



EuroMed Youth III Programme



STUDIES ON YOUTH POLICIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES

LEBANON



Prepared by Kamal RARRBO



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The third phase of the **Euromed Youth Programme*** (Euro-Med Youth III), funded by the European Commission (DG EuropeAid) and launched in October 2005, is a regional Programme set up within the framework of the third chapter of the Barcelona Process '*Partnership on Social, Cultural and Human Affairs*'. The overall objectives of the Euro-Med Youth Programme are to promote intercultural dialogue among young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region, motivate active citizenship as well as to contribute to the development of youth policy.

The overall aim of the studies undertaken in **Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey** on Youth Policies, was to be a reference tool which would give all stakeholders in the field of youth, as well as youth project organisers, an overview of the situation of young people and of provisions available for them in the 10 partner countries. The objectives were to identify whether there was a Youth Policy, legislation or any other national strategy addressing the needs of youth and what kind of provision was made through non-formal education and youth work in the relevant partner countries.

Research for the studies was carried out by 7 experts and involved gathering of information, during a 5-month period, on basis of available written materials and resources, and as a result of missions to the studied countries to interview relevant youth authorities, organisations and young people individually or through focus groups.

The outcomes of the studies, each produced in a report format following a common structure for all the ten studies, give an enlightening overview of the definition and situation of youth in the Mediterranean partner countries. The studies focused on young people's rights and entitlements as active citizens, such as opportunities to vote, get elected and contribute to the decision-making process; the challenges faced by youth such as unemployment, immigration, housing, marriage, generational and cultural conflict, young women's place in society; young people's reactions in response to such challenges and description of provision for leisure-time activities and non-formal education through governmental and/or non-governmental youth institutions and organisations.

A reading of all the studies shows that a national youth policy is not yet fully implemented in any of the partner countries. However, each of them has a number of national directives, legislations, policies and/or strategies to address youth issues, usually at cross-sector level, even if youth are not, in some cases, recognised as a priority. The definition of youth varies from country to country, sometimes even within the same country depending on the responsible national authority. Non-formal education has no, or limited, place in most of the studied countries, formal education being the main priority of national authorities. The Euromed Youth Programme is assessed positively and considered to be an essential tool for the promotion of youth work and non-formal education.

Each report, published individually, provides a factual background on youth issues on basis of information collated by the relevant researchers. In addition, one document bringing together the executive summaries from each of the ten studies has been also produced to highlight an overview on the situation of youth within the Mediterranean region.

* www.euromedyouth.net

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people represent one fifth of the total population of four million inhabitants in Lebanon. Generally speaking, they are not recognised as being an important segment of the Lebanese society, but only as an element of a bigger community, which remains based upon denominational lines. The last decades have stressed the lines of division around political and denominational issues without special consideration given to youth issues, which means that, for the majority of young people socialisation is based on the community and not on age. Only a minority of young people develop social relations with the other religious communities.

The proportion of the 18-35 years old in Lebanon is 32%. The schooling rates by age groups are 96.9% for the 10-14 year olds, 70.8% for the 15-19 and 29.7% for the 20-24 age groups. The unemployment rate of those aged 15-24 is 22.6% and this rate is higher for young women (30.4%) than for young men (19.6%). Youth unemployment constitutes more than 70% of the overall unemployment rate in Lebanon.

When one talks about culture in Lebanon, it is inevitably about several cultures. One aspect is linked to the 17 religious communities which have legal recognition within the political system. The Lebanese territory is based on religious communities - "*cantonisation*": a village, a region or a district in a town can correspond to a religious community. This situation is also reflected in the use of different languages in Lebanon. The second cultural element is often ancestral and linked to traditional supports and breeding through families. Because of the complex cultural situation, young Lebanese people often reproduce traditions, cultural and religious divisions. Young people are given opportunities for training, becoming open to modernity and to foreign languages, but often staying within the limits of their community frontiers. Therefore, the young people move between three identities, which clash with each other according to mobilised interest and resources: the religious community, the national community and the supra-national community, which could be considered as either Islamic, Arabic, or occidental. In addition to being strongly sensitive to the culture of their own community, Lebanese young people are also sensitive to elements of the world mass culture, which are strongly conveyed by modern channels of communication technologies such as satellite televisions, the internet and mobile phones.

Lebanese young people share many characteristics and challenges with the other Mediterranean youth: a high unemployment rate, desire to leave the country, a narrow relationship with the extended family, a strong openness towards the outer world through communication technologies. Lebanese youth also has a particularly high degree of political consciousness.

When most of the young Lebanese people finish their studies, they often face unemployment, which weakens their occupational integration, especially as no programme has been established by the authorities to accompany and facilitate young Lebanese people's transition towards work life.

These young people are forced to call upon the last resource they have: family. Despite the problems of generational conflict, a certain number of young people rely on the resources of their family in order to facilitate their social and occupational integration. However, the problem remains unsolved for young people whose families do not have resources which could facilitate the transition towards a first job.

Young Lebanese people are very attracted by foreign countries, and according to a survey in 2003, more than 37% of young people aged 18-35 wish to emigrate or leave provisionally the country - this rate is higher among young men (43.3%) than young women (23%). The postponed departure from the parental house, the lack of housing and the absence of the young people's financial autonomy hinder young people's transition to adulthood and create tensions which need to be negotiated between their aspirations of autonomy, independence and the achievement of experiences, and the parents' needs and requirements, family values and economic realities.

The Lebanese Constitution, dated 1996, guarantees equality before the law, without any distinction. It also enacts freedom of education and each community has the right to have schools, under the state control. Compulsory education is theoretically guaranteed by the state until the age of 13. The age of majority is 18 both for men and women. It is also the age of legal liability, eligibility to military service and to get a driver's license; the age of voting is 21. The Lebanese Labour Code regulates the working conditions of those above 18. Marriage is governed by personal status laws and there are about 15 such laws linked to the 17 Lebanese religious communities.

Young Lebanese people are socially defined as the age group of 15-30. Three public departments are involved in the field of children and youth: that of the National Education, with primary, secondary and post-secondary schools; the Department of Social Affairs in child protection and crime prevention concerning young people under 18; and the Youth and Sports Department, the main public representative for youth since 2000. Therefore, youth policy is defined as being inter-sectoral and centralised within Ministries. The current President of the Republic has declared that youth would be a priority issue in his programme.

The Youth Department maintains relationships with 76 associations working in the youth field. However, more than half of these associations are public organisations. The state is largely absent in the field of non-formal education as well as of information and prevention towards youth. The initiative in the field of non-formal education is left to local and national NGOs. Actions which promote volunteering are conducted by the Department of Social Affairs through the voluntary youth camps.

About 100 associations work in the field of youth. An association's action is not dependent on the authorities. Nevertheless, the religious community of origin can help the association to develop its activities. Associations, which work within a multi- or non-religious environment, face difficulties to develop activities (financing, location, recognition of public and religious authorities...). The topics dealt by NGOs vary and many of them are based on multi-religious projects. Some of those topics are public health (prevention of addictions and AIDS); prevention in open spaces (street work) and organisation of summer camps; education on democracy and human rights; tutoring; environment;

youth leaders' training; citizenship education; humanitarian action, etc. There is no national council for youth; however, the Lebanese state has recognised the Youth Shadow Government as having such a role. The funding of Lebanese NGOs' activities often depends on foreign solidarity loans, notably from the European Commission, world organisations, embassies and private foundations.

Due to the lack of a youth policy and of public support towards group leadership, education, information and prevention, all international cooperation programmes are seen strategically important in Lebanon. Associations, as well as decision-makers, affirm the importance of programmes such as the Euromed Youth Programme, as it is the only programme allowing youth associations to develop exchanges with young people from other countries. This programme represents an important partnership action for the Lebanese Youth and Sports Department and it also contributes, even if modestly, to the necessity of an action planned, joined, and coordinated towards a youth policy.

Lebanese civil society, NGOs and non-profit associations are also supported by other international support mechanisms such as AFKAR, which is a programme of cooperation between the European Commission and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Lebanon; part 2 of AFKAR specifically focuses on youth.

Youth NGO leaders' knowledge about the problems faced by young Lebanese is solely gathered through the activities that these leaders organise within their associations. Youth leaders estimate that the problems of young Lebanese people are about unemployment, exile or youth emigration, the security situation, cultural identity problems and generational conflicts, young women's relegation from society. Youth leaders also think that there are difficulties for developing partnerships between the different associations because many of them take their origin from, or are part of, political and community organisations.

Young leaders point out the absence of the state, its lack of dynamism and of leading on the issue of a youth policy, whereas the NGOs' initiatives are very dynamic on this matter. Since 2000, there has been an effort to construct a youth policy as an initiative of some NGOs, through the setting up of numerous commissions. But since then, only a small number of NGOs has continued on meeting.

To conclude, it is possible to argue that one of the main challenges for Lebanon in general, but also for Lebanese youth in particular, is the multiplicity of environments between communities. It is argued that the formulation of youth policy depends on political and inter-community balances. However, today, there is neither a global strategy nor national youth policy in Lebanon and it is difficult to state that the needs of the young Lebanese people regarding their autonomy, need to training, job search, health, housing, information and citizenship are currently being met. There are also emergencies, such as the great number of young people who wish to leave the country and emigrate, which need to be addressed. On the other hand, the existing civil society resources could provide a basis for a dynamic involvement by the local actors in youth issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this study were to explore and understand the policy, regulations, and structures affecting youth in Lebanon. Research focused on its demographical place, its main difficulties, its relationships with the State but also with the denominational communities and their families. Its behaviour compared to its projects: the studies, then employment, marriage, housing, landmark identities and autonomy.

The study aimed to analyse more particularly if a youth policy existed in Lebanon and to understand how public Lebanese managers perceived the problematic of Lebanese youth. The youth NGOs' role was explored, as well as the issue of non-formal education.

The goal of this study was to understand Lebanese Youth policy but also its legislation and regulations which underlie youth rights and duties. The research aimed:

- To analyse the presence of a youth policy managed by a governmental body.
- To understand how the applied strategy tries to answer young people's needs.
- To determine the mechanisms of development of the youth involvement at a local and national level.
- To identify the place and the role of youth NGOs and their actions.
- To analyse the different existing international partnership mechanisms in the country.

1.2 Methodology

The chosen methodology in order to carry out this study was to organize in a first time a specific documentary reference list because no other similar work had been conducted in the past. This work has also allowed identifying documentation and research centres allowing completing the jurisdictional, legislative and regulatory information. This prior documentation work has allowed singling out the principal problems of Lebanese youth. After, it has been possible to create a survey form adapted to the local situation.

A series of interviews with local managers were planned: representatives of the Department in charge of youth and sports, leaders of local NGOs composed of and/or for young people, lawyers, and representatives of the Department of Justice, representatives of the Legal delegation of the European Commission, the responsible of the Euromed Youth Unit, managers of other international organisations.

1.3 Challenges of the study

There were some challenges that appeared during undertaking this study. The most important one is that a number of people responsible for youth within the National Council for Youth (NCY) apologized or refused to meet the researcher or provide him with the required data and information. Another important challenge was the absence of a youth-specific database and disparities in data collection methods.

2. SITUATION OF YOUTH

2.1 Definition of Youth

Generally, young people do not have a separate identity within the Lebanese society. A young person is only an element of a bigger community which remains based upon denominationalism. Youth is not recognized within a social or political context. When one speaks about youth, one refers to unemployment and desire to leave.

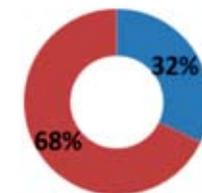
The Lebanese Constitution is based on a political system (denominationalism) founded on the more or less proportional distribution of power according to the demographic weight of each community (18 are recognized). In 1932, under the French protectorate, a census of the population was conducted in order to determine the weight of each community. At that time, there were 55% of Christians against 45% of Muslims, especially Sunnis. Since 1932, there has been no other census on the demographic weight of each community. In order to preserve the unity of the country and the balance between communities, an official new census is forbidden. This fact influences an understanding of the socially experienced situations and limits the attempts to analyse the social phenomenon. Of course, unofficial polls are conducted, but no censuses on the new test of strength between communities. For the majority of young people, this state of fact generates a socialization based on the community and not the age. A minority of young people develop socialization in these multi-religion places.

2.2 General Statistics: Demography, young people's rights and conditions

More than 37% of the Lebanese population is less than 20 years old - according to the results of the survey of the Saint Joseph University (USJ) in 2002. The study published in the Lebanese review in 2004 (ABI-KHALIL 2004) gives the following proportion:

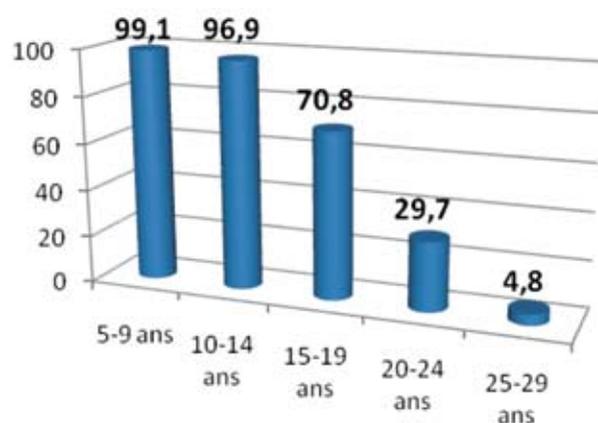
Graph n°1 -
Proportion of the 18-35 years old

■ 18-35 years ■ rest of the population



Young Lebanese generations cumulate the most important school attendance rate of the region. And, what especially differentiates them are the attendance rates in the secondary and post-secondary schools: more than 7 young people out of 10 between 15-19 years old and more than one third for the 20-24 years old follow their studies. This shows that school is at the centre of the strategies of young Lebanese people and their families in order to guarantee a social climbing or a simple future in terms of employment for their children. Young girls' education is, like elsewhere, more important. In this way, the rate of education for the 18-35 years old is of 20.1% for women and 18.9% for men (ABI-KHALIL 2004).

Graph n°2 - Schooling rate by age groups



The unemployment rate of the 15-24 years old is of 22.6% in Lebanon (according to figures of the Saint Joseph University study) and as in other countries, it is higher for young women (30.4%) than for young men (19.6%). Young people's unemployment rate (over 70%) is much higher than the general Lebanese adult unemployment rate.

The feature of young people's unemployment is that it has a nature of 'integration unemployment'. It looks like an unemployment of integration to active life which seems to be constituted of a more or less important period during which the young person cumulates small jobs and precarious contracts before finding a more long-lasting occupational integration.

These last decades, marriage has known a significant change, especially in the average age of marriage: it has gone from 23 years old in 1970 to 28 years old in 1996 for women and from 29 years old to 31 years old for men during the same period. The logical consequence of this is the development of celibacy not only for men but also for women. Therefore, there can be almost half of the 25-29 years old, a third of the 30-34 years old and a fifth of the 35-39 years old of young single women⁽¹⁾. Emigration of young women (more important in numbers) generates and strengthens these young women's celibacy, since the data of the University of Saint Joseph's research mentions the fact that the number of men is lower than the one of women in the 30 to 35 years age bracket. Qualitative or quantitative data on the matter of "mix" marriages between young people from different communities was not available.

(1) According to figures taken from Micheline Abi-Khalil, *Disenchant generations, carried by an unfavourable politico-economic conjuncture. Lebanese youth facing an uncertain future, Lebanon's review*, n°3945, 17/04/2004

When one talks about culture in Lebanon, one inevitably talks about several cultures. First, the ones linked to different religious communities which are often ancestral and linked to traditional supports and breeding through families. Lebanon is the country with the largest religious diversity in the region - 17 religions, with a distribution between Catholic Christians, non-Catholic Christians and Muslims. The 17 religious communities have a legal recognition because of the religious particularity of the political system. The following table shows the diversity of the Lebanese religious communities:

Catholic Christians	non-Catholic Christians	Muslims
Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Sunni
Greek Catholic	Armenian Orthodox	Shiite
Armenian Catholic	Syriac monophysite	Druze
Syriac Catholic	Assyrian	Alawite
Latin Catholic	Protestant	
Chaldean Catholic	Coptic Orthodox	
	Chaldean Orthodox	

Each of these religions benefits from a special private right applied by religious tribunals; until 1997, the religion of a Lebanese person was written on his/her identity card.

The Lebanese territory matches a religious membership - "cantonization": a village, a region or a district in a town can correspond to a religious community. The geography of Lebanon can be defined through different communities: Maronites are especially gathered in the East of Beirut and in the north of the road which leads to Damascus; the Druze are in majority in the south of the Mount Lebanon and in the Anti-Lebanon. Sunnis are concentrated in the north of the country and in big cities of the shore, which also gather the Greek Orthodox. The Shiite population, numerous in the suburbs of Beirut and in the south of the Mount Lebanon, is also concentrated in the north of the Bekaa plain. Young people's education and socialization are based on religious communities. Only a small minority of young people avoids this communitarian logic.

Like many of the young people of the South of the Mediterranean Sea, young Lebanese people are very attracted by foreign countries. According to a USJ survey in 2003⁽²⁾, more than 37% of young people from 18 to 35 years old wish to emigrate or leave provisionally the country. This rate is more important for young men (43.3%) than for young women (23%). Lebanese emigration or the existence of an important Diaspora abroad (especially in the United States, Canada, Europe, Black Africa and Middle East) represents a fundamental social data for the Lebanese society. According to unofficial estimates, there would be more Lebanese people abroad than in Lebanon. This emigration would affect more the Christian communities than Muslim ones. Hence the fact that a come back, even partial, of the Diaspora would unbalance the local political chessboard.

Civil war and different political crises have impoverished the Lebanese population. According to the researcher K. Hamdan (K. HAMDAN 2000), poverty affects one third of the Lebanese population. Poverty often generates youth delinquency, which is controlled by a legislation defined as the infringement of the law by a minor and minors' protection: decree law 119 of 16 September 1983, applying to any minor aged from 7 to 18 years old. In 1999, tribunals for Lebanese children have pronounced 1222 legal actions concerning 1147 minors, 24.5% of whom have been sentenced to imprisonment (Rehabilitation Centres or adult prisons).

(2) Young Lebanese's occupational integration and emigration, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University Saint Joseph, 2002.

2.3 Youth culture and trends

Because of this complicated cultural situation, young Lebanese people have to reproduce traditions and cultural and religious divisions. Families give youth a status of young people in training, becoming, open to modernity and to foreign languages but with limits, the ones of community frontiers.

Therefore, the young person is moved between three identity authorities which clash into each other according mobilized interest and resources: the religious community, the national community and the supra-national community which can be either Islamic, Arabic, or occidental (NAMMOUR J. 2007).

There is another religious and community characteristic seen in the social use of languages in Lebanon. So, apart from Arabic spoken by all the Lebanese people, the use of French and English answers to religious and social recognitions.

2.4 Young people's needs and challenges

Proportion of young students in an age group: 24,3% for men and 28% for women (ABI-KHALIL 2004). Education and training remain, for a young woman, a challenge more important for autonomy and freedom to choose. But, one must not forget the effects of schooling differences between young women and young men. More inclined to stay at home by nature indeed, young women tend more to "stay at home" than young men. This is of course seen in Middle-East societies.

Civil marriage for mix couples (mix inside of Lebanon) coming from different religious communities creates some problems. In order to break free from religious communities and laws, young people coming from different communities are forced to get married abroad, because civil marriage is not recognized in Lebanon. A certain number of associations led by young people develop claim actions in order to get recognition of the right and practice of marriage between communities. So for instance, in one day, one can get married in Cyprus, with two witnesses and at a cost that makes it possible only to middle classes at least.

Example of a theatre setting this problem: Here is a scene in Beirut - a group of young actors are acting in a play on the right to marry, on the quayside by the sea in Beirut. A boat nicely decorated carries two candidates to civil marriage in Cyprus. They are accompanied by songs of close relatives who stayed on the Lebanese shore. But, a piece of news comes and announces the Parliament's decision of granting the right to get married on the Lebanese soil. The future spouses' close relatives quickly inform and remind them to come back and to renounce to this trip. This anecdote observed by the actors poses a real problem of freedom, of course, for a minority of today's Lebanese youth.

Another issue, which can also encourage young Lebanese people (and especially the ones who have enough money) to leave Lebanon, is the one about its political or security situation. Between 1975 and 1990, there was a civil war. But regional instability, the war in the South of Lebanon and problems of spring 2008 feed the uncertainty and encourage eventual new departures for overseas.

Of course, the causes are multiple: unemployment integration, youth emigration, financial uncertainty of part of the Lebanese population, extension of the period of studies especially secondary and university ones, pressure from the community and the family. For the majority of young Lebanese people, family constitutes a resource in order to succeed an occupational integration but also a social integration for the period of departure from the family home. But the paradox is that this important resource can be a handicap for those who would like to escape from traditional links of the family and in the consequence from the community, especially since the State does not set up any accompanying support mechanism for young people (in terms of searching a job or housing...). This situation is a good example of the junction of a cultural element with another economic one which are a handicap for the necessary autonomy and emancipation of the Lebanese youth.

3. STRUCTURAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE ASPECTS OF YOUTH POLICY

3.1 Provisions

The Lebanese Constitution enacted on 23 May 1996 guarantees to all Lebanese people that they are equal before the law, without any distinction. Therefore, citizens have the same rights and duties (article 7 of the Constitution). The article 10 enacts freedom of education. Each community has the right to have schools (under State control).

The age of majority for men and women is 18 years old, especially for the age of legal liability, eligibility to military service and to the right to a driver's licence; 21 years old is the age at which Lebanese citizens have the right to vote.

Compulsory education is theoretically guaranteed by the State until the age of 13.

Regarding work, Lebanese Labour Code⁽³⁾ submits to regulation the labour of adolescents under 18 years old. Nevertheless, it allows the employment of young people aged between 16 and 17 years, on basis of a medical certificate.

Marriage is governed by personal status laws. In this way, there are about fifteen laws linked to the 17 Lebanese religious communities (some communities give this right to young women from the age of pre-adolescence).

3.2 Institutional approach to the Youth Sector

Young Lebanese people are socially appointed by the definition of the group of young people between 15 and 30 years old. Therefore, it is essentially a statistic definition but which corresponds to the age of a teenager or a student.

Three departments get involved in the field of Child and Youth: the one of National Education, with primary, secondary and post-secondary schools; the Department of Social Affairs in charge of child protection and crime prevention which concerns Young people under 18 years old; and, finally, Youth and Sports Department. Since 2000, it is the main representative for youth. Therefore, it is a public inter-field and centralized action within Ministers which defines youth policy in Lebanon. It is interesting to review the stages of the appearance of the Youth and Sports Department:

1. (1953/1955). Creation of a Sports and Scout Department linked to the central Administration of the National Education Department
2. 1964: Creation of the Youth Institution with the aim to deal with questions in relation with Youth and Sports.
3. Law No 247 from 7/8/2000: Creation of the Youth and Sports (on the basis of).

The Department is composed of five services including the most important one which is the Sports service. The Youth service is responsible for the following missions:

- Questions about authorities, commissions, clubs, associations and youth and scout federations by granting a licence and by verifying their conformity to conditions described in the laws and rules into force as well as the organization of files, data, registers and documents linked to them.
- Supervise and control the conformity of programmes, activities and annual Federations' meetings, authorities, commissions and associations of youth and Scouts according to the regulation in force.
- The implementation of public policies of youth and scouting in different educational, ethical, civil, social, leisure fields as well as plans and programmes about this subject.
- Elaboration and application of programmes of general or joint activities of young people and scouts in cooperation and with the coordination of associations and federations of youth and scouting.
- Promote and encourage the participation to out-door activities of young people and scouts.
- Supervision of the organization of activities of camps, training sessions, conferences, festival of youth and scouts, and summer camps.
- To ensure training courses, training and skill-development of technical managers specialized in several youth and scouting activities and the application of conventions and protocols linked to this subject.
- Supervision of training courses held abroad and attended by Lebanese young people and scouts.
- Presentation of proposals for trainers and foreign or local technical experts, and identify the needs of the Department that will collaborate with them.

The Youth Department maintains relationships with 76 associations working in the youth field. However, more than half of these associations are public organizations. It organizes more easily activities in the field of scouts and summer camps' activities. The Ministry does not have local structures for young people, nor information and prevention structures. The initiative in this field is left to local and national NGOs. The State is largely absent from the field of non-formal education and the information and prevention towards youth.

According to an interviewed person, "The political situation in Lebanon blocks most of the projects in the youth field"; with reference to various examples such as the adoption of a youth policy (result of the work of more than one hundred NGOs between 2001 and 2004); the 'youth card' project created by UNESCO; or the five-year development plan for youth created in association with UNICEF and UNESCO.

All these projects and others cannot be realized because of political fluctuations and obstacles.

Despite the magnitude of young people's unemployment rate, the Government has not set up any special strategy for the benefit of young people: no accompanying measure or policy to incite

employment. The young people are forced to mobilize resources from their familial or religious community of origin. In these cases, some of them develop emigration projects either towards Middle East countries (the nearest ones), or towards occidental countries.

In his inaugural speech, the new President of the Republic of Lebanon (Michel Sleiman) elected in May 2008, indicated that youth and security would be the priorities of his mandate.

3.3 Non-formal education and youth work

State support is defined by funding and support action. Because of the absence of public structures, the majority of non-formal education structures are held by private and association structures.

Youth and Sports Department supports different actions, especially for the associations leading actions towards children, such as the Scouts Association (known as Kechefs). Actions which promote volunteering are conducted by the Department of Social Affairs through the following programme:

The voluntary work camps aim at:

- Promoting communication among the Lebanese youth.
- Providing the Lebanese youth with opportunities to participate in the development of their society.
- Spreading out the idea of voluntary work, which is a first step into achieving the concept of joint responsibility between the private and public sectors.

Achievements:

- The establishment of active associations and clubs in the villages and towns where the camps had taken place
- The camps have revealed the importance of social work, which has surpassed the regional religious and political affiliations at general national level.
- These Camps were implemented along with development projects executed by the volunteers and financed by the ministry in collaboration with the civil society.

4. THE YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS AND NGOs DEALING WITH YOUTH

Hundreds of associations work in the youth field. An association's action is not inclined to an authorization of the authorities. Nevertheless, the religious community of origin can help the association to develop its activities. Associations which are in a mix or non-religious environment have many difficulties to develop activities (financing, location, recognition of public and religious authorities ...).

The topics dealt by NGOs are various and many of them are based on mix religious projects:

- Public Health: prevention of addictions and AIDS.
- Prevention in open spaces (street work) organization of summer camps
- Democracy and Human Rights education
- Tutoring
- Environment and sustainable development
- Youth leaders' training
- Citizenship education
- Humanitarian action, Palestinian camps
- Active citizenship

The funding of the Lebanese NGOs' activities often depends on foreign solidarity loans, notably European (European Commission, world organizations, embassies, private foundations, etc.). The difficulty noticed in multi-cultural projects' completion lies in their fragility during resurgence of violence that can destroy months of work between youth groups from different communities.

There is no national youth council. However, the Lebanese State has recognized the **Youth Shadow Government**. It develops relationships with the association **Nahar Eshabab** which handles this action. It is an action which promotes original youth citizenship which interests other Middle East States.

An example of good practices is the Youth Shadow Government. The 'Nahar Eshabab' Association has set up an initiative of youth involvement in public life. Since 2006, a youth government sits and deals with problems in Lebanon. It is set up on the basis of the official government (each young person manages a ministry). It is composed of 30 young people, one third are young women. This department tries to have each religious community represented. The youth government meets each week, it organizes a press conference in order to inform the public of its works' results. Sometimes, it meets also with the real government. It has already set up some projects that have been submitted to the different ministries. These projects deal with jurisdictional, environmental tourist and human rights issues. The association can also report on its works in the youth supplement of the Lebanese newspaper «El Nahar»: «Eshabab Nahar».

5. THE EUROMED YOUTH PROGRAMME

The Euromed Youth Programme is a regional programme, which had been launched at the end of the 1990s within the context of the Barcelona process.

The general objectives of the third phase of the Programme (Euromed Youth III) are to foster intercultural dialogue among the young people living within the Euro-Mediterranean region, to promote active citizenship, and to contribute to the development of youth policy, through various youth and youth work projects organised by and for young people. The projects' themes focus on the Programme's major priorities, which are: gender equality; minority rights; the fight against racism and xenophobia; as well as protection of the cultural heritage and of the environment.

Due to the lack of a youth policy and of public support towards group leadership, education, information and prevention, all international cooperation programmes are of a strategic importance to Lebanon. Associations encountered, as well as decision-makers, unanimously affirmed the importance of this type of programme. Associations are very interested in the Euromed Youth Programme due to its positive results and impact.

The Programme contributes in a multiple way to the development of actions for the benefit of Lebanese youth:

- Youth leaders' training and promotion of the culture of group leadership
- Exchange and knowledge of others
- Development of mix spaces in the Lebanese society which contribute in developing objective conditions of coexistence between Lebanese communities
- Elaboration and adoption of a youth policy in Lebanon.

It is the only programme allowing youth associations to develop exchange actions with young people from Mediterranean countries. This Programme represents an important partnership action for the Lebanese Youth and Sports Department. It also allows to train association managers and group leaders to international exchanges but above all to sensitize them to intercultural and inter-religious exchange problems, which are very relevant to the sensitive situation in Lebanon. The Programme contributes, even if modestly, to the necessity of an action planned, joined, and coordinated towards a youth policy.

At the third, and last call, for proposals of the current third phase of the Programme, 16 projects were introduced by youth organisations, out of which 9 were selected for financial support.

6. OTHER YOUTH SUPPORT MECHANISMS

AFKAR is a programme of cooperation between the European Commission and the Ministry of Social Affairs of Lebanon to strengthen the Lebanese civil society. It aims to support the NGOs and non-profit associations in the missions they conduct for civil and social rights. The Project aims at strengthening civil society organizations in order to lead actions with the following global objectives:

- Strengthening and consolidation of the rule of law;
- Strengthening respect and protection of fundamental rights;
- Promoting dialogue and a more important civic engagement among Lebanese citizens.

The targeted areas are: The promotion and consolidation of the dialogue between the Lebanese society's different components, and especially youth, through creative and innovative actions aiming at artistic, cultural and recreational activities, as well as actions of concrete interventions in direct partnership with beneficiaries.

The types of actions funded are: The priority is given to operational and concrete actions, and not to expensive and non-productive seminars/workshops. For instance:

- Social and juridical assistance; actions of support and integration to targeted groups;
- Actions of awareness, communication, extension aiming at, for instance, a better knowledge of laws and rights;
- Organization of awareness campaigns of public opinion (migrant workers' rights, respect of the environment, abolition of the death penalty);
- Actions aiming at « accountability » of the State and Administration's action towards citizens (publication of accounts, transparency and fight against corruption, etc.);
- Advocacy, lobbying and/or campaigns aiming at the modification or effective implementation of laws, proposition of new laws, 'advocacy' for their adoption (Penal Code, Labour Code, Law reduction of prison sentences, etc.);
- Organization of summer camps throughout the country with young Lebanese people from different religions (collective, artistic or other works, memory of war); etc.
- Exchanges of experiences and research of common solutions, debates, promoting action of dialogue, etc. ...

7. PERCEPTION OF THE ACTORS

Young leaders of Lebanese NGOs have limited knowledge of the problems young Lebanese are facing. This knowledge comes from the closeness produced by activities that these leaders organize within their associations. But this knowledge could be improved especially by objectifying the perceptions in relation to problems of addiction, AIDS, but also demographic relations between girls and boys. They estimate that the problems faced by the Lebanese young people are unemployment, exile or youth emigration, security situation, cultural identity problems, generational conflicts, and exclusion of young women. Nevertheless, managers insist to point out that education represents a positive value for young people as well as for their families. Numerous actors play a role in the development of education such as the religious congregations, private institutions and the Lebanese State. But, there is no information and orientation mechanism for young people, such as a Centre of Information and Orientation (CIO).

Unemployment forces young people to emigrate, especially boys. *"We loose many young people, so there are marriage problems for young women ..."* said an interviewee. Following quotes from the various interviewed actors reflect the current situation and attitudes of youth:

"Demography is at stake because the youth emigration is a plague which affects rich young people as well as those financially disadvantaged. For young people, emigration represents either the result of despair or a reasonable and thoughtful opportunity."

"Young people feel neglected due to unemployment, misery and a negative economic situation. They want to study and love life. This explains why some of them want to live in exile. And since the last 7 to 8 years, young women have also started to resort to emigration, as they have even less employment opportunities than young men."

"There is a problem of tolerance, of acceptance of the others and of citizenship. There is no Lebanese identity for young people, some of them go towards other foreign identity references"

On the subject of youth policy, young leaders point out the absence of the State, its lack of dynamism, its lack of leading and in contrast the initiative of NGOs which are very dynamic on this matter. Many think that the content of a youth policy should take into account the non-formal education question as well as sanitary, socio-occupational integration, autonomy and active citizenship.

Since 2000, there has been a construction of a youth policy that had been the initiative of some NGOs with a set up of numerous work commissions. But by 2008, there were only 10 to 12 NGOs which continued to meet.

"The content of a youth policy should have two dimensions: one about unemployment, vocational training and orientation, and a second one about leisure and culture with an easy access to leisure and cultural structures"

"A youth policy should give a priority to sports but also to the question of citizenship and to a fighting programme against young people's unemployment. There is a lack of State and actions towards young people. The State's weakness and the war effects explain that there is a lack of essential conditions for the youth's development. Local institutions do not have actions towards youth except in the culture field. The new President of the Republic has promised the priority for youth but young people do not believe words anymore."

"Very often, people think that there are difficulties of an inter-associative partnership between the different associations. This partnership is difficult because many associations take their origin or are part of political and community organizations."

"A certain number of associations are political relays to political parties and the partnership between associations is hard or even impossible."

"There are different youths because there are different youth organizations. For instance, the scouts: there is the Kechef (Scout) of mahdi, the Muslim kechef; the kechef al-maroni, the kechef al-taqadoumi, the kechef el-ichtiraki... The Communities' organizations manipulate easily young people."

This explains that some associative leaders insist and say that Lebanon's future will be possible thanks to the development of mixed environments, between communities. And that youth represents a challenge for religious communities. A challenge for the future!

"Mixed environments between communities have to be developed. But mixed environments do not increase so well, on the contrary, community tensions come back with crisis. As long as the social pact which governs the relations between communities, the situation will persist."

"Youth is a challenge for religious communities. Some young people reproduce tradition patterns but others invest in mix environments. Family and cultural membership is a resource and a support for a young person who knows some problems."

8. CONCLUSION

One of the challenges for Lebanon's future is the multiplication of mix environments between communities. It is with the actual youth that frontiers between communities will be able to evolve towards a pacific coexistence, that suburbs and towns and regions will no longer be mono-community. Social and cultural mix is the key for Lebanon's future.

This is the reason why, the central strategy in terms of youth policy would be for the State to set up a support mechanism, with relevant information and resources, to help young people in important issues such as (employment, housing, health, orientation, scholarship, etc.

Non-formal education would also be one of the key elements of this youth policy by encouraging and developing youth NGOs but also promoting young people's initiatives to encourage their active participation in their community. This suggests that a policy of positive discrimination has to be set up in order to encourage associations that really participate in multi-cultural, multi-gender as well as multi-religious projects. In fact, the young Lebanese women could play a fundamental role in an inter-cultural and inter-religious peaceful society.

Today, in Lebanon, there is neither global strategy nor national youth policy. Young Lebanese people have many needs. These needs are not met at present with regards to autonomy, support to training, job search, health, housing, information and citizenship involvement. There are also emergencies when one considers the large number of young people who wish to leave the country and emigrate.

During his inaugural speech, the new President of the Republic, Mr Michel Sleimane, has declared that youth would be a priority issue in his programme.

The formulation of youth policy depends on political and intercommunity balances. This is the reason why youth policy in Lebanon remains today a project. However, civil society's resources exist and can be a basis in order to involve local actors in a dynamic of involvement in youth issues.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the contribution of Justine Abi-Saad for the programming of the talks in Beirut and all the association leaders met.

Annex 2: Country profile (part 1)

Full name of the Country	Lebanese Republic	
Government Type	Republic	
Area	10,452 km ²	
Capital City	Beirut	
Other main cities	Sidon, Tripoli	
Population	4,200 000	
Gender Ratio (F/M)	F: 50,2	M: 49,8
Ethnic composition	Arab, Armenian, Druzes, Alawites	
Age Structure		
0-14	—	
15-24	—	
25-30	—	
Median age	—	
Educational background (F/M ratio)		
Primary	F: 82	M: 82
Secondary	F: 76	M: 70
Tertiary	F: —	M: —
Literacy rate	Youth: —	Adult: —
Unemployment rate		
	Youth: —	Adult: —

Annex 2: Country profile (part 2)

Summary of age related regulations and rights	
Compulsory education (up to.....)	13
Compulsory military service	—
Legally employable (from...)	16
Marriage without parental consent	according to the religious community
Minimum voting age	21
Minimum age to be elected	N/A
Driving licence	N/A
Purchase of alcohol and drinkink	N/A
Purchase of tobacco products and smoking	N/A

Local Currency/ Exchange rate (Euro)	1 € = 2,200 Lebanese pounds
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Annex 3: List of Abbreviations

CAS	Central administration of statistics
CIO	Centre of Information and Orientation
EC	European Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Annex 4: Glossary

Civil war: which took place between 1975 and 1990 - division based on confessional and politics.

Kechef: Scout Association

Political system in Lebanon: based on **confessionalism**

Annex 5: Bibliography and resource materials

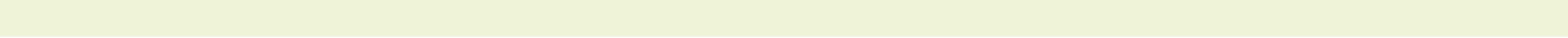
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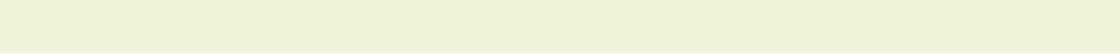
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Institut national de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation populaire
Regional Capacity Building and Support Unit
/ Unité Régionale de Renforcement des Capacités
11, rue Paul Leplat
F78160 - Marly le Roi - France

Telephone : + 33 1 39 17 27 55
Telefax : + 33 1 39 17 27 57
Email: rcbs@injep.fr

Web: www.euromedyouth.net



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