



**ADOLESCENT
GIRLS** COMMUNITY
OF PRACTICE



Intentional Design Practitioner Report

Beginning with the Girl Roster Results from West Bekaa, Lebanon, to Reach the Unreached Girls



BASMEH & ZEITONEH
RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

By Rima Mourtada

Field Teams:

Women Now for Development in West Bekaa: Khitam Diab, Laila Haraba, Nada Hassan, Joumana Lahham, Jihan Obeid, Jana Seiffeddine, and Women Now leadership (Aisha Dennis, Weam Ghabash, and Roula Roukbi)

BasmeH and Zeitooneh in Beirut: Amina Dawood, Samah Dirawi, Ali Fatayerji, Omar Mansour, Amina Mousa, Basmah Mousa Ousaily, Mohammad al Yassine, Alaa Zakaria, and BasmeH and Zeitooneh leadership (Rabi Ahmad and Amal Al Raai)

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The Adolescent Girls Community of Practice is a project of the Population Council.

<https://buildcommunity4girls.org/>

About

The Intentional Design approach has been foundational to the Population Council’s work since 2000, when on-the-ground programs to reach the most excluded girls in the poorest communities greatly expanded. This practitioner report is part of a series of 20 reports reflecting work in sites around the world from 2000 to 2020. The Intentional Design approach was implemented in these sites with nongovernmental and governmental partners who explored the question: Why invest in girls? Once that was understood, the Council offered learning tools to navigate the questions: Where do we work? With whom do we work? When, chronologically, in the girls’ life cycles are the most crucial moments? Which content is meaningful and realistic and builds girls’ protective assets? What does success look like for different segments of girls?

In 2013, the Girl Roster tool was added when it was clear that many partners lacked the technical and scientific resources to establish the “universe” of girls in the places they had selected to work. Intentional Design tools—with the Roster being the most known and catalytic learning aid—have been utilized in South and East Asia; the Middle East; Central, East, and West Africa; North America; Latin America; and the Caribbean.

The Roster has been adapted for use in an array of sociodemographic contexts including dispersed rural villages, poor urban neighborhoods, conflict zones, refugee camps, densely packed informal/migrant-receiving settlements, high-risk HIV zones, before and after epidemics, as a rebuilding tool, and in Native American reservation communities. In every context, the Roster provided a transformative opportunity to see girls’ lives more systematically, drawing both quantitative and qualitative information. The efforts to estimate and segment the universe of girls has challenged initial assumptions about girls, families, safe and unsafe zones in communities, and the accessibility and relevance of services, even among those who felt they knew their community, including longstanding program staff. Across the board, practitioners report that on-the-ground application of the learning tools generates surprising and useful knowledge vital to shaping their work, assessing its reach, and articulating plans for expansion.

In the 20 reports that comprise this series, our partners share their experiences applying Intentional Design tools and principles. The reports represent just a few on-the-ground projects, but most of our partners report that the Intentional Design approach has taken root. We honor our partners for their honesty and dedication. They inspire us.

Judith Bruce and Sophie Soares

Authors, *Intentional Design: Reaching the Most Excluded Girls in the Poorest Communities—A Guide for Practitioners and Advocates*, from which these reports were excerpted.

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Findings and Decisions	Implementation Observations and Adaptations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, 45% of 6-18-year-old girls who ever attended school are currently not in school in West Bekaa and 20% are currently not in school in Beirut. • There was a dramatic decline in schooling at age 13 in West Bekaa and at age 14 in Beirut. • There was a higher proportion of girls who were not in school in West Bekaa among those living inside the ITS (Informal Tented Settlements) (43%) than those living outside the ITS (21%). This is a significant program challenge. The proportion of girls who were not in school in Beirut was much higher for those living in Shatila camp (32%) than it was for those living in Burj al Barajneh Camp (13%), and it was higher among Syrian refugee girls (21%) than it was among Palestinian refugee girls (11%). • Roster results as well as results of other studies suggest that residing inside the ITS may impair girls' access to schooling; there is pressure to remain inside the ITS due to security concerns, which increases risk of child labor, child marriage, and adolescent childbearing. Therefore, future programs should use outreach activities to increase the chances of reaching girls living in ITS. • Around 10% of the rostered 13-17-year-old girls in both settings (Bekaa [n=480] and Beirut [n=1,105]) were currently or previously married. • The percent of ever-married girls was higher for those living inside the ITS (14%) than for those living outside the ITS (8%). • 66% of ever-married girls aged 13-17 in West Bekaa and 82% of girls in Beirut had at least one pregnancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining access to most of the settlements in West Bekaa requires an official approval from the municipality. This ensures the cooperation of the <i>Swawishs</i> (camp leaders) thus facilitating the rostering process inside the settlement, • Paring Syrian community workers with Lebanese ones eased the tension the Syrian community workers felt when approaching Lebanese households. • Participants who were not familiar with the collaborating NGO in West Bekaa were sometimes hesitant to participate; this underscored the importance of liaising with the community and the rosterers wearing name tags with the NGO logo on them as a means of introduction. • Gaining access to some of the neighborhoods in Beirut was difficult because of security concerns, so not all households in those neighborhoods were rostered. • Questions about marriage and pregnancy should apply to girls starting at 9 years of age, given the sometimes extreme child-marriage patterns in those communities (and not 12 years of age, as originally assumed). Additionally, many girls between 9 and 12 are engaged, which is one of the danger signs that those girls will most likely fall off-track (drop out of school and marry before turning 18).

Findings and Decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 20% of the rostered 6–17-year-old girls in both settings participated in health or development programs, confirming that existing programs are not yet sufficiently reaching younger girls. • Programs in Bekaa are not sufficiently reaching younger girls who are facing many risks. Without intentional reorientation, such programs will continue to disproportionately reach the older age categories. • There should be outreach programs to recruit (10–17-year-old) Syrian refugee girls from the following locations: Bar Elias, Marj, and Saadnayel (inside and outside the ITS) in West Bekaa; the ITS from all of the rostered locations in West Bekaa; neighborhoods that had the highest percent of off-track girls in each Burj al Barajneh and Shatila camps in Beirut. • In both settings, programs should give additional attention to: 1) out-of-school 10–14-year-old girls who are at risk of child marriage and early pregnancy, and the associated health risks and poverty, and 2) 13–17-year-old married girls, the majority of whom are also mothers with poor access to health and other vital services.

The Lebanese government did not establish official camps for refugees as neighboring countries such as Jordan and Turkey did. In 2018, 66% of Syrian refugees lived in residential buildings, 19% lived in informal tented settlements, and 15% lived in nonresidential buildings (e.g., unfinished buildings, factories, warehouses and shops) (UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP 2018).

Syrian refugee adolescent girls in Lebanon have limited access to education and are at high risk of child marriage and early pregnancy, as demonstrated by a number of studies in West Bekaa as well as in Burj al Barajneh and Shatila camps in Lebanon (UNFPA, AUB, and SAWA 2016; Basmeh and Zeitooneh 2017; Mourtada, Schlecht, and DeJong 2017). A previous study (a cross-sectional survey) conducted by a research team at American University of Beirut in collaboration with UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) in August 2016 that surveyed 2,400 9–24-year-old Syrian refugee girls in three regions in West Bekaa, Marj, Bar Elias, and Qab Elias, demonstrated that half of the 9–17-year-old girls (1,612 girls) were not attending school and the prevalence of child marriage among sampled girls/women was 34.6%. Additionally, 61% of the 15–17-year-old married girls had at least one pregnancy (UNFPA, AUB, and SAWA 2016). This is concerning given the fact that Syrian refugee women, particularly adolescent girls, have limited access to sexual and reproductive health services (UNFPA, AUB, and SAWA 2016; Kabakian-Khasholian et al. 2017; Han et al 2019). Additionally, most Syrian refugees are unable to register their children due to many logistical and financial barriers (UNFPA, AUB, and SAWA 2016). Unregistered children face additional barriers to access major services such as education and health services (UNFPA, AUB, and SAWA 2016).

The 2018 vulnerability assessment (UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP 2018) (the most recent at the time of this report) revealed that 69% of Syrian refugees were below the poverty line. The same assessment also showed that despite all the efforts attempting to address school enrollment

Background

Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Lebanon is among the countries that have been hosting the highest number of Syrian refugees in the region since the onset of the Syrian conflict. Lebanon has the fourth largest refugee population in the world and the largest concentration of refugees per capita (UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP 2018).

The latest figures from UNHCR indicate that there are currently 919,578 registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon (UNHCR data portal), however this figure is believed to be much higher reaching 1.5 million refugees if unregistered refugees are included. Among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 37% reside in Bekaa, especially West Bekaa, which includes large agricultural areas. Almost 20% of refugees are 5–17-year-old girls (183,916 girls).

for Syrian refugees in the country, more than half of Syrian refugee children aged 3–17 were still out of school in 2018 (UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP 2018). Consequently, adolescent girls who are out of school are even at an increased risk of child marriage and child labor.

Gaps of Present Programs on the Ground

Programs offered by NGOs and UN agencies have largely focused on collective priorities in humanitarian settings unintentionally neglecting the needs of adolescent young females, especially those who are out of school and those who married at an early age. Additionally, the few programs attempting to reach vulnerable adolescent girls were not always successful due to the content of such programs that did not always prioritize their needs or because of implementation mechanisms that were not culturally or contextually appropriate.

For example, most of the programs are provided at the NGOs' centers making it difficult for girls who do not live within close proximity of those centers to participate. Sometimes programs are offered at inconvenient times that clash with school attendance (considering that most Syrian refugee girls attend the afternoon shift at schools). Another factor that may discourage girls' participation is the lack of female-only spaces—which raises reputational and safety concerns for girls and young married women. Moreover, centers offering female programs may have concurrent programs for men and boys, thus effectively seen by the community as mixed-sex. Some of the outreach programs are offered at schools preventing girls who are not attending school (and who are likely to be more vulnerable) from benefiting from such programs. Moreover, many programs are subject to serial interruptions, given the high mobility of refugees in Lebanon.

In the dynamic refugee context, there is high staff turnover within the NGOs, and without intentional efforts, there are few community advocates for girls and women or a sustainable female leadership. The rostering highlighted the repressive leadership in informal tented

settlements (ITS), under universally male leadership, which promotes restrictive norms for girls and women, including restricting them from attending schools or NGO-run programs, and the active promotion of child labor and marriage.

Funding gaps also prevent well-intentioned NGOs from establishing long-term evidence-based programs that have sufficient continuity with their constituent households and the girls and women within them to be beneficial and build sustainable capacities.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project is to address the above-mentioned gaps that limit the NGOs' ability to reach the most-at-risk Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon, thus magnifying the hazards resulting from war and displacement; this is achieved by building the capacity and resources of local NGOs to:

- Identify the categories and the numbers of adolescent girls and young women who are most at risk (especially those who are not currently reached by existing programs);
- Modify current programs or create new ones so they are more likely to address the social, economic, and reproductive health needs of the most disadvantaged adolescent girls and young women.

In this practitioner report, the most-off-track girls, as defined by the Population Council, include the following segments:

- Girls (6–17 years old) who are not currently attending school or who have missed several years of schooling and thus are at elevated risk of child marriage and adolescent childbearing;
- Girls who are isolated (such as those living in ITS), focusing on 10–14-year-old girls;
- Girls who do not currently live with their parents;

reaching, and areas they would like to reach). Because of privacy concerns, we do not list the names of the subcommunities (neighborhoods or ITS within each of those cities).

Rostering was conducted in ITS (which were located in both urban and rural areas) as well as in residential areas such as rented apartments, rooms, or unfinished buildings in the selected communities in each of those cities. The type of accommodation entails different challenges, which are important to consider when designing programs.

Figure 1 highlights the different areas where WN staff applied the Girl Roster survey. Darker colors indicate higher concentrations of Syrian refugees per area.

WN staff recruited six female community workers (five Syrian and one Lebanese, aged 19–45 years) based on their qualifications. Those community workers were already attending programs at a WN center and expressed interest in working with WN. They received a two-day training session in September 2019. The Rostering process started around the end of the same month and was completed within the first week of November 2019.

SOUTH BEIRUT

Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh refugee camps in south Beirut were established in the late 1940s mainly to accommodate Palestinian refugees.

Since the Syrian conflict and the influx of Syrian refugees in 2011, Shatila camp is estimated to have around 30,000 people and Bourj al Barajneh camp is estimated to have around 50,000 people. The population in the camps includes Palestinian, Syrian, and other refugee and migrant workers from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and other locations.

The camps do not fall under the authority of the Lebanese government. Services in both camps are provided by host authorities such as the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) that provides services such as education and health to Palestinian refugees.

Both camps are integrated in the surrounding urban areas and therefore are different from other typical refugee camps that are more rural and isolated. However, both camps are overcrowded, with poor living conditions and limited access to basic services such as clean drinking water and electricity.

B&Z selected a number of neighborhoods in each camp. Eight Palestinian community workers were recruited (four females and four males). Pairing male and female Palestinian community workers was important for both access and security concerns. Rostering for B&Z started in the first week of December. It was delayed by one month due to the political turmoil in the country that resulted in demonstrations and road closures.

TABLE 1. THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND GIRLS PER LOCATION AND TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

Location	Households inside ITS N (%)	Households outside ITS N (%)	Girls inside ITS N (%)	Girls outside ITS N (%)
Bar Elias	217 (60.3)	143 (39.7)	520 (64.1)	291 (35.9)
Housharimeh	0 (0)	307 (100)	0	379 (100)
Majdalanjar	101 (46.1)	118 (53.9)	162 (48.6)	171 (51.4)
Marj	152 (40.9)	220 (59.1)	294 (49.6)	299 (50.4)
Saadnayel	94 (64.0)	53 (36.0)	190 (68.4)	88 (31.6)
Thaalabaya	0	29 (100)	0	55 (100)
Total	564 (39.3)	870 (60.7)	1,166 (47.6)	1,283 (52.4)

FIGURE 2. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY GIRLS' AGE FOR 6-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO EVER ATTENDED SCHOOL (N=1,010 GIRLS) IN WEST BEKAA

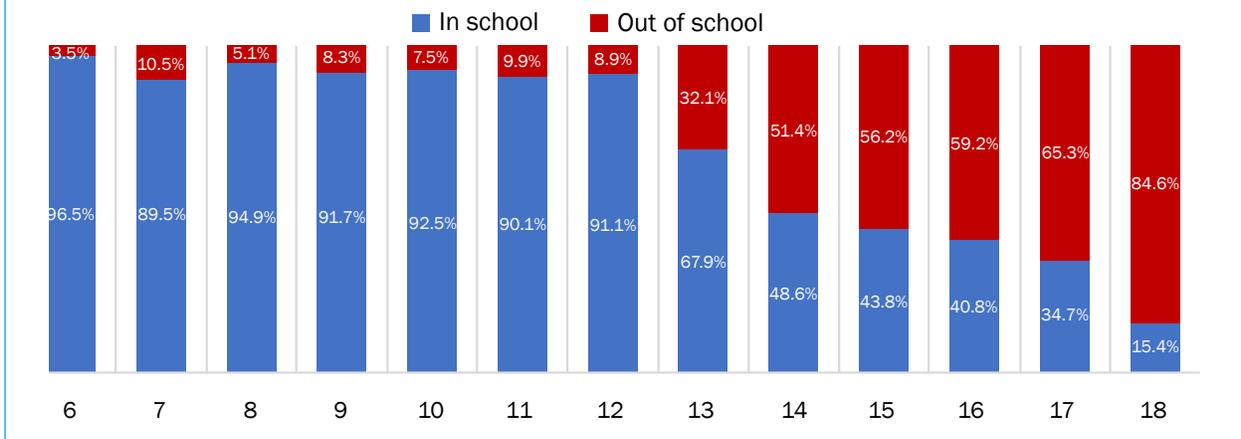


TABLE 2. CURRENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PER LOCATION (6-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO EVER ATTENDED SCHOOL, N=1,010)

Location	Attending school N (%)	Not attending school N (%)	Total
Bar Elias	163 (55.1)	133 (44.9)	296
Housharimeh	165 (84.2)	31 (15.8)	196
Majdalanjar	141 (82.5)	30 (17.5)	171
Marj	136 (68.3)	63 (31.7)	199
Saadnayel	83 (67.5)	40 (32.5)	123
Thaalabaya	20 (80.0)	5 (20.0)	25
Total	708 (70.1)	302 (29.9)	1,010

Results: Women Now, Basmeh and Zeitooneh

WOMEN NOW

Sample Overview

The community workers approached 1,741 households in six areas in West Bekaa. A total of 307 households refused to participate (18% of the approached households). A total of 1,434 households were rostered including 2,449 0-24-year-old girls.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of households and girls per community and housing type. Among the rostered households, 92% are of Syrian origin, 7% are of Lebanese origin, and the remaining 1% are of Palestinian origin. Among

the rostered girls, 52% live outside the ITS and 48% live inside the ITS.

Schooling

As per the standard Girl Roster questionnaire, schooling questions were only asked for 6-24-year-old females. We present the findings with respect to females who are 6-18 years old.

The proportion of girls who were currently attending school decreased as the girls' age increased (see Figure 2).

- There is a sharp drop in school attendance at age 13, where the proportion of girls who are currently in school drops from 91% at age 12 to 68% at age 13.

TABLE 3. AGE FOR GRADE PER LOCATION (6-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL, N=708)

Location	2y+ behind grade N (%)	Less than 2y behind grade N (%)	Total
Bar Elias	104 (63.8)	59 (36.2)	163
Housharimeh	61 (37.0)	104 (63.0)	165
Majdalanjar	51 (36.2)	90 (63.8)	141
Marj	47 (34.6)	89 (65.4)	136
Saadnayel	42 (50.6)	41 (49.4)	83
Thaalabaya	8 (40.0)	12 (60.0)	20
Total	313 (44.2)	395 (55.8)	708

- There are also sharp drops in the proportion of girls who are currently in school at ages 14, 17, and 18. Of the rostered 15-year-old girls, 56% are currently out of school.

Table 2 shows the current status of school attendance per location. Bar Elias has the highest percentage of girls who are currently not attending school (45%).

Almost 43% of girls residing inside the ITS are currently not in school compared to 21% of girls residing outside the ITS.

Table 3 shows girls who missed at least two years of school per location. Of 708 girls who are currently attending school, 44% are at least two years behind their grade. Bar Elias had the highest percentage of girls who missed at least two years of schooling (64%), followed by Saadnayel (51%) and Thaalabaya (40%), though Thaalabaya's sample size was small.

The proportion of girls who missed at least two years of school was much higher among those living inside the ITS (57%) compared to those living outside the ITS (38%).

Marriage and Pregnancy

Questions about marriage, as per the standard questionnaire, were asked for girls above 12 years old only (975 girls). Among 13-24-year-old rostered girls, 34% were married, while 10% of 13-17-year-old girls were ever-married. The highest percentage of 13-17-year-old girls who ever married were from Marj (14%) followed

by Bar Elias (11%). In some of the locations, the total number of girls was very small, indicating more girls would need to be rostered to confirm these patterns.

The proportion of 13-17-year-old girls residing inside the ITS who were ever-married was higher compared to the proportion of ever-married girls residing outside the ITS (14% versus 8%, respectively).

Out of the 358 ever-married girls, 82% had at least one child or were pregnant at the time of the survey. Of the 13-17-year-old ever-married girls, 66% had at least one pregnancy.

The proportion of ever-married girls who were ever-pregnant was roughly similar across the selected locations and among those living inside and outside the ITS.

Participation in Non-school-based Programs

Overall, 15% of the 1,264 10-17-year-old girls participated in NGO programs (by WN or other NGOs). We found that older girls are more likely to participate in NGO programs compared to younger ones. For instance, 35% of 18-24-year-old girls participated in NGO programs compared to 11% of 10-12-year-old girls and 24% of 13-14-year-old girls.

The highest percentage of 6-17-year-old girls who participated in NGO programs came from Saadnayel (27%) followed by Bar Elias (19%), Majdalanjar (19%), and Marj (13%).

Only 5.5% of the rostered 6–17-year-old girls participated in programs by WN. The highest percentage of girls who participated in programs by WN were located in Majdalanjar (16%), followed by Marj (9%) and Saadnayel (7%).

The proportion of 6–17-year-old girls who participated in any NGO program was similar for girls living inside the ITS (15.4%) and those living outside the ITS (15.2%). However, the percentage of girls who participated in WN programs was much higher for those living outside the ITS (9%) than those living inside the ITS (2%).

On-track Off-track Girls

We present three categories of “off-track” 6–17-year-old girls based on certain vulnerability criteria (constructed by the Population Council):

- Category 1. The most-at-risk girls: Girls who are out of school OR living with no parent OR married OR have a child.
- Category 2. The next risk level (adding single parent): Girls who are out of school OR living with no parent OR living with one parent OR married OR have a child.
- Category 3. Adding in-school girls who are behind their accrual grade: Girls who are out of school OR behind grade for age (2+ years) OR living with no parent OR living with one parent OR married OR have a child.

Table 4 lists the proportion of girls who are off-track per housing type, location (highlighting only the results for the locations that had the highest and lowest off-track girls), and per origin. Bar Elias, Marj, and Saadnayel had the highest proportion of girls who were off-track for all three categories.

Overall, 46% of the 6–17-year-old girls were off-track according to Category 1, 52% were off-track according to Category 2, and 73% were off-track according to Category 3. The proportion of girls who are off-track is noticeably higher for the older two age

categories (13–14 and 15–17) compared with the younger age categories. For instance, 69% of 15–17-year-old girls were off-track according to Category 1 compared to 38% of 6–9-year-old girls.

The proportion of girls who were off-track was much higher for girls living inside the ITS (64%) than for those living outside the ITS (29%).

The proportion of girls who were off-track was noticeably higher for Syrian refugee girls compared with the local Lebanese girls. For instance, and according to Category 1, 49% of Syrian refugee girls were off-track compared to only 4% of local Lebanese girls. The sample size for Palestinian refugee girls was too small to draw strong conclusions (19 girls), although they were clearly more vulnerable than the local Lebanese girls.

BASMEH AND ZEITONEH

Sample Overview

Rostering was conducted in selected neighborhoods in two camps; Burj al Barajneh camp and Shatila camp. A total of 4,533 households were approached by the community workers, out of which, 3,905 households were rostered. A total of 628 households were excluded, 39% of which were empty, 32% declined to participate, and 29% had no adult at home. Out of the 3,905 rostered households, 2,262 (58%) were from Burj al Barajneh and 1,643 (42%) were from Shatila.

Among the households, 839 did not have any girls. Out of the 6,232 rostered girls, 3,506 (56%) were of Syrian origin, 2,550 (41%) were of Palestinian origin, and 176 (3%) were of other origins. Among girls in Burj al Barajneh, 50% were Palestinians, 49% were Syrians, and 1% were of other origins. Among girls in Shatila, 67% were Syrians, 29% were Palestinians, and 4% were of other origins.

Schooling

Almost 80% of the 3,111 6–18-year-old girls who ever attended school were currently attending

TABLE 4. PROPORTION OF OFF-TRACK 6-17 YEAR-OLD-GIRLS (N=1,264) PER LOCATION, HOUSING TYPE, AND ORIGIN

Category	Type	On-track (%)	Off-track (%)
Category 1	A-All locations	54.4	45.6
	B-Housing type		
	Inside ITS	36.4	63.6
	Outside ITS	70.7	29.3
	C-Location		
	Bar Elias	37.0	63.0
	Majdalanjar	78.5	21.5
	D-Origin		
	Syrian	51.4	48.6
	Lebanese	95.7	4.3
Palestinian	36.8	63.2	
Category 2	A-All locations	48.3	51.7
	B-Housing type		
	Inside ITS	33.2	66.7
	Outside ITS	62.0	38.0
	C-Location		
	Bar Elias	31.4	68.6
	Majdalanjar	71.4	28.6
	D-Origin		
	Syrian	45.0	55.0
	Lebanese	92.5	7.5
Palestinian	36.8	63.2	
Category 3	A-All locations	27.5	72.5
	B-Housing type		
	Inside ITS	14.4	85.6
	Outside ITS	39.3	60.7
	C-Location		
	Bar Elias	11.4	88.6
	Majdalanjar	46.9	53.1
	D-Origin		
	Syrian	23.4	76.6
	Lebanese	76.3	23.4
Palestinian	31.6	68.4	

FIGURE 3. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BY GIRLS' AGE FOR 6-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO EVER ATTENDED SCHOOL IN BURJ AL BARAJNEH AND SHATILA (N=3,111)

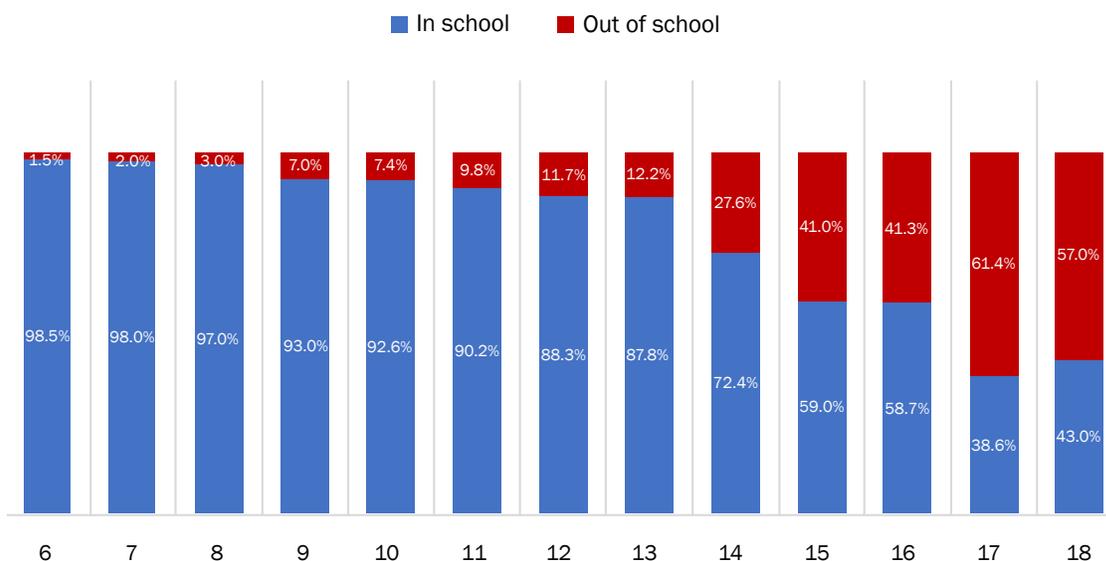


TABLE 5. CURRENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PER CAMP (6-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO EVER ATTENDED SCHOOL, N=3,111)

Camp	Attending school N (%)	Not attending school N (%)	Total
Burj al Barajneh	1,675 (87.1)	248 (12.9)	1,923
Shatila	810 (68.2)	378 (31.8)	1,188
Total	2,485 (79.9)	626 (20.1)	3,111

school. The proportion of girls who were currently attending school decreased as the girls' age increased (see Figure 3).

- There is a sharp drop in school attendance at age 14: the proportion of girls in school dropped from 88% at age 13 to 72% at 14.
- There are sharp drops in the proportion of girls who were in school at ages 15 and 17. At least 40% of girls who were 15 and above were not in school.

The proportion of girls who were not in school was much higher among girls living in Shatila (32%) than girls living in Burj al Barajneh (13%) (see Table 5). A possible explanation

is that Shatila regularly receives new Syrian refugees who tend to be more vulnerable. The proportion of girls who were not in school was much higher among Syrian refugees than it was among Palestinian refugees (20.6% vs. 11%, respectively).

Among 6-18-year-old girls who are currently attending school, 32% were at least two years behind their actual grade: 29% in Burj al Barajneh and 38% in Shatila (see Table 6).

The proportion of girls who were at least two years behind their grade was much higher for Syrian girls (58%) than it was for Palestinian girls (12%). We will learn more about these dynamics using focus group discussions.

TABLE 6. AGE FOR GRADE PER CAMP AND NEIGHBORHOOD (6-18-YEAR-OLD GIRLS WHO ARE CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL, N=2,485)

Camp	2y+ behind grade N (%)	Less than 2y behind grade N (%)	Total
Burj al Barajneh	481 (28.7)	1,194 (71.3)	1,675
Shatila	305 (37.5)	505 (62.4)	810
Total	786 (31.6)	1,699 (68.4)	2,485

TABLE 7. MARITAL STATUS PER CAMP (13-17-YEAR-OLD GIRLS, N=1,105)

Camp	Ever-married N (%)	Never-married N (%)	Total
Burj al Barajneh	29 (4.3)	650 (95.7)	679
Shatila	73 (17.1)	353 (82.9)	426
Total	102 (9.2)	1,003 (90.8)	1,105

Marriage and Pregnancy

There were 2,572 girls above 12 years of age who were asked questions about marriage and pregnancy, as per the standard questionnaire. Of the rostered girls aged 13–24, 31% were currently married. Of the 1,105 13–17-year-old girls aged 13–17, 9% were married and 2.9% were engaged.

The proportion of ever-married girls aged 13–17 was much higher for girls living in Shatila than for girls living in Burj al Barajneh (17% vs. 4%, respectively) (see Table 7). The proportion of 13–17-year-old ever-married girls was also much higher among Syrian girls than it was for Palestinian girls (18% vs. 1%, respectively).

Out of the 822 ever-married girls, 91% had at least one child or were pregnant at the time of the survey. Of the 13–17-year-old ever-married girls, 82% had at least one pregnancy.

The proportion of ever-married girls who were ever-pregnant was higher for women living in Burj al Barajneh (95%) compared to women living in Shalita (84%) and was roughly similar between Palestinian and Syrian refugee girls.

Participation in Non-school-based Programs

Overall, 41% of the 3,199 6–17-year-old girls participated in NGO programs (B&Z or other NGOs). Burj al Barajneh had a higher proportion of girls who participated in NGO programs than Shatila (44% vs. 36%, respectively). The percentage of girls who participated in NGO programs was roughly similar among Palestinian and Syrian refugee girls.

Only 18.6% of 6–17-year-old girls participated in programs by B&Z; 22% in Shatila and 16% in Burj. However, a higher percentage of Syrian girls participated in programs by B&Z (28%) than Palestinian girls (8%).

On-track Off-track Girls

The proportion of off-track girls was higher for girls living in Shatila than it was for girls living in Burj al Barajneh for the three categories defined in this study: 40.5% vs. 18% (Category 1), 47% vs. 22% (Category 2), and 67.5% vs. 44% (Category 3). The proportion of off-track girls was also higher among Syrian girls as compared to Palestinian girls (see Table 8).

TABLE 8: PROPORTION OF OFF-TRACK 6-17-YEAR-OLD GIRLS (N=3,199) PER CAMP AND ORIGIN

Category	Type	On-track (%)	Off-track (%)
Category 1	Burj al Barajneh	81.8	18.2
	Shatila	59.5	40.5
	Origin		
	Palestinian	89.1	10.9
	Syrian	59.6	40.4
	Other	76.3	23.7
Category 2	Burj al Barajneh	78.3	21.7
	Shatila	53.4	46.6
	Origin		
	Palestinian	82.3	17.7
	Syrian	57.0	43.0
	Other	71.0	29.0
Category 3	Burj al Barajneh	55.7	44.3
	Shatila	32.5	67.5
	Origin		
	Palestinian	73.7	26.3
	Syrian	23.3	76.7
	Other	64.5	35.5

Challenges

Some of the challenges encountered by WN staff included not being able to gain access to some of the ITS due to restrictions imposed by the camp leader, “the Shawish,” who prevented the community workers from entering the settlements without official permission from the municipality, which was also very difficult to obtain in some of the areas. There were a few kidnapping incidents in Bekaa that contributed to increasing the anxiety of Syrian refugees living outside the ITS, in rented apartments, and consequently some refugees refused to participate.

The households that refused to answer the Roster questions—a stark minority—were either Lebanese who were not interested in programs for adolescent girls or households who were not interested in participating simply because there were no financial incentives. Occasionally, Syrian community workers faced harassment from some of the Lebanese residents in those

communities due to the increased tension between the local Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees induced by competing over limited resources. Finally, the recent political turmoil in the country, which resulted in road closures and increased insecurity caused additional delays in the implementation of the Girl Roster in those areas as well as delays in paying the salaries of the community workers. Despite the above-mentioned challenges, community workers were able to complete the work in the Bekaa region.

The challenges encountered by B&Z staff included not being able to complete rostering in two neighborhoods because of security concerns, encountering many empty households (as many Syrian refugees go back and forth to Syria), and not being able to work when it was raining, particularly in Shatila camp due to the exposed electricity wires. Despite these obstacles, the community workers collected information vital to program decisions on more than 6,000 girls.

The Learning Circle

The current humanitarian system in Lebanon has become overstretched as a result of cuts in funding, limited resources, the dynamic setting, and political turmoil. All of these factors have implications on the humanitarian system's efficiency in addressing the refugees' needs. Many NGOs and UN agencies work on similar programs targeting the same populations, but the lack of transparency results in wasting resources and decreasing the efficacy of such programs.

The first meeting for the Learning Circle, convened by the Council, was held in October 2019 and included the following NGOs/agencies: Women Now NGO; Basmeh and Zeitoneh NGO; Jusoor NGO; Mercy Corps; and the Arab Institute for Women (The Lebanese American University).

Each of those NGOs/agencies was approached individually by the Population Council to discuss their willingness to take part in this Learning Circle initiative and discuss ways to collaborate with other actors on the ground and improve the efficiency of their programs targeting adolescent girls.

At this first meeting, the main topics of discussion were: 1) the main areas of work for each of these actors, particularly programs for adolescent girls; 2) challenges faced on the ground; 3) the promise/potential of a Learning Circle; and 4) the aims and aspirations for future meetings, particularly addressing the competitive inefficiency and wasteful competition as described in a Guardian article discussing ways to fix the aid system (Chonghaile and Rankin 2016).

All participants mentioned that one of the main challenges is the recent cut in funds, which resulted in a discussion on finding innovative ways that NGOs can complement each other's work and ways to collaborate. Some participants discussed potential initiatives to raise joint funding. Other challenges raised by some of the participants were the difficulty in accessing some communities and dealing with the swiftness.

In April 2020, a second meeting was held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential and successful adaptations of existing programs for adolescent girls given the political, economic, and health/COVID challenges.

The third meeting was also held remotely in June 2020. The main purpose of the meeting was to identify the best strategies to involve men and boys for gender equality in Lebanon. We hosted a guest speaker from ABAAD NGO who highlighted the NGO's current programs and the best strategies of involving men and boys.

As of August 2020, Lebanon is contending with the conjoint impact of the increase in COVID-19 cases and the devastating aftermath of the August 4 explosion. Both NGOs (WN and B&Z) have amended some of their activities and are currently focusing on the following:

- Providing online awareness sessions on COVID-19;
- Gender-based violence (GBV) online counseling (given the increase in GBV cases since the lockdown due to COVID-19 as well as a consequence of the economic crisis);
- Participating in relief efforts in their communities as well as in other communities, such as cleaning the rubble in the affected communities and providing basic needs such as food and water.

The Design and Implementation of a Pilot Program for 11-14-year-old Out-of-school Girls and 13-17-year-old Married Girls in West Bekaa and South Beirut

- Based on the roster results, we are currently designing a pilot program targeting the most-at-risk girls in the rostered locations (11-14-year-old out-of-school girls and 13-17-year-old married young women).
- The content of the program will incorporate elements that will be adapted from existing programs developed by the Population Council as well as additional elements/

activities based on the needs of those girls/women; 20 focus group discussions have been carried out (to date) to identify the needs of the most-at-risk girls/women in those communities to elicit their opinions regarding the content of the sessions and the preferred implementation mechanism, especially given the current political and health challenges in the country that limited their mobility.

- The majority of girls/young women expressed a great interest in participating in such programs.
- The majority were illiterate. Many expressed interest in incorporating literacy programs and vocational training sessions.
- The majority of married young women expressed interest in limiting the number of their children given all the challenges in the country (health, political, and economic), but they have poor access to health services and modern contraception methods. They all expressed interest in a program that will facilitate their interaction with health services.
- Both NGOs are currently in the process of recruiting the mentors who will implement the sessions. The recruitment of the girls will soon follow.
- Given the restrictions/concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following activities/precautions will be applied once the program starts:
 - There will be ongoing weekly online training sessions for the mentors.
 - For girls living inside the ITS in West Bekaa, the sessions will take place outside the farming season (as most of those girls work in agriculture) and inside the ITS to maximize attendance and decrease the risks of COVID-19 transmission.

- The sessions for girls living outside the settlements will be carried out at the WN community center in a large room with fewer girls to maintain social distancing.
- Similar approaches will be followed for mentors and girls in South Beirut.
- Male authority figures in the girls'/women's lives will not prevent their participation as long as the sessions are carried out in female-only spaces for all girls, inside the ITS (for girls living in the ITS), and as long as transportation (bus with a female mentor on board) is provided for girls living outside the ITS.

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