



Youth Work in Lebanon and Cultural Identities: "Diversity of Communities : Richness or...?"



This programme is funded by the European Union

Content

Executive Summary	3
Chapter 1	4
Introduction	4
1.1 Prologue	4
1.2 Aims and Objectives	6
1.3 Methodology	6
1.3.1 Research approach, sampling and tools	6
1.3.2 Questionnaire Design, Validity of Method and Data Analysis	8
1.3.3 Limitations of the research instruments	8
1.4 Ethical Considerations	9
Chapter 2	10
The Lebanese Mosaic Impinging on Youth Work	10
2.1 What is Youth for Lebanon?	10
2.2 Confessional System	11
2.3 Outlook on Youth Work in Lebanon	11
2.4 Educational and Pedagogical Background of Youth Work in Lebanon	12
2.5 Refugees and Refugee Camps	15
Chapter 3	16
Challenges of Youth Work in Lebanon	16
3.1 Systemic	16
3.1.1. The State VS Youth Work	16
3.1.2 Corruption, Decision Making Process and Youth Policy	16
3.1.3 Unemployment	17
3.2 Economic	18
3.2.1 Domestic and International Funding	18
3.2.2 Donors	19
3.3 Cognitive	19
3.3.1 Mindset, kinship and tradition	19
3.3.2 Capabilities and Competences	20
Chapter 4	22
Mapping Out Impactful Youth Work	22
4.1 Participating organisations in the research at glance	24
4.2 Noteworthy Models of Youth Work	29
4.3 Upgrading the Impact of Youth Work	31
Chapter 5	35
Conclusion	35
Bibliography	36
Appendix	37

Executive Summary

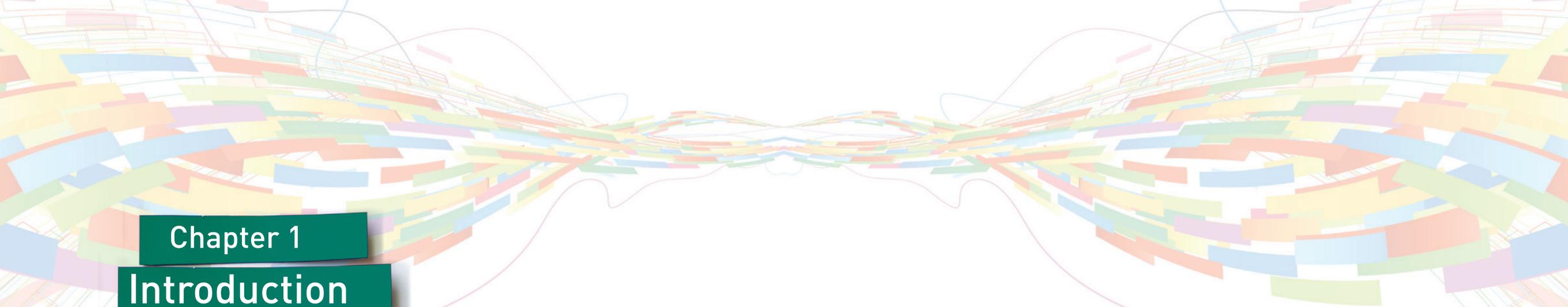


When exploring and analysing the encumbrances of the challenges bestowed upon youth and youth work in Lebanon, it requires little or no effort to realise that at the end of the day everything boils down to the diversity of communities. Lebanon cannot survive without the sizeable contribution of civil society to youth welfare; nevertheless, it is at the very core of Lebanese society that we can see the problematic symbiosis of the communities best.

This present report is an attempt to chart youth work in Lebanon and it endeavors to establish through empirical and situational analysis whether the diversity of communities in the country signifies constructive plurality or unproductive heterogeneity. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on youth work linked to religious and political affiliations and examine the risks and the opportunities that youth work offers in the multicultural and diverse environment that is Lebanese society.

This report is largely based on material from the field research carried out as part of a study visit in Lebanon from 22nd to 27th June 2015. The study visit gave the multinational group of 24 participants of 14 different nationalities the rare opportunity to travel throughout the country from North to South and experience first-hand the tough and demanding conditions facing youth work and youth workers. Despite the huge complexities of Lebanese social stratification and the sectarian plurality of the country, the study visit thoroughly encapsulated in a relatively short period of time a quite diverse sample of NGOs, organizations and agencies ranging from institutional bodies to grassroots initiatives of a confessional and secular character at local or international level.

The visit definitely exposed some of the malignancies, the challenges and the potential areas of development for youth work in the perpetually agitated Lebanese society and within the multifarious political and religious mosaic. This study aims to contribute to the overall reflection on youth work in Lebanon with a specific focus on youth engagement linked to political and religious attachments. Lebanon has 18 different confessions and most political parties also carry a religious colour. Both religious communities and political parties have youth departments or activities targeting young people. There are also NGOs working with or for youth without any of the affiliations mentioned above, and trying to build bridges between the different parties and communities. Despite all the above, there is evidence showing that youth work in Lebanon has the potential to transcend the aforementioned obstacles and bring forth respect, a sense of community and mutual contribution.



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Prologue

Cultural profusion in Lebanon is a fact of life. The country has been experiencing an increasingly problematic symbiosis of antithetical political and religious elements for several decades now. The systemic inadequacies within Lebanon have triggered the emergence of radical-or-not-social movements and actors, compelled to step in and replace the partial and insufficient governmental capacity to provide. However, a vacuum has been created as a result of the aforementioned extensive range of religious and political actors and the deficit of civil attention attributed to public institutions serving the population. Part of this void is currently filled by non-state actors that also work with young people. Youth work is nevertheless at a crossroads. Despite the obvious

benefits to society and even to the economy, a lethargic new generation is flourishing due to overreliance on aid and the burgeoning overconsumption of youth. Or is it the opposite? And how exactly does the state engage in the contemporary environment? Whatever the case, how sustainable can the efforts of those actors, NGOs and volunteers be while operating in a more often than not inimical environment?



Installation representing the multi-faith/cultural environment of Lebanon in Tyre.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The primary purpose of this paper is to shed light on youth engagement linked to religious and political affiliations and to examine the risks and the opportunities that youth work proffers in such a multicultural and diverse environment. Thus the present paper will establish whether the diversity of communities in Lebanon signifies constructive plurality or unproductive heterogeneity. More specifically the paper intends:

- To map out the key NGOs, state agencies and other actors involved in youth work in Lebanon and those operating and receive funding from abroad.
- To examine the current policies or initiatives in youth work and the capabilities and level of previous and existing programmes on non-formal education.
- To identify the core political and religious hue or open affiliation (if any) of the aforementioned NGOs, local agencies and political parties.
- To validate the spatial range of operations and establish if they target rural or urban areas.
- To distinguish between the NGOs and the political or religious agencies and actors that promote constructive diversification and those who endorse sectarianism
- To scrutinize the role and input in youth work of the usually overlooked Palestinian refugees who nevertheless represent a sizeable portion of the population
- To determine the chief motivation (or the lack of it) for young people to join an NGO or a political or religious entity.
- To verify the challenges and the

risks as well as the opportunities that impinge on youth work in Lebanon

- To establish a framework for sustainable and functional cooperation and mutual respect between the various youth organisations.

The study was not negatively impacted by the perennial limitations on quantitative studies on Lebanon regarding demographics due to the lack of an official census, and will provide a comprehensive outline of the influence and the capabilities of the various cultural identities and youth work organizations in the country.

The tools of the analysis will provide, in addition to the originality of the approach to the subject matter, an all-encompassing overview of the issues related to youth work and diversity in Lebanon. It will also constitute the basis of a new platform for productive cooperation, with an emphasis on non-formal learning. This platform intends to augment the visibility and the capacity of youth work in Lebanese society, as well as of all the relevant domestic and international stakeholders related to it.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Research approach, sampling and tools

A combined research method was required to realise the aims and objectives of this study. Qualitative research is best suited to research where different facts, opinions and viewpoints are required to arrive at

a solid conclusion. On the other hand, a quantitative approach is more accurate when dealing with first hand research and statistical validation, based on analysis of the figures and indicators gathered. The paper uses the observations and the material gathered as part of the field research carried out in Lebanon during the study visit and combines quantitative research methods –such as questionnaires - as well as qualitative research. Because a number of the findings were essentially based on empirical data, an empirical research strategy was primarily applied, as the validity and reliability of the conclusions was a top priority for the study. The questionnaire format was chosen to ensure that the most significant aspects of the challenges and the opportunities regarding youth work in Lebanon would be highlighted. A total of 46 respondents were invited to participate to ensure results that were both representative and well-founded. The respondents range from government officials to executive and administrative personnel of various NGOs and from simple local beneficiaries of some of the NGOs' activities to actual youth workers, volunteers and academics. The questionnaires were distributed among the respondents via an online platform. A different questionnaire was distributed among the participants to collect their thoughts and impressions concerning their experiences during the study visit.

1.3.2 Questionnaire Design, Validity of Method and Data Analysis

A questionnaire was designed to round out the semi-structured interviews carried out during the study visit, essentially because the data that it provides is uncomplicated to standardize, code and construe. Moreover, this particular format made it possible to access a larger sample in a shorter period of time and increase the prospects of producing valid, legitimate and generalizable results. The questionnaires also allowed respondents to remain anonymous, thereby removing a potential obstacle for them as well as improving the chances that their answers would be honest (given the often divisive nature of the questions).

The questionnaires for the NGOs looked at their relationship with the state, the challenges they face (including funding), the relationship of NGOs with multiple or other confessions, their practices and whether they deal at all with issues related to Syrian or Palestinian refugees. The questions for the study visit participants dealt with similar themes in order to provide impartial third party observations and insights. This practice has significantly enhanced and augmented the data collection and processing during the final stages of the research. The questionnaires can be found in appendix 1.

As part of the quantitative data analysis, the results from the questionnaires and all the relevant statistical data given to SALTO by the NGOs were coded and analysed manually in order to produce consistent and linear results.

Primary research data was mostly gathered through:

- the conducting of semi-structured interviews during the field research/ study visit
- the utilization of a fast and easy online questionnaire
- a force-field needs analysis and recommendations regarding the nature and scope of youth work in Lebanon
- empirical observations throughout the study visit
- existing relevant quantitative and qualitative research material

1.3.3 Limitations of the research instruments

The international bibliography has not adequately dealt with the issue of youth work in Lebanon as more often than not the primary focus is on sectarian issues. As a result, secondary research has been limited to a very specific range of scholarly studies. Additionally, despite their capacity to produce swift and accurate results, one drawback of questionnaires is their inability to capture complex and nonfigurative aspects, linked to the specific subject matter (Bryman, 2008). Lastly, one of the biggest challenges for research methods, when dealing with the delicate mosaic that comprises Lebanon, is to prevail over potential bias, intolerance and insularity. An additional feature of this problematic is the susceptibility to

mendacious statements when the study, for example, needs to extract the negative aspects of a given situation such as the exclusion generated by NGOs operating strictly on confessional basis and criteria, or when trying to determine the true relationship of youth workers and NGOs with the state.

There are many aspects related to youth work and cultural diversity in Lebanon that could not be sufficiently captured in the format of a questionnaire given the lack of time and budgetary restraints or during the field research and thus have been only partly covered in this research, such as the based-on-fact participation of the state, the satisfactory representation of the Druze minority, a deeper look at the effects of the domestic and regional displacement of people and the potential long-term humanitarian aspects of the cultural and confessional diversity and their impact on youth work.

1.4 Ethical Considerations

This research has met all the ethical standards set by SALTO Youth EuroMed Center. The names of the participants in the survey were kept anonymous and their answers were solely used for the scope of this research. All of the participants gave their explicit consent before participating in the online survey and the interviews during the field research. They were also given all the essential information about the aims and objectives of the project.

Although this research did not involve any respondents known to be vulnerable or unfit to answer, all the participants had the right to only partly answer the questionnaire or to withdraw from the survey at any time.

Chapter 2

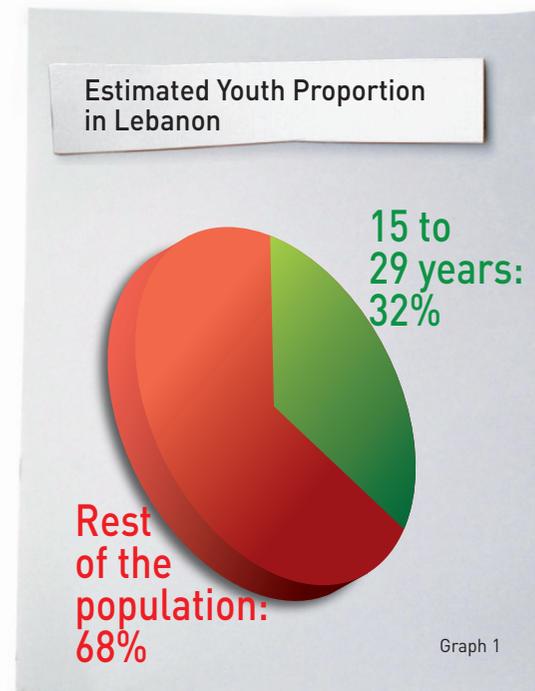
The Lebanese Mosaic Impinging on Youth Work

A person's ethnic origin is generally of no particular importance within the core of Lebanese society and Lebanon is a predominantly Arab country. However, religious affiliation, independently of the level of personal religious devoutness, is the foundation of every citizen's identity. Inevitably the intricacies of the Lebanese social and political modus operandi leave very little room for non-sectarian discourse from grassroots level up to the political elites as family ties, geography, peer pressure, financial interests, customs and traditions and even the Constitution of Lebanon tend to drive out and silence the individual or collective secular proclivities. There is hard evidence, however, showing that youth work has the potential to transcend the aforementioned obstacles and bring forth respect, sense of community and mutual contribution.

2.1 What is Youth for Lebanon?

The recognised definition of youth in Lebanon in agreement with the Lebanese Ministry of Youth and Sports, United Nations' agencies working with children and youth and youth work NGOs working within the context of the Lebanese civil society starts with teenagers of 15 and goes up to young adults of 29.¹ This figure is based on rough demographic estimations and age structure figures since there has been no official census since 1932. However, "youth" in Lebanon has no explicit separate identity or any other distinctive characteristics of a legal nature within the Lebanese society. According to various independent sources such as

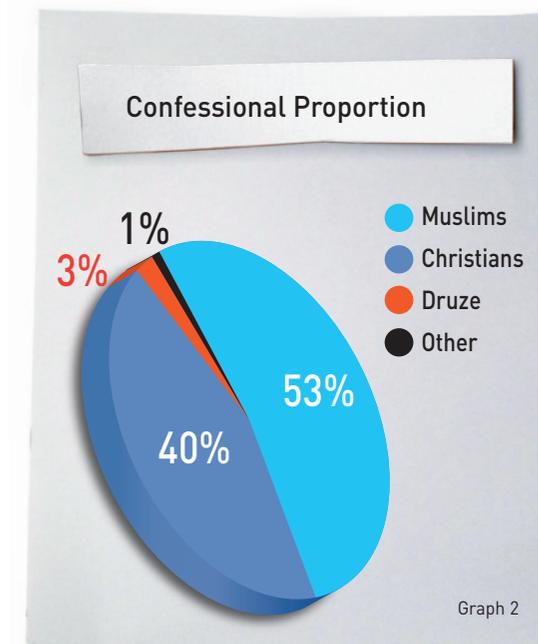
the CIA Factbook, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the United Nations' "World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision" the percentage of "youth" within the 5.8 million population in Lebanon ranges approximately from 29% to 32% including the almost impossible to accurately measure Palestinian and Syrian refugees whose numbers may exceed the 2 million mark when combined.



¹ It must be noted that many UN surveys define "youth" as young people between 15 and 24 years of age.

2.2 Confessional System

Seats in the Lebanese Parliament are allocated by confession alone, as Lebanon has a system that allocates the exercise of political power via quotas for all the constitutionally recognized religious groups. Political parties, despite their public and official secular political positioning, tend to be predominantly supported by a particular religious group. Nevertheless, elected parties are supposed to represent the entire Lebanese population and not only their respective sect. However, many complications arise from this pluralistic arrangement on both social and political levels. Lebanon has never managed to give a majority vote to a single party to govern because of the system and coalitions typically are capricious and lead to political instability. Another of the manifold side-effects is



that it creates a rather reprehensible legal environment as each religious group has a particular interpretation of legal issues such as inheritance or marriage (among others), which in turn fosters a kind of discrimination.

2.3 Outlook on Youth Work in Lebanon

Youth work in Lebanon has only been recently institutionally endorsed by the state. Since 2000, youth policies in the country have been regulated for the most part by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, although it must be said that the state apparatus has approached the matter with an almost total lack of strategy and dynamism (Rarrbo, 2006). Due to the widespread lack of public structures, the burden of youth work falls on the willingness of civil society to take action and their efforts are often partly or selectively funded by the state. However, to compensate for its lack of social services such as hospitals, schools and sports clubs, the state sub-contracts many NGOs to provide such services in its stead. It would appear, however, that a great number of youth work associations and domestic NGOs are inescapably pegged to the confessional system. Some of these groups strive to maintain a welcoming stance towards other religious groups, while others are unashamedly sectarian.

There are over 6,000 NGOs and associations operating in Lebanon at the present time, with more than 200 of that number being outsourced branches of international NGOs (Intenational Center For Not-For-Profit Law, 2015). A report from Beyond Reform and Development (2015, p.12)

states that 39.5% of those NGOs engage in activities that are in some way related to youth work at either national or local level. Regardless of the fact that many Youth Work NGOs affirm that they operate on a

political and economic competition among each confession shapes those divisions into tangible outcomes (Chaaban & Seyfert, 2012). More to the point, every youth work association or NGO requires support and funding so being under the wing of a particular party or confession guarantees a level of assurance and support. What's more, political parties are particularly proactive in terms of youth engagement as most if not all of them have youth wings.

in public schools) in addition to frequent parental intervention that generates further discrimination and intimidation, especially in areas where Syrian refugees have enrolled as students (UNHCR, 2015).

job placement, self-reliance and the encouragement of entrepreneurship. The Al Sadr Foundation in Tyre, for example, offers vocational training to underprivileged girls.

- **Private schools**

Lebanon has one of the highest percentages (54%) of students enrolled in private schools in the world, while the number of students enrolled in public schools is less than 29%. The remaining 17% attend non fee-paying private schools (BankMed Special Report, 2014). Private fee-charging schools, unlike public schools with their low quality, obsolete methods of instruction, better trained educators and more innovative methods of education (Hussein, 2011, p. 101). However, the majority of primary, secondary and tertiary private educational institutions are sectarian and politically affiliated and their quality of service and processes are often questionable.

- **Community Participation**

Community participation encompasses on a rather broad spectrum of activities and projects enabling active involvement at local level. The Nahnoo Youth Club, for example, promotes local community development, such as the reopening of a park in Beirut. Sponsorship programmes are also included in this category. A good example at local level is the work of the St Vincent De Paul association in Batroun that enables youth workers as act as sponsors to families in need, as well as running facilities for the elderly.

- **Culture**

The cultural approach builds up non-adversarial relationships as it endorses non-sectarian components while maintaining, when applicable, aspects of community identities. This category includes activities involving theatre, music, painting and dance. For example the youth led Lebanese Organization of Studies and Training (LOST) in Bekaa Valley facilitates cultural workshops including the aforementioned disciplines and arts.

- **Sports & Recreation**

As a response to the lack of sustainable sources, sports and other recreational activities including the scouts, empower youth through involvement in physically active programmes. Sports and scouting also have a component for additional discussion and learning outcomes including the omnipresent element in Lebanese associations of conflict resolution. For example, at local level, the Chabibeh Youth and Sporting Club offers a wide range of

Most components of political and social life are linked to confessions and youth work is no exception. Civil society complements inadequate educational structures from kindergarten level onwards. The pedagogical approach to youth work throughout Lebanon, independently of whether it is faith-based, centre-based, detached, outreach or even school-based can be identified as follows:

- **Vocational**

Vocational training (also part of the national educational agenda) is vital for access to work as lack of any specific expertise is rather widespread in rural and urban areas. Usually the skills obtained include embroidery, hairdressing, woodwork, and generally development of technical skills for

2.4 Educational and Pedagogical Background of Youth Work in Lebanon

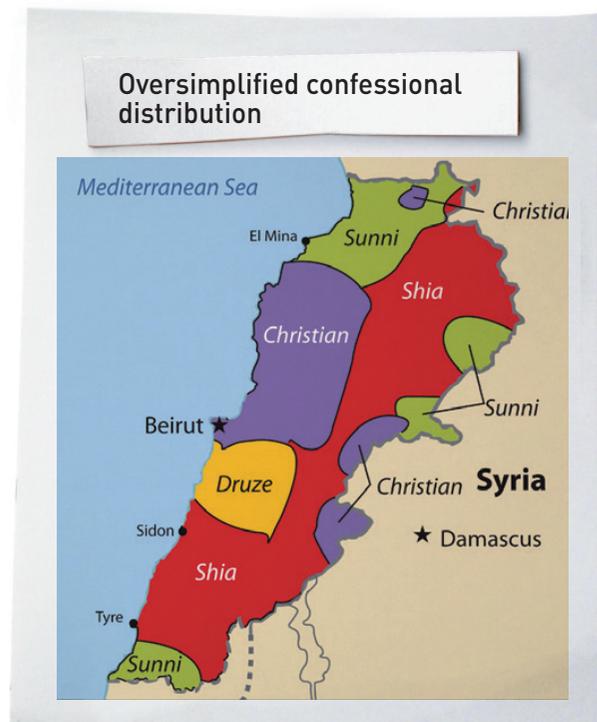
The formal educational system in Lebanon is characterised by an uneven duality between public and private schools. General, vocational and technical education is part of the curriculum in the public educational system; however there are many inadequacies and restraints that negatively affect the quality and effectiveness of the pedagogical values.

- **"Moonlighting" and corporal punishment**

In Lebanon there is no mechanism preventing public school teacher from working in private schools too. According to Article 186 of the Penal Code "The law permits the types of discipline inflicted on children by their parents and teachers as sanctioned by general custom". It has been reported that teachers have deliberately adopted aggressive behaviour based on their "right to discipline" to encourage students to transfer from from public to private schools.

- **Violence and intimidation**

Bullying and terrorization of students by fellow students and teachers has been widely observed (particularly



secular basis, even while being openly affiliated to a specific confession, field research showed that the geographic and spatial confessional distribution of the population reflects a less diversified involvement from different religious backgrounds, particularly when the NGOs are based on the periphery or in areas with a predominant demographic from a certain confession. The unrelenting tumultuous political and economic environment tends to foster polarisation and tends to favor the emergence of NGOs with a strong confessional character. Thus, even during less turbulent times,

2.5 Refugees and Refugee Camps

sporting activities in Chiah, Beirut. The popular scouts movements often focus their activities on sectarian and national concerns, which is the case for Amal's Islamic Scout Society, Hezbollah's Mahdi Scouts, the Future Scouts of Future Movement or the Scouts Chrétien. However, 29 Scout associations out of the 31 associations recognised by the Lebanese Scouting Federation are politicised and linked to a political party or religion (Lynch, 2011 and Shaery-Eisenlohr, 2011).

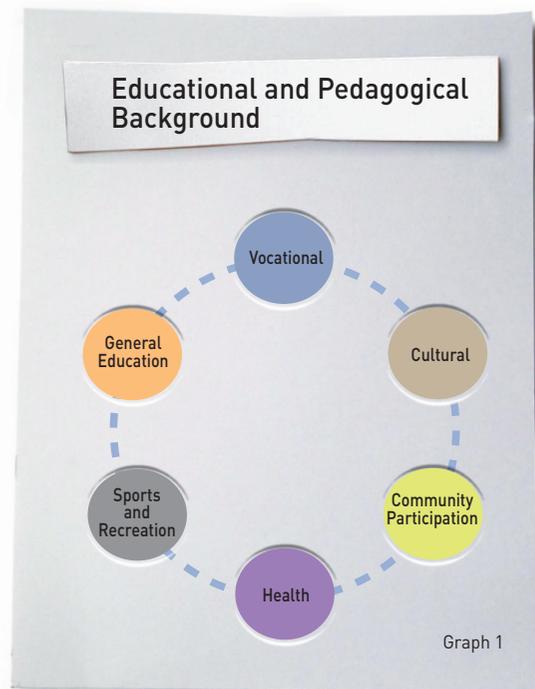
- *General Education*

Despite general education being the major component of the national education agenda, Lebanon "faces high repetition and drop-out rates, thus negatively impacting economic growth due to low labour force qualifications, given that students are leaving school without proper educational attainment" (BankMed Special Report, 2014). Within the framework of general education, especially at tertiary level, there are initiatives enabling youth and youth work in terms of political activism, human rights, conflict resolution and decision making processes, such as the Human Rights Club at the Notre Dame University in Louaize, which also involves youth workers and students from other institutions. Additionally NGOs often offer complementary cycles of general education as part of their lifelong learning projects.

- *Health*

Lebanon is heavily reliant on private and NGO initiatives for health services. Health includes youth work projects that provide remedial and personal hygiene classes, among others, which is a particularly important issue in

refugee camps where there is a chronic lack of access to clean sanitation. They also provide health mainstream services and are involved with children and youth with special needs and mental health problems. This is perhaps one of the most complicated areas of youth work as many youth workers do not possess the skills required to deal with health issues and unfortunately know-how transfer from international NGOs is limited. Al Hanan Center in Abbasieh, with the support of the methodologies of the NGO Right To Play, delivers programmes that work on rehabilitation as well as therapeutic services including speech therapy and occupational therapy.



The Palestinian presence is an overlooked minority characterized by a lack of information regarding their status within the country and by various other obstacles to their social integration. Despite their presence in the camps or "gatherings" since 1948, there is a prevalent perception among the Lebanese that their presence is temporary, along with a rather pervasive sense of resentment. Palestinian integration is currently impossible, due to the principle of reciprocity and the massive impact it would have on the balance of the confessional system (Baraka, 2008). Also,

camps is imperative, absolutely necessary but also precarious. However, the number of NGOs operating within refugee camps is relatively low in comparison to the total number of active NGOs in the country (around 80 according to officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs, although there are certainly more, as many of them run their operations unofficially without a permit from the Lebanese state (Palestinian Refugee Research - Ajjal Center, 2001). Most of them are engaged in one way or another with youth work, education and children in need.



The situation worsened following the massive influx of Syrian

historical grievances coupled with the double standards regarding their status in terms of employment have added another volatile piece to the already convoluted Lebanese mosaic.

The camps, despite the lack of basic living standards, also represent a refuge for underprivileged Lebanese citizens as rent and tuition fees are practically zero. However, the absence of the rule of law within the camps has created a haven that also attracts criminals and absconders. To counteract this, enabling youth work to be carried out without hindrance within the

refugees into the existing camps and "gatherings" as governmental support is often frowned on by some parts of Lebanese society. Hence, civil society at international level and the UNRWA are almost exclusively responsible for all humanitarian aid and support (Naufal, 2013). Unfortunately, given the current fluidity of the situation and the lack of trustworthy quantitative data, there is little hope of insightful assessments.

Chapter 3

Challenges facing Youth Work in Lebanon

Youth work in Lebanon faces manifold perennial challenges on a number of multifaceted levels. The challenges have been divided below into three different categories: first, the systemic challenges that include the problematic normative and statutory structures of the state apparatus and the exploitation of those statutory deficits regarding youth work; second, the omnipresent challenge of financial issues and the widespread conditionality of endowments and charitable donations when it comes to youth work; and lastly, the cognitive challenges regarding youth work. The latter includes the social consent that perpetuates the damaging mentality in Lebanese society with regard to the cultural identities that make up the country and the inevitable counterproductive effects impinging on NGO capacity building and sustainability.

3.1 Systemic

3.1.1. The State vs. Youth Work

While international and local NGOs have significantly shaped new attitudes in Lebanon towards social issues such as gender inequality, little progress has been made in easing the tensions towards the different minorities and confessions and there is no sustainable solution strategy for the refugee issue, as they still rely on humanitarian aid and support to survive. The failure to ensure serious change in the discourse on national conflicts can be attributed to the current confessional-

based structure and the lack of a direct relationship between the state and its citizens.

Youth in Lebanon is either vibrant and active in civil society organisations or indolent and idle. The inability of youth to be more motivated, or at least fulfil its potential, is frequently associated with the increasing dependency on their parents and the ineffective educational system. Youth workers are often mobilised by political and religious leaders, even within universities, and not necessarily by real youth needs and existential questions. Unfortunately youth work has no weight in the political process and the usually understaffed state agencies (the Ministry of Youth and Sports has approximately 30 active employees) linked to youth work are perceived as unimportant by the political elites.

The role of the state and its relationship with local and international NGOs does at least enjoy a horizontal positive reception. For the most part the NGOs responded that they collaborate relatively harmoniously with the state at local or national level and frequently there is a dissociation between their level of cooperation and their sectarian background. However, a number of respondents mentioned a rather strained and confrontational relationship with the state authorities.

3.1.2 Corruption, the Decision Making Process and Youth Policy

The endemic corruption in Lebanon undermines and slows down almost every limited display of political will within the field of youth work. There is an almost

complete lack of long term strategy, vision and goal, as political and sectarian competition is also reflected in every aspect of policy making. Given the intrinsic links of youth work with politics and confessions, the decision making process regarding youth is constantly being reprioritised and youth work is increasingly becoming a less important element in the political debate. Party-run schools or scout movements and party sponsored associations with their extra-curricular activities develop their own interpretation of national priorities for their respective youths. While several political parties maintain a moderate standpoint towards nationalism and other confessions, others have a more radical perspective, sometimes even against parties from the same religious background, although both alliances and animosities tend to be ephemeral and changing. There is no realistic and time bound approach for constructive collaboration between political parties, religious leaders and stakeholders because of the lack of reliable statistics and the growing detachment of the government from the issues of social welfare and youth welfare, as a result of political instability. The state has not seriously invested in any kind of scientific research regarding relevant social concerns and the laxity regarding youth work formally reassigns the body of intellectual and factual work to NGOs and the cooperation of stakeholders with international agents and institutions. This bottom-up approach has the advantage of offering a realistic reflection of the challenges regarding youth work, but it also heralds clear obstacles to actual policy transformation since it rarely reaches the pertinent bureaucrats and politicians, due

to conflicting interests, lack of structures, lack of transparency at municipal and state level and the constant changing of key figures in the state apparatus.

The adaptation of Youth Policies by each Lebanese government systematically sets all-encompassing general objectives such as strengthening the motivation of young people, freedom of expression or support for youth employment. However, those rhetorical declarations cannot be realistically or sufficiently transformed into action by existing structures and existing budgetary constraints. There are no suitable institutional mechanisms or any kind of tangible reformation in the educational and pedagogical system of Lebanon offering the capacity to achieve those goals as there is no follow-up in decision making by the constantly interchanging governments who failed to adapt a national strategy regarding pressing social issues and, of course, youth work.

3.1.3 Unemployment

Rampant unemployment reduces the willingness of young people to be actively involved with youth work as simply earning a living is clearly a higher priority, which does not fit in with the by and large volunteering nature of youth work. However, at the same time the ever-expanding NGO sector in Lebanon constitutes an emerging alternative for work placement opportunities for Lebanese youth. More and more, young Lebanese are showing a greater inclination towards youth work as it often provides reasonably paid employment coupled with activities for the greater good.

Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for professional youth workers to be victims of exploitation with long working hours, minimal payment and harsh working conditions. Appalling working conditions have been reported both from international NGOs as well as domestic organizations. Indeed, the characterisation as domestic or international NGO is often only a legal technicality based on registration with the relevant ministry, such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports or Social Affairs. The real number of professional youth workers is totally unknown in Lebanon as very few of them have a work contract and even fewer have legal access to social security. However, despite sporadic negative reports about the working environment, the youth work sector is a relatively attractive, if not stable, employment possibility.

3.2 Economic

3.2.1 Domestic and International Funding

Despite the fact that Lebanon has effectively become part of the general donors' agenda, funding is predictably a multifarious issue even to those associations and NGOs that do not face pressing financial issues or those that are partially self-sustained. For most NGOs the sustainability of funding is their major concern whether it stems from private or international donors or the state. Political instability recurrently poses a threat to funding streams, along with the various setbacks -within Lebanon as well as regionally-, not only financially, but also in terms of the objectives of each

NGO. Many predominantly local NGOs throughout Lebanon highlighted the issue of unhealthy competition with regard to funding and endowments for youth work organisations due to intensive lobbying, fraud and sectarian ties.

Although the NGO sector is instrumental in almost balancing the social welfare deficit in Lebanon, the dependency and overreliance on external funding coupled with rigid regulations significantly undercuts the scope of civil society ventures. For example, the Lebanese Autism Society receives partial funding from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education for students with autism. However, there is a limit to the number of students the state will subsidise, even if they could take on more. As a result, the remaining students have to rely on private funds. The unsustainability of state and international funding generally renders long term planning impossible and the efforts of the civil society concerning youth are often short-lived, even given that most of the NGOs largely rely on volunteers. However a number of NGOs possess a highly sophisticated institutional and operational basis as their funding stems from international charities and associations or strong regional sectarian affiliations. Furthermore, according to a survey by Beyond and Development (2015) 30.7% of civil society organisations in Lebanon (not only those linked to youth work) have the capacity to generate income by other activities, in addition to the charitable donations and funding they receive.

3.2.2 Donors

Despite the conventional wisdom that suggests that fundraising is by default an intricate process, Lebanese civil society manages to attract a noteworthy amount of donations and grants. However, it is difficult to establish any kind of statistics regarding distribution or amounts, as regional funds especially are labelled and transferred in manifold ways and the involvement of religious entities and potential tax exemption issues coupled with non-transparent transactions and political involvement cloud the exact direction and final use of the streams of capital. The dynamic Lebanese Diaspora from all over the world also privately supports the youth sector, typically based on sectarian (or financial) criteria, usually at local level.

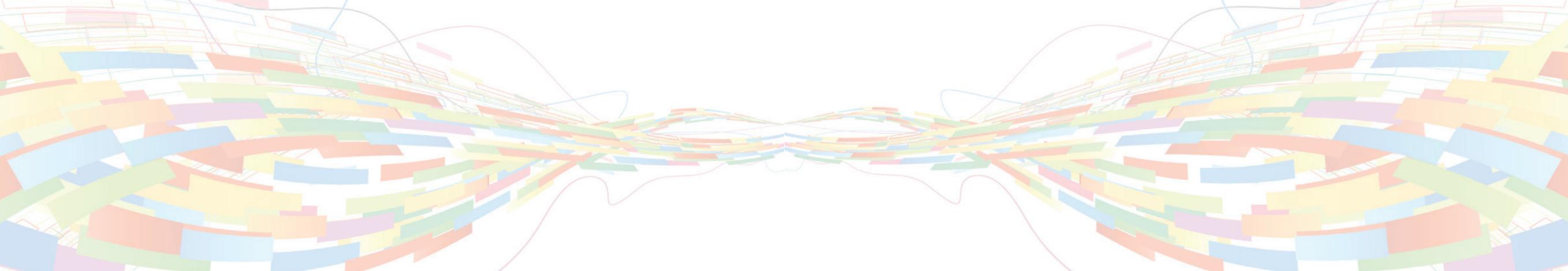
Further complications can arise when external support comes with strings attached and donors want their funds to be directed towards a particular confession only or used for a specific purpose. This situation heavily impacts the efficiency and range of civil society operations in Lebanon and deliberately nourishes sectarian power play and cultural divisions. However, given the absolute need for support and an active NGO sector throughout Lebanon, it goes without saying that those deontological dilemmas -when they occur- are of secondary importance. Additionally, often political and religious elites refuse to accept donations if the funding originates from a country or entity that they dislike or mistrust or if they simply believe that there is an underlying political agenda: for example, certain NGOs have rejected USAid in South Lebanon. Conversely, there is also a degree of mistrust from the donor's perspective. In several cases, there is no follow-up coordination or supervision of the activities of the NGO

or of fund management. So, while on the one hand the lack of a strict regulatory system normally enhances capital flow towards NGOs, on the other the lack of scrutiny encourages mismanagement and can impact the sustainability of the efforts. The lack of monitoring paves the way for additional misconduct and negligence by the state. In a nutshell, the amount of money reportedly lost in patronage, favouritism, embezzlement and mismanagement is considerable.

3.3 Cognitive

3.3.1 Mindset, kinship and tradition

Lebanese youth, despite being ostensibly in sync with the contemporary social environment, still overwhelmingly maintains traditional social values and principles. Whether they do so out of conviction or due to familial or religious pressure is of little importance. In Lebanon, kinship, family and religion are still distinctive components of personal identity. As a result, Lebanese youth projects high levels of hostile prejudice towards other confessions (Harb, 2010). A very characteristic example is Harb's survey, which stated that while 41% of Lebanese youth was in favour of interfaith marriage, 33% was totally against it. Even more interestingly, only 37% would actually be willing to marry someone from another confession, while the remaining 63%, despite not being necessarily against inter-faith marriage, still showed an unwillingness to marry outside their own confession. So, even though Lebanese youth often seem to be tolerant of other



cultural identities, social surroundings and the historically embedded values between different confessions predetermine behavioural patterns to a significant extent. It is also not unusual in Lebanese society for bias based on locality and origin from within Lebanon to be a distinguishing feature or even an idiosyncratic one for someone's identity and personality.

Even when the aforementioned characteristics are not present, there are other challenges that impinge on youth work more directly. The mentality regarding youth work and volunteerism is often characterized by a degree of skepticism. As Fadi Tabet from Chabibeh Sporting Club mentioned, the philosophy behind youth work is not clearly understood by large parts of society, whether it is the parents or the young people themselves, as it is not directly reciprocal, since non-formal education, development through sports and their results are not quantifiable. The transition towards a more considerate and sympathetic environment for different cultural identities has yet to be made, despite the fact that youth work at the moment is widespread and constitutes -one way or another- the driving force behind social welfare in Lebanon.

Controversial ideals based on kinship are also evident in the ruling political and religious elites, with nepotism being one the most infuriating and frustrating elements of the social web in Lebanon. Public positions also tend to be "hereditary" and the lack of a meritocracy nourishes upheaval, radical political movements and even emigration. The lack of perspective and the general perception among young people that this situation will never change, has given rise to two different outcomes:

on the one hand, the recruitment pool for youth work is frequently rife with radical and heavily religious undertones and on the other it has led to the opposite reaction, with disengaged and apathetic young people feeling any effort is futile.

3.3.2 Capabilities and Competence

Professional youth work often overlaps with social work: however, the latter usually requires a certain degree of expertise whereas youth work per se theoretically could be carried out by individuals with no particular set of predetermined skills. Nevertheless, youth work within the complex environment of Lebanon increasingly requires youth workers with skills, proper training or correct supervision as they have to deal more and more often with alarmingly complex situations. The situation is continually deteriorating due to the high numbers of school drop-outs, which is intrinsically linked to high private school fees, while also creating generations of undereducated youth who often fall victim to child labour abuses.

The challenges at local level may vary between urban and rural environments, as civil society prioritizes change based on the needs and deficits of every region. Unemployment, poverty, education, health and inter-communal clashes are problematic issues for the entire country, but can be significantly more intense from one municipality to another. For example, in the urban environment of Beirut, youth work may be less visible due to the fact

that the demographic concentration and income distribution is more uneven and so youth disengagement is more prevalent. However, in less densely populated areas, youth work comes across as more dynamic due to the wider spectrum of social needs, although polarisation and radicalisation of the youth is purportedly more acute in the Eastern and Southern provinces of Lebanon.

Despite the often inadequate means of many NGOs, there is a surprising lack of networking. Hidden hatreds and a shortsighted sense of belonging undermines the limited structures civil society endeavours to build in Lebanon, mainly because of the profusion of identities and creeds. Given the widespread lack of expertise, many NGOs (not just in the youth work sector) are reluctant to share experiences and good practices, even when it concerns youth work that transcends religious affiliations, such as human rights violations. As Pierre Gedeon from Notre Dame University mentioned during the study visit: "even twenty five years after the end of the civil war students and youth workers may still refuse to visit NGOs in other religious areas". Diversity for many students and youth workers is often seen as a problem and not as a source of richness and the situation has been made even more complex by the issues linked to Palestinian or Syrian refugees.

The distrust and lack of cooperation among many Lebanese NGOs renders the efforts of the international community essential to the transfer of know-how and the provision of services by outsourcing skills to local NGOs. However, an emerging culture of overreliance on their international counterparts for initiatives, vocations and employment, not to mention funding, is

already being observed by many NGOs and youth workers.

Chapter 4

Mapping Out Impactful Youth Work

This chapter highlights several good practice examples of youth work observed during the study visit and/or the follow-up research. The contributing NGOs come from different geographical and religious or secular backgrounds. This section provides the opportunity to raise awareness of their best practices and achievements and highlights the need for networking, exchanging ideas, greater mobility. It sets out the changes that should be implemented in Lebanon not only by the state, but also by the international community that supports and sustains youth work in the country. Since the state basically subcontracts civil society to provide social and youth welfare structures in its stead, this chapter

looks at several NGOs that already offer remarkable help, along with others that possess the ability and commitment to make an impact on Lebanese society but have not yet reached their full potential.



Al Hanan Center in Abbasieh

4.1 Participating Organisations At A Glance

AGBU Lebanon



- Founded in 1910
- Based in Antelias but operates at semi-national level
- Armenian affiliation
- Educational, cultural and humanitarian character
- 5 chapters throughout the country
- One of the most well funded and well organised associations in Lebanon

St Vincent De Paul



- Founded in 1910
- Based in Batroun, operates at local level.
- Catholic affiliation, but they work with most Christian confessions
- Offer sponsorship and financial assistance on food, rent, burials, also support education and health
- For a grassroots level association perhaps one of the most devoted with high level of commitment among its volunteers

Right To Play (Al Hanan)



- Canadian global organisation founded in 2000
- Network of 100 local NGOs
- Build local capacity regarding developmental and humanitarian work
- Al Hanan is founded in 2003 and provides vocational and social skills as well as therapy to children with special needs
- Based in Abbasieh
- Non-confessional character and they also accommodate Palestinians

Chabibeh Sporting Club



- Founded in 2002 and its Youth Dept. in 2008
- Based in Beirut
- Operating at local level
- Predominantly Christian character
- Youth empowerment, non-formal education and sports
- EVS Accreditation
- Small operational budget but high efficiency
- Member of 6 sporting federations

Al Sadr Foundation

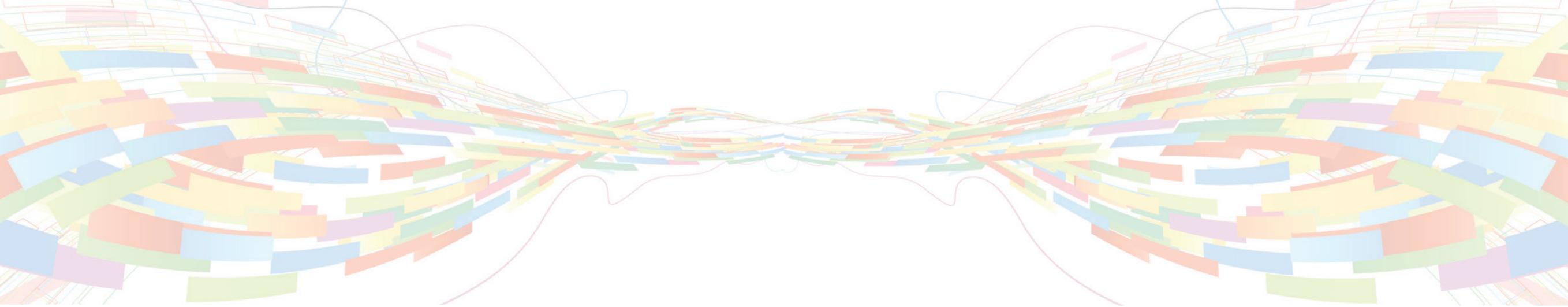


- Founded in early 1960s
- Based in Tyr
- Predominantly Shia character
- Women and orphans empowerment with vocational skills, education and healthcare
- Projects for local development
- High functional multileveled NGO with sustainable funding and remarkable facilities

Nahnoo



- Founded in 2003
- Based in Beirut
- Non-confessional character
- Youth participation and advocacy and conflict resolution
- One of the few NGOs in Lebanon dealing with research on public spaces and their utilisation



NABAD



- Founded in 2013
- free educational enhancement and women political empowerment
- democratic values among Lebanese and Syrian youth and conflict resolution
- Building organization capacities in Bekaa via networks and partnerships

Safadi Foundation



- Founded in 2001, however it operates unofficially since the civil war
- Predominantly Sunni
- Developing youth capacities
- Support sessions for students studying for the intermediate certificate (Brevet)
- Women empowerment

Beyond Reform & Development



- Founded in 2011
- Based in Beirut
- One of the most active public management reform advocates and policy innovators
- Produce objective and reliable resources for a wide range of political and social issues

March



- Founded in 2011
- Citizen awareness through youth engagement and activism on civil rights, censorship and freedom of expression
- Non-confessional character
- Potential to become the censorship watchdog in Lebanon

Autism Society



- Founded in 1999
- Based in Gemmayzeh
- Promoting the acceptance of vulnerable groups of children and youth in Lebanon and sustainable change in the knowledge and beliefs of the and the youth about the rights of children and youth with special needs
- Aiming to the establishment of specialized center

Lebanese Red Cross



- Founded in 1946
- International association
- Developmental and resource management programs
- Youth engagement via 26 youth clubs, 2 health assistant schools and 30 chapters of local committees and 50 medical centers

4.2 Noteworthy Models for Youth Work

Right To Play (via Al Hanan Center)

The international NGO Right To Play has developed a vast network of local organisations - including schools, youth clubs, orphanages, daycare centers, specialized centers for children with disabilities independently of confessional or ethnic origin as well as refugees in Lebanon. They provide them with methodologies and expertise on manifold disciplines related to youth work and social welfare. By outsourcing their capabilities and know-how, they provide an ever-expanding network of organisations that empowers and educates children and youth in need. Given the lack of local expertise, especially on sensitive social welfare issues such as children with special needs, Right To Play is a major provider of essential life skills to the disadvantaged youth of Lebanon.

Al Hanan Center in Abbasieh, South

Lebanon is the partner association of Right To Play. Al Hanan Center deals with youth with mental and physical disabilities. Operating as both a daycare and rehabilitation center, it provides vocational programs such as carpentry, sewing, computer skills and hairdressing to facilitate the social integration of their students. As Al Hanan is situated in one of the most underprivileged regions of the country, their openness to multiple cultural identities and their advanced capacity to deal with a wide range of disabilities renders them an important local agent of social welfare. Since Al Hanan has both the technical wherewithal and the appropriate methodologies, they can also maintain a decent standard of services with small staff requirements and budgetary manoeuvrability, which in turn helps to safeguard its sustainability.

Al Sadr Foundation

The Imam Sadr Foundation combines youth welfare with developmental projects. The programs offered by Al Sadr foundation primarily target young women, who represent 77% of its beneficiaries. Even though the services of Al Sadr Foundation are technically open to all confessional backgrounds, the strong religious attachment of the foundation to the legacy of its founder and the demographics of its location in the South of Lebanon limit the cultural diversity of its beneficiaries. The high quality of the vocational training they offer in their nursing school is reflected in the increasing numbers of graduates who are currently employed. The foundation has identified local needs and bases its educational and vocational efforts to those needs. However, it is labour intensive as a very small percentage of the beneficiaries pursue high education. Nevertheless, due to the state of the art facilities and their financial sustainability business model - based on a sophisticated combination of fees, book sales, income generating projects, subscriptions, aid, Sharia entitled donations and contracts- the Foundation manages to maintain high standards.

St Vincent De Paul Youth Committee

Operating in the district of Batroun, the Youth Committee of St Vincent De Paul provides material and spiritual help and tangible support to people in need at local level with considerable commitment and discretion. It was one of the few organisations whose modus operandi was carefully observed in action by all the participants during the study visit and it probably represented the most touching and humbling experience for the group. The group actively participated in one of the regular visits to the homes of



the families sponsored by the association. The participants split in small groups and followed several volunteers while they first purchased necessities for the families including food and sanitation materials from local supermarkets. With great discretion (to avoid any social humiliation), the groups then delivered the goods to those in need, who come from different confessional backgrounds. The association also often provides medication, covers the cost of operations, gives financial support for students in public schools or helps families with rent stipends and also provides care for the elderly through the OZANAM retirement facility. Even though they receive some funding from the state, a huge proportion of the activities are covered through charitable events and by contributions from the volunteers themselves.

AGBU - AYA

The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) is the largest non-profit Armenian organization in the world and definitely possesses the widest and most complex organisational structure of all the Youth Work NGOs examined in this study. The group visited the flagship facilities of AGBU in Antelias during the study visit, where they were meticulously briefed on all the activities and administrative details of the organisation. AGBU offers activities ranging from sports and scouts to theatre and music and also runs medical dispensaries and health clubs. AGBU is active at all educational levels from kindergarten to university and in addition it offers scholarships to high quality private educational institutions. The interconnection between AGBU youth workers and beneficiaries with most of

the academic institutions and sports in Lebanon also creates ties for young people with their community that last all their lives. This all-embracing multileveled approach is a chief element of the successful and extraordinary centripetal force that characterises the Armenian community in Lebanon.



Chabibeh Sporting Club

Chabibeh Sporting Club is the most grassroots organisation in this section. Operating from the premises of a secondary public school for boys in Chiah with permission from the Ministry of

Education, Chabibeh Youth and Sporting Club has managed to bring together children, teenagers and young adults from different backgrounds through non-formal education, sports, volunteering and summer camps. At the moment Chabibeh is a member of 6 different Lebanese sports federations and the female basketball team won the Lebanese Championship for Second Division clubs in 2015 and was subsequently promoted to the First Division cluster on a very low budget. However the most important distinguishing feature of Chabibeh is the fact that it is one of only eight Lebanese associations with European Voluntary Service (EVS) accreditation. Given that almost six thousand NGOs operate in Lebanon, more than half of which are connected to youth work and the fact that from this year on accreditation is compulsory in order to attract European programmes, the percentage of EVS accredited associations is disappointingly low. For the members of Chabibeh their greatest achievement has been their ability to create a youth department within a sports organization and include a Youth and Women's empowerment dimension in both local and international projects. Despite its limited means, facilities and staff, Chabibeh is an excellent example of youth work.

4.3 Upgrading the Impact of Youth Work

In order to maximize the impact of youth work in Lebanon, this study will concisely explore several recommendations either arising from field research or proposed by the participating NGOs. As farfetched general ideas are easy to think up but hard

to implement, the propositions are based on the S.M.A.R.T. approach, meaning they are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. The study nevertheless recognises that the challenging and volatile political environment would probably hinder swift implementation of any kind of reform and recommendations. Therefore the suggestions focus on actions with negligible red tape and most importantly with minor submission to time consuming and counter-productive policy transformation. It is once again up to civil society in Lebanon to create the framework for coordination and management of the issues related to youth work and present it to the relevant bodies. When existing structures such as NGO databases are clearly catalogued, it will be easier to implement new conventions. If the NGO sector undertakes to not only to draft the necessary adjustments but also to realise them, there will be little room for escape by the state.

Short term

- Create or expand the database with domestic or international NGOs operating in Lebanon and literally map out youth work NGOs.
- Create a database with the students from public and private schools after completing an assessment test indicating their interests, inclinations and social competencies. The tests are easy and cheap to design. Many NGOs already possess the skills needed to create them.
- NGOs could then use the results with relevant guidance or training.
- The tests could also provide a framework for the establishment of appropriate apprenticeships.

- A simplified and accessible to all compilation of existing policies and regulations should be available for current and future NGOs, so that they know and are aware of their rights and privileges.
- Disseminate best practices and expert meetings by creating a healthy and beneficial competitive environment via internet platforms. Upgrade existing structures where necessary and make it compulsory to participate in monitoring.
- Reward students and give incentives to youth who volunteer in the NGO sector.
- Connect youth work involvement with apprenticeships and professional development and the marketplace. There are many existing functioning models that could be imitated and implemented within the complex framework of Lebanon
- Stimulate cooperation between various NGOs and especially the scouts through competitions. Given the widespread antagonism promoted by the confessional system, a series of cultural events, sports and other activities to stimulate competition could eventually bring the different communities closer. This suggestion is crucial as it would transform a very specific weakness of the cultural diversity into a strength.

Long term

- Since youth work is linked to sectarian imbalances and there is little political will for change on these issues, the utilization of existing and new NGOs, who already replace the state on social welfare issues, would require the foundation of a supervisory body with

jurisdiction over NGOs and the power to oversee the practices of the relevant state agencies.

- Linking NGOs via a Lebanese closed umbrella network of associations and employing appropriate categorisation could lead to a hybrid public - private system of youth welfare in the long term.
- Encourage local mergers of similar NGOs through deregulation and financial incentives to enhance their capacity and efficiency.
- Give incentives (such as tax deductions) to potential investors, donors and institutions such as universities that can facilitate infrastructure projects and other pertinent capabilities with youth work, especially on the periphery.
- Establish a third party and independent board to supervise and evaluate state funding to promote transparency and limit cronyism.
- The Lebanese government responded to the Syrian crisis with restrictions on the NGO sector and given the additional complications of the confessional system, a centralised social welfare approach is long overdue. For this reason, a temporary deregulation of the Law of Associations would be incentive enough for the various NGOs operating in Lebanon to take better care of their beneficiaries and receive funds, even if this approach generates other complications. Unregistered NGOs should continue to remain outlawed.

Chronic and significant structural problems continue to hinder any kind of suitable transformations. Despite the relatively recent endorsement of a new regulatory and policy framework,

another profoundly streamlined and more straightforward policy on Youth Work needs to be elaborated. Policy reforms and streamlining will be a vastly difficult goal to attain given that youth work is not politically expedient in Lebanon, despite the fact that it is politically pertinent. The European Union has made serious steps to enhance the mobility and visibility of the various communities in order to root out negative stereotypes and prejudices and also raise awareness of cultural diversity. The now compulsory EVS accreditation for the Erasmus+ platform will enhance healthy competition between associations and will stimulate local, regional and international partnerships, thus augmenting their capacities and methodologies. All that is needed now is for Lebanese civil society to positively embrace those challenging and disconcerting issues that continually rear their heads so as to finally rise above divisive issues and build on the manifold traits that unite.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Youth Work NGOs are first and foremost supposed to be brokers of awareness, conflict resolution and intercultural tolerance, which for the most part they are. The work they do regardless of affiliation and potential hidden agendas is remarkable and indispensable. At the same time, it is not uncommon for their political, partisan and religious affiliations to lead to sectarianism and consequently prop up discrimination and prejudice between the communities that constitute Lebanon.

While exploring and analysing the encumbrances of the challenges facing youth and youth work in Lebanon it is easy to see that at the end of the day everything boils down to the diversity of communities. On the one hand Lebanon cannot survive without the sizeable contribution of civil society to youth welfare and purportedly there is a growing desire on the side of young people to overcome the sectarian predicament; on the other, it is the very components that make up Lebanese society that allows the problematic symbiosis to flourish. Despite youth work being a fact of life in Lebanon and the fact that the accomplishments of civil society are an integral and indispensable part of youth and social welfare, it is still neither a political nor community priority at the moment.

In Lebanon, the term “political party” does not have the same meaning that it has in other parts of the world. Political parties habitually, but not exclusively, represent members from a particular confession. The sustainability and efficiency of the confessional system is an issue of continuous controversy amplifying a fragmentation that has been further exacerbated by the high degree of political

corruption and the historically embedded differences among the different cultural identities.

Cultural diversity is generally contained by the geographical concentrations of the demographic distribution of all confessions, with a spillover effect in urban areas where cultural backgrounds often mix. Each confession and political party demonstrates an inevitable bias in its own constituencies. For this reason the spatial range of youth work is often localised and there is no appropriate adaptation of a homogeneous approach to social welfare and youth work for the same reason, since each stakeholder represents conflicting interests.

The prevailing confessional character of youth work in Lebanon often attempts to shield youth from the emergence of a more secular society, since such an occurrence would undermine the power sharing arrangements and possibly shake the foundations of Lebanese politics and the Constitution. This vicious circle is permanently fuelled by the ensuing chaotic and disorganised political and economic environment that encourages sectarian polarisation and the emergence of NGOs with an even stronger confessional character. Youth work chronically constitutes a less important element of the political debate and despite political elites regularly endorsing “new and improved” youth policies, these are not implemented. In addition, youth workers are often mobilised by their political and religious leaders, even within tertiary academic institutions, and not necessarily by actual youth needs or existential questions. Lebanese youth, despite being ostensibly

in sync with the contemporary social and cultural environment, more often than not continues to maintain traditional social values and principles.

Although the civil society seems to be deeply engaged in youth policy making, this commitment almost represents an impediment to actual policy reform as it hardly ever reaches the pertinent bureaucrats and politicians, due to conflicting interests, lack of structures, lack of transparency at municipal and state level and the constant movement of key figures in the state apparatus.

The perennial interaction between cultural identities and youth work in Lebanon can be attributed to a triptych of factors. Firstly, the systemic challenges that include the statutory deficits in the country, coupled with the institutional and political inadequacies described above. Social investment and a specific youth work strategy are still of minor importance for the political elites. Despite the fact that Lebanon has effectively become part of the general donors’ agenda, sponsors still impose many conditions on how funds should be used. In addition, the administrative and executive branches of many NGOs, despite the scarcity of donations and piecemeal international financial support, may turn down funds stemming from a country or institution that they disapprove of or when they have doubts about the underlying political agenda of the donor. Lastly, there are the cognitive hurdles that tend to further trigger fragmentation. Even supposing that Lebanese youth was naturally tolerant towards other cultural identities, the social backdrop and historically embedded values between different confessions

predetermine behavioural patterns to a certain extent. In the final instance, it is the social acceptance of intolerance that perpetuates the damaging attitude of Lebanese society in general towards the cultural identities that make up the country.

Discontent among young people is also exacerbated by the common practice of making public positions hereditary. The blatant lack of a meritocracy nourishes social discontent, fosters radical political movements and sometimes even leads to emigration. The lack of a positive perspective and the general perception amongst Lebanese youth that this state of affairs is unchangeable, both gives rise to a recruitment system for youth work that frequently has radical and religious undertones and to exactly the opposite, namely youth disengagement and apathy since they feel that any effort to try to better the current situation is futile.

In conclusion, the richness of cultural identities in Lebanon has a significant impact on youth work, but whether that is a beneficial or detrimental feature cannot be examined in one linear dimension. To date, the richness of cultural identities and the plurality of communities in Lebanon could be said to cause more problems than it resolves.

Bibliography

- BankMed Special Report. (2014).** *Analysis of Lebanon's Education Sector.* BankMed - Market And Economic Research Division.
- Baraka, H. (2008).** *Palestinians in Lebanon: Chains of Misery (Bound by the Law and the Market).* FMRS Working Paper No. 9.
- Beyond Reform and Development. (2015).** *Mapping Out Civil Society Organisations in Lebanon.* Beirut: Civil Society Facility South, *Beyond Reform and Development.*
- Chaaban, J., & Seyfert, K. (2012).** *Faith-based NGOs in A Multi-Confessional Society: Evidence From Lebanon.* Doha: Arab Center For Research And Policy Studies.
- Harb, C. (2010).** *Describing the Lebanese Youth: A National and Psycho-Social Survey.* Beirut: The Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs & AUB.
- Hussein, L. H. (2011).** *An exploration into senior and middle managers' effectiveness : The Education Programme, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees, Lebanon.* Bradford: University Of Bradford.
- Intenational Center For Not-For-Profit Law. (2015).** *NGO Law Monitor: Lebanon.* Retrieved September 15, 2015, from <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/lebanon.html>
- Lynch, S. (2011).** *Lebanon's scout promise.* Retrieved September 18, 2015, from Now: https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/reports/features/lebanons_scout_promise
- Naufal, H. (2013).** *Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach Under Political Divisions.* Florence: European University Institute, Migration Policy Center.
- Nelson, S. (2013).** *Is Lebanon's confessional system sustainable? Journal of Politics & International Studies , 9, 332-387.*
- Palestinian Refugee Research - Ajjal Center. (2001).** *Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon.* Retrieved September 16, 2015, from Palestinian Refugee Research Net: <http://prrn.mcgill.ca/research/papers/ajjal.htm>
- Rarrbo, K. (2006).** *Studies On Youth Policies In The Mediterranean Partner Countries: Lebanon.* EuroMed Youth III Programme.
- Shaery-Eisenlohr, R. (2011).** *Shi'ite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities.* New York: Columbia University Press.
- UNESCO - Youth Forum Lebanon. (2012).** *Youth Policy in Lebanon (Endorsed on 3rd April 2012).* Beirut: SIDA - UNESCO - Youth Forum.
- UNHCR. (2015).** *The Future Of Syria: The Challenge Of Education.* Retrieved September 17, 2015, from <http://unhcr.org/FutureOfSyria/the-challenge-of-education.html>
- YAP (2012).** *The Youth Policy in Lebanon (Case Study).* Beirut: Youth Forum For Youth Policy - Youth Advocacy Process.

Appendix

Youth Work in Lebanon and Cultural Identities: "Diversity of Communities: Richness or ...?" Participant Survey

Questionnaire 1

Your name please?

Title :

First Name :

Last NameQuestion :

What do you feel about the NGO sector in youth work?

- It supplements the efforts of the state
- Without it there would be a massive void that the state cannot fill
- In some cases it can be part of a wider sectarian conflict
- Confessional issues are NOT a primary concern for NGOs
- Confessional issues actually are a primary concern for NGOs
- The work they do is just amazing
- The work they do is simply inadequate
- Other

In your opinion what are the biggest challenges NGOs face in Lebanon?

.....

.....

Do you feel that there are certain opportunities that the NGOs could take advantage of in Lebanon at the moment?

.....

.....

After the study visit, which NGOs do you feel had the most impactful activities?

.....

.....

Please drop a line here if you have any thoughts as feedback

.....

.....

Diversity of Communities: Richness or.....?

.....

.....

Please write one to three words that could complete the sentence

Questionnaire 2

What is the name of your NGO?
.....

What are the main challenges you face as an NGO in Lebanon?
.....

How is the relationship with the state apparatus - friend or foe?
.....

What is your best achievement/practice?
.....

What could make things better for your endeavours?
.....

How difficult is the fundraising process?
.....

How difficult is the fundraising process?

- Very easy and lucrative
- Relatively easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult, it's a constant struggle to survive
- The NGO's survival is in constant peril

What is the relationship of your organisation with other confessions (if applicable) like?

You may choose more than one and add your own comments

- We accept absolutely everyone and we work together harmoniously
- We accept everyone but due to geography there are limitations
- We accept everyone but due to our confessional background there are limitations
- We don't accept everyone due to geography
- We don't accept everyone due to the NGO's confessional background
- Other

Do you work with Palestinian or Syrian refugees at the moment?

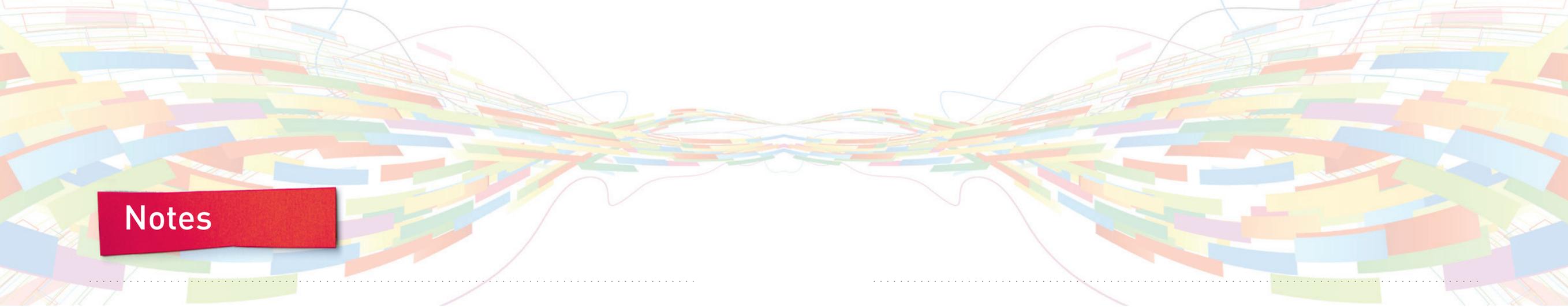
- Yes
- No

Are you a primarily international or domestic NGO?

- International
- Domestic
- Both applicable (due to outsourcing for example)
- Other

What is your name?
.....

Due to ethical considerations, if you wish to remain anonymous please leave the box empty.



Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, providing a space for handwritten notes.



The multinational group of 24 participants of the study visit comprised by 14 different nationalities. Lebanon, June 2015

Youth Work in Lebanon and Cultural Identities: "Diversity of Communities: Richness or?"



This publication has been edited and financed by the Regional capacity building support unit (RCBS) for Euromed Youth Programme IV dealing with the countries participating in the ENPI South (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia).

The overall objective of RCBS is to support the Euro Mediterranean youth units (EMYUs) in their efforts to ensure an efficient implementation of the Euromed Youth programme and an optimum achievement of results.

Specific objectives are:

- guidance and training activities for EMYUs and project leaders and organisations,
- coordination and synergies between actors and stakeholders (youth in action programme, Euromed platform, etc.),
- visibility and communication.

Author:

Nicholas Rossis,
Research fellow and project coordinator working on regular basis for the Institute of International Economic Relations and the British Ministry of Defence. His work on Lebanon has been featured in several governmental Policy Briefs on corruption and in a United Nations publication profiling Lebanon.

Editorial committee:

B. Abrignani,
Project Director of RCBS
F. Demicheli,
Project Officer of SALTO-YOUTH Euromed Resource Centre
M.R. Valentini,
Key Expert in Communication of RCBS

Publication Director:

The EU-funded Euromed Youth Programme under the European Neighbourhood Policy in collaboration with SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Resource Centre

Design and layout by Alain Dalerici. Photo credit: INJEP. Printed in FRANCE, December 2015

Youth Work in Lebanon and Cultural Identities: “Diversity of Communities: Richness or?”

Youth work is changing and opening new interesting perspectives for the future. The field of youth work within Meda countries is living strong changes and the role of young people is more and more relevant in the society.

It is the sixth issue of a collection in several languages called «*Youth Work in...*» composed of publications dedicated to youth work in the European Neighbourhood South countries.

This collection aims to support the cooperation within EuroMed area providing a depth reflection about the nowadays issues and challenges in youth work in the Euro Mediterranean context.

Youth Work in Lebanon and Cultural Identities: “Diversity of Communities: Richness or?” is the result of a study visit, organized with the coordination of RCBS (Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit for the EuroMed Youth. Programme IV) held in Lebanon from the 22nd to the 27th June 2015 that gave the chance to contribute, during five days, to the overall reflection about youth work in Lebanon with a specific focus on youth engagement related to religious or political affiliations. The specific aim of this study is to supply some new keys for reading the diversity in the youth field, strategies and good practices of youth work facing the complex situation in the country.

This publication provides:

- overview about Youth Work in Lebanon
- educational and pedagogical background of youth work in Lebanon
- statistics situation about youth in Lebanon and the overall reflection about youth work with a specific focus on youth engagement related to religious or political affiliations
- challenges of youth workers for developing projects facing the topic at local level
- some examples of youth projects and best practices.

Download it for free at: www.euromedyouth.net and
<http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/>



This publication does not represent the official view of the EC or the EU institutions. The EC accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to its content.