palestinians have left Lebanon. UNRWA reports that about 10 percent of graduates from its Sibline Training Center (STC) find employment abroad (FCEP 2006). However, it is difficult to ascertain the existence of a brain drain with the absence of data on out-migrants and on their educational levels. Suffice it to say that observations during the course of this survey have shown that many university educated Palestinian males appear to take it for granted that they will be leaving Lebanon in order to work in their field of specialization.

Educational achievement cannot be seen in isolation from the quality of available services and resources. High poverty levels and geographical distance render Lebanese private and public schools inaccessible for most school-aged Palestinians. Private schools are prohibitively expensive and public schools will accept Palestinian students only when space is available. UNRWA is thus the main education provider for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. It is credited for pioneering gender parity in education and for ensuring primary education for the vast majority of Palestinian refugees. It also provides secondary education and semi-professional educational training (Sibline Training Center - STC) although with limited capacity. STC, however, is not accredited in Lebanon and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, instead of the Ministry of Education, countersigns its diplomas.

Since the 1990s, decreasing resources have undermined UNRWA's educational program. A needs assessment conducted in 2008 by UNRWA-Lebanon Field highlights the growing concern of the population over diminishing student achievement. It also recognizes the need to reform the UNRWA educational program in Lebanon, including the improvement of human and pedagogical capabilities:

> Education is considered key for ensuring a better future for Palestine refugees and youth. Emphasis must be placed on improving the quality of the learning conditions for children and the working conditions for UNRWA teachers: and the curriculum provided (UNRWA 2008, p.4).

In contrast to low educational achievement levels, attitudes across the Palestinian community remain highly favorable to education. There is a wide spectrum of complementary educational programs offered by NGOs and an ever-present community debate on the education system. A recent study on vulnerable Palestinian youths observed that there are many university educated youths in Palestinian camps and gatherings who are "extremely ambitious, focused

and determined to succeed in life," despite their "uncertain future" (Abu Sharar 2009, p. 9). A 2003 Fafo survey indicated that 50 percent of parents with children in basic education expected them to pursue higher studies. Similarly, a survey conducted in Shatila camp revealed that a substantial proportion of families resort to additional tutorials, mostly at their own cost, to ensure their children's scholastic success, at 44 percent of primary school children, 25 percent of those at intermediate level and one-eighth of those in secondary (El-Madi, 2008).

2.2.3 Some positive signs?

The high emigration levels from Lebanon, especially by young adults, and high poverty levels resulting from continued job market restrictions tend to mask the progress in educational attainment. Research shows, that over the past decades, young Palestinians are becoming better educated than their older counterparts, especially among young women who are also becoming better educated than young men. This has influenced the rate of economic activity with the likelihood of employment increasing as more youth pursue higher education:

> "Two in 3 men and 9 in 10 women with graduate education work as professionals or managers. Conversely, half of the males and females with no completed education work in elementary occupations, as machine operators or as crafts workers." FAFO 2003b, p. 146).

The recent AUB/UNRWA socio-economic survey confirms that increase in educational levels impacts most positively on women and reports that a quarter of working Palestinian women with higher education occupy professional, senior or managerial posts in contrast to one fifth of working Palestinian men with similar qualifications. However, while young educated Palestinians are improving their chances of employment, the vast majority of those who are hired are working informally in the Lebanese market at low pay, without job permits, contracts or social benefits and, due to discriminatory laws, cannot prevail upon any form of legal or social protection. The average hourly wage of a working Palestinian is less than USD 2 an hour. Professionals are reported to earn a little above USD 3 per hour (FAFO 2006). A study conducted in 2010 on employed Vocational Training graduates indicated that their monthly earnings were slightly higher than the average wage of all employed Palestinians,with44 percent earning between USD 320,andUSD 600 a month, while a significant proportion, 39 percent, earned less than the minimum wage (CRI 2010, p.8).[2]

Nonetheless, continued improvements in Palestinian youth education and employment in Lebanon suggests the potential for relative progress in the future well-being of the community. This will enable concerned stakeholders to focus on strategies and policies that strengthen and multiply existing assets. It will also enable campaigners to promote an alternative image of Palestinians within Lebanon, rally public opinion and help to accelerate the adoption of measures that will eliminate injustice and provide legitimate access to work opportunities.

[2] At the time of the CRI study, the Lebanese minimum wage was LBP 500,000 (approx. USD 320)

3) Rationale and Methodology

3.1 Background and Purpose

This is the second study commissioned by Association Najdeh to serve as an advocacy tool for the Right to Work Campaign (RWC). Launched in April 2005, RWC is a coalition of 88 Lebanese and Palestinian NGOs that aims to empower Palestinian refugees to claim their right to work. RWC's previous study on "The Impact of Palestinian Refugees' Contribution to the Lebanese Economy" (PARALECO) presented an alternative, positive perspective on the role of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The present study draws on the PARALECO sample group, and offers a distinctive perspective by focusing on Palestinian youth, their potential, development and their domestic socio-economic contributions. It seeks to test the thesis that those Palestinian youths in Lebanon who have acquired knowledge and skills through education and work represent an untapped potential for advancing the quality of life of the community, notwithstanding the external legal and material constraints. The growing amount of surveys on the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon has thus far focused on trends in the general population. This body of data has signaled that there is progress in the area of educational attainment among the young, especially women, which in turn has shown signs of progress, albeit limited, on employment levels and occupational status among youths and young adults. However, not enough data are available to measure generational shifts within the community, or to provide indicators on their scope, nature and sustainability.

This study is not an in-depth survey of Palestinian youths in the camps and gatherings of Lebanon. Its purpose, rather, is to profile a group of relatively privileged Palestinian refugee youth and measure their skills and experiences, in addition to exploring their motivations, expectations and personal aspirations. Within this framework, the study explored youth perceptions/experiences of the new Lebanese parliamentary modifications on the Lebanese Labor Law and National Social Security Fund (NSSF). The study also focused on their domestic socio-economic contribution and took into consideration gender perspectives across examined themes. Three tracks of inquiry were utilized:

- What is the scope of capabilities acquired by educated/trained/working Palestinian youths in Lebanon?
- How do educated/trained/working Palestinian youths contribute to their family and community?
- What are the attitudes and motivations of educated/trained/working Palestinian youth, and given their perceptions of reality, what coping mechanisms do they employ?

3.2 Methodology

The study relied on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, although the initial research strategy was based on focus group discussions (FGDs), building on the previous PARALECO study. However due to confidentiality measures taken during the PARALECO study the same individuals could not be identified and thus the present study is not a follow-up project. As such, direct comparisons cannot be scientifically made and, it was agreed with Association Najdeh to apply both qualitative and quantitative research methods,

including qualitative sections in the quantitative research tool, with the PARALECO data providing a pool from which to select the sample groups for this study.

In order to select the participants for the quantitative component of this study, and as the study focuses on youth potential and the extent to which it is acquired through education and/or labor market participation, the age bracket of the sample straddled two age categories: older youths aged 18-24 years and younger adults aged 25-29 years. The selection targeted young persons with a minimum of intermediate schooling. Out of 1,500 families from the PARALECO study, 452 individuals fit the criteria; of these, 364 belonging to 192 PARALECO households were located and participated in the quantitative interviews. Households with one member fitting the criteria made up 38 percent of the sample; 41 percent had two such youth members and 14 percent had three. Households with more than three members fitting the criteria were all extended families and made up 8 percent of the sample.

The participants in the focus groups were not gathered from the PARALECO study, and rather were randomly chosen from geographical areas not covered by the quantitative segment of this study, namely the Wavel refugee camp as well as gatherings in southern Lebanon, the Beqaa and Beirut. The aim was to validate the results dealing on perceptions and attitudes in the quantitative survey. Six FGDs were conducted, with 58 participants.

The same criteria (age groups and educational level) were applied in the selection of FGD participants, with the addition of secondary criteria related to work status and gender. This sample was more controlled as proportions were applied to the chosen criteria, whereby a third of all 58 selected participants were to have university education and half of total respondents were to be working, with gender representation to be balanced from the onset. This was done in order to get a closer look at "more advantaged" youth and to explore any linkages between capabilities and perceived reality.

Training and research ethics: Qualitative and quantitative data was collected separately, by two different teams of interviewers. Each team was trained, using the study's questionnaires, as well as facilitating mock focus group discussions for the qualitative group. Pilot testing and the resultant amendments were undertaken in Beirut for both quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. The interviewers were trained to explain the purpose of the research project to all interviewees, and to obtain their signed consent to the quantitative and qualitative interviews and the tape-recording of their narratives.

4) Sample Group Characteristics

The respondents of the quantitative sample, selected from eight Palestinian camps, represented a majority of single youths aged 18-24 years, with slightly more females than males. Nearly half had obtained post-intermediate and post-secondary technical education and one-third were university educated. Fifty percent were students at the time of interview; the majority being enrolled at university, and one-third were employed. The characteristics of the qualitative sample group will be explained separately below.

4.1. Regional Distribution

The regional distribution of the 364 respondents was influenced by the selection criteria and the availability of the chosen sample group. This limited regional representation and comparisons across regions. The majority of those who fit the selection criteria (age and education) were found in the South, at 64percentand were mostly from Sidon's Ein El Helweh camp at 29 percent, followed by the North at 21 percent (Table 1).

Table 1: Regional Distribution and Place of Residence

Governorate	Camp	Number	%
South (64.3%)	Ein El Helweh Camp	106	29.1
	Rashidiyeh Camp	55	15.1
	Borj El Shemali Camp	55	15.1
	Al Buss Camp	18	4.9
North (20.6%)	Baddawi Camp	37	10.2
	Nahr El Bared Camp	38	10.4
Mount Lebanon (12.6%)	Borj El Barajneh Camp	46	12.6
Beirut (2.5%	Shatila Camp	9	2.5

4.2 Gender, Age and Marital Status

There was near equal gender balance in the sample group at 47 percent (172) for males and 53 percent (192) for females. Age distribution is comparable to available data for the overall population: Most respondents (78%) were youths aged 18-24 years, with young adults of the 25-29 age group constituting less than half the 20-24 age group. The former matches the demographic configuration of the overall population, with the low proportion of those aged 25-29 is attributed to in-country (between camps and gatherings) and out of country migration. Of the female respondents, more came from the youngest 18-19 age group (22%) than was the case for all males (16%), while of more male respondents came from the oldest 25-29 age group (28%), in comparison to 17 percent of females (Table 2).

Table 2: Respondents by Age Group and Gender

Age group	Gender		All respondents
	Male (47%)	Female (53%)	
18-19 years	16%	22%	19%
20-24 years	56%	61%	59%
25-29 years	28%	17%	22%

In relation to marital status, the majority of respondents (72%) were single, 16 percent engaged, 11.5 percent married and only one respondent (female) was divorced. The incidence of engagement and marriage among respondents increased with age and was more prevalent among females than males. The rates were highest in the 25-29 age group, with25.5 percent of males and 32 percent of females married (Table 3).There was a high proportion of never married individuals of both genders across ages, representing 80 percent of all males and 65 percent of all females.

Table 3: Marital Status by Age and Gender

Marital Status		Age Groups							
		18-19		20-24		25-29		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Male	Single	27	100%	87	90%	23	49%	137	80%
	Engaged	0	0%	9	9%	12	26%	21	12%
	Married	0	0%	1	1%	12	26%	13	8%
	Total	**27**	**100%**	**97**	**100%**	**47**	**100%**	**171**	**100%**
Female	Single	30	71%	76	66%	18	53%	124	65%
	Engaged	11	26%	22	19%	4	12%	37	19%
	Married	1	2%	17	15%	11	32%	29	15%
	Divorced	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	1	1%
	Total	**42**	**100%**	**115**	**100%**	**34**	**100%**	**191**	**100%**

4.3. Educational Qualifications

As shown in Table 4, a plurality of respondents (49%) has a school education and VET training. Only 20 percent have only a school education. The remaining 31 percent have university education; of which 7 percent also have vocational training. Both genders were almost equally represented in the sample; however, 37 percent of all females have university education in comparison to 24 percent of all males.

Table 4: Educational Level by Gender

Educational Level	Gender		
	Male	Female	All respondents
School	25%	16%	20%
School + VT	51%	47%	49%
University	21%	26%	24%
University + VT	3%	11%	7%

Half of the respondents were still enrolled in an educational institution at the time of the interview, consisting mainly of the 18-24 youth group. Among those who were no longer enrolled, nearly three-quarters were young adults aged 25-29 years, and 88 percent had school education, and 62 percent had combined their education with vocational training. Around 80 percent reached the intermediate level, and 20 percent secondary. The remaining 12 percent of the non-enrolled category had a university education. In contrast, 50 percent of the still-enrolled category was at university (Table 5). University dropout rates in both categories were relatively low, with only 8 dropouts from of total university of 113 students.

Table 5: Educational Level by Enrolment Status

Educational Achievement Level	Current Educational Enrollment				(No. of respondents)	% of all respondents
	Enrolled	% of total enrolled	Not enrolled	% of total not enrolled		
Intermediate	3	2%	46	25%	49	13%
Secondary	24	13%	1	1%	25	7%
Intermediate and VT	31	17%	82	45%	113	31%
Secondary level and VT	33	18%	30	16%	63	17%
University	90	50%	23	12%	113	31%
Total	**181**	**100%**	**183**	**100%**	**364**	**100%**

The percentage of respondents with a school educational level was highest for the 18-19 age group, while university education was almost equal for the 20-24 and 25-29 age brackets (at 36 percent and 35 percent respectively). As before, this should not be seen in isolation of their enrolment status, with 67 percent of the 18-19 age group, 53 percent of 20-24 age group and 26 percent of the 25-29 age group still enrolled in an educational institution (Table 6). This is likely to suggest a shift of percentages potentially in favor of further education levels for this sample group in the near future.

Table 6: Age by Enrolment Status and Educational Level

	Current Educational Enrollment			Educational Level		
Age Group	Enrolled	Not Enrolled		School	University	School + VT
18-19 years	67%	33%		35%	11%	54%
20-24 years	53%	47%		15.6%	35.8%	48.6%
25-29 years	26%	74%		21%	35%	44%
% of all respondents	**49.7%**	**50.3%**		**20%**	**31%**	**49%**

4.4 Employment Status

Slightly more than one-third of the sample group was working at the time of the interview. Despite its small size, the percentage of economically active respondents and the rate of labor force participation can be estimated. After discounting student respondents who are not working, and respondents not seeking a job, 43 percent of our working age sample group, can be considered economically active, consisting of 29 percent of all females and 60 percent of all males. The gender disparity is due to higher student enrollment rates among young women, coupled with higher numbers not seeking jobs. At the time of interview, 89.9percent were working of the economically active at 90 percent of males and 87 percent of females. Moreover, 93.5 percent of engaged/married males were working, compared to only 25 percent of engaged/married females, which points to the likelihood that many women will stop working

outside of the home[3]once married, in conformity with dominant social norms and traditional gender attitudes.

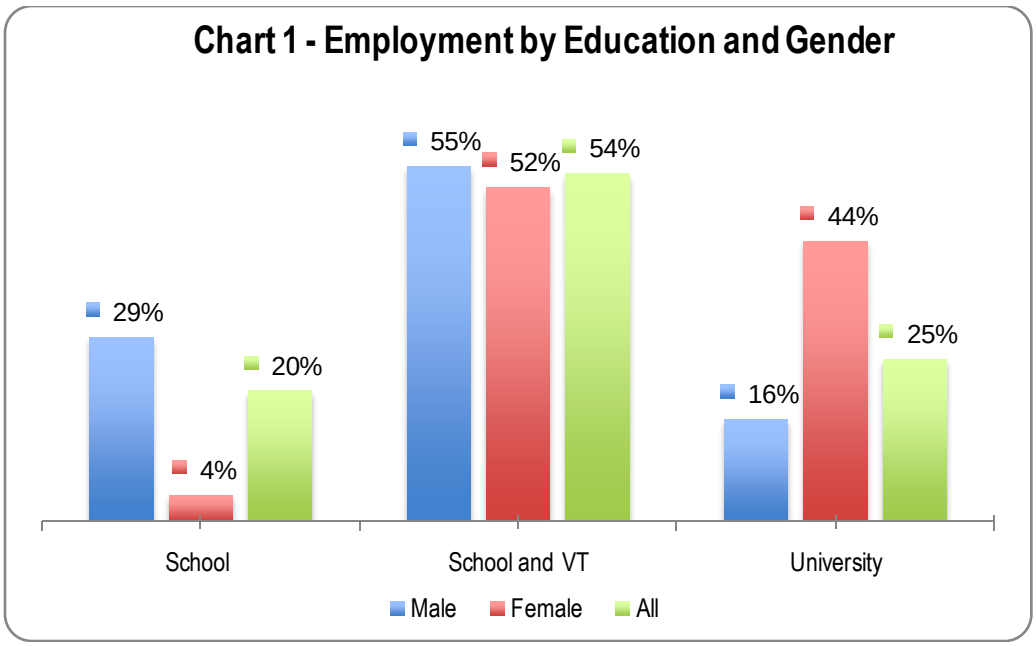
Nevertheless, as the overwhelming majority (94 percent) of all respondents stated that they aspired to earn an income, and with one third of non-working respondents (M33%/F27%) declaring that they intend to search for a job in the future, this study considers all respondents part of a potential workforce. Table 6 below demonstrates working status by gender and educational enrollment within the whole sample group. Of the 364 respondents, 142 (39%) were working, with 55 percent of all male respondents and 25 percent of all females. Compared to the overall Palestinian workforce as surveyed in 2010, this sample group's working rates are close to the employment rates of the working age population, estimated at 37 percent. However, this report's findings differ from the overall gender employment rates, which were estimated at 65 percent for males (compared to 55 percent in this report), and 13 percent for females (compared to 25 in this report) (Chaaban: 2010: 7-10).

Table 7: Working Status by Gender and Educational Enrollment

		Current Work Status				**Total**	
Gender	**Current Educational Enrollment**	Working		Not Working			
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Male	Enrolled	17	18.1	51	65.4	68	39.5
	Not enrolled	77	81.9	27	35.1	104	60.5
	Total Male	**94**	**100**	**78**	**100**	**172**	**100**
Female	Enrolled	20	41.7	92	63.9	112	58.3
	Not enrolled	28	58.3	52	36.1	80	41.7
	Total Female	**48**	**100**	**144**	**100**	**192**	**100**
Total Respondents		142	39.0	222	61.0	364	100

As shown in the chart below, the majority of working respondents, at 54 percent, have attended vocational training at the post-intermediate or post-secondary level, with only slight gender variation; 21 percent, mostly young males, have obtained only a school education. Higher education was most advantageous to young women in our sample group, with44 percent of working females compared to 16 percent of working males having the same qualifications.

[3]"Three-quarters of non-active [Palestinian refugee] women are full-time housewives by the time they are in their early 20s" (FAFO 2003b,:p.134).



As expected, work status was closely correlated with respondents' age, with 87 percent of the youngest category (18-19) not working, and non-working rates lowering to 64 percent for the 20-24 youth category and to 31 percent for the oldest group of young adults (25-29).

4.5Focus Group Participants

Six focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in the Qasmieh and Shabriha gatherings in the South, Wavel camp and the gatherings of Saadnayel and Bar Elias in the Beqaa, as well as gatherings and neighborhoods in Beirut (Ard Jalloul, Sabra, Fakhani and Tariq el Jdideh). The FGDs engaged 58 young men and women aged 18-29, with the majority (57%) falling in the 20-24 age bracket –similar to quantitative sample of 59 percent for this age group category. Half of the FGD sessions took place in the Beqaa, totaling 48 percent of all participants, followed by Tyre at 35 percent and Beirut at 17 percent (Annex 1).

As intended from the controlled sample, the overall gender distribution was balanced (48 percent female and 52 percent male), with gender variations in each locale reflective of the study's sample specificities and the availability of respondents who fit these criteria at time of selection. The majority of participants (41 percent) came from a household size of 6-7 members, followed by 26 percent that were constituted of 4-5 members, reflecting similar trends to the quantitative sample (36 percent and 29 percent respectively). The overwhelming majority, at 90 percent, were single.

As the study's main focus was on youth potential, the selection of this sample focused on higher educational levels, however bias encountered when selecting for university education level meant that the originally intended rate of 33 percent reached 57 percent. An additional 28 percent underwent or were undergoing vocational training, 5 percent were trained both at university and VT centers, with the remaining 15 percent had only school education. Around 60 percent were still enrolled in an educational institution.

A majority (55 percent) were not working at the time of interview. Of the remaining 45 percent of participants, 31 percent (18) were working regularly and 14 percent were working on an occasional basis. It is noteworthy to mention that four out of the 18 working participants had two jobs (Wavel: 2, Saadnayel: 1 and Beirut: 1). A third of the working participants were female (6 out of 18). In addition, of the eight participants working on occasional basis, two were females.

Table 9 below provides an examination of work status and educational level of FGD participants, showing 58 percent of those working have a university level education and 56 percent of those not working were also at university level. Moreover, 45 percent of total university participants (33) were working.

Table 8: FGD Respondents by Work Status and Educational Level

	Current Work Status Total respondents: 58 Working: 26 (45%) Not Working: 32 (55%)	
	Working	**Not Working**
Educational Level		
School	5 (19%)	4 (13%)
VT	6 (23%)	10 (31%)
University	13 (50%)	17 (53%)
University + VT	2 (8%)	1 (3%)
Total	**26**	**32**

5) Main Findings

5.1 Scope of Capabilities Acquired through Education and Employment

This section focuses on respondents who have acquired specializations through technical training and/or university education. Among school-educated respondents, six out of ten were still attending school and the employed group was largely engaged in low status jobs as laborers, sales and trade workers (Annex 2).

On education, our findings indicate that educational attainment among Palestinian youth is likely to be significantly higher than that of the overall population[4]. Two-thirds of the randomly selected youth in this survey are either university educated or have obtained semi-professional education (Vocational Education Training –VET) of an extended duration lasting one to two years or more. Young women lead in both educational tracks.

[4] According to Chaaban et al (2010), among Palestinians aged three and above and not enrolled in school, 12% have completed intermediary education, 5% have completed have completed secondary school and an equal proportion holds a university degree. For those who are above 18 years of age, 15% have completed secondary and hold a Baccalaureate, and 6% have obtained vocational training degree. Among those aged more than 25 years 5% hold a university degree (p. 38-39)

In general, fields of study and specialization conformed to fields that currently afford higher status occupations for Palestinians as professionals or semi-professionals, managers and technicians. Many plan to become teachers and choose specializations in the social sciences, humanities and sciences while others opt for the fields of, welfare, health and business administration.

5.1.1 University Specializations

Although UNRWA is the main provider of basic and secondary education, the most frequented venues for advanced education are Lebanese institutions. Most university-level respondents, (46 percent), are studying or have studied in one of the various branches of the Lebanese University; interestingly, there is a large gender divide of 58 percent of females compared to 19 percent of males. The next most frequented institution is the Beirut Arab University, at 21 percent of respondents, representing 35 percent of university-educated males and 13 percent of females. The Lebanese International University (LIU) and the Arts, Sciences and Technology University in Lebanon (AUL) each host 11 percent of university attendees, with very slight gender variance. Only 2 persons entered the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University, covering their fees from private funds. Neither are females.

Of the university-level respondents, 75 percent specialized in the Humanities, Social Sciences or Business Administration. Social Sciences are the preferred fields among females, with three times as many female to male enrollees. Twenty one percent of young men are majoring in Engineering, but no women are (Table 10).

Table 10 - University Major by Educational Field and Gender

	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
Social sciences and law	6	14.3%	24	33.8%	30	26.5%
Humanities and arts	11	26.2%	16	22.5%	27	23.9%
Business and administration	13	31.0%	11	15.5%	24	21.2%
Science	3	7.1%	15	21.1%	18	15.9%
Engineering	9	21.4%	0	.0%	9	8.0%
Health	0	.0%	4	5.6%	4	3.5%
Other	0	.0%	1	1.4%	1	.9%
Total	**42**	**100.0%**	**71**	**100.0%**	**113**	**100.0%**

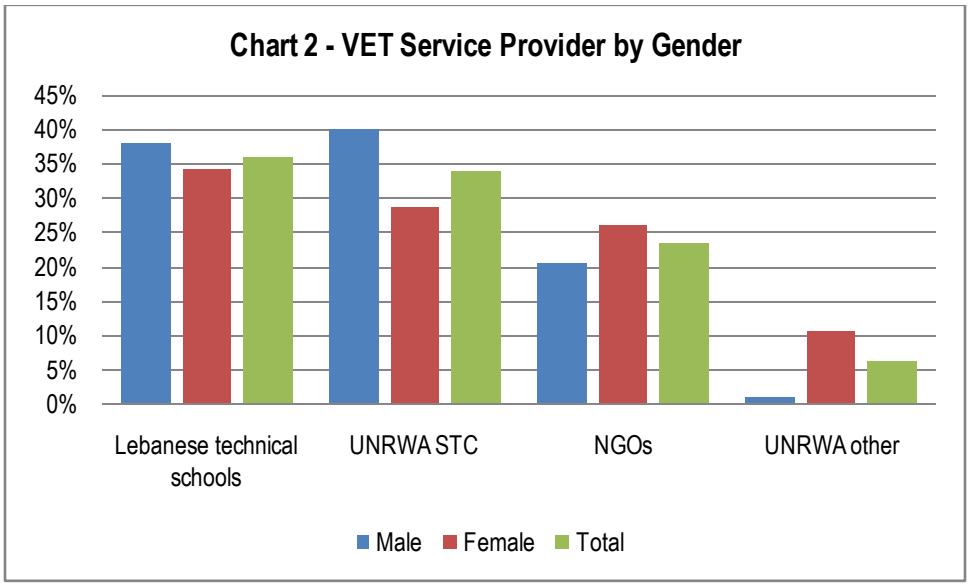
In terms of career plans, six out of ten university level respondents aimed for occupations in Business, Education or Social Welfare, in ascending order. Very few (12%) received career counseling, but 41 percent undertook internships (Annex 3), most commonly in the Business and Administration sector.

Although most university-level respondents are solely pursuing their education, those who are also currently employed (30%) are mostly working in occupations related to their field of study, mainly as teachers, social workers and accountants (Annex 4).This suggests that there is a reasonable level of success among university respondents in meeting career plans and matching jobs with specializations. It also suggests that these areas yield better employment opportunities for Palestinians at the present time.

5.1.2. Vocational Training Specializations

In the quantitative sample, semi-professional training was sought by youths of different educational levels, including one-third of intermediate level respondents, two-thirds of those with secondary education and 18 percent of those with university education. Overall, women constitute 54.7 percent of the 203 respondents who have attended or are currently attending Vocational Training. Short-term VET training was least common, at 38 percent (77) of all who took technical training (Table 11).

As shown in Chart 2, respondents received their vocational training mainly through Lebanese technical schools (36%), followed by UNRWA STC (34%) and NGOs (24%), in addition to UNRWA short-term training (6%). UNRWA's Sibline Training Center was the educational venue for most males, at 40 percent, followed by Lebanese technical schools at 38 percent. Conversely, women most commonly attended the latter, at 34 percent, followed by the UNRWA STC at 29 percent.



The majority of VET-level respondents, (62 percent), attended courses lasting one year or more. As shown in Table 11, the UNRWA STC provided the bulk of training for those who received one to two years of education. Training lasting more than two years was obtained from Lebanese technical schools. NGOs were the main service provider for short-term courses, with 65 percent of respondents attending NGO VET courses for less than one year. More than half (55%) of those attending short-term courses had intermediate level schooling (Annex 5).

Table 11 -VET Service Provider by Course Duration

	VT Course Duration				
Service	11 months and less	12 to 18 months	19 months to 2 years	Above two years	Total

	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
UNRWA STC	15	20.5%	31	53.4%	21	80.8%	2	4.8%	69	34.0%
Lebanese technical schools	18	23.4%	13	22.4%	4	15.4%	38	90.5%	73	36.0%
NGOs	31	40.3%	14	24.1%	1	3.8%	2	4.8%	48	23.6%
UNRWA other	13	17.8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	13	6.4%
Total	**77**	**100.0%**	**58**	**100.0%**	**26**	**100.0%**	**42**	**100.0%**	**203**	**100.0%**

The two main fields of technical specialization selected by vocational training respondents were: 1) Business and Administration and 2) Crafts and Trades, with each absorbing nearly a quarter of interviewees (Table 12). The latter encompasses a mixture of specializations ranging from mechanical trades to maintenance and construction, and was mainly attended by young men. Health ranks third among specializations, reflecting awareness of the Lebanese job market demand due to the chronic shortfall in health workers.

There are more than twice as many women as men trained in Business and Administration. Young women also predominate in Computing and Teacher Training, with men holding the lead in the Crafts and Trades as well as in Health.

Table 12 - Specialization in Vocational Training by Gender

		Gender					
Educational Sector	**Type of VET Specialization**	**Male**		**Female**		**Total**	
Business and Administration	Accounting, management, banking, commerce, marketing, etc.	15	16.3%	38	34.2%	53	26.1%
Crafts and Trades	Machinery, electrical mechanics, building and construction trades, metal works, sewing	43	46.7%	5	4.5%	48	23.6%
Health	Nursing, medical lab and x-ray	16	17.4%	8	7.2%	24	11.8%
Personal Care	Restaurant services, hairdressing, barber skills, beauty care	6	6.5%	13	11.7%	19	9.4%
Computing	Information technology, computer programming, data processing, electronics	2	2.2%	13	11.7%	15	7.4%
Engineering, Building and Construction	Architecture, civil, mechanical and landscape engineering and land surveying	7	7.6%	5	4.5%	12	5.9%
Teacher Training	Pre-school and primary education	1	1.1%	11	9.9%	12	5.9%
Other	Graphic design, photography, interior design, theology	1	1.1%	9	8.1%	10	4.9%
Secretarial and Office Works	Office management, word processing and basic computer skills	0	0.0%	5	4.5%	5	2.5%
Basic Programs	Language and computer skills	1	1.1%	4	3.6%	5	2.5%
	Total	92	100%	111	100%	203	100%

A quarter of VET-level respondents received career counseling, twice more than their university educated counterparts. Moreover, more than half (55%) engaged in internships

(Annex 3) focusing mostly on Crafts and Trades, Business and Health/Welfare occupations. As with university-level respondents, 52 percent of currently employed VET trainees secured jobs that are compatible with their field of training. (Annex 6)

5.1.3. Occupations of the Employed

In the quantitative sample, most working respondents (39 percent of the total sample) were recent entrants to the workforce, with 46 percent having been employed for one year or less at the time of interview and 21 percent for 13 to 24 months (Annex 7).Only one-third was more experienced, having held a job for more than two years. A quarter of working respondents received career counseling, but the majority, at 57 percent, participated in job interviews(Annex 8).Of these, 38 percent were successful at their first interview, and40 percent needed between 2 to 4 interviews before securing a job. The remainder, 20 percent, remained tenacious and attended 5 to 7 interviews or more.

Around two-thirds of the employed with semi-professional and/or university educations obtained jobs matching their specializations. One half of all workers considered that their job position was suitable to their skills,16 percent regarded it as only partially suitable, while 34 percent thought that the position was unsuitable(Annex 9). University educated employees were more satisfied than other educational groups by the suitability of their jobs, and males were less satisfied than females. This can be attributed to the higher proportion of females and university-level respondents in professional occupations such as teachers, social worker and others (Table 13).

Given the educational profile of respondents, the rate of semi-professional and professional occupations was more than double the rate of the overall Palestinian population, (estimated at 11 percent by the AUB-UNRWA survey of 2010). According to this study's findings, more than a quarter (27%) worked as teachers, social workers and health workers (nurses and lab technicians); 15 percent were engineers (or assistant engineers), technicians and computer specialists, and 7 percent were accountants. As shown in Table 13, among working females the rate of professional level occupations (66%) is more than twice the proportion among working males (29%); this confirms recent findings that employment rates of educated women are higher than the population's average ([5]. In addition, 21 percent of women were secretaries and 8 percent accountants, with the rate among young men at1 percent and 6 percent respectively.

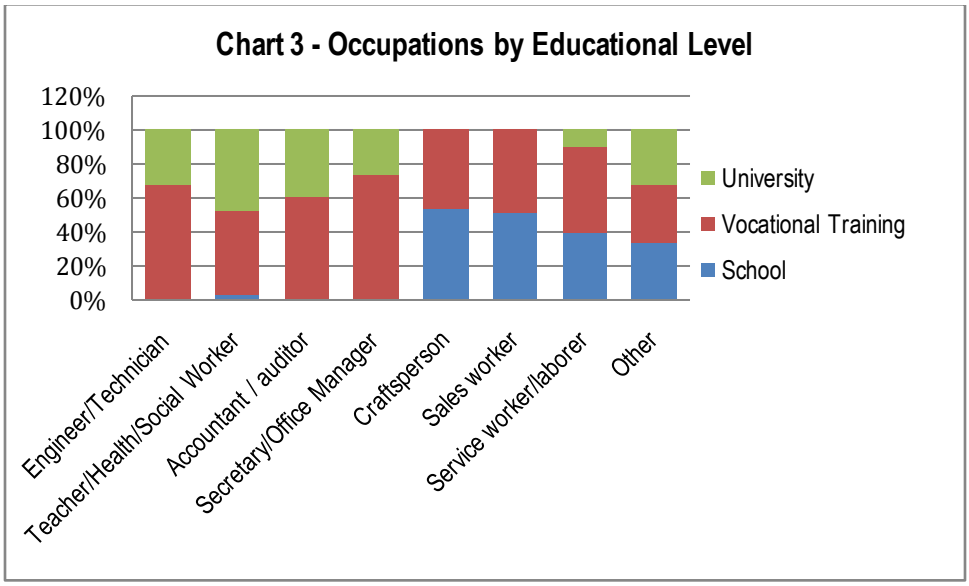
[5] According to Shaaban et al (2010), "If women work, they generally do in high status employment. Indeed, slightly more than a quarter of working women do so as professionals, senior officials and managers or technicians, associate professionals and clerks" (p.11)

Young men dominate as service workers/laborers (37%); 19 percent were employed as engineers/technicians/computer specialists and 14 percent worked as craftsmen. A minority of women was employed in these occupations at 2, 6and 4 percent respectively.

Table 13 - Youth Occupations by Gender

	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
Occupation	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Teacher/ Social / Health Worker	13	14%	25	52%	38	27%
Service worker/ Laborer	35	37%	1	2%	36	25%
Engineer/Technician/Computer Specialist	18	19%	3	6%	21	15%
Craftsperson	13	14%	2	4%	15	11%
Secretary/Office Manager	1	1%	10	21%	11	8%
Accountant / Auditor	6	6%	4	8%	10	7%
Sales Worker	6	6%	2	4%	8	6%
Other	2	2%	1	2%	3	2%
Total	94	100%	48	100%	142	100%

Chart 3, below, confirms the correlation between education and occupational levels, with 78 percent of the university educated working in professional and semi-professional occupations, in addition to 48 percent of those with Vocational Training. Respondents with intermediate and secondary schooling tended to work in lower level occupations.



The private sector is the main employer of working respondentsat68% of working respondents, encompassing the majority of males (76%) and the plurality of females (44%), with at least one-third presumed working with Lebanese enterprises (as determined by work location – i.e., far from the camp) (Annexes 10 & 11). UNRWA and other UN Agencies employ another 10 percent, while 6 percent are working with Palestinian official institutions (PLO offices and PRCS) and 5 percent hold jobs with local or international NGOs. The majority of those working

with UN Agencies, INGOs, NGOs and Palestinian institutions is female (77%).Eleven percent of respondents are self-employed, mainly within the camps.

UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and Palestinian official institutions employed the majority of teachers and social workers, whereas private establishments outside the camp employ most technicians, engineers, health workers, computer specialists, accountants and secretaries.

Most working respondents (87%) are paid employees, with 55 percent receiving monthly wages. The remainder is self-employed or works in the family business (Annex 12). However monthly earnings are low with a slight advantage in the private sector; 88.3 percent of earnings were below the Lebanese minimum wage,(USD 467) and 10 percent ranged from USD 467 to USD 600Only 2 percent secure an income higher than $600 (Annex 13).

5.1.4 Perceived Performance Levels and Skills Acquisition

This section examines perceptions of educational and professional performance and views on skills acquisition including language proficiency, computer literacy, life skills and the practice of hobbies. The results of the quantitative sample show that the pursuit of education is not necessarily linked to high scholastic achievement, and that most employees are satisfied with their performance in the work place. Most respondents believe that they have acquired new skills over and above education and work experience through career counseling, internships, volunteer work and personal hobby pursuits.

In the quantitative sample, respondents were asked to rate their performance at each completed educational level in order to examine the correlation between educational performance and the subsequent pursuit of education and/or occupational levels. They also asked to articulate practical and professional skills that they have acquired during their educational, occupational and personal trajectories. The majority, 82 percent, declared that they had acquired new skills over and above education and work experience through internships, volunteer work and of hobby practice

Educational and Professional Performance

Scholastic Performance: One out of ten respondents considered that their scholastic performance at the last completed level (intermediate or secondary) was excellent (M 7%/F 15%) while 31 percent of VET attendees rated themselves similarly (M 21%/F 39%). High performance was cited more frequently by females than males both scholastically and vocationally. At the university level, excellence is quoted by 15 percent of respondents with only slight gender variation.

At the other end of the scale fair to poor scholastic performance was cited by 28 percent of respondents and by more males than females at 32 percent and 21 percent respectively. Among respondents who have continued their education, 4.5 percent cite poor performance in VT with none at the university level.

However, the pursuit of education after the completion of intermediate and secondary education is not limited to high performers, but rather encompasses average (good) and low (acceptable) ranking students. About one third of semi-professional VET and of university level

respondents ranked average at school and around one tenth were low performers (Table 14). This indicates that many students with achievement potential may not succeed in school because of the poor quality of the education provided. It can be presumed that opportunity (such as household income and/or remittances) is the determining factor in the pursuit of education, since one fifth of students with 'acceptable' ranking at school have obtained (or are obtaining) semi-professional and university education.

Table 14 - Scholastic Performance by Educational Level

	Educational Level				
Ranking at School	**Intermediate/ Secondary School**	**Short-Term VET**	**Semi-Professional VET**	**University**	**Total**
Excellent	7.5%	15.0%	17.5%	60.0%	100.0%
Very good	14.5%	8.7%	33.3%	43.5%	100.0%
Good	18.3%	21.1%	31.7%	28.8%	100.0%
Acceptable	35.8%	44.2%	9.5%	10.5%	100.0%
Total	20.3%	27.4%	48.6%	31.0%	100.0%

Professional Performance: Asked about their professional achievements, 24% of working respondents reported a promotion and 36% received an increase in their salary Half of respondents believed that they had succeeded in realizing the objectives of their profession More than a quarter felt that they had strengthened their professional standing, and 13% stated they were fast and efficient workers.

Work experience had improved the skills of most workers: 42 percent stated that they have strengthened their vocational competencies, 18 percent their scientific skills and 8 percent their management skills. In addition, internships and volunteering was perceived as having improved the technical skills of 55 percent of participants in these activities Tutoring is common as a paid or voluntary activity amongst respondents: one-third was helping siblings with their studies at a weekly average of 18 hours, and 17 percent have also volunteered to tutor or train NGO beneficiaries.

Computer Literacy

Computer literacy is prevalent across educational levels. Seven out of ten are familiar with at least one standard computer software (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.). Half practice their computer skills regularly and one-third has a computer at home. Half are skilled Facebook users and almost as many are adept at Twitter. Conversely, general and specialized computer skills are the most frequently mentioned skill development needs (See table xx Skills needs).

Three out of four respondents consider themselves familiar with computers: an average of 47 percent declared a "very good to excellent" performance in standard computer programs (word processing, data base, etc.) and 35 percent gave themselves "good" to '"fair" ratings. Perceived Internet and Social Media proficiency is slightly less widespread, although 49 percent consider themselves "very good to excellent" and 19 percent "fair to good," compared to 30 percent stating that they did not employ the Internet or Social Media. Regardless of performance, levels 70 percent of respondents are on Facebook and 45 percent use Twitter.

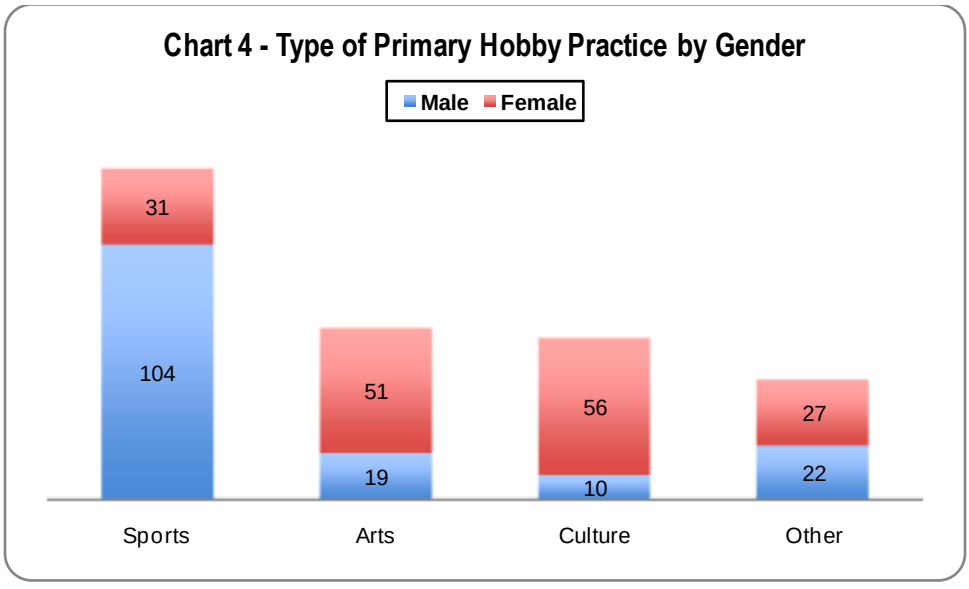
One out of two respondents practice their computer skills regularly with 15 percent declaring the computer and/or Internet a major hobby. Over 70 percent of computer users practice at home, but only 33 percent of students also use it in their place of study, and only 20 percent of workers also use it at work. This suggests that the proliferation of computer usage among young Palestinians is largely due to personal choice and/or instigated by peer influence, social media and access to affordable PCs, rather than to educational or employment status or needs.

Life Skills

In the quantitative sample, the attainment of social and communication skills was the most frequently cited benefit of study, internships, employment or volunteer work, often qualified as a "better understanding of society and of the 'other'." In fact, 76 percent of respondents stated that they had engaged in debate and dialogue activities, including 57 percent of school level respondents and 80 percent with technical and/or university education. An increase in interpersonal communication skills was also the uppermost gain cited by internship participants, at 49 percent, while 23 percent of volunteer workers felt they had gained empathy skills through humanitarian work and a better understanding of the needs of others. It is also significant that 71 percent of the 126 respondents who engaged in job interviews describe their encounters in positive terms, stressing their self-confidence, ease of demeanor and preparedness.

Hobbies

Like any other youth group, respondents are actively involved in a range of hobby practices, reflecting personal interests and additional skills that fine-tune their individual and collective profile. The total of 88 percent of respondents with at least one hobby exceeded expectations: As a primary hobby, two out of five practices a sports-related activity, one fifth are engaged in artistic pursuits with a similar proportion in cultural activities. Young men dominate in sports and young women in the Arts and the Culture domains (Chart 4).



Football is the leading sports hobby, and along with basketball and handball, and is practiced exclusively by young men – barring one woman, who plays basketball as a secondary hobby. The second most common sport is swimming, which involves 16 percent of men and 10 percent of women respondents. There is near equal gender distribution in computer and Internet related, which range from communication to software and hardware. Reading constitutes two-thirds of cultural activities, with one-third of respondents stating that they write poetry and occasionally some prose.

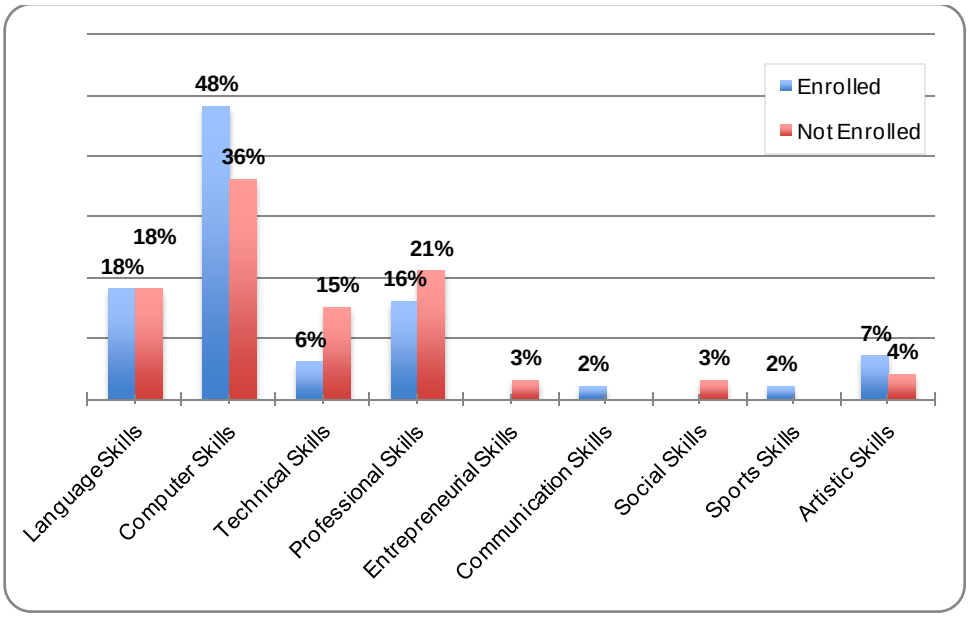
Two-thirds of hobby practitioners state that they engage in their favored activity outside the home, in public spaces and stadiums inside and outside the camp but also at school, at NGO centers, in clubs and in the workplace. This suggests that hobbies are an important venue for social interaction for a good number of respondents.

Skills Development Needs

Almost half (49%) of respondents expressed their desire to acquire new skills or improve existing ones, at 54% of students, 45% of employees and 48% of non-workers. It is noteworthy to mention that some respondents enumerated two or three skills; and although the ranking of the skill may have differed amongst some respondents, the types of skills sought were the same.

More than half (58%) of respondents seeking skill-enhancement were enrolled in an educational institution at the time; for non-enrolled respondents, the desire of skill-enhancement was voiced by more working candidates than non-working ones, at 60% and 40% respectively, perhaps reflecting market demand. Computer skills were on top of the desired list for both enrolled and non-enrolled respondents (43% of total). Language (English) and professional skills were next on the list. There were slight variations between the two groups, as shown in Chart 4 below.

Chart 5: Overview of Skills-Enhancement Needs (177 respondents from quantitative survey)



Focus group participants articulated similar skills-enhancement needs in terms of their job aspirations, with many of the FG participants choosing specializations that afford them higher employability chances. Intissar, 21, said she was studying accounting (VET) though she did not like that specialization. She added that she wanted to also enroll in a make-up course (VET) and hoped to work in that field.

Some FG respondents linked their job aspirations with social standing / good job positions, which to them was more attainable with better education. Khalil, 22, a university student in Banking and Finance, hoped to attain a good position in his field and become "a director." He stressed that one has to work hard to fulfill his/her ambition. A few Beirut respondents also expressed political/national and social aspirations. Majd, 23, aspired to struggle for Palestine, while another young man Deeb, 19, dreamed of a free Palestine to which he could return and work. Two men had philanthropic aspirations, with Wissam, a 20 year-old business administration student, aspiring to become a director of a company through which he could help other students by also securing jobs for them; and Ghanem, 22, expressing the urge to help people. Ghanem added that his dream was to fulfill his parents' needs first. Similarly, Ayman, 23, prioritized his parents' aspirations which he hoped to satisfy by completing university and working, and which he saw as the least he could do to repay their efforts. Mustafa, 23, aspired for a job in Lebanon in order not to travel abroad and leave his family: "My dream is to find employment inside Lebanon and not to be forced to emigrate or become separated from my parents." He further noted that his siblings were fulfilling their aspirations through him as, for example, his brother was not afforded the opportunity to go to university.

The discussion on aspiration paved the way and was connected to their presentation of their future outlooks. Most FG participants wanted to finish their studying or vocational training and work, many with the intention of supporting their family. A 28 year-old mother from Shabriha explained that she was trying to coordinate between her family duties and university education in the hope to find work in the future. Fouad, 22, also from Shabriha and married, was already working but expressed his desire to change jobs for he disliked routine.

5.2. Youth Contributions to Family and the Community

In the quantitative sample, most working youth contributed financially to the family by direct (mainly partial) financial support, and many students and non-workers contributed by alleviating family expenses. Expense reduction measures include working to cover tuition and/or personal expenses, securing scholarships and loans, tutoring siblings and helping in the family business. The majority of young women, (employees and students), engages in a significant share of household chores, more frequently among the youngest, as well as those not studying and not working.

Close to half of respondents have been involved in community work, emergency relief and campaign activities through NGOs, charities and scouts groups.

5.2.1. Contribution to the Household

Nearly two-thirds of working respondents contribute financially to the household; half manage to cover personal expenses. One out of three university-educated respondents covered tuition fees through scholarships, loans or own work income. Of all respondents, 11 percent help in the family business without remuneration, one out of three regularly tutors their siblings and 85 percent, predominantly females, assume a variety of household responsibilities: 91percent of females are responsible for cleaning the household compared to 7 percent of males; 59 percent of females cook meals for the family compared to 2 percent of males and 51% of females engage in grocery shopping compared to 25 percent of males.

5.2.2. Direct and Indirect Financial Support to the Family

Among working respondents, 11 percent are the main family income earners, 46 percent contribute partially but regularly and 8 percent when needed. An additional 25 percent contribute indirectly by covering personal expenses (Table 15).

Table 15– Workers' Direct/Indirect Financial Contribution to Household

Type of Financial Contribution	Count	%
Partial but regular support	66	46%
Coverage of personal expenses	36	25%
Full support	15	11%
No financial contribution	13	9%
When needed	12	8%
Total	142	100%

Young women are less likely to contribute financially, at 16 percent of all working females compared to 35 percent of males. This is at least in part due to their low earnings, since only 4.2 percent (regardless of education level) earn more than the minimum wage – in comparison to the 14.9 percent of males whose earnings exceed the minimum wage (Annex 14). However, when questioned about the importance of work, 87 percent of respondents replied that it was necessary to provide support for the family, with 92 percent of all males and 83 percent of all females agreeing. (Table 17)

In addition, respondents engage in a range of measures and activities, often concurrent, to mitigate household expenses:

- 82 percent of young employees are able to cover their personal expenses, some of whom (65%) also contribute to household expenses; (Annex 15)
- 33 percent of university students secured their tuition fees through scholarships, loans, external assistance or through their own work income. Moreover, 21 percent of all respondents have worked while studying at some point
- 34 percent of all respondents provide regular tutoring for their siblings
- 11 percent of all respondents help in the family business without remuneration

Focus group participants echo similar trends. Many felt that the ultimate goal of education and of employment is to help the family. Ayman, a university student studying in Beirut,

encapsulates this objective as follows: “You should at least plant the seeds of hope in your parents. Ya’ani [my father] is still paying for university… From here and there, he is managing to cover the tuition. So you have to let him feel that this is not being squandered… that you, inshallah, will get them out of this situation.”

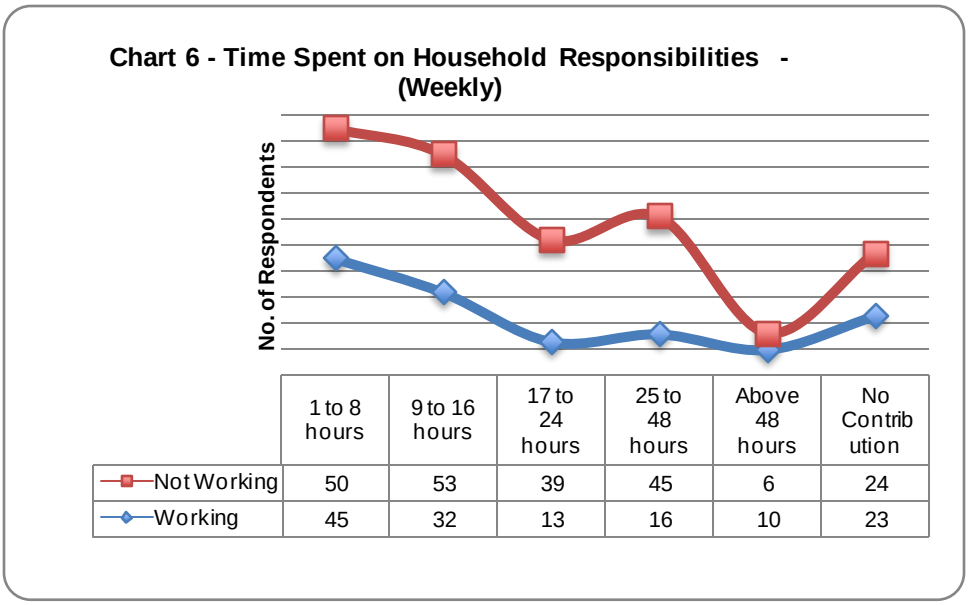
Another university student from Beirut, Deeb, states that he has begun supporting his family through a scholarship: “Alhamdulillah, after the Baccalaureate, I was among the first and I managed to get a scholarship, equivalent to [LBP] 5 million a semester. So I relieved my father a lot.”

The fear of becoming a burden has motivated students to seek occasional work to cover their personal expenses, as Tahani, a university student from south, explains: “When one is at university, the most important thing is not to be very demanding [of one’s parents] ya’ani not to ask for a different outfit everyday to emulate the girls at university since our means are limited.”Nour, from nearby Qasmieh, concurs that she works occasionally “for a symbolic fee to help myself… even if it is a small amount the important thing is that one must contribute.”Majd from Beirut adds that to ease the load on the family, any type of work is honorable: “Frankly I am not ashamed of any kind of work, especially in the summer, I work at anything. It is important that I earn my personal expenses for the coming academic year. The tuition is on my parents. I try to lessen the load. I am not ashamed of any kind of work painter, butcher. I work at everything.”

5.2.3 Assuming Family Responsibilities

Eighty-five percent of respondents stated that they assumed a variety of responsibilities at home, to a greater or lesser degree, including standard chores, caring for the sick and the old. Most young women undertake feminized chores, such as cleaning (91%), cooking (59%) and grocery shopping (51%). However, more young men than young women care for elderly relatives, at 24 percent and 9 percent respectively (Annex 16).

Three out of ten respondents devote eight to 16 hours weekly to household responsibilities; 26 percent spend the equivalent of two to four working days on family related chores. However, working respondents of both genders allocate less time on household chores and on tutoring siblings than their unemployed counterparts, and younger respondents contribute more to household chores than older ones.



	1 to 8 hours	9 to 16 hours	17 to 24 hours	25 to 48 hours	Above 48 hours	No Contribution
Not Working	50	53	39	45	6	24
Working	45	32	13	16	10	23

Focus group members clarify that often their families depend on them to help at home, as explained by Ghanem from Beirut: "They call me the family professor… All my younger siblings at home depend on me… At the end of the week I teach whoever needs something. Also, my father has a clothing shop and at the weekend when I have time, I go there. I help him during the high seasons."

The relationship with siblings is not limited to tutoring, nor is tutoring merely a chore. Rather, it is a means to further the scholastic development of young relatives and assist them in shaping a better future. Sana, a Baccalaureate student from the Shabriha gathering, states: "I am still a student and I have reached an advanced level (BaccII). With this experience I have started teaching my younger siblings to help them reach what I have reached." Hala, from Qasmieh, extends her guidance to her young cousin: "I have the biggest responsibility because I am the eldest. Hamdulillah my brothers and sisters have finished school but I tutor my cousin. I feel responsible for her because her parents work a lot. I must teach her and look after her." Meanwhile, Yazan from Shabriha believes that one should combine tutoring with awareness-raising within the family. He also expressed concern about burdening the family: "I help my siblings with their studies and when I attend an awareness raising presentation, we raise their awareness. We relay what we have learned. This is useful from a health perspective or any other perspective. I try not to be a burden. As much as I can, I don't ask for much."

5.2.4. Contribution to the Community

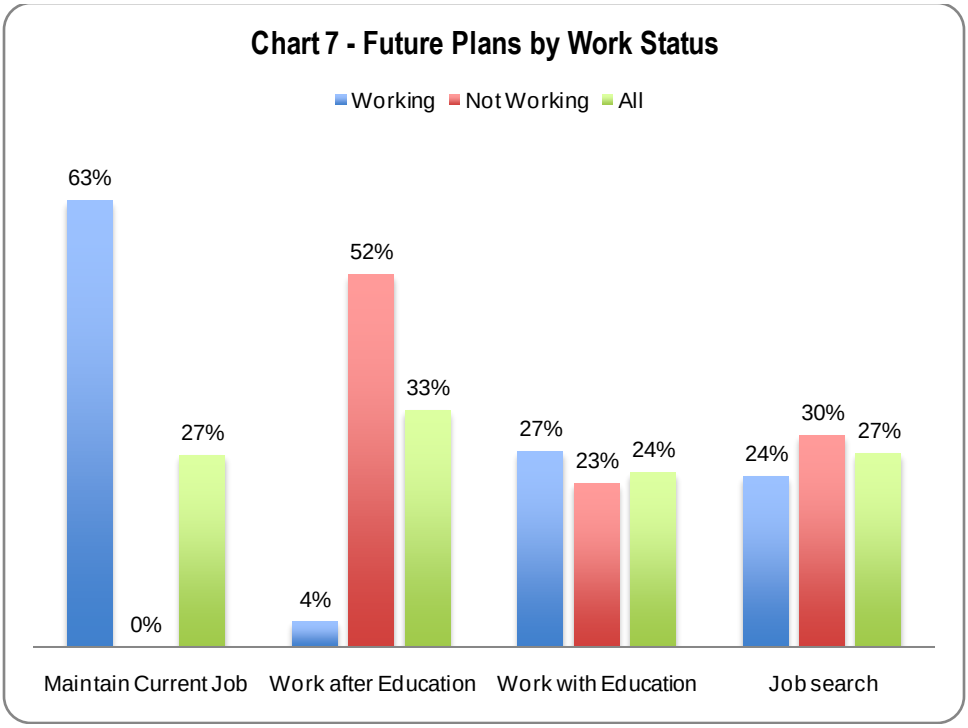
Nearly 30 percent of quantitative respondents have participated in one or more type of volunteer work through local NGOs and youth clubs). In addition, 18 percent were involved in advocacy work, focused mainly on the right of work for Palestinians in Lebanon. Volunteering and advocacy work was also frequently mentioned in the focus groups.

One out of two volunteers worked as an animator, trainer or tutor. The remainder divided their interests between seasonal charity work, emergency assistance in times of crisis and occasional community work to clean up public spaces and plant trees. Most volunteers have a VET or university level education. Only 15 percent of school-educated respondents were

involved in volunteer work. Based on focus group results, there appears to be a similar level of community involvement in the unofficial gatherings, despite the dearth of NGOs and clubs

5.3 Aspirations, Attitudes and Coping Strategies

Respondents in the quantitative sample were asked to share their priority plans and objectives for the future. It was clear that youth were generally purposeful about work as a target, although not overly optimistic about reaching their objectives. As shown in Chart 7 below, 63 percent of employees planned to maintain their jobs, with 66 percent of males and 53 percent of females. More than half of non-working respondents, mainly students, planned to continue their education before working. Around a quarter of all respondents wanted to resume their education and work at the same time. This included the majority of the unemployed (not currently enrolled) at 89 percent, as well as 30 percent of non-working students. Paradoxically, most non-workers do not intend to seek a job, with only 30 percent planning to launch a search in the future, slightly more among females than males. It is likely that discouragement is already affecting many respondents and appears more prevalent to some extent among students than non-students, especially those with at the lower levels of educational achievement.



However, discouragement was articulated by only 4 percent of the quantitative sample group when questioned about their career preferences, indicating an as yet a low incidence of apathy (Table 16). On the whole, career preferences tended to match most students' choice of specializations and working respondents' actual occupations (as detailed earlier), as well as matching the overall market reality for Palestinians. Table 16 below shows that among respondents who identified occupational preferences, the fields of business, administration and office work ranked highest at 32 percent, followed by occupations in education, health and

welfare at 27percent, and engineering, building/construction and computing combined ranked third at 16 percent. Occupational choices subscribed to social norms, and most women (62%) opted for education health and welfare, as well as business administration.

Eighty-one respondents identified job position preferences rather than occupations, with nearly half (47%) aspiring to attain a high/er job position, 32 percent preferred to establish their own business and 16 percent preferred to keep their current job.

Table 16: Career Preferences

		Gender					
		Male		Female		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Occupational Preference:	Engineering, Building and Construction	17	16%	5	3%	22	8%
	Computing	12	11%	8	5%	20	8%
	Health & Welfare	9	8%	18	12%	27	10%
	Education	4	4%	40	27%	44	17%
	Business Administration and Office Work	31	28%	52	35%	83	32%
	Art & Design	4	4%	7	5%	11	4%
	Economics/Law/Political Science / Media	1	1%	9	6%	10	4%
	Personal Care	5	5%	7	5%	12	5%
	Crafts and Trades	26	24%	4	3%	30	12%
	Subtotal	109	100%	150	100%	259	100%
Position Preference:	Employee in private/public institution	2	4%	2	7%	4	5%
	High or higher position	25	46%	13	48%	38	47%
	Establish own business	19	35%	7	26%	26	32%
	Maintain current job	8	15%	5	19%	13	16%
	Subtotal	54	100%	27	100%	81	100%

The preferences of those already working or with a university education clashed somewhat with their realities, less so for the latter group. The recorded preferences and actual jobs matched in the field of education where 82 percent worked in their preferred occupation as compared to one third in the remaining sectors. Possibly career preferences are influenced by potential employability, especially with the prevalent work restrictions. The field of education has numerous employers in the Palestinian job market, including NGOs and UNRWA.

University specializations matched more closely to job aspirations (Annex 27). For example, 90 percent of respondents aspiring to work in Engineering, Building and Construction* were studying/studied engineering, 85 percent of those aspiring for Business, Administration and Office Works and 71 percent for Economics/Law/Political Science/Media were majoring/majored in related subjects. Almost all of the 25 respondents aspiring for the education field were specializing / specialized in connected majors and the three respondents

interested in Art & Design enrolled in Humanities & Arts. In this measurement, the youth remain resolute towards their aspirations.

5.3.1. Underlying Values and Attitudes

Values and attitudes generally tend to be determined or influenced by individual circumstances, collective experience, societal norms and tradition. It was therefore interesting to observe that at least two-thirds of 364 respondents, (quantitative sample), claimed sole agency in decision making about their education, choice of vocation and of jobs. However, nearly half cited that they are the only decision-makers on marriage, at 66% of men and 39% of women. There was little variance in gender-based attitudes on marriage decision-making across age groups, marital status and educational level.

Attitudes on Education and Work: Dignity and Self-Reliance

Findings in this survey indicate that education occupies an important place in the life respondents. In the quantitative sample, two out of three considered themselves the sole decision-makers on their education, (66 percent of males and 60 percent of females), without significant variations across age groups and educational attainment. Nearly half of non-working respondents were not seeking employment because of full-time studies. Most were satisfied with their educational choices, although one tenth of the non-enrolled expressed the desire to resume their studies and 8 percent of the enrolled did not wish to continue studying in the future, with or without work. Overall, around 30 percent believed that their career aspirations will be furthered by education and/or training.

In addition, work was highly valued by the majority of employed and unemployed respondents both for its financial benefits as well as for the opportunity it affords for personal development. The social benefits of work were less significant, with the exception of "gaining respect" from society, which was considered valuable by three out of four respondents. As indicated in Table 17, among the financial benefits of work, "earning an income" ranked highest at 94 percent of respondents. The gender disparity in "family support" is partly attributable to the age of female respondents, with the youngest (18-19 years) tending to dismiss family support as an option. Self-reliance was the most valued of personal benefits, with gains in personal "confidence, "independence" and "knowledge" more significant among women than men.

It is indicative that the option of "leaving" the camp and the household was considered important by the least number of respondents, at 30 and 28 percent respectively. This probably reflects low expectations of social mobility and of any improvements in economic and legal status. However, more than half of those who desired to leave their camp live in the Tyre region, with little variance between gender, educational enrollment or work status. It is possible that motivations are linked to scarce job opportunities[6].

Table 17: The Importance of Work

[6] As reported by Chaaban (2010), nearly one third (34 percent) of the poor Palestinians live in the Tyre region, which has the highest incidence of poverty among refugees at 79 percent of the region's population.

	Why is work important	Frequency	Male	Female	% of Total Respondents
Financial	Earn Income	342	97%	92%	94%
	Self-Support	328	92%	89%	90%
	Family Support	317	92%	83%	87%
Personal Development	Self-Reliance	336	94%	91%	92%
	Gain Confidence	327	88%	92%	90%
	Gain Independence	300	80%	84%	82%
	Gain Knowledge	298	79%	84%	82%
Social	Gain Respect	273	74%	76%	75%
	Fill Time	230	56%	69%	63%
	Leave Camp	109	26%	33%	30%
	Leave House	103	25%	31%	28%

Identity and dignity were themes that emerged in the focus group discussions on education, echoing the issue of self-respect observed in the quantitative sample group. Opinions were often linked to the prevailing image of Palestinians in the media and Lebanese society, with education frequently described as a "weapon." For Majed, 29, who left school in Wavel camp at the secondary level, "education is the only weapon for the Palestinian people. Without education they will be lost. Ya'ani a diploma is the most important thing."

This weapon is without substitute for Ali, a university student in Beirut: "We can only confront with Palestinian culture, especially in Lebanon where the image of the Palestinian is much distorted. Through our education and our diplomas we can show the world how cultured and learned we are… we [should] reach important positions that can respond to the concerns of the Palestinian people and Palestinian youth."

Aid dependency is rejected by Shadia, 27, who considers that education is an antidote to dispossession and a means to maintain national dignity and to achieve self-reliance: "We [Palestinians] want to tear up the ration card… we are a people who do not want a ration card but who want to work." Self-reliance and awareness are also the most important gains of education for Safa from Beirut, because they improve social status: "When a person wants to work he can no longer be duped; he performs better, earns a higher income, secures a better life, earns value in society, and does not depend on anyone."

Predictably, the link between economic security and education drew the most commentary. It has empowered Nawal, 28 from Shabriha, a mother who recently returned to university. She hopes for future employment and also appreciates the knowledge she is gaining, which she can invest in her children's education. Pragmatic attitudes were also expressed highlighting the connection between the job market and education with Badr, 19 from Wavel camp, elaborating that education was a necessary prerequisite to employment in the prevailing global economy

with everything being labeled "business and business." Fouad, 22, a university student from Shabriha expands further: "As a Palestinian, I have discovered that our enterprises are very limited, our occupations are very limited and our employment is very limited. Based on life experience I have discovered that a person must get educated because it is the key to any kind of work."

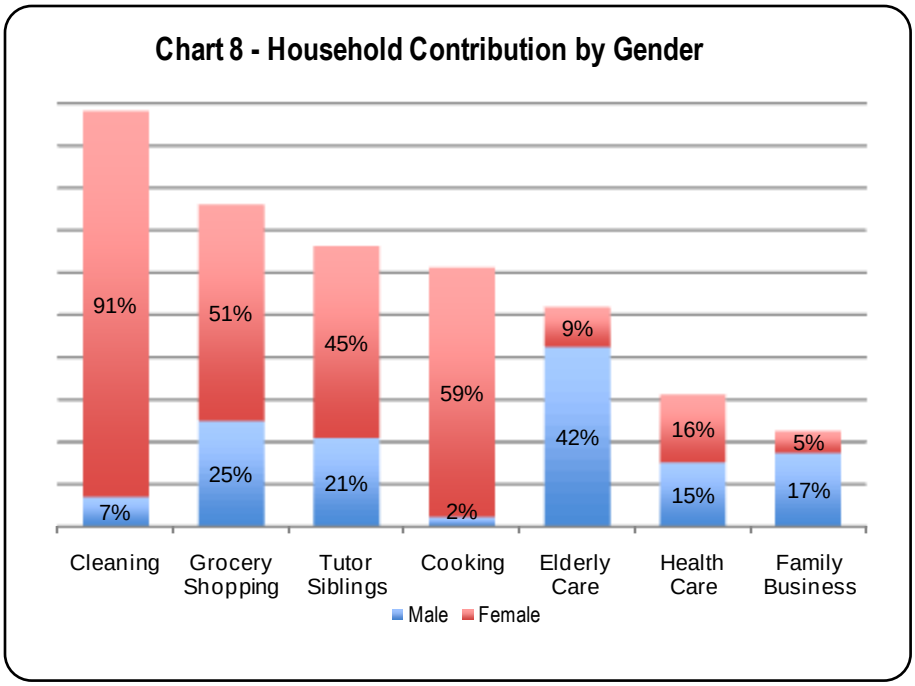
Attitudes on Gender

In the quantitative sample group, 62 percent of females felt that they were the sole decision makers on work-related issues, compared to 83 percent of males. Family opposition was cited as an important obstacle to employment in the Lebanese market by 52 percent of females compared to 22 percent of males. The rates rise in relation to the Palestinian market, at 60 percent of females compared to 25 percent for males.

In the focus groups, family opposition was mentioned by two young women from Saadnayel, Muna 20 and Suha 19, both vocational training students, who explained that they want to work but feared that their parents would not allow them. In addition, some FG participants revealed stereotypical views when discussing work. A few participants, of both sexes, commented that more females were finding jobs than males because they were willing to accept lower salaries. Thus Ali, 20 from Beirut and working occasionally, said that females were finding jobs at the expense of males, whom he viewed as the main heads of households and ultimately responsible for supporting the family. Similarly, Farah, aged 18 from Bar Elias, viewed lowly paid female employment as a problem because it adversely affects male employment, especially since men have more duties and responsibilities to meet than women. A few FG respondents, mostly males, said women were unable to take on jobs that men can do because they saw that women were unable to endure pressure and were too sensitive.

Nevertheless, two out of five respondents from the quantitative sample group cited gender discrimination as an important obstacle in both the Lebanese and Palestinian job markets. This attitude was slightly more prevalent among females than males, and most dominant among non-working females, with 49 percent considering the Lebanese job market gender discriminatory, rising to 56 percent in relation to the Palestinian job market.

Indicators of traditional gender attitudes in the quantitative sample group were most dominant in relation to roles within the household. Females bore the brunt of most household chores, with 91 percent of women engaged in cleaning, compared to 7 percent of males; more than half cook and shop for groceries, compared to 2 and 25 percent of males respectively; and twice as many females as males tutor their siblings, at 45 and 21 percent respectively. Males dominate in assisting the elderly at home (M42%/F9%) and in helping with the family business (M17%/F5%).



This was reinforced by some opinions in the focus groups, where household chores were attributed to women. Bassem, 21 from Qasmieh, insisted that there was no logic for a man to perform household chores while women were around the house: "If there is a girl at home, she works. Why should a young man work if she is there?" He then adds: "If there are no sisters and the mother is elderly and unable, then there is no shame in that."

Conversely, there were views that were more respectful of women's equality. One male respondent, Wissam20 from Beirut, was vocal in encouraging female education, which he saw as necessary for advancing in life. Another, Zahra, aged 19, from Shabriha, refuted arguments on traditional gender roles and emphasized that, "there are women in society who have more capabilities than men."

Attitudes on Lebanese Labor Law

At the time of the interview, seven months after the amendment was passed, most respondents had superficial or no knowledge about the new Labor Law amendment. Nevertheless, it was considered ineffective by 41 percent of respondents, who were skeptical of the Lebanese government's willingness in implementation. It was viewed positively by 21 percent, because it encourages youth education and employment, and possibly positive by 38 percent who felt that it might benefit Palestinians.

Most respondents in the quantitative and qualitative sample groups were predictably aware of the discriminatory laws pertaining to Palestinian employment in Lebanon, but not necessarily knowledgeable of the newly introduced amendments to the labor laws. Most were pessimistic that positive change will occur in the labor market for Palestinians.

The extent of the quantitative sample's labor law knowledge focused on the absence of the right to work and the forbidden occupations – for 74 percent of respondents – and around 20%

expanded on their information to include exclusion from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and lack of trade unions. Around 5% did not know about the labor law.

When asked about their attitude towards the Labor Law amendments, a plurality of 42 percent said they have not heard of them or did not know enough to form an opinion. "Insufficient and unjust" was the opinion of 25%, and 16% felt that the modifications were not serious as they have not materialized on the ground. A minority of 17 percent focused on the positive aspects or potentials the amendments may offer for job opportunities and living conditions; and a few of them elaborated that the debate of the laws may raise the profile of Palestinian issues while others noted that they may encourage Palestinians to continue their education.

As to their speculations on the effects of labor law amendments on Palestinian employability in the near future, 41 percent said nothing will change, 37 percent saw the possibility and 21 percent were hopeful of a positive impact. Nineteen respondents (5%) considered that change was conditional on the ability to exert public pressure, on the political will of the Lebanese Parliament or on overall security and economic developments in the country

It was not possible to properly gauge their readiness for applying for a work permit, both because of the respondents' age group and the lapsed time since the introduction of the new law amendments. Very few working respondents had applied for work permits, however, of the twelve who did, seven (5M,2F) were successful in 2005 – 2010,including four nurses, one teacher and two ICT specialists. Five are still pursuing semi-professional or higher studies. The overwhelming majority of respondents had never applied for a work permit, with almost half of them stating that they were either too young and/or engaged in full time studying. Around 26 percent had no need to apply (type of occupation / not working), while less than 2 percent said they were discouraged by their educational attainment (school drop-out / no diploma). Still, around 21 percent (71 respondents) were discouraged because of procedure's inherent conditions and deprivation of their work rights.

Participants of the focus groups exemplified their pessimistic attitudes towards the Labor Law, objecting over forbidden occupations and the lack of NSSF and job syndicates. Fouad, 22 from Shabriha, described these laws as racist, as preference to employment is given to all nationalities over the Palestinian. "Frankly, I call all these laws discriminatory. The most difficult refugees in the whole world, are we Palestinians refugees in Lebanon because it is not that the other are cleverer or something. They prefer the Lebanese, the Syrian, the Kurd, the Turk and all other nationalities to ours."

Hamade, 29 from Qasmieh, observed that there may be more Palestinians now working as paramedics, but without insurance, which he saw as insufficient but "better than nothing." He added that nurses have no syndicates to protect them, and that in general a Palestinian could leave a job after 50 years without receiving any end of service compensation. Hadi, 25 from Wavel camp, agreed that there were no syndicates that could lobby for the rights of Palestinian workforce. Another young man from Wavel, Oussama, 27 with two jobs, summed up that Palestinians were not entitled to compensation (pension) or NSSF and that a Palestinian

"keeps on working and working for nothing." Majeda, a 21 year-old interior design student from Bar Elias, personalized the situation noting that she would not be allowed to open her own professional practice in the future. Similarly, Mustafa, a 23 year-old university student from Beirut specializing in commerce, was doubtful he will find work in Lebanon upon graduation. Badr, 19 from Wavel camp, was skeptical of the new labor amendments, which he saw as just a formality, especially as Palestinians were still barred from liberal professions such as engineering, law and medicine. Similarly, Majd, 23 from Beirut, saw the amended law as a "trick" since job permits will be given for occupations that were already being practiced.

Attitudes towards Lebanese Youth

Asked to describe the negative and positive aspects of their relationship with Lebanese youths, nearly three out of four from the quantitative sample group mentioned positive attributes, and 40 percent did not cite any negative qualities in their relationships. Slightly more than a quarter focused on negative aspects, while one out of five cited that they had not interacted with Lebanese youths, mainly females (who may be slightly less exposed to Lebanese society), along with the youngest age group of 18-19 years.

The most frequently cited positive comments, at 45 percent, described the relationship as "normal and good." One-tenth elaborated that it was "warm, strong, open and respectful." Around 14 percent narrowed their relations with Lebanese to the workplace, and described it as "collegial" and 8 percent viewed it as positive but casual. When relaying the negative aspects of relationship, 16 percent complained of discrimination, 7 percent focused on the difference in values and opinions and 3 percent saw the interaction as superficial.

Friendship or personal relationships with Lebanese youth did not emerge during most focus group discussions, with the exception of Beirut. Opinions were cautiously positive and qualified by perceived or experienced negative experiences. For example, Ghanem, 22, stated that the relationship was relatively good, but that there are always sensitivities: "It is transient, ya'ani I am the companion here at university, but when the university is over he doesn't know me wala asli wala fasli [neither my origins nor my roots]. The relationship ends."Other participants agree, although they have also experienced more sympathetic encounters with Lebanese youths, as with Safa, a sociology student: "Many Lebanese are very good and appreciate that we are refugees and that we are struggling in life and working and studying and that we want to live even if not in our own country. But sometimes you find people that don't like Palestinians. I see their reaction when I say that I am Palestinian…" Ali from Qasmieh is more magnanimous and cites positive experiences and friendships with many Lebanese: "The relationship is very good. I don't detect racism except when something called politics enters into the picture." Another participant, Diya, elaborates that the racism is not directed towards Palestinians only. It is more pervasive and touches all those who are different: "If a young man is Sunni he doesn't like to interact with a Shia or a Christian only with his own group. There is a lot of taassub."

5.3.2 Coping Strategies

Education appears to be the main coping strategy for the majority of respondents and their families in this study, given the educational profile of the quantitative sample group and the prevalence of households covering tuition expenses from their own resources (69 percent of the university educated and 36 percent of the VET educated enrolled in Lebanese institutes). As demonstrated earlier, education is also an aspiration for the majority of youth who have not continued their education, and is perceived as a key pre-requisite for achieving economic security.

Therefore, occupational choices and preferences were mostly compatible with mainstream Palestinian perceptions of market demand; much of it seemingly connected to UNRWA and NGO employment opportunities in education and social care, as well as opportunities for managerial and clerical positions within these institutions. In practice, educated Palestinian youth appear to be extending their sphere of contacts, especially as they are leaving the camp for their studies and internships, with two-thirds of internships taking place at Lebanese institutions, including commercial companies, educational institutions and hospitals (Table 18). In fact, several respondents mentioned internships and volunteer work as strategies for finding employment.

Table 18–Internship Institutions

Type of Institution	Frequency	Percentage
Private sector outside camp	73	48
UNRWA and NGOs	29	19
Private sector inside camp	23	15
Hospitals/Clinics	17	11
Other (Lebanese syndicate, Lebanese public school, abroad)	5	3
Lebanese universities and Technical institutes	4	2
Total	151	100

Many respondents used multiple venues to develop their skills and competencies in order to adapt to the labor market. Some attended more than one educational institution, combining university and technical training (7 percent), or two successive technical institutions (17 percent),along with one or several internships(28 percent attended two internships and 11 percent three), mostly lasting three or four months but often up to one year without pay. When asked about possible ways of realizing job aspirations, 60percent of responses were skills-related, balanced between two groups, with one focused on experience and education and the second concentrated on work training, internship or volunteering. For the rest, “Obtaining the right to work in aspired occupation” was the way proposed by 9percent of respondents, whereas each of “travel/emigration” and “seeking support/pull of others,” including Lebanese relations, equally ranked at 6percent. Only 2percent proposed establishing their own projects and around 3 percent linked the possibility with the approval of their parents/husband. In

addition, 5percent saw no possibilities of realizing their job aspirations (of these 65 percent were males and 35 percent females). Moreover, 86 percent of those who mentioned "travel/emigration" were men, while 89 percent of those who noted family approval were females. Eleven out of 17 respondents claiming no possibilities of realizing their aspiration were men.

Table 19 - Method of Realizing Job Aspiration

	Frequency	Percent
Experience/skills/education	99	27.2
Seek work/training/internship/volunteer	98	26.9
Obtain right to work in occupation	32	8.8
Travel /emigration	22	6.0
Seek the support of relations/Lebanese/wasta	21	5.8
Practicing vocation	20	5.5
No possibilities	17	4.7
Once parent/husband approve	9	2.5
Establish own project	8	2.2
Other methods	8	2.2
Money and training	5	1.4
DK/NA/no answer	25	6.8
Total	364	100

Travel and emigration as a coping strategy was mentioned by 34 percent when asked about their future plans, while only 9 percent were contemplating emigration as an aspiration. Women constituted 44 percent of those wanting to secure money to establish a project, whereas 25 percent of those voiced the same option when discussing the realization of job aspirations. Similarly, women constituted 30 percent of those who mentioned travel/emigration in comparison to the 11 percent demonstrated earlier (realization of job aspirations). This shows that there are possibly more women ready than expected to cope with reality by travelling/emigrating even if not necessarily for job-connected reasons and despite existing constraints on their mobility. It is also perhaps atypical to observe that 60 percent for those wanting to work whilst continuing education were women.

Advocacy to change Lebanese attitudes was mentioned by a few focus group participants, who spoke of their efforts to raise awareness among fellow Lebanese students by engaging them in advocacy activities for the right to work and through Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue activities. The results were considered mainly fruitful, increasing empathy and support for the Palestinian situation in Lebanon, although expressions of hatred and racism from a few Lebanese were experienced and were deemed unavoidable.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations[7]

The findings of this study indicate that youth and young adults aged 18-29 years are likely to differ perceptibly from the overall Palestinian population in the key areas of education, employment and gender. Their motivations (along with the motivations of their families) reflect a high level of resilience. Whereas this study has focused on youth potential, evidence of difficult living and psychological conditions can be detected across the findings and are further illustrated through the personal experiences of focus group participants. The benefits of education and employment remain scarce, and many expressed their discouragement before entering the job market.

Therefore, advocacy initiatives against discrimination are a priority in order to claim the civil rights of Palestinians in Lebanon, including the right to work. It is recommended that this report is shared with all concerned stakeholders to better explore strategies for future activities targeting youth, who are most positioned in the no man's land of being educated but unable to be employed.

In addition, the following practical realizable mid-term objectives are recommended:

1) Organize workshops to share and develop the findings of this report with Palestinian youths;

2) Engage the participation of Palestinian youths in the development of intervention strategies in their schools, universities and the private sector;

3) Disseminate the results of this study among the youngest of Palestinian youth (15-18 years) and their families, in order to combat discouragement and demoralization;

4) Disseminate the results of this report to promote the educational and economic participation of young women; and

5) Promote NGO coordinated participatory interventions with unemployed youths holding Brevet (intermediate level), Baccalaureate (secondary level), semi-professional and university degrees to develop a range of employability skills, including knowledge, occupational skills, career management skills, and labor market adaptability, among others.

[7] Additional recommendations from the Right to Work Campaign are presented in Annex 17

Annexes

Annex 1: Overview of participants in FGDs

Residence	Gender	Age group	Household size	Marital status	Education[8]	Work status
Beirut (10 participants)	**Beirut (10)**	**Beirut (10)**	**Beirut (10)**	**Beirut (10)**	**Beirut (10)**	**Beirut (10)**
Beirut gatherings & neighborhoods: 10	Females: 1 Males: 9	18-19 yrs: 1 20-24 yrs: 8 25-29 yrs: 1	2-3: 0 4-5: 2 6-7: 7 8-9: 0 10+: 1	All single[9]	School: 0 VT: 0 Uni: 10 Uni + VT: 0	W: 1 NW: 6 Occasional: 3
Tyre (20 participants)	**Tyre (20)**	**Tyre (20)**	**Tyre (20)**	**Tyre (20)**	**Tyre (20)**	**Tyre (20)**
Qasmieh gathering: 13	Females: 8 Males: 5	18-19 yrs: 3 20-24 yrs: 7 25-29 yrs: 3	2-3: 2 4-5: 3 6-7: 2 8-9: 3 10+: 3	All single	School: 1 VT: 3 Uni: 9 Uni + VT: 0	W: 4 NW: 6 Occasional: 3
Shabriha gathering: 7	Females: 5 Males: 2	18-19 yrs: 2 20-24 yrs: 4 25-29 yrs: 1	2-3: 1 4-5: 1 6-7: 5 8-9: 0 10+: 0	Single: 5 Married: 2	School: 1 VT: 1 Uni: 3 Uni + VT: 2	W: 1 NW: 5 Occasional: 1
Beqaa (28 participants)	**Beqaa (28)**	**Beqaa (28)**	**Beqaa (28)**	**Beqaa (28)**	**Beqaa (28)**	**Beqaa (28)**
Wavel camp: 10	Females: 2 Males: 8	18-19 yrs: 4 20-24 yrs: 2 25-29 yrs: 4	2-3: 2 4-5: 3 6-7: 3 8-9: 1 10+: 1	Single: 7 Engaged: 2 Married: 1	School: 4 VT: 4 Uni: 1 Uni + VT: 1	W: 6 NW: 4 Occasional: 0
Saadnayel gathering: 7	Females: 4 Males: 3	18-19 yrs: 2 20-24 yrs: 4 25-29 yrs: 1	2-3: 1 4-5: 2 6-7: 3 8-9: 1 10+: 0	Single: 6 Married: 1	School: 3 VT: 3 Uni: 1 Uni + VT: 0	W: 2 NW: 4 Occasional: 1
Bar Elias gathering: 11	Females: 8 Males: 3	18-19 yrs: 2 20-24 yrs: 8 25-29 yrs: 1	2-3: 0 4-5: 4 6-7: 4 8-9: 3 10+:0	All single	School: 0 VT: 3 Uni: 8 Uni + VT: 0	W: 4 NW: 7 Occasional: 0

[8] School education mentioned under educational level is either intermediate or secondary with the exception of one participant from Wavell aged 19 who has only elementary education and no VT

[9] Single means never been married and does not reflect relationship status i.e. if currently in a relationship

Total participants: 58	Total Females: 28 (48%) Total Males: 30 (52%)	Overall age groups 18-19 yrs: 14 (24%) 20-24 yrs: 33 (57%) 25-29 yrs: 11 (19%)	Overall household size 2-3: 6 (10%) 4-5: 15 (26%) 6-7: 24 (41%) 8-9: 8 (14%) 10+: 5 (9%)	Overall marital status Single: 52 (90%) Engaged: 2 (3%) Married: 4 (7%)	Overall education School: 9 (15%) VT: 16 (28%) Uni: 30 (52%) Uni + VT: 3 (5%)	Overall work status W: 18 (31%) NW: 32 (55%) Occasional: 8 (14%)

Annex 2 - Occupations of Intermediate and Secondary Level respondents:

Type of Occupations	Count	%
Service worker/laborer	12	41%
Craftsperson	8	28%
Sales worker	4	14%
Engineer, Technician, Computer specialist	3	10%
Teacher/Social/Health Worker	1	3%
Other	1	3%
Total	**29**	**100%**

Annex 3 – Internship Experience by Educational Level

Educational Level	Internship Experience				Total	
	Yes		No			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Intermediate/Secondary school	7	9	67	91	74	100
School and VET	98	55	79	45	177	100
University	46	41	67	59	113	100
Total	**151**	**41**	**213**	**59**	**364**	**100**

Annex 4 – Main Current Job by University Major

Main Current Job	University Major										Total	
	Humanities and Arts		Social Sciences and Law		Sciences		Health		Business and Administration			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Teacher	5	38%	3	38%	4	80%	0	0%	1	14%	13	38%
Social worker	1	8%	4	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	15%
Accountant / auditor	1	8%	1	13%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	4	12%
Secretary/office manager	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	2	29%	3	9%
Service worker/laborer	3	23%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	9%
Technician	2	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%
Engineer	1	8%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%
Computer specialist	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	2	6%
Total	**13**	**100%**	**8**	**100%**	**5**	**100%**	**1**	**100%**	**7**	**100%**	**34**	**100%**

Annex 5 – VET Course Duration by Educational Level

VET Course Duration	Educational Level						Total	
	Intermediate		Secondary		University			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Less than six months	4	3.5	0	0	0	0	4	2.0
Six to 11 months	57	50.4	10	15.6	6	23.1	73	36.0
12 to 18 months	27	23.9	24	37.5	7	26.9	58	28.6
19 months to 2 years	5	4.4	15	23.4	6	23.1	26	12.8
Above two years	20	17.7	15	23.4	7	26.9	42	20.7
Total	**113**	**100.0**	**64**	**100.0**	**26**	**100**	**203**	**100**

Annex 6 –Current Job by VET Specialization

Main Current Job	Matches VET Specialization		Does Not Match VET Specialization	
	Count	%	Count	%
Nurse/Lab/Health Technician	11	100%	0	0%
Computer specialist	1	100%	0	0%
Trade worker	1	100%	0	0%
Secretary/Office Manager	7	78%	2	22%
Accountant / auditor	4	57%	3	43%
Craftsperson	4	57%	3	43%
Service worker/laborer	11	52%	10	48%
Engineer	1	50%	1	50%
Teacher	3	30%	7[10]	70%
Technician	2	17%	10	83%
Sales worker	1	25%	3	75%
Social Worker	0	0%	2	100%
Other	0	0%	2	100%
Total	**46**	**52%**	**43**	**48%**

[10] Six teachers had attended VET in Business and administration and the seventh had specialized in health

Annex 7 – Duration of Current Job	Frequency	Percent
Less than six months	41	28.9
Six months to a year	24	16.9
From 13 to 24 months	30	21.1
More than two years	47	33.1
Total	142	100

Annex 8 – Number of Job Interviews by Employment Status

	Current Work Status				Total	
	Working		Not Working			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
One Interview	31	38%	19	38%	50	38%
Two to Four Interviews	32	40%	20	40%	52	40%
Five to Seven interviews	12	15%	1	2%	13	10%
Eight interviews and above	4	5%	4	8%	8	6%
Missing	2	2%	6	12%	8	6%
Total	**81**	**100%**	**50**	**100%**	**131**	**100%**

Annex 9 - Suitability of Current Job

	Frequency	Percent
Suitable	71	50%
Partially suitable	23	16%
Not Suitable	48	34%
Total	142	100%

Annex 10 – Occupation by Employer

Occupation	UNRWA		Other UN Org		Local NGO		INGO		Palestinian Institution		Private/Commercial Institution/Self Employed						Total	
											Inside Camp		Near Camp		Far from Camp			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Technician	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	5	14%	4	21%	9	16%	19	13%
Engineer	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	2	4%	3	2%
Teacher	6	67%	3	60%	2	40%	1	50%	1	11%	6	17%	0	0%	1	2%	20	14%
Social Worker	1	11%	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	7	5%
Health worker	2	22%	1	20%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8	14%	12	8%
ICT Specialist	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	3	2%
Accountant/Auditor	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	1	3%	4	21%	5	9%	11	8%
Secretary/Office Manager	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	2	22%	1	3%	0	0%	5	9%	9	6%
Craftsperson	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	8%	5	26%	6	11%	14	10%
Trade worker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Sales worker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	11%	1	5%	2	4%	7	5%
Service Worker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	11%	12	33%	4	21%	16	28%	33	23%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%	1	5%	0	0%	3	2%
Total	9	100%	5	100%	5	100%	2	100%	9	100%	36	100%	19	100%	57	100%	142	100%

Annex 11 - Employment in Private/Commercial Sector

Occupation	Private/Commercial Institution						Total	
	Inside Camp		Near Camp		Far from Camp			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Technician	4	16%	2	13%	8	15%	14	15%
Engineer	1	4%	0	0%	2	4%	3	3%
ICT Specialist	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%	2	2%
Accountant/Auditor	1	4%	4	25%	5	9%	10	10%
Teacher	6	24%	0	0%	1	2%	7	7%
Social Worker	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
Health worker	0	0%	0	0%	8	15%	8	8%
Secretary/Office Manager	1	4%	0	0%	5	9%	6	6%
Craftsperson	2	8%	5	31%	6	11%	13	14%
Sales worker	3	12%	1	6%	2	4%	6	6%
Service Worker	5	20%	3	19%	15	27%	23	24%
Other	2	8%	1	6%	0	0%	3	3%
Total	**25**	**100%**	**16**	**100%**	**55**	**100%**	**96**	**100%**

Annex 12 - Employment Status

	Frequency	Percent
Paid Employment	123	87%
Self-employed	14	10%
Helps in family business	3	2%
Head of business	2	1%
Total	**142**	**100%**

Annex 13 - Monthly Earnings by Work Location

Monthly Income	Work Location						Total	
	Inside the camp		Near the camp		Far from the camp			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
USD 1 - 185	25	48.1	10	43.5	20	29.9	55	38.7
USD 186 - 466	23	44.2	10	43.5	37	55.2	70	49.3
USD 467 - 600	1	1.9	3	13.0	10	14.9	14	9.9
USD 601 - 1000	3	5.8	0	0	0	0	3	2.1
Total	**52**	**100**	**23**	**100**	**67**	**100**	**142**	**100**

Annex 14 – Monthly Earnings by Gender

Monthly Income	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1 - 185 USD	37	39.4	18	37.5	55	38.7
186 - 466 USD	42	44.7	28	58.3	70	49.3
467 - 600 USD	13	13.8	1	2.1	14	9.9
601 - 1000 USD	2	2.1	1	2.1	3	2.1
Total	**94**	**100**	**48**	**100**	**142**	**100**

Annex 15 – Contribution to Family Expenses by Coverage of Personal Expenses

Contributes to Family Expenses	Covers Personal Expenses				Total	
	Yes		No			
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	76	65%	17	68%	93	65%
No	41	35%	8	32%	49	35%
Total	**117**	**100%**	**25**	**100%**	**142**	**100%**

Annex 16 – Household Responsibilities by Gender

Type of Responsibilities	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Count	% (M=172)	Count	% (F=192)
Cleaning House	12	7%	175	91%
Cooking	4	2%	113	59%
Grocery Shopping	43	25%	98	51%
Tutor Siblings	36	21%	87	45%
Health Care	26	15%	31	16%
Elderly Care	41	24%	18	9%
Help in Parental Business	30	17%	10	5%

Annex 17 - Recommendations of the Right to Work Campaign

1. At the Lebanese Level (Government, LPDC, NGOs):
   - Make use of available job market opportunities for Palestinians with higher education and training (i.e. types of specializations and vocations)
   - Provide Palestinians access to Lebanese syndicates
   - Utilize the available competencies and capabilities of Palestinian youth
   - Establish venues for dialogue with Palestinian youth
   - Encourage employers to adopt non-discriminatory hiring policies

2. At the Palestinian Level
   - Increase the availability of scholarships and loans for post-secondary and higher education
   - Encourage NGOs working in the Palestinian community to strengthen their relations with Lebanese Technical Institutes
   - Develop the employability competencies (ICT, life skills and communication skills) of Palestinian youths
   - Expand the scope of youth empowerment initiatives to include awareness-raising and career guidance and counseling
   - Encourage parents to accept their children's vocational preferences
   - Organize workshops for Palestinian and Lebanese youths on the Lebanese Labor Law and its amendments.

3. UNRWA
   - Expand gradually the UNRWA Sibline Training Center (STC) and integrate women and persons with special needs in all specializations
   - Integrate career counseling in UNRWA schools at the intermediate level
   - Establish a Palestinian university

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