

# Study on the Characteristics of Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon

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A Study by SHEILD  
2021



**SHEILD**  
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## Foreword

Childcare remains a measuring criterion for the advancement of nations. The general meaning of the word “care” encompasses all kinds of protection, as may be assumed by the workings of the sound instinct found in humankind before the Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions, and before getting to the provisions of international conventional and local laws.

All in all, Arab children still suffer from the social, political, and economic legacy that one would inherit from being born in these lands that are full of nothing but problems, so much so that the Arab child has become the epitome of misery. Only mere coincidence could help some child in some family in some community in some Arab country escape the “no future”. Misery is chasing the Arab child for all sorts of reasons, starting from the disintegration of the family, and all the way to the aggression, siege, and occupation their countries have to face.

The Arab child has to live with a mountain of problems; this is the natural result of the ongoing tug of war and the absence of the state across all levels. Things being what they are, SHEILD has sought to use its Research and Data Unit to issue the present study, and which will be followed by another study on juveniles, but always from the angle of education. As Chairman of SHEILD’s Administrative Board, I cannot but thank the team of the SHEILD Research Unit for looking into the eyes of these poor children and supporting them with a smile first, before uttering the first very words they hope would ease the souls of these children through communication, working together in solidarity, asking questions that have troubled them on matters that life in our communities sometimes cannot explain.

*Chairman of the Board- SHEILD  
Dr. Samer Haydar*



## Legal Preamble

Interest in minors - who should be our key concern for the present and our main hope for a better future for humanity - is not something new or exclusive to these modern times. In fact, the concept dates back to the nineteenth century, at least from a legal aspect, where the international community worked together hand in hand to develop a Convention on children's right and eventually produced the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that was promulgated on the 20th of November 1959 as a constitution on the protection of children for many countries across the globe. This Convention has been preceded by the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) that had granted children the right for special care and attention. In 1955, the Geneva Convention agreed to expand the concept of "Juveniles" beyond children who have committed a crime to include those young people who are at risk of delinquency because of their social situation and their need for care and protection.

Numerous conventions have preceded the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), but the UNCRC represents the epitome or the coronation of six decades of hard work on developing and formulating international guidelines on children's rights. The UNCRC is a truly unique list as it covers all human rights related to children and is also global since it is signed at the global scale by all countries except the USA and Somalia. Lebanon has joined by virtue of Law no. 20 dated 30/10/1990.

In Lebanon, attention to the concept of juveniles can be felt firstly in the Ottoman Penal Code of 1858, then in the Ottoman Police System of 1911, and then the Lebanese Penal Code of 1943, the Lebanese Juveniles Law of 1983, and lately the law of 2002 on the protection of Juveniles in Conflict with the Law and/or at Risk which is currently in force in Lebanon.

This 2002 law has approached the topic of juveniles from a different angle. As can be inferred from the name of the law, the aim was to protect juveniles and not simply punish them for going against the law. The 2002 law has also made a clear distinction between a juvenile who has contravened the law and the juvenile who is at risk. A juvenile who is in conflict with the law is someone who has committed a criminal offence, i.e. has infringed a penal text and thus deserves a sanction or action being taken against what he/she had done, while a juvenile who is at risk refers to children who go through –continually or occasionally - personal, familial, or social circumstances that may negatively influence their upbringing and life, and put their physical or psychological safety to danger. In Article 25 of that law, the legislator has listed the cases that put the juvenile is at risk.



- a. If the juvenile is in an environment that exposes him/her to abuse, or threatens his health, safety, morals, or upbringing.
- b. If he/she is subject to a sexual abuse or physical violence beyond what is conventionally known as sound un-harmful disciplining.
- c. If he/she is a beggar or mendicant.

The legislator has given the Juvenile Judge the right to take all measures necessary to protect the minor and put an end to dangers and threats to his/her health, safety, morals, and upbringing. For this end, Juvenile Judges in Lebanon have actually issued verdicts across numerous Lebanese provinces to protect these children and prevent them from turning from children at risk to children with a penal history.

Among such verdicts or decisions, the decision to keep the child with the mother even if the religious court has given custody to the father, in the instance where the Juvenile Judge had seen that such decision would protect the child. Juveniles have been placed in specific schools, or in drug addiction programs, or within specific families that wishes to care for these children, etc... by virtue of court rulings.

Minors who go against the law are not born criminal. The vast majority of them wouldn't have gone this far if they had been met with immediate care and support from their parents, communities, and schools. Most children who find themselves head-to-head with the justice system had ended up there because care was not afforded to them, or because of a flaw in how the whole system operates.

In the light of the above, we understand why the current study, Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, is so important. Child labor and School Dropout are two important indicators on whether children are at risk and whether they need protection and care to protect them from turning from school dropouts into juveniles and going into jail as a result of that.

A study conducted in Algeria has concluded that most juveniles who get involved in criminal cases in society have had a middle school education only, and have been affected by their early dropping out of schools and by having the doors to education or vocational training being closed to them. Within the span of three years (2010 to 2012), 11,556 crimes were recorded and inspected by the capital police; 4,487 of these crimes were committed by subjects who have a limited educational background (primary, middle or high school).

By looking at school dropout indicators and by obtaining real figures on child labor, we can find solutions to these problems, and children would not have to leave school and join the labor market at a young age and become exposed to danger, possibly turning into criminals.



In the language of international conventions and Lebanese law, the minor is a child until the age of 18. As such, the minor needs to be afforded enough protection and his / her present reformed to secure a future for him/her. Every new generation is another chance for humanity. If we give children what they need to remain in school and stay away from the labor market, and if we protect them from harm and abuse, we will surely be laying the foundations for a fair society that we all desire and that our children deserve.

## Summary

In light of the current deteriorating living and economic conditions in Lebanon, several previously existing social problems, which at the time did not constitute a significant issue at the national level, have exacerbated, including child labor. This highlights the importance of studying this phenomenon and its repercussions in connection with educational and social variables that affect and are affected by it, particularly the phenomenon of school dropout.

Several questions were raised in this study about the demographic and social characteristics of the families of working children. Other questions related to school dropout as being one of the reasons behind child labor, and to the characteristics of working dropout children were also addressed.

### **The objectives of the study are as follows:**

- Identifying the categories of school dropouts
- Types of child labor
- The links between school dropout and child labor
- The role of the main players in school dropout and child labor.

The descriptive analytical method was adopted to conduct this study, and the guided interview was used as a research tool. The research sample consisted of 720 working children in four governorates (Mount Lebanon, Akkar, South Lebanon and Nabatieh). We sought through this geographical diversity to ensure a sample as scientifically representative of the population as possible.

The psychological and social suffering and health problems that these children encounter in their work and in their daily lives.

Their exposure to a significant risk of The study results showed similar family and social characteristics of working children, including the parents' low educational level, the father's work in the service sector, living with the parents, the large family size with an average of six members per household, and the presence of working dropout siblings within the family.



The study proved the existence of a link between school dropout and child labor in the sense that parents are encouraging their children to leave school and work to help support the family, and the personal reasons causing children to leave school due to repeated failure and lack of necessary educational therapy. The economic aspect and the motivation for securing a living by family members emerged as the first influential factor for leaving school and turning to child labor.

### **The study also sheds light on:**

- Financial exploitation,
- Their exposure to minor physical or mental violence,
- The feeling of discrimination between them and their peers who go to school.
- The children's desire to leave work and return to school or receive vocational training, and their wishes to have a professional future that will help them break the cycle of poverty and deprivation they're in.

### **On the other hand, the study showed some aspects of:**

- Poor services and poor access to these children by associations and agencies concerned with childhood issues
- The fragility of the social protection policy in Lebanon.

### **The study presented many recommendations, the most important of which are:**

- The need for entities concerned with childhood issues to organize a national workshop to present the results of this study and similar ones, to discuss its most important results and conclusions, and to agree on a national action plan for reducing child labor and school dropout, and distributing roles among the main and supporting stakeholders.
- Strengthening the roles of children's associations by improving the quality of their services and integrating the criteria for selecting working and dropout children within their work plans and programs and including them in their provided services, as well as highlighting the importance of working to attract these children and informing them about their rights and the importance of reporting violations and violence committed against them.
- Increasing the presence of associations, schools, institutes and their services in all remote areas such as the Akkar governorate and some areas of Mount Lebanon, in order to facilitate the process of equally delivering services to the beneficiaries on the various Lebanese territories.
- Raising social awareness related to the laws on the protection of juveniles and



children in Lebanon, their applications, and the applicable protection measures for both children and their families and in different local communities, in coordination with the competent social, judicial and security entities.

- Providing financial support to the families of working children so that they enroll their children back at school.

## Introduction

There is no doubt that the Syrian crisis, which has been ongoing since 2011, and its repercussions have weighed heavily on Lebanon<sup>1</sup>. Given the declining economic growth and the increasing poverty rates in areas hosting displaced Syrians, some social problems that threaten security and social stability have emerged, such as the spread of theft and beggary, the significant increase in the number of street children, and the high number of domestic violence victims, not to mention the percentage of foreign detainees and prisoners<sup>2</sup>... especially in areas hosting the displaced and which are considered marginalized areas suffering from economic and social deprivation even before the crisis<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, it became necessary, when studying any social phenomenon in Lebanon, to link it to the Syrian crisis and its repercussions.

Add to this the deteriorating living conditions that the Lebanese society is witnessing in recent times, in connection with the current economic, financial and political crisis and the resulting deterioration of social and economic indicators as well as the high rates of poverty, deprivation, unemployment and migration.

Given that the governorates of Bekaa and North Lebanon are the most affected by the repercussions of this crisis, especially since they are among the first governorates to receive displaced Syrians, the number of displaced Syrians there reached more than half of the local population<sup>4</sup>. In light of this continuous

1. The World Bank report was published upon the request of the Lebanese government under the title "Lebanon: The economic impact of the Syrian crisis", 2014.

2. Op. cit.

3. The report prepared by the World Bank in collaboration with the United Nations, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund has estimated the losses incurred by the Lebanese economy as a result of the war in Syria and the influx of refugees into the Lebanese territory, at approximately \$7.5 billion, for the period between 2011 and 2014.

4. <https://newspaper.annahar.com/article/220533> خرائط-توزيعات-اللاجئين-لبنان-مخيم-كبير



overpopulation<sup>5</sup>, some social indicators have suggested an imbalance in the local social structure, and the emergence of social phenomena that affected the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, i.e. children and youth, and that spread geographically. Beggary by the so-called “street children” has become a phenomenon widely spread throughout different Lebanese regions<sup>6</sup>.

Child labor has also spread in the sectors of agriculture, services, construction, and others, along with its effects on the growth and future of children... In some cases, children are forced to leave their studies and resort to work in search of a living or to help their family earn a living and fight poverty. Although the numbers that the concerned ministries such as the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Social Affairs and the International Labor Organization<sup>7</sup> have are different, this phenomenon cannot be denied, and it comes as a result of several problems affecting the families and the society at large. It is also not possible to deny the economic reasons, i.e. the extreme poverty, weak social awareness, or disregard for the dangers of beggary among the parents of these children, which contributes to creating an environment enabling for this phenomenon.

Violence statistics also indicate that “more than 859 cases of violence against children, varying between sexual and psychological abuse, were recorded during in October 2015, according to Himaya Association<sup>8</sup>.” This indicator can be partly used to understand sexual violence against beggars and dropouts.

Despite the existence of a judiciary, laws, and disciplinary measures prohibiting violence and abuse of juveniles, as well as the existence of social institutions concerned with protecting them and following up on their situation, juveniles are still subjected to violence in Lebanon.

This was confirmed by the former Minister of Social Affairs, Rashid Derbas, who said in 2015 that “although Lebanon has ratified international conventions and protocols that protect the rights of children, and although there is the Law 422/2002 for the Protection of Juveniles in Conflict with the Law and/or at Risk in Lebanon, which protects children from any environment that exposes them to delinquency or threaten their health, moral integrity or the conditions of their upbringing, and despite the efforts of the Ministry of Social Affairs, other ministries, civil society organizations and international associations, to protect the rights of all children, these rights are still violated, and their protection requires concerted efforts by

5. Op. cit.

6. <https://al-akhbar.com/Community/258205>

7. <https://www.legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=4792>

8. هديل فرفور: "أكثر من 859 حالة عنف ضد الأطفال في عام 2015". بيروت، جريدة الأخبار، العدد 2751، 27 تشرين الثاني 2015، ص 7.



everyone at the local and international levels<sup>9</sup>". This description of reality is still valid today but has worsened with the acceleration and complexity of surrounding crises.

The living conditions of displaced Syrians in Lebanon cannot be excluded from this issue, especially since 73% of the children in the 2015 study are Syrians, and 61% of them arrived in Lebanon after the onset of the crisis. Therefore, it can be considered that children of Syrian families with the most precarious social conditions are likely to work on the streets and to resort to beggary. The social assistance provided by the United Nations and the World Food Program is not considered sufficient to secure a decent life for families, in terms of basic needs and daily costs, forcing many children to resort to work and beggary.

Despite the social protection provided by the Ministry of Affairs and the judicial protection provided by the Ministry of Labor, it remains "that the response mechanisms for children's rights in Lebanon are inefficient." The International Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed its observations about the slow pace of the legislative process in Lebanon, and Lebanon's non-compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child given that the labor law is not consistent with it.

Despite the serious effects of these social phenomena on the Lebanese society and how their spread is linked to the flow of displaced Syrians, and the suspension of UNRWA programs<sup>10</sup>, there is no official or national survey that identifies the size and characteristics of these phenomena and the extent of their connection to the crisis<sup>11</sup>. There is no official database tackling the phenomenon of beggary, child labor, street children, or school dropout and its causes.

With no official data, the intervention to address these phenomena cannot achieve its objectives and is seen as weak or perhaps wrong in its endeavors<sup>12</sup>.

Therefore, it is critical to prepare an analytical descriptive study on child labor and school dropout in Lebanon. The importance of this study lies in defining the general framework of child labor and its size within the geographical scope of the study, and linking it to school dropout, as being a cause or a result of child labor.

9. وزارة الشؤون الإجتماعية (المجلس الأعلى للطفولة) وجمعية دار الأمل ومنظمة دياكونيا وجمعية إيكبات (فرنسا). **الدراسة الوطنية**.

**حول العنف الجنسي على الأطفال في لبنان**، بيروت، 2015، ص 7

10. Op. cit.

11. MoSA's National Program for combating begging launched a campaign to combat beggary. The study, prepared by the Project in 2016 showed that 76 percent of street children are Syrian, 12 percent are of multiple nationalities, including Palestinians, and 8 percent are Lebanese.

12. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child compels the countries to protect the children they have, and Lebanon has signed the convention, but like any convention, it needs implementing decrees and laws.



### **This study addresses many questions, namely:**

- What is the size of child labor across the governorates in Lebanon?
- What is the type of child labor and what are the jobs in which the children work?
- What are the demographic and social characteristics of working children and their families?
- Is child labor linked to other family social behaviors?
- Is school dropout a cause of child labor or a result of it?
- What are the characteristics of working children who have dropped out of school? (their age, education level...family status)?
- Who are the influential players in child labor and school dropout?
- How much does the economic motive affect child labor and school dropout?
- Who are the forces, institutions and associations that can intervene to address these two phenomena?

## **Objectives of the study**

- 1- To determine the segments of school dropouts and types of child labor.
- 2- To determine the reasons behind school dropouts and child labor.
- 3- To show interlinks between school dropouts and child labor.
- 4- To showcase the role of major players in relations to school dropouts and child labor.

## **Study approach**

The descriptive analytical approach has been used as the overall study approach, and a structured interview of 30 main questions has served as the research tool. The research sample was a targeted random sample that has been selected based on two criteria: working child, and the geographic location that was set for the study based on the area in which SHEILD is present and active, i.e. the provinces of Akkar, Mount Lebanon, and Southern Lebanon.

The sample size was made up of 720 working children, geographically distributed based on the number of street children that showed up as we were working on getting the forms filled in the field during the span of multiple months using a street children field survey technique. The distribution has come out as follows:

**Table no. (4):** Sample distribution per provinces

|                 |                  | frequency  | %          |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Province</b> | Mount Lebanon    | 282        | 39.2       |
|                 | Southern Lebanon | 137        | 19.0       |
|                 | Nabatiyeh        | 31         | 4.0        |
|                 | Akkar            | 270        | 37.5       |
|                 | <b>Total</b>     | <b>720</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

This study has been conducted by a SHEILD Team across the above-mentioned provinces during 6 consecutive months of field work in 2021.

## Expected outcomes of the study

- A descriptive analytical report on the characteristics of child labor and school dropouts, addressing in depth these two phenomena and how they inter-relate.
- General recommendations to combat child labor and the dropping out of school of all forms.

# Child Labor and School Dropouts Study Presentation and Analysis of Findings

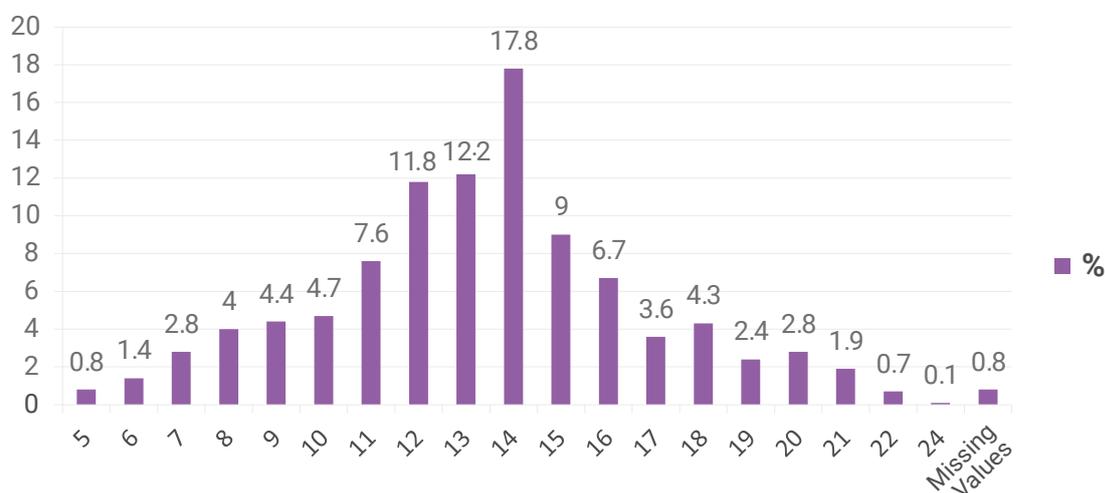
## Chapter One: Demographics

In this first chapter, we present the main demographics of the study sample.

### First: Age Distribution of the Sample

The majority of the sample is made up of children (see chart no. 1) whereby 18.1% of the sample was made up of children under the age of 10 and 49.4% of the sample was made up of children between the ages of 11 and 14. As such, 76.4% of the sample was under the age of 15, meaning that children under the age of 15 represent a large proportion of children who are on the street, in the labor market, and away from school. The 11 to 14 years old bracket represents the largest segment in the sample, and this brings us to raise questions about the relation between this age group and school dropouts, about the sensitive puberty and adolescence age period these children have to go through, and their exposure to danger and moral degeneracy, as they become at the risk of losing their future, deprived from their rights as children to education and health. We also notice that the children are being pushed to join the workforce at a young age; we will seek to look into underlying reasons in the body of this study.

**Chart no. 1: Age Distribution of Respondents**



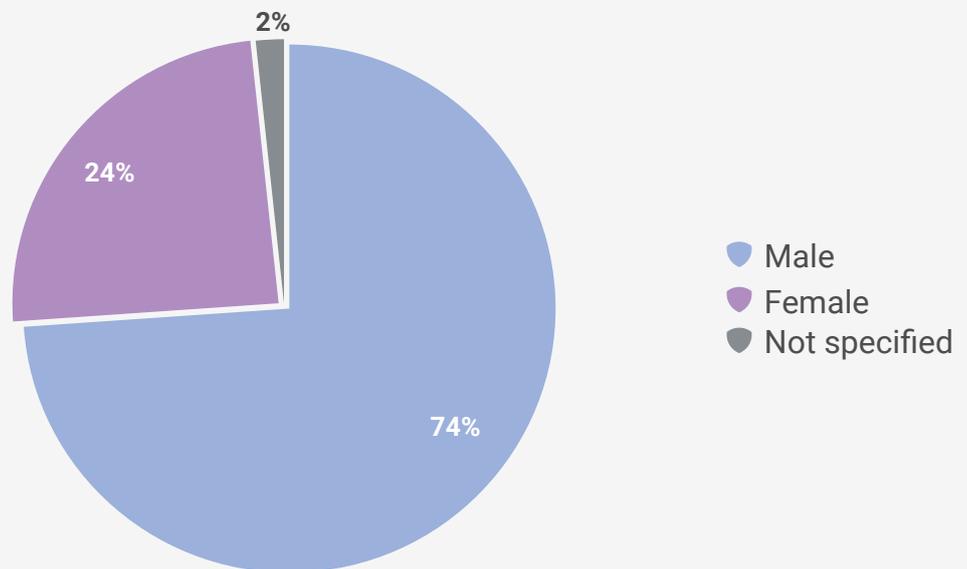
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



## Second: Gender Distribution of the Sample

The number of respondents is 720 persons (see Chart no. 2), 73.9% for males against 24.4% for females. We conclude that the vast majority of working children are males. This fact may be partially attributed to child-rearing constructs whereby the girl is usually kept at home to help out her mother with house chores, and also to the construct of manhood and the belief that work will help build a boy's character and will turn him into a man who is capable of relying on himself and providing for his family.

Chart no. 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents



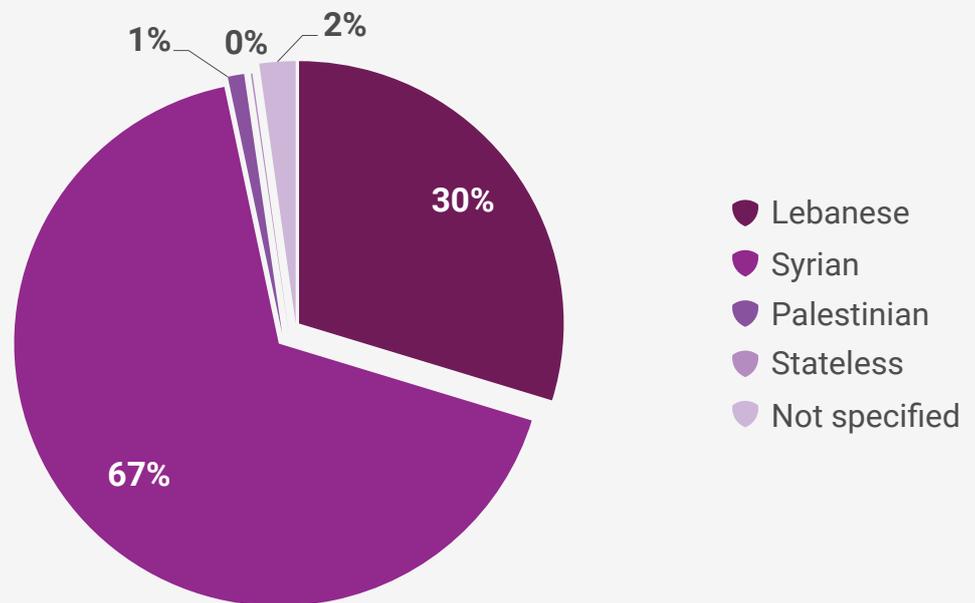
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Third: Nationality Distribution of the Sample

One third of the children who have participated in the study and are on the street or in the labor market are Lebanese (see Chart no. 3). This percentage is relatively high and is expected to increase given the current living conditions in Lebanon. This goes against the prevailing belief that beggars and working children are all non-Lebanese. In fact, the study has shown that 30% are Lebanese, 1% are Palestinian, and 67% are Syrian. These new findings indicate that the number of Syrian children who are on the street have increased following the Syrian crisis; this issue requires intervention and addressing by competent international organizations and bodies in order to support and assist Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Chart no. 3: Distribution of Respondents by Nationality



Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

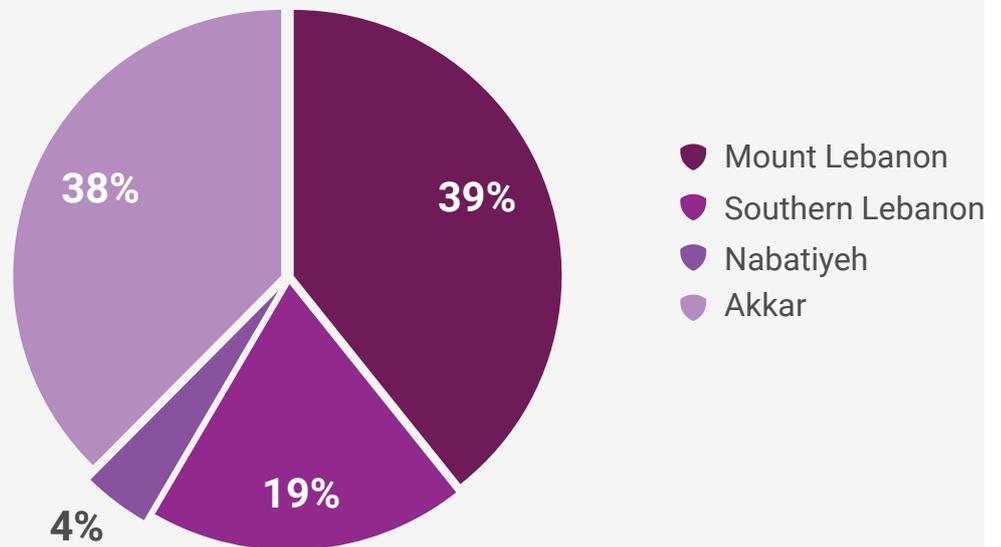


#### Fourth: Distribution of the Sample by Province

The sample - i.e. children participating in the study - are 39% from Mount Lebanon, 38% from Akkar, and a small percentage from Nabatiyeh (See Chart no. 4).

These percentages show that street children and children in the labor market is a widespread phenomenon across many provinces in Lebanon; as such we are faced with a social phenomenon that is at the national level, albeit the local discrepancies between one province and another.

Chart no. 4: Distribution of Respondents by Province

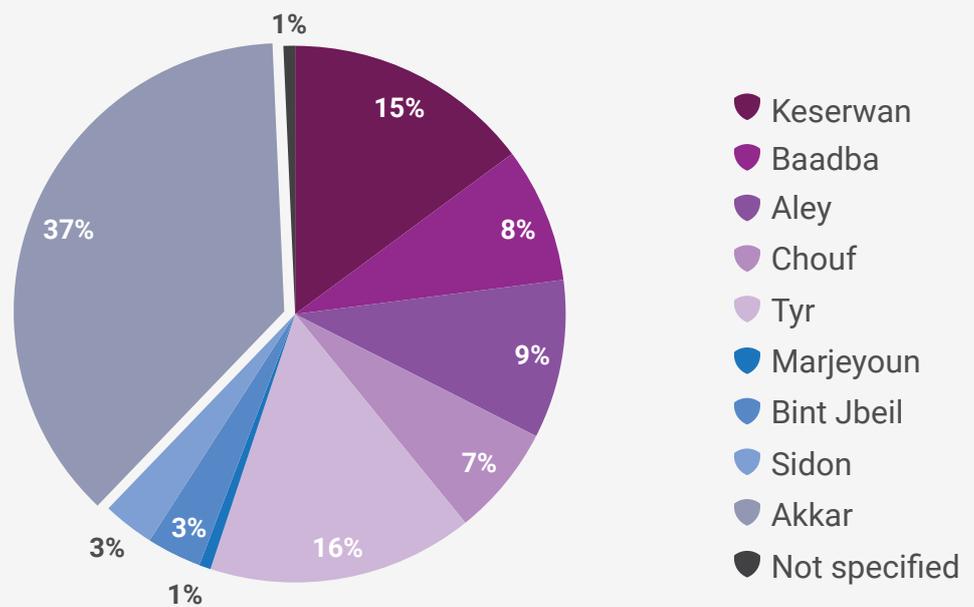


Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

### Fifth: Distribution of the Sample by District

Chart no. (5) indicates that respondents living in Akkar make up the highest percentage compared to other districts. There is no doubt that the province and regions of Akkar are one of the most deprived and marginalized areas in Lebanon. Respondents living in Marjeyoun represent the lowest percentage, with only 0.7% or 5 cases only. Respondents living in Sidon represent 3.1%. We see that the largest concentration of children who beg on the streets or working children by area of residence is found in Mount Lebanon and Akkar.

Chart no. 5: Distribution of Respondents by Area of Residence / District



Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

To conclude this chapter, child labor is widespread in Lebanese provinces, albeit some local discrepancies; therefore, it is a social phenomenon at the national level. The vast majority of working children is under the age of 15 and consists of males; this calls for the examination of the enforcement of Lebanese laws and international conventions (the ones that Lebanon is a signatory to) on compulsory education, combating child labor, and child protection against dangers.

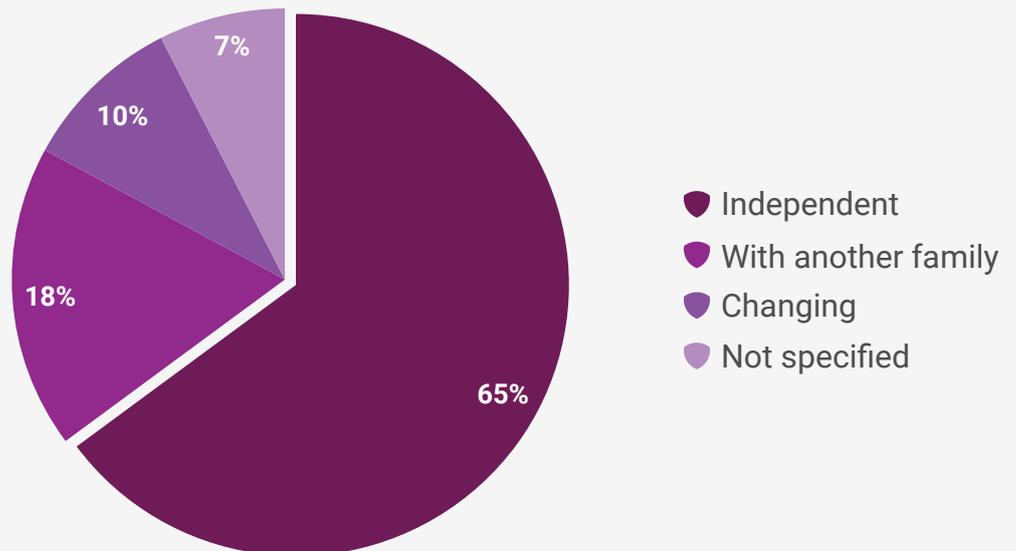
## Chapter Two: The Characteristics of the Families of Working Children of Working Children

In this chapter, we scan the main attributes of the families of working children and dropouts, and we look into the details of their characteristics.

### First: The Nature of the Residence of Working Children

Chart no. (6) findings indicate that 65% of the sample live in independent houses with their families, while 18% live together with other families, i.e. in shared dwellings. 10% live in non-permanent changing places. These findings tell of a residence problem for working children that is the inability to provide decent housing for these children. It also tells of a high population density in shared dwellings and hard living conditions and environment for 28% of the sample (shared dwellings + non-permanent changing places).

**Chart no. 6:** Distribution of Respondents by the Nature of Their Residence

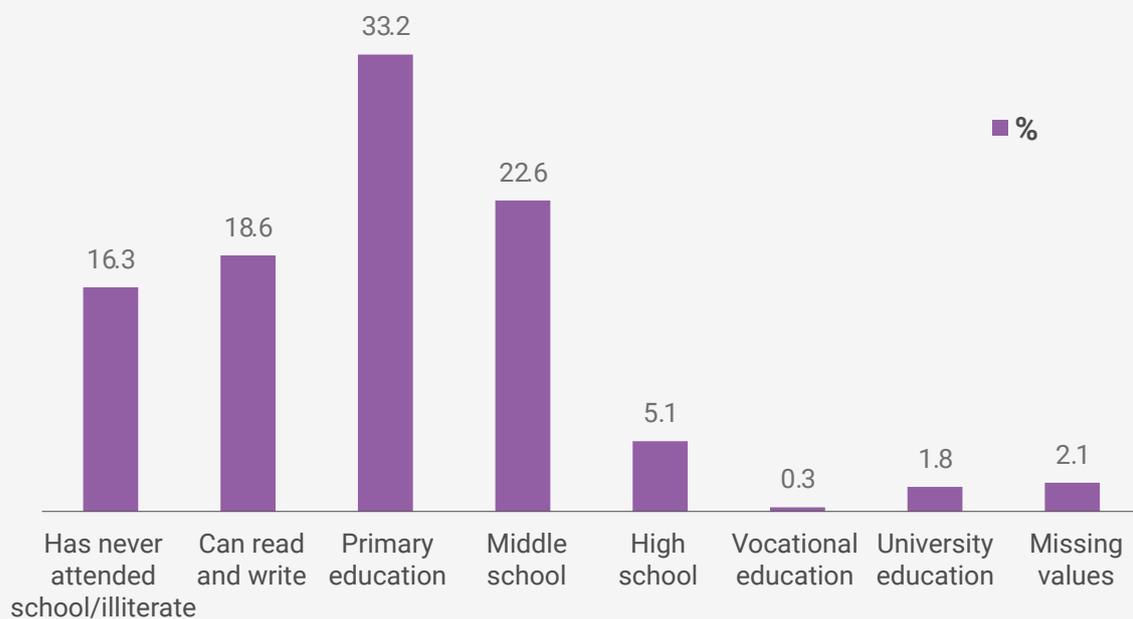


**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Second: Educational Level of the Father

It seems that the majority of the fathers has had a middle school education or below level (See Chart no. 7). While 16.1% have never attended school, 18.6% can read and write, and 33.2% have finished primary school. These percentages indicate that there is a statistical correlation between the level of education of the father on the one hand and child labor and school dropouts on the other hand.

**Chart no. 7:** Distribution of Respondents by the Educational Level of the Father



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

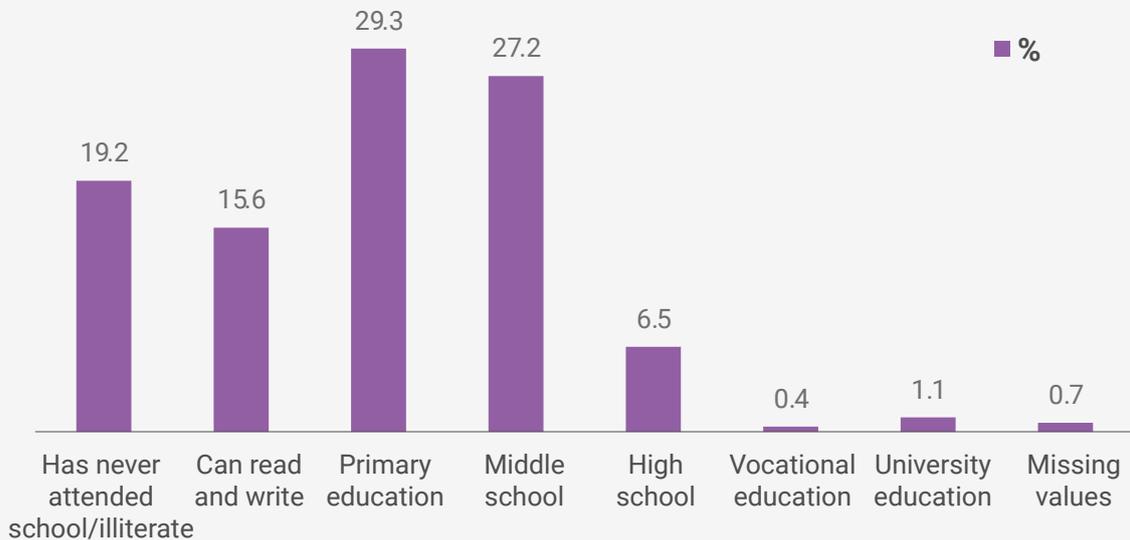


### Third: Educational Level of the Mother

It seems that the majority of the mothers has had a middle school education or below level (See Chart no. 8). While 19.2% have never attended school, 15.6% can read and write, and 29.3% have finished primary school. These percentages indicate that there is a statistical correlation between the level of education of the mother on the one hand and child labor and school dropouts on the other hand.

These findings are an additional proof of the influence of the parents' educational level in terms of facilitating child labor and accepting that the child leaves education to support the family.

**Chart no. 8:** Distribution of Respondents by the Educational Level of the Mother



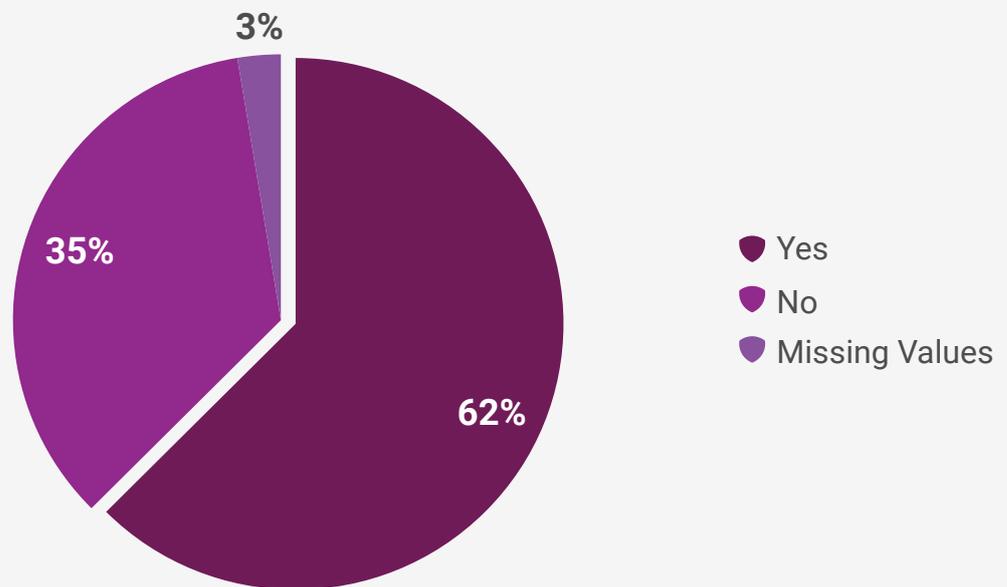
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



#### Fourth: The Father's job profile

Findings indicate that 35% of the fathers of working children do not work. This is probably one of the reasons that have pushed these children to leave school and join the workforce to support their families. (See Chart no. 9).

Chart no. 9: Distribution of Respondents by the Father's job profile



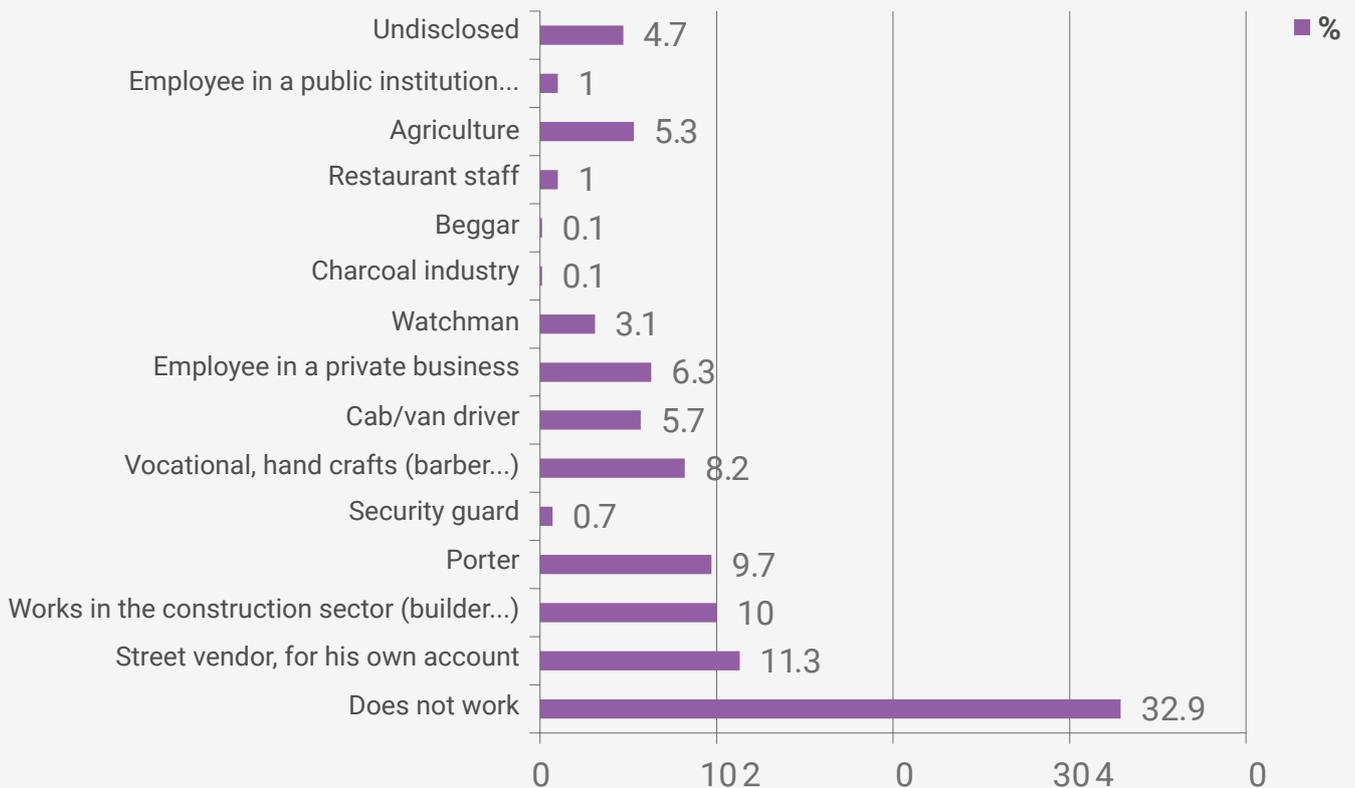
Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Fifth: The Father's Profession

Findings indicate that the nature of the father's profession is correlated with the level of child labor and school dropouts (See Chart no. 10). 32.9% of the fathers do not work, 11.3% work as street vendors, and 10% work in the construction field. It was surprising to see that a very limited number of parents work as beggars. Most parents who are working are actually in the general services domain that does not require high educational degrees or particular or technical skills. This type of work does not offer durability or stability, and does not provide social, medical, or educational guarantees. It is quite telling to see that 1% of the sample, i.e. 7 fathers, actually work in the public sector.

Chart no. 10: Distribution of Respondents by the Father's Profession



Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

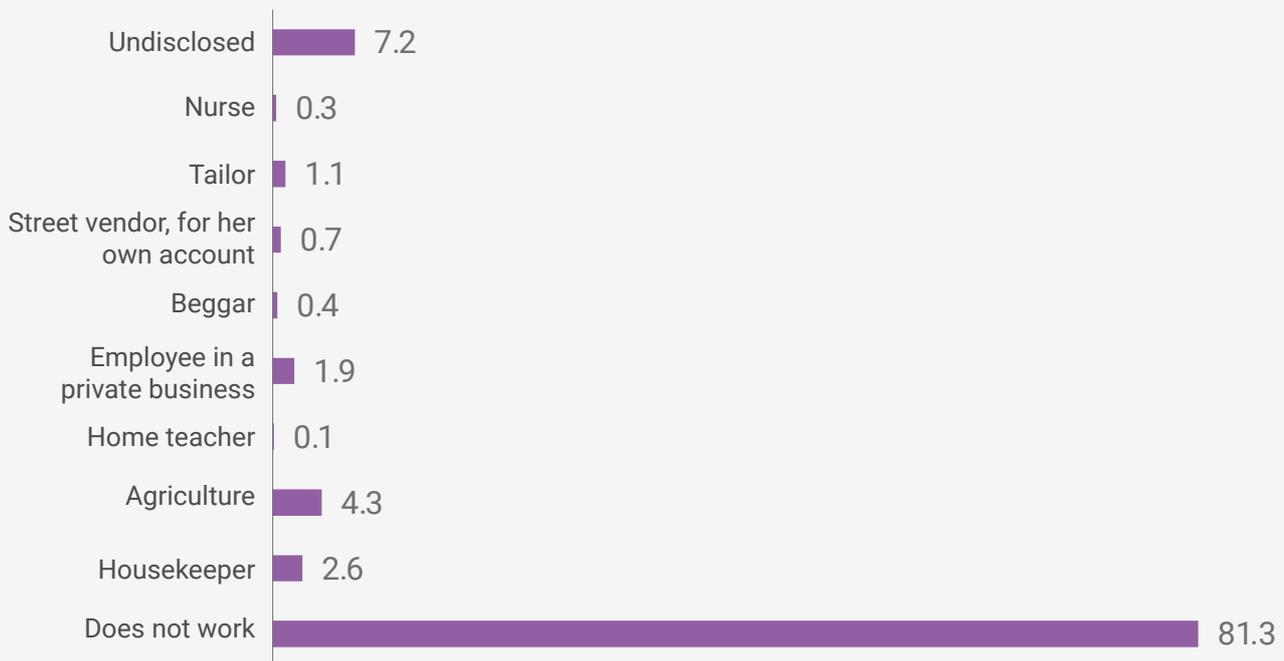


### Sixth: The Mother's Profession

Findings indicate that 81.3% of the mothers of working children do not work and do not have a profession. This is yet another factor that pushes towards the use of children to secure an income and money to support the family (See Chart no. 11). 4.3% of the mothers work in agriculture while 2.6% work as housekeepers. These types of jobs do not provide durability and do not offer financial, medical, social, or educational guarantees.

Chart no. 11: Distribution of Respondents by the Mother's Profession

■ %

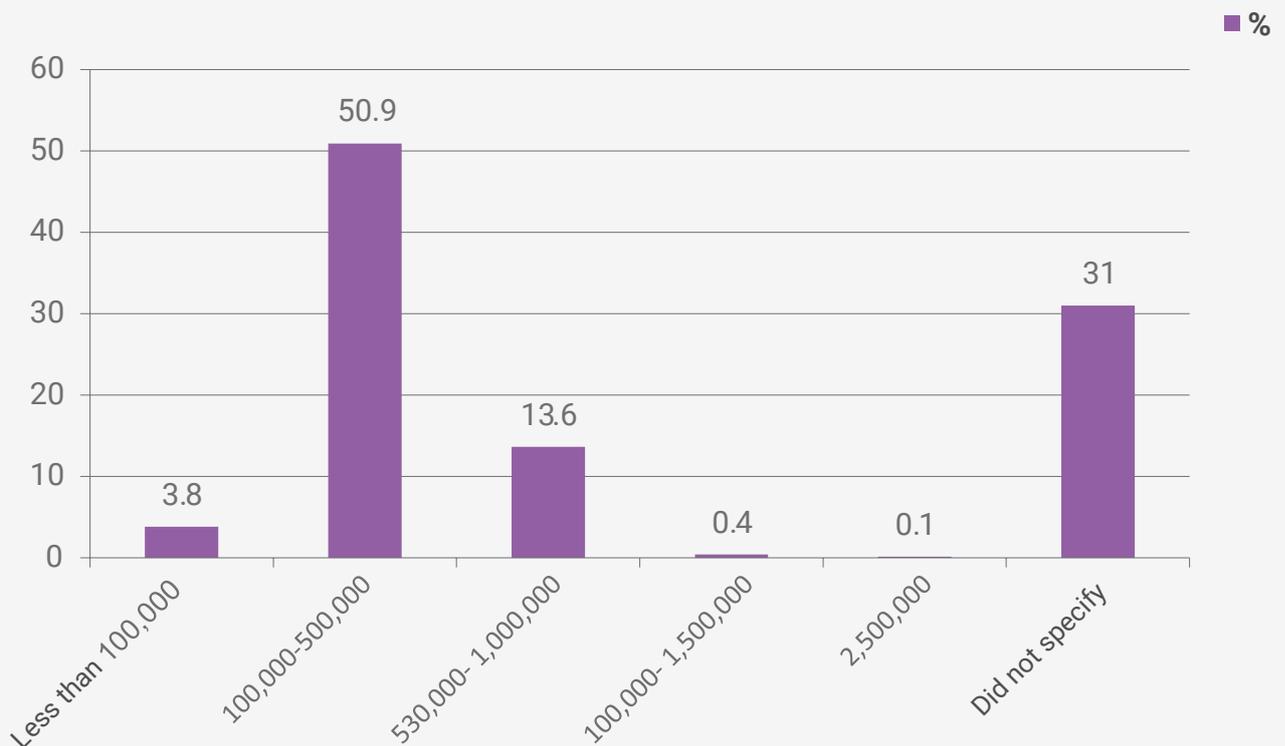


Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

### Seventh: The Family's Monthly Income

The findings of the study show that the family income is between 100 and 500 thousand LBP in 51% of the cases (See Chart no 12). This amount is very low and tells of a sharp decline in the family income and that these families have fallen into extreme poverty. There is no doubt that the situation has gone even worse given the deterioration of the value of the Lebanese pound and living conditions in Lebanon as of late. We also find that 31% of the respondents do not calculate their monthly income; this percentage is expected given that the respondents are children and not all children, regardless of their age, know what the monthly income of their family is.

**Chart no. 12:** Distribution of Respondents by the Family's Monthly Income



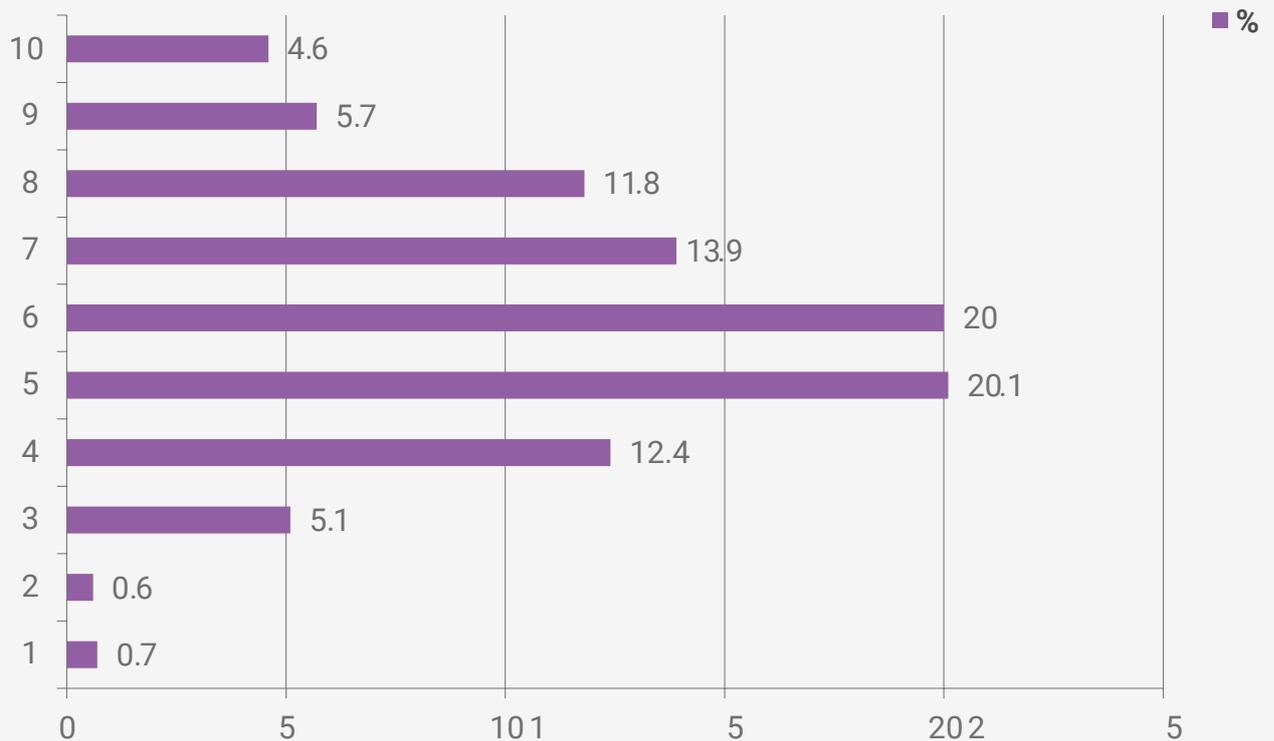
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Eighth: Family Size

Findings in Chart no. (13) indicate that families are large families in general with multiple family members. The number of family members was 5 members in 20% of the sample, 7 in 14% of the sample, and 10 in 5% of the sample. These numbers are big numbers and indicate a high level of childbearing in these families. Large families that go beyond the national rate are seen as an indicator of deprivation poverty since large families are less likely to meet the needs of their members and find themselves with their basic needs unmet.

Chart no. 13: Distribution of Respondents by the number of family members



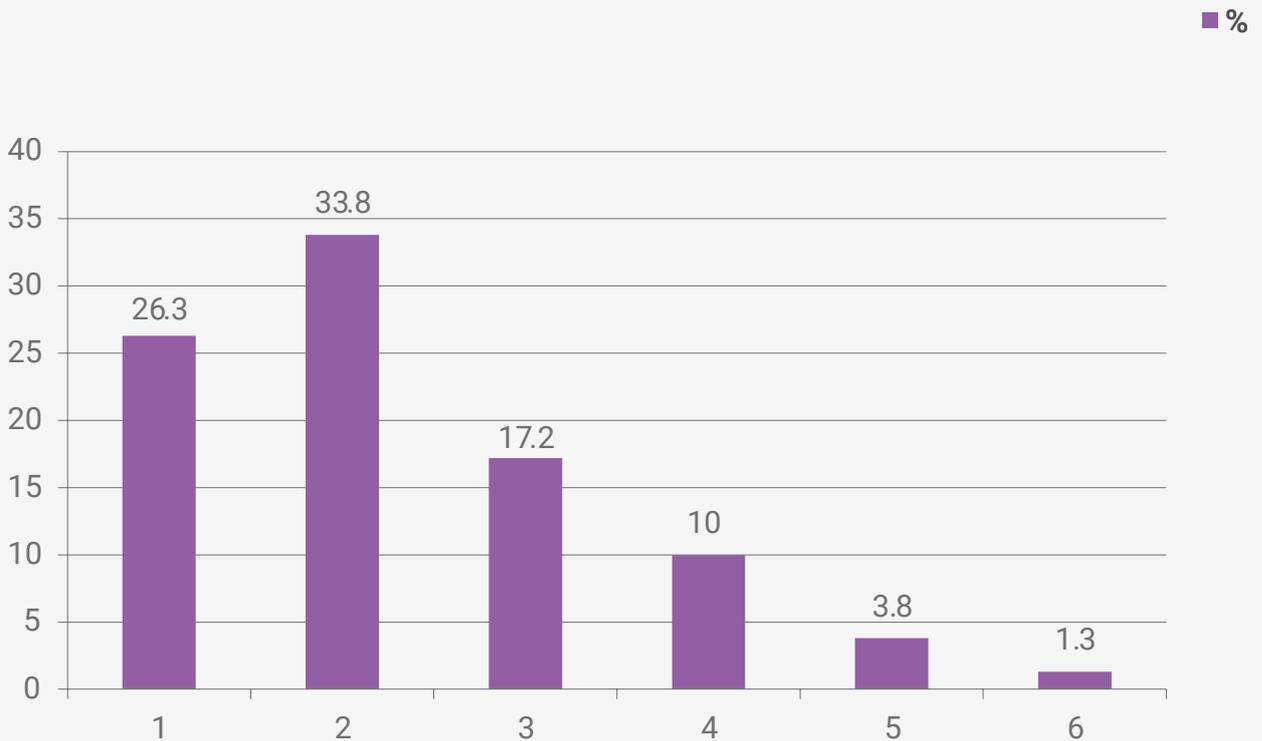
Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Ninth: Number of Rooms the Family Lives in

Findings indicate that 26.3% of respondents live in a single room dwelling while 33.8% live in a double room dwelling (See Chart no. 14). This is yet another indicator as to the deprivation that the respondents live in. If we look at this indicator in association with findings illustrated in previous chart (family size; 6 family members on average), we wonder how 6 people can live in a single or double room dwelling. This is a major deprivation for all family members, namely that the minimum living area per person should be of 7 meters. How can this standard be met? Population density per square meter is high for these families, proving the weak housing policy in Lebanon.

**Chart no. 14:** Distribution of Respondents by the Number of Rooms the Family Lives in

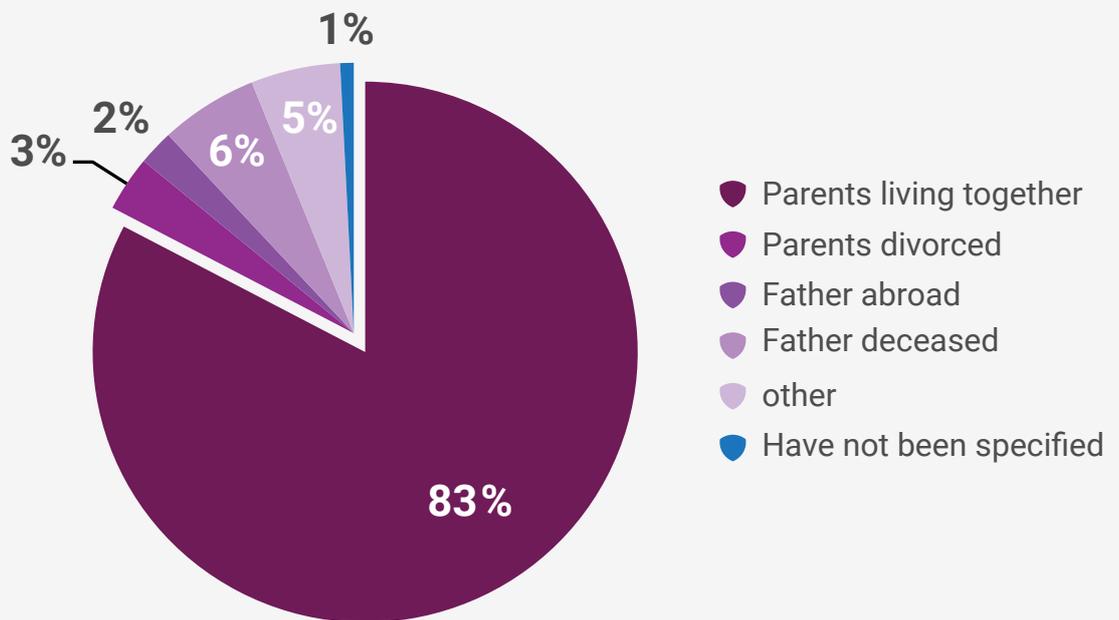


**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Tenth: Family Status

82.6% of the respondents live in stable families with their parents while 5.8% have lost their fathers (See Chart no. 15). However, despite having both parents and living all together under the same roof, the parents seem to be trying to send their children to work and rely on them for income, denying them their right for education and exposing to them to danger since they are children under the age of 15, as we have pointed out earlier.

Chart no. 15: Distribution of Respondents by Family Status

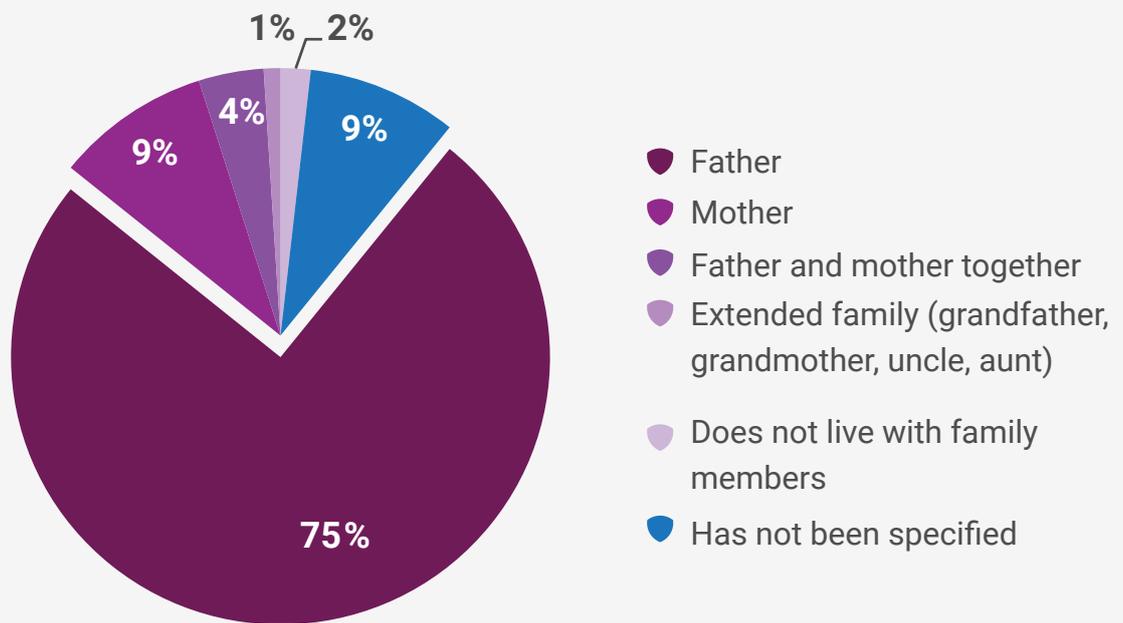


Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

### Eleventh: Models of Living with the Other Family Members

Results illustrated in Chart no. (16) confirm that most respondents live with their mother and father (75%) while 9.3% live with their extended families. Here we find that children have a family and relatives around them, still children seek out work or beg on the streets. This indicator suggests that family status is not correlated with child labor and school dropouts.

**Chart no. 16:** Distribution of Respondents by Model of Living with the Other Family Members



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

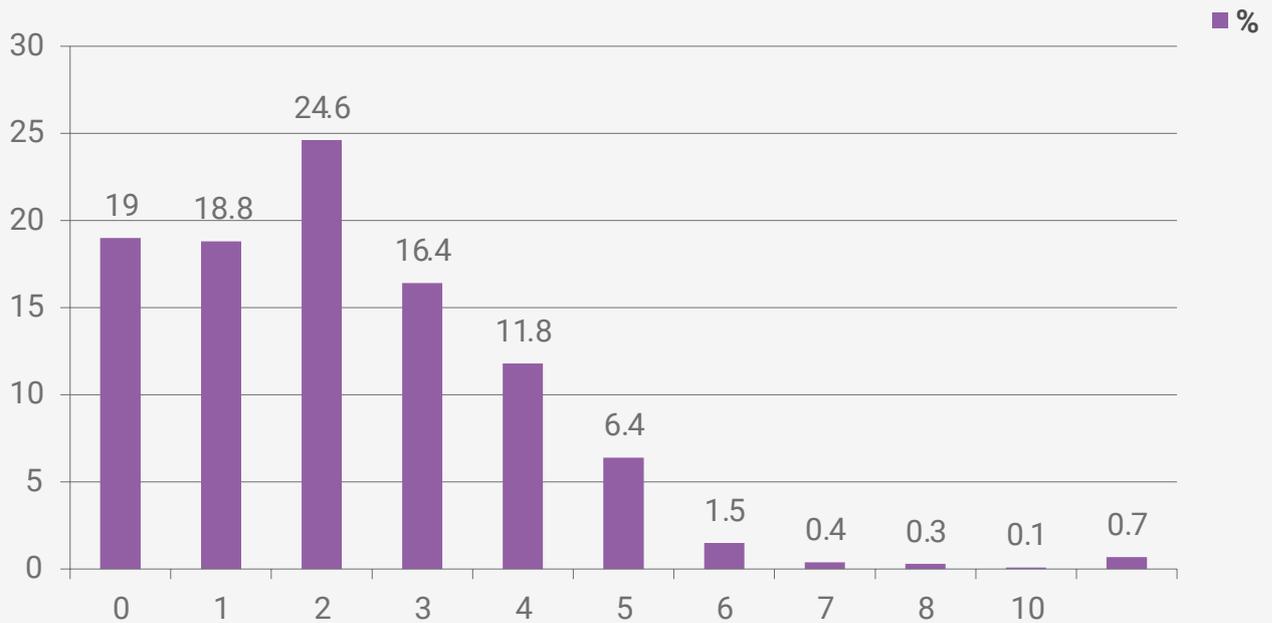


### Twelfth: Age Group of Siblings

Chart no. (17) indicates that 24.6% of respondents have two-year-old siblings and that 38% have siblings who are less than 2 years old. This suggests repeat childbirth and high childbirth among families. These are young families since most of their members are of young age.

These families will need to be approached to raise their awareness about reproductive health and other family awareness themes, and they need to be followed up upon to protect their new children from following in the footsteps of their older siblings in terms of dropping out of school or falling in early child labor.

**Chart no. 17:** Distribution of Respondents by the Number of Siblings who are under the age of 15



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

In conclusion to this chapter, we find that the families of working children and school dropouts have shared attributes and characteristics, including a low educational level for both the mother and the father, the father being engaged in general services domain and work domains that do not require a high degree or particular technical skills. In general, the mother doesn't work.

For the most part, their children live with their nucleus family, with both the mother and father. The size of the family is relatively large with many and frequent childbirths.



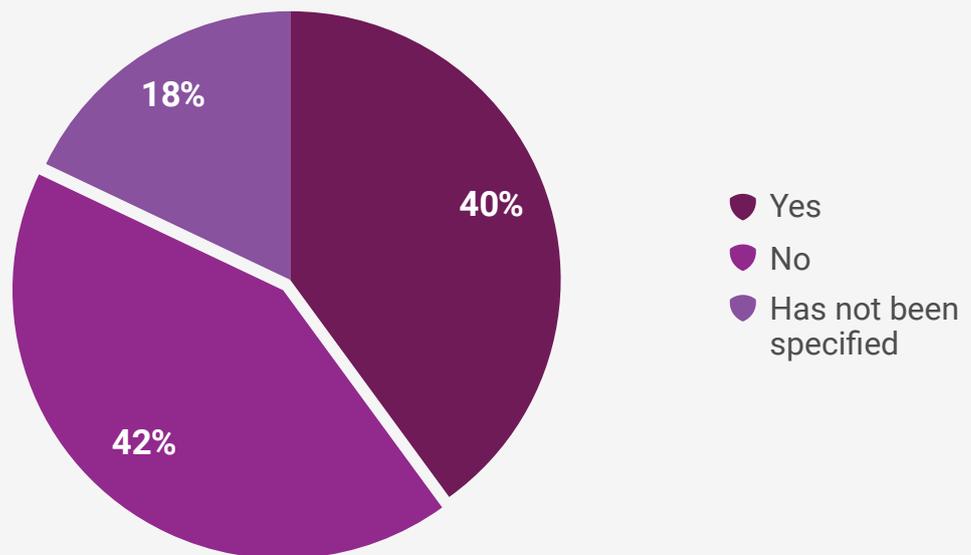
## Chapter Three: Status of School Dropout Among Working Children

This chapter will shed the light on the issue of school dropout, highlighting underlying reasons and motives, as well as the ages and personal & family characteristics of children who drop out of school.

### First: School Dropouts among the Siblings of Working Children

Findings illustrated in Chart no. (21) indicate that 40% of siblings under the age of 15 do attend school, meaning that more than half of the children are not enrolled in a school and do not receive an education. This ushers an increase in illiteracy among this young age group if an early intervention with the sample category is not undertaken as these will be more predisposed to join the workforce at an early age.

**Chart no. 21:** Distribution of Respondents by the number of siblings under 15 who attend school



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

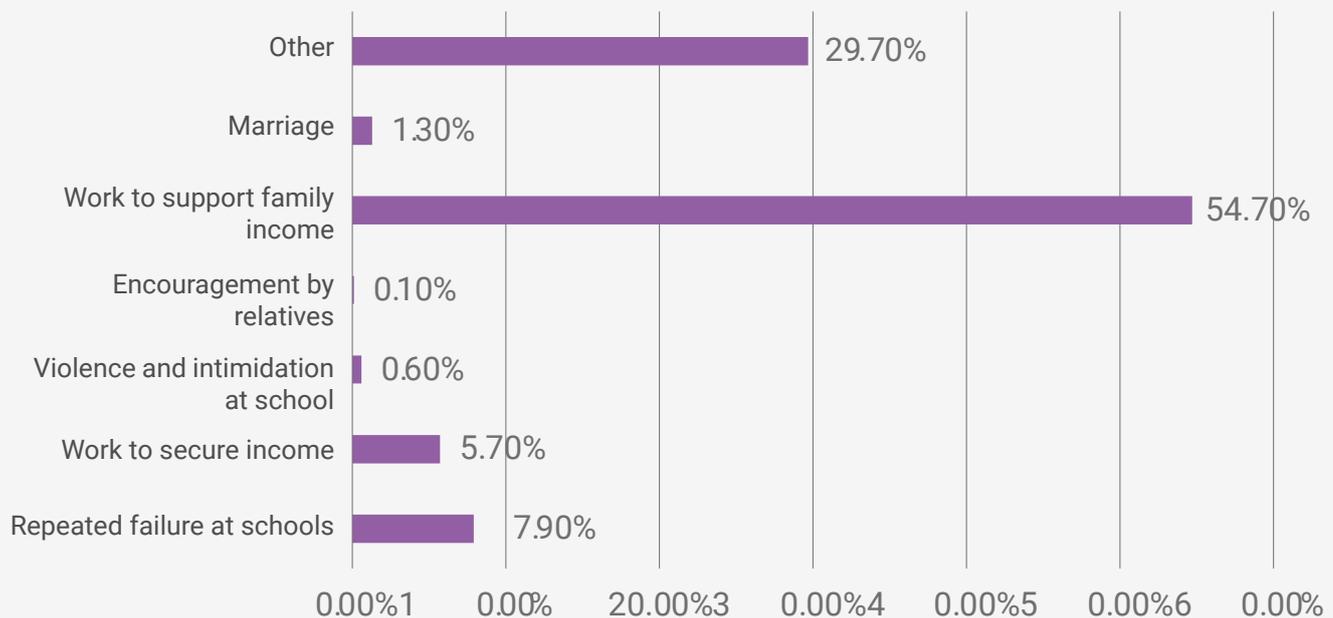


## Second: Reasons behind the Dropping Out of School among Siblings

Why it is that siblings under the age of 15 are not attending school? Chart no. (22) indicates that the biggest reason behind failure to attend school is work to support the family income. This reason is true in 54.7% of the cases. This means that the direct reason is family-related, and related to the living conditions. The student's repeated failure at school is behind 7.9% of the cases (educational reason). Marriage – i.e. the early marriage of children under the age of 15 – is behind 1.3% of the cases. 29.7% of the cases are due to "other" reasons, meaning that there are other factors, for example no school in the neighborhood, or parents being unable to provide transportation for their children.

**Chart no. 22:** Distribution of Respondents by the Reasons behind the Dropping out of School among Siblings under the age of 15

### Reasons why my siblings who are under 15 do not attend school



■ Reasons why my siblings who are under 15 do not attend school

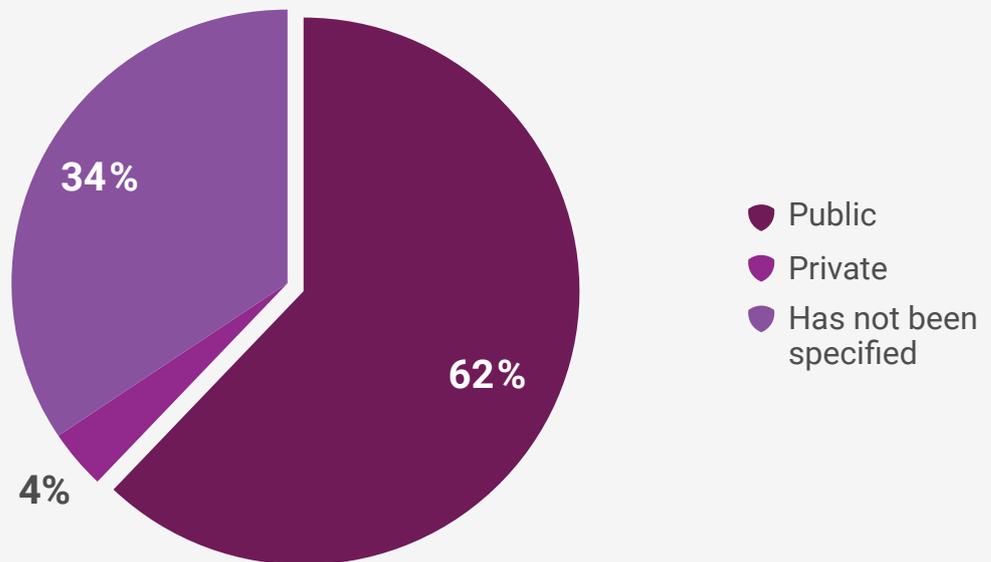
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Third: Type of School Attended by Siblings

It appears that siblings who attend school are for their most part enrolled in public schools, especially that public schools are almost free in Lebanon and receive all children of all nationalities (See Chart no. 29).

Chart no. 29: Distribution of Respondents by the Type of School Attended by Siblings



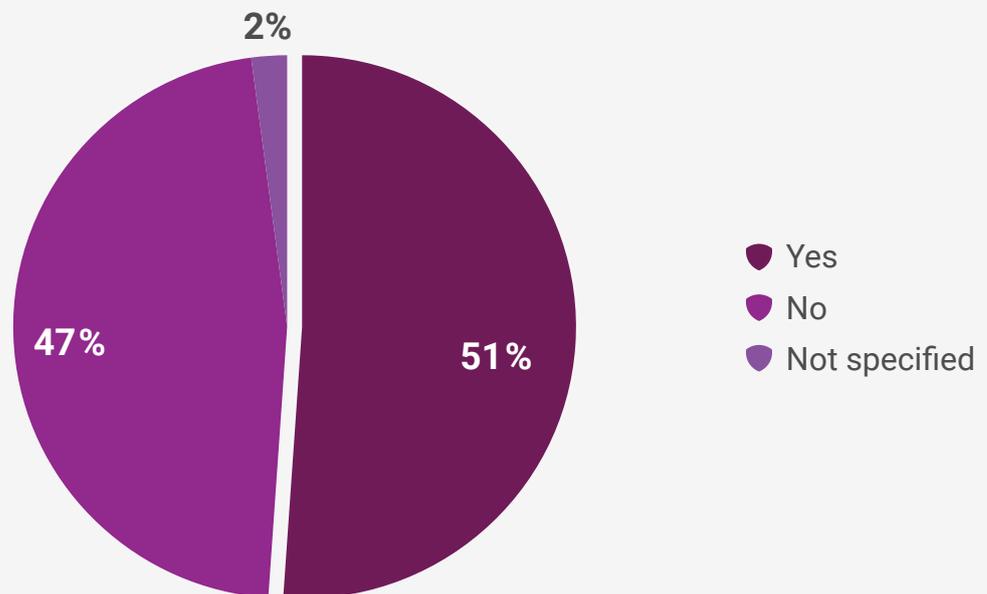
Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



#### Fourth: Having Siblings who are School Dropouts

It appears that 51% of the sample of children who are working children or school dropouts have other siblings who are school dropouts themselves (See Chart no. 30). This percentage is considered very high given that each working child in the sample has at least one brother or sister who has dropped out of school at an early age. This suggests an increase in the number of school dropouts in Lebanon.

Chart no. 30: Distribution of Respondents by “Having Siblings who are School Dropouts”



Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Fifth: Age at Which Other Siblings Have Dropped Out of School

Up to the age of 13, the vast majority has dropped out of school for economic and other reasons (See chart no. 31). When the dropping out of school occurs at this early age, the child is usually in late primary or middle school, meaning that this dropping out of school is occurring at a risky age for the child who is going through the troubles of puberty and adolescence and is unable to discern the risks that come with the decision of abandoning school and education and leaving behind the prospects of a college degree or vocational education that would otherwise support his personal growth and development and break the poverty cycle for him/her self and the family.

**Chart no. 31:** Distribution of Respondents by The Age at Which Other Siblings Have Dropped Out of School

|   |                   | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b>     |
|---|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>At which age he/she dropped out of school?</b> | Under 6 years old | 38            | 5.3          |
|   | 6-8 years         | 45            | 6.3          |
|   | 9-12 years        | 87            | 12.1         |
|   | 13-15 years       | 124           | 17.2         |
|   | 16-18 years       | 63            | 8.8          |
|   | Other             | 5             | 0.7          |
|   | <b>Total</b>      | <b>362</b>    | <b>50.3</b>  |
|   | N/A               | 358           | 49.7         |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |                   | <b>720</b>    | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Sixth: Dropping out of School and Work among Siblings

Table no. (32) indicates that 32.5% of siblings that have dropped out of school actually work; this confirms a positive correlation between the dropping out of school and child labor.

**Chart no. 32:** Distribution of Respondents by  
“Dropping Out of School and Work among Siblings”

|               |              | Number     | %            |
|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Does he work? | Yes          | 234        | 32.5         |
|               | No           | 134        | 18.6         |
|               | <b>Total</b> | <b>368</b> | <b>51.1</b>  |
|               | N/A          | 352        | 48.9         |
| <b>Total</b>  |              | <b>720</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Seventh: Type of Work Siblings are Engaged in

The types of work siblings are engaged in are varied: 7.9% are engaged in handy work (plumber, electrician, carpenter, barber, etc...), 5% are shop vendors, 4.3% are construction worker, and 3.5% are street vendors (See Chart no. 33). These types of work are dangerous, especially for children under the age of 15.

**Chart no. 33:** Distribution of Respondents by the Type of Work Siblings are Engaged in

|  |   | Number       | %    |
|--|---|--------------|------|
| If he works, what is the type of work? | Shop vendor   | 36           | 5.0  |
|  | Construction worker (builder, whitewasher, etc...)                          | 31           | 4.3  |
|  | Porter  | 16           | 2.2  |
|  | Handy work (plumber, electrician, carpenter, barber, etc...)                | 57           | 7.9  |
|  | Street vendor, for his/her account  | 25           | 3.5  |
|  | Administrative work (cashier, secretary, etc...)                            | 1            | .1   |
|  | Works at restaurant   | 10           | 1.4  |
|  | Beggar  | 2            | .3   |
|  | Agriculture   | 37           | 5.1  |
|  | Security Guard  | 1            | .1   |
|  | Employee in a private business  | 12           | 1.7  |
|  | Employee in a public agency (municipality, army, government agency, etc...) | 3            | .4   |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>231</b>  | <b>32.1</b>  |      |
|  | N/A   | 489          | 67.9 |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>720</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |      |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### **Eighth: Encouragement to Abandon School**

It appears that only 15% of the respondents have been encouraged by someone to abandon school while 78.3% have abandoned school by a decision of their own (See Table no. 34). This high percentage suggests that the children are rebellious and unable to follow the educational system and appreciate the hard economic situation of the parents. Leaving school and actually taking the decision to leave school by themselves, at the age of puberty as highlighted above - possibility to emulate a sibling, family member, or friends in the neighborhood in what is called peer pressure and influence - may be attributed to a lack of parental care and attention to the education of the children.

**Chart no. 34:** Distribution of Respondents by “Encouragement to Abandon School”

|  |               | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b>     |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>Did anyone encourage you to abandon school?</b> | Yes           | 110           | 15.3         |
|  | No            | 564           | 78.3         |
|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>674</b>    | <b>93.6</b>  |
|  | Not specified | 46            | 6.4          |
| <b>Total</b>                                       |               | <b>720</b>    | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

### Ninth: Enticer to Leave School

In the group of respondents who have been encouraged to leave school and have done so, it appears that in 9.7% of the cases (the valid percent here is  $70/110 \times 100 = 63\%$  and not 9.7% because the valid percent excludes the missing data), both parents have encouraged the child to leave school, possibly forcing the child to do so and join the workforce. Here we confirm the importance and role of the parents in providing a good upbringing for their children and encouraging them to pursue an education.

**Chart no. 35:** Distribution of Respondents by “Enticer to Leave School”

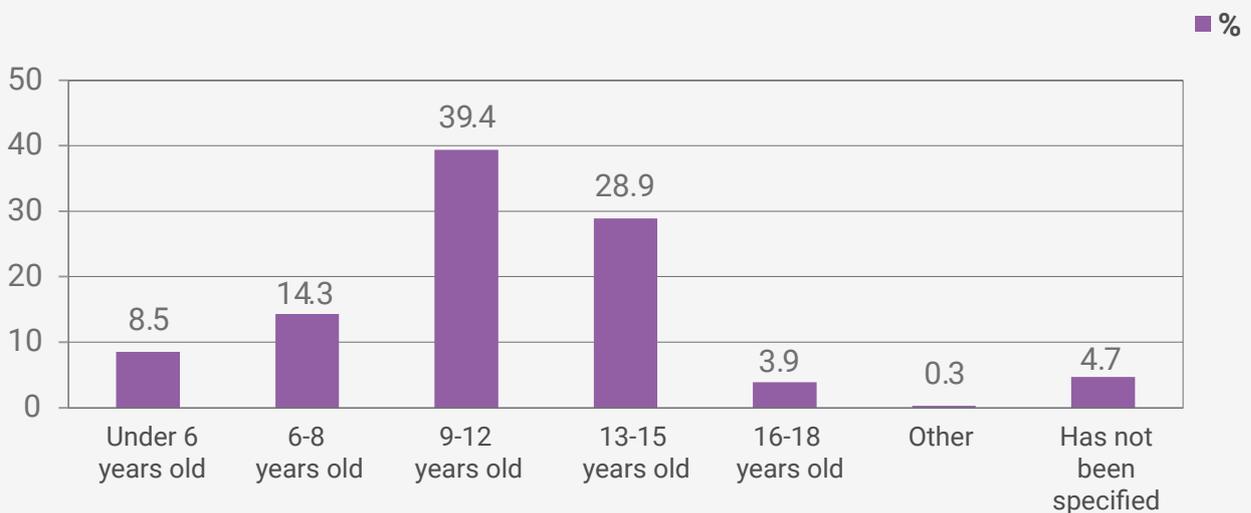
|  |  | Number       | %           |
|--|--|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Who encouraged you to leave school?</b> | The father   | 9            | 1.3         |
|  | The mother   | 6            | 0.6         |
|  | Both mom and dad   | 70           | 9.7         |
|  | Siblings   | 1            | 0.1         |
|  | Uncle from the mother’s side   | 2            | 0.3         |
|  | Husband / fiancé   | 3            | 0.4         |
|  | Friend (s)   | 4            | 0.6         |
|  | Family member (s)  | 1            | 0.1         |
|  | Uncle from the father’s side   | 1            | 0.1         |
|  | Grandfather  | 1            | 0.1         |
|  | School administration or teachers in the school that was attended by the child | 14           | 1.9         |
|  | <b>Total</b>   | <b>110</b>   | <b>15.3</b> |
|  | N/A  | 610          | 84.7        |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>720</b>   | <b>100.0</b> |             |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Tenth: Age at which the dropping out of school has occurred

Respondents have indicated that they have left school at an early age, 39.4% in the 9-12 age bracket, and 28.9% in the 13-15 age bracket (See Chart no. 36). These age brackets and distributions are analogous to what we have seen in previous paragraphs on repeat dropping out of school by the children of the same family and in the same age bracket. This call for an intervention by competent educational and social bodies to protect children who are in these age brackets from dropping out of school. The dire economic situation can well be the main reason behind the dropping out of school.

**Chart no. 36:** Distribution of Respondents by Age at which the dropping out of school has occurred

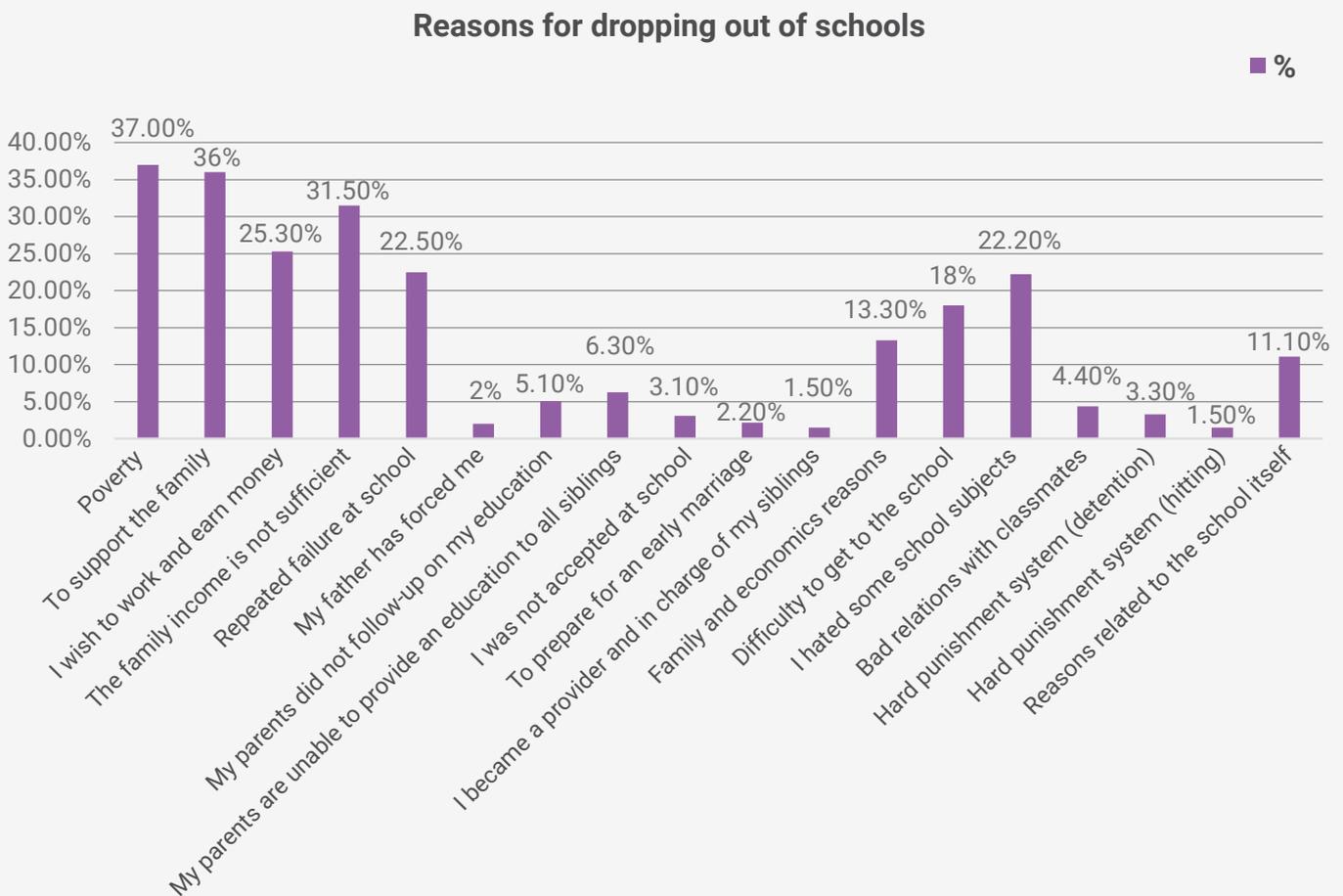


**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Eleventh: Reasons for Dropping out of Schools

Findings in Chart no. (37) show that there are a multitude of reasons that are pushing the child to leave school and seek to work. There is not one single reason or motive but a multitude of reasons and these can be placed under three categories: family factors, personal traits factors, and educational and school-related factors.

**Chart no. 37:** Distribution of Respondents by Reasons for Dropping out of Schools



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

We find that family factors are the stronger motive behind the dropping out of school, be it because of poverty, low family income, or hard living conditions. Poverty and supporting the family has stood behind 37% of the cases, and if we add “family income is not sufficient” and “support family income”, we find that children seek to earn money to support family needs. With the factors added, the percentage will be much higher than 37%.



We have also noticed there are multiple factors related to the school itself, and to teaching and punishment methods. Repeated failure at school seems to be another factor that plays out. Lack of transportation or school distance from home is also a factor. All these factors need addressing by competent official stakeholders in the educational sector. Public schools need to be present at remote areas. Repeat failure at school and its underlying reasons need to be addressed; way to attract school dropouts and merge them again in schools need to be set out. This commands a public educational policy that takes into consideration the needs and problems that have been identified in this study and other similar field studies. For when the right conditions for education are there, the dropping-out of school could well ease even if its main underlying reason is poverty.

To conclude this chapter, we summarize some characteristics related to the dropping out of school of these children. As it seems, more than one child in the same family has dropped out of school at an early age. The vast majority of those who have dropped out of school are in the 9-12 and 13-15 age groups. It also appears that the parents have had a role in encouraging their children to leave school, as shown in answers presented in previous tables. The largest percentage of respondents have indicated that not one has encouraged them to leave school, and that they were not interested in school and would rather join the work force and learn a craft, or simply wander the streets selling miscellaneous items, as illustrated earlier in this study. It seems that reasons behind the dropping out of school revolve for their most part around difficult economic living conditions, weak parental follow-up on school retardation as well as social and educational problems for the child at school.

## Chapter Four: The Situation of Child labor

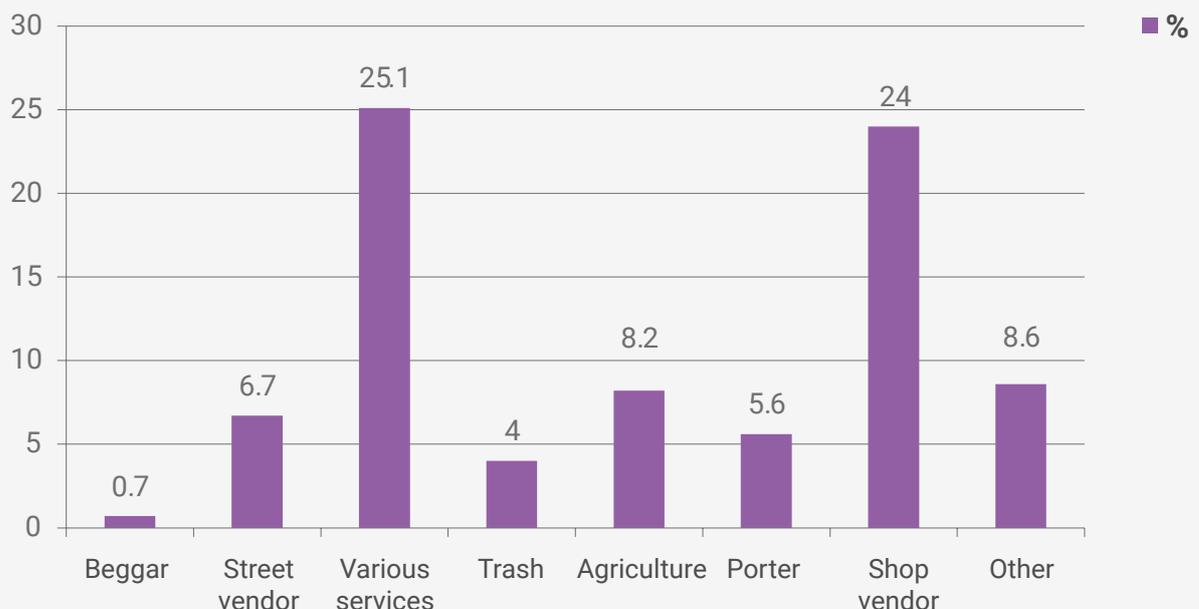
In this chapter, we present the situation of working children in terms of nature of their work, their employers, as well as work characteristics such as working hours, pay, and other.

### First: Work Domains

Findings in Chart no. (39) indicate that children work in various domains, from street vendors to providers of general services, shop vendors, work in the agriculture field, etc... These types of work do not require specific skills; by they are full of dangers for the child.

It appears that 5.6% of the children work as porters; this occupation will impact the health and growth of the child. 25.1% work in various non-specific service delivery domains, meaning that the child is not working in a specific occupation, which puts the child under a big psychological pressure in addition to the other pressures that the child has to face in his job and for being a school dropout.

**Chart no. 39: Distribution of Respondents by Nature of Work**



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Second: Work History

Finding in Chart no. (40) indicate that 21% of the children have been working for a year now, while 7.6% have been working for two years and more. The other values range between one month and six months; these figures indicate that child labor is an enduring process with new children entering the pool of child labor in a continuum.

**Chart no. 40: Distribution of Respondents by Length of Work History**

|  |               | Number      | %            |
|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Since when have you been working?<br>(In months) | 1.00          | 74          | 10.3         |
|  | 2.00          | 58          | 8.1          |
|  | 3.00          | 60          | 8.3          |
|  | 4.00          | 9           | 1.3          |
|  | 5.00          | 26          | 3.6          |
|  | 6.00          | 31          | 4.3          |
|  | 7.00          | 4           | .6           |
|  | 8.00          | 5           | .7           |
|  | 9.00          | 3           | .4           |
|  | 10.00         | 3           | .4           |
|  | 12.00         | 153         | 21.3         |
|  | 14.00         | 1           | .1           |
|  | 15.00         | 2           | .3           |
|  | 18.00         | 12          | 1.7          |
|  | 20.00         | 1           | .1           |
|  | 24.00         | 55          | 7.6          |
|  | 30.00         | 1           | .1           |
|  | 36.00         | 27          | 3.8          |
|  | 40.00         | 1           | .1           |
|  | 48.00         | 9           | 1.3          |
|  | 53.00         | 1           | .1           |
|  | 60.00         | 6           | .8           |
|  | 72.00         | 1           | .1           |
| 96.00  | 1             | .1          |              |
| 144.00   | 1             | .1          |              |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>545</b>    | <b>75.7</b> |              |
|  | Not specified | 175         | 24.3         |
| <b>Total</b>                                     |               | <b>720</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

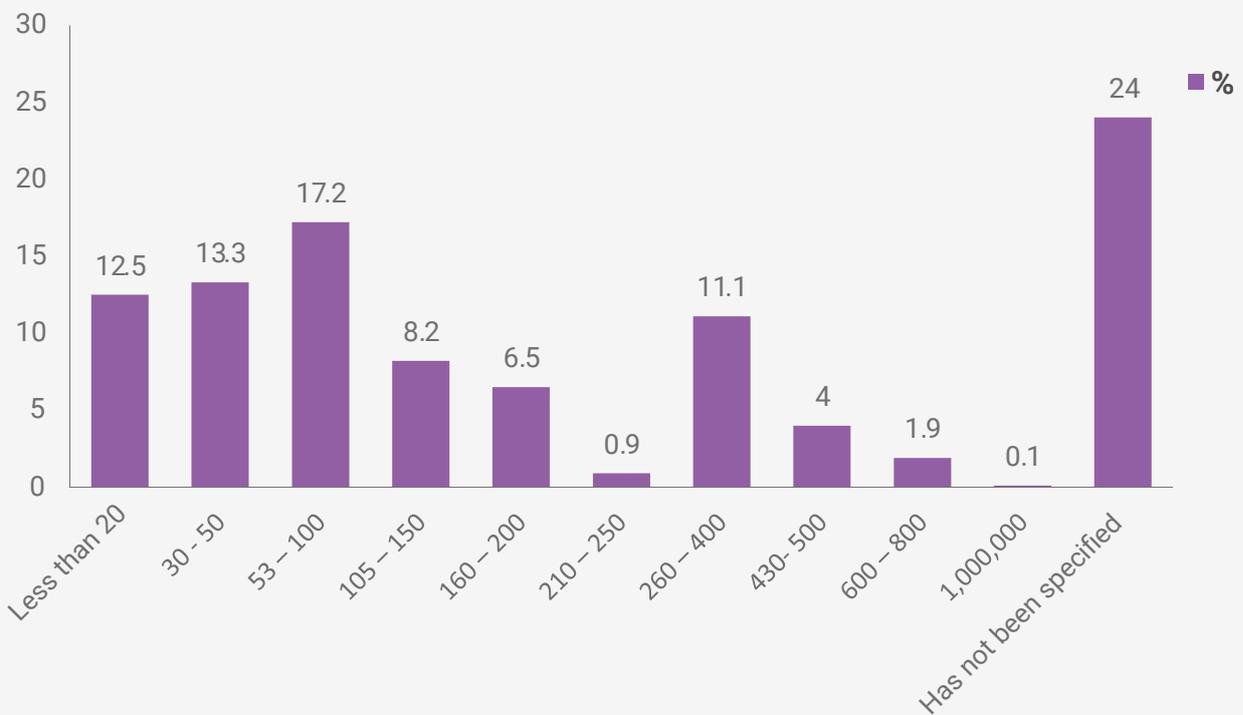


### Third: Value of the Monthly Income

Findings in Chart no. (41) tell us that 24% of the children do not know what their monthly income is and have no way to know. They work without knowing what the pay is. 17% receive around 53 to 100 USD a month, while 12.5% make less than 20 USD a month, which is a low pay. Relatively speaking, this pay is very low given the current living conditions in Lebanon and the deterioration of the purchasing power and of the value of the Lebanese pound. This pay does not meet the basic needs of the child or this family.

**N.B.:** the exchange rate at the time of the study was 1 USD for every 30,000 LBP.

**Chart no. 41:** Distribution of Respondents by Approximate Monthly Income in USD

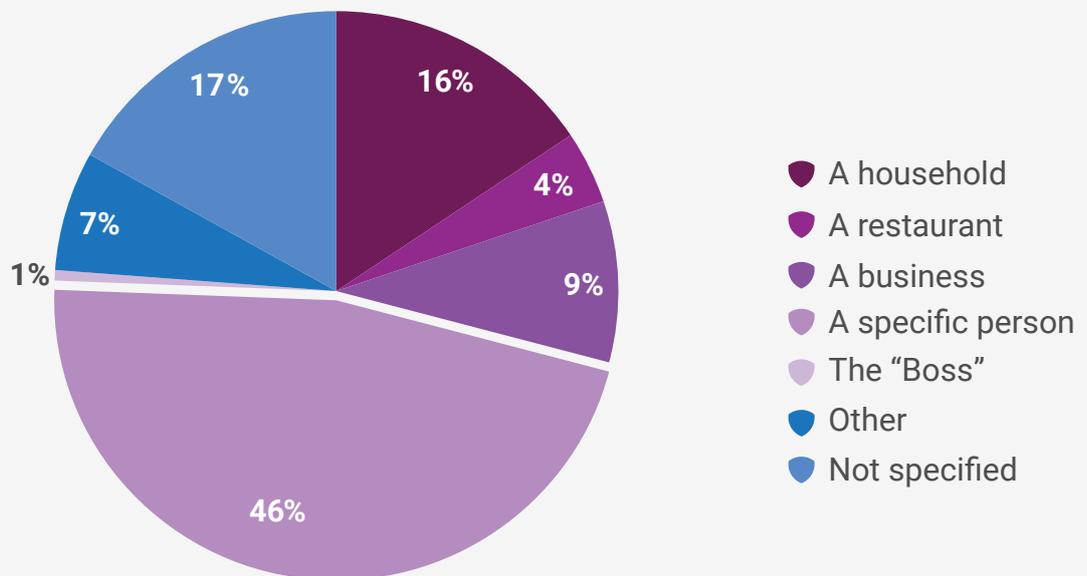


**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

#### Fourth: The Employer

Findings in Chart no. (42) indicate that 46% of the children work for a specific person (parents, brother, uncle, etc...) meaning that there is an adult who is operating and regulating the work of these children and who is taking money from them. This is yet another indicator as to the dangers that the children are exposed to and to the sufferance they endure having someone exploiting them financially and personally and abusing their right to protection.

Chart no. 42: Distribution of Respondents by Employer



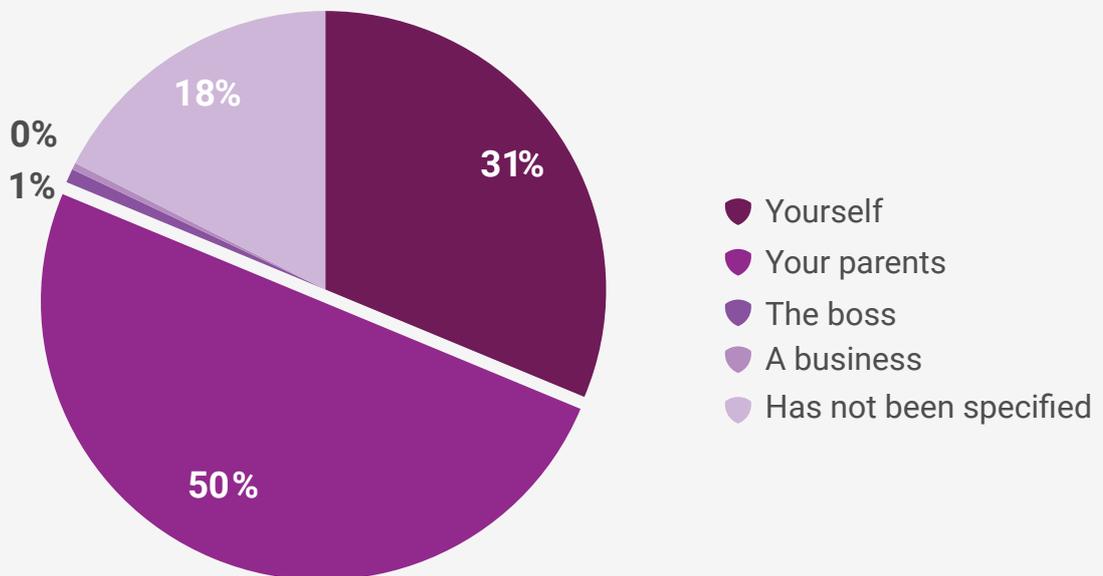
Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Fifth: Main Beneficiary from the Work of the Child

Findings in Chart no. (43) indicate that 50% of the children work and primarily benefit their parents with their money. If we associate these findings with those of the previous paragraph, we find that the person who operates the children is a family member. These percentages indicate that children work to support their families and earn them money without keeping or enjoying their rights (right for education similarly to other peers, living in a safe environment that does not expose the child to danger...), and that they are being exposed to many dangers for working at an early age and in unsafe work environments.

**Chart no. 43:** Distribution of Respondents by Main Beneficiary from the Work of the Child



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

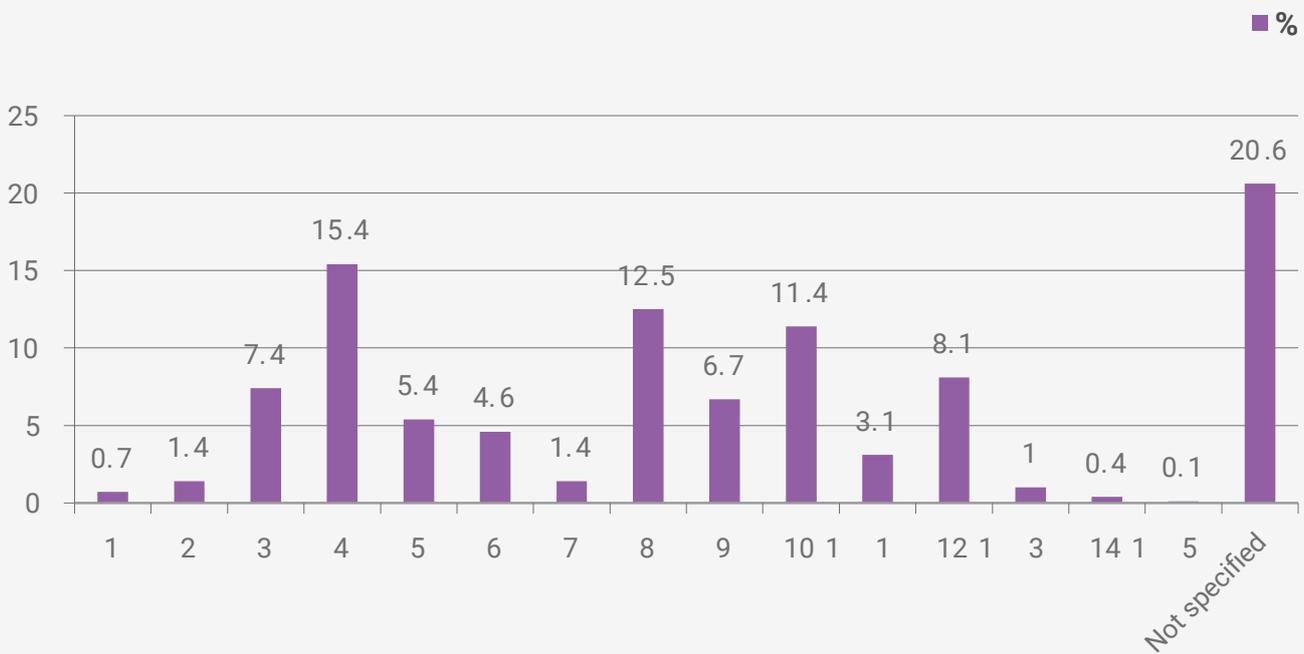


### Sixth: Daily Working Hours

Working hours are not the same for all children. While 15.4% work 4 hours a day, 11.4% work 10 hours, and 8.1% work 12 hours (See Chart no. 44).

These working hours are long hours for the children and negatively influence their physiological growth. Not taking breaks or enough resting times jeopardizes the psychological and physical health of the children.

Chart no. 44: Distribution of Respondents by Daily Working Hours



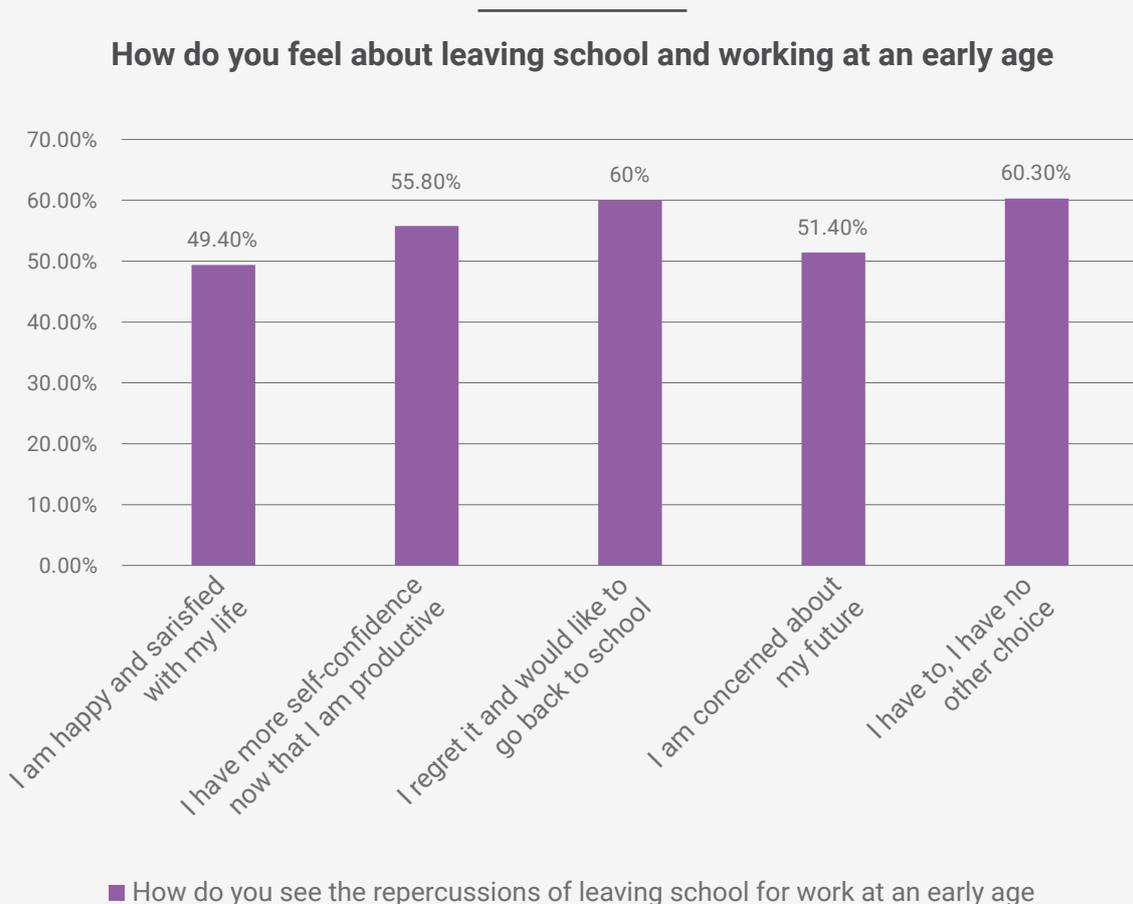
Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Seventh: The Repercussions of Leaving School and Working at a Young Age in the Eyes of the Children

In the child's assessment of the repercussions of leaving school for work at a young age, the answers and assessments came sometimes negative and sometimes positive (See Chart no. 45) as 60.3% have stated that they have to work and have no other choice, while 60% said they regret it and wish to go back to school.

These answers are an expression of the frustration and sadness that working children feel; this is likely to influence their perception of themselves as they believe that their future has been distorted, is bleak, and that their dreams are lost. On the other side, 55.8% feel confident about earning money and being able to support their family. More than 44% are happy and satisfied.

**Chart no. 45:** Distribution of Respondents by The Repercussions of Leaving School and Working at a Young Age in the Eyes of the Children



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



To close this chapter, we conclude from studying the situation of working children that, in most cases, these children are under the obligation to work. These children work in various non-descriptive domains as many of them have stated they work in various service domains. We are talking here about children under the age of 15 being exposed day in day out to dangers as they go to and return from work, and being exposed to financial and personal exploitation as they give their money to the persons who operate them and who are typically family members. These children are tired and exhausted from spending long hours at work for a relatively unacceptable pay that goes in large parts to the pockets of other people.

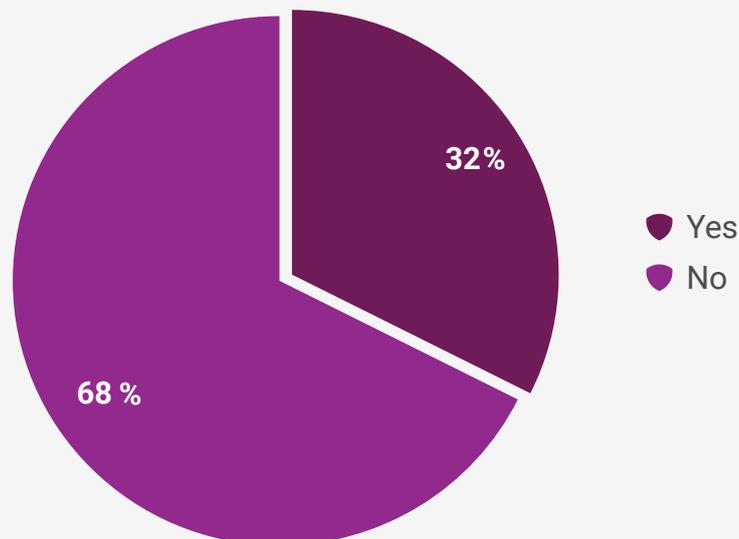
## Chapter Five: Medical and Psychological Health of the Working Children

This chapter tackles main study findings related to the health of working children, how older people deal with them, their exposure to violence and the types of violence, and finally how they feel about work.

### First: Contracting Health Problems Because of Work

Findings in Chart no. (5) indicate that 32% of the working children have declared that they have health problems, i.e. more than one third of the children have medical problems that have appeared as they have joined the workforce. 68% do not have health problems.

**Chart no. 50:** Distribution of Respondents by Work-related Health Problems

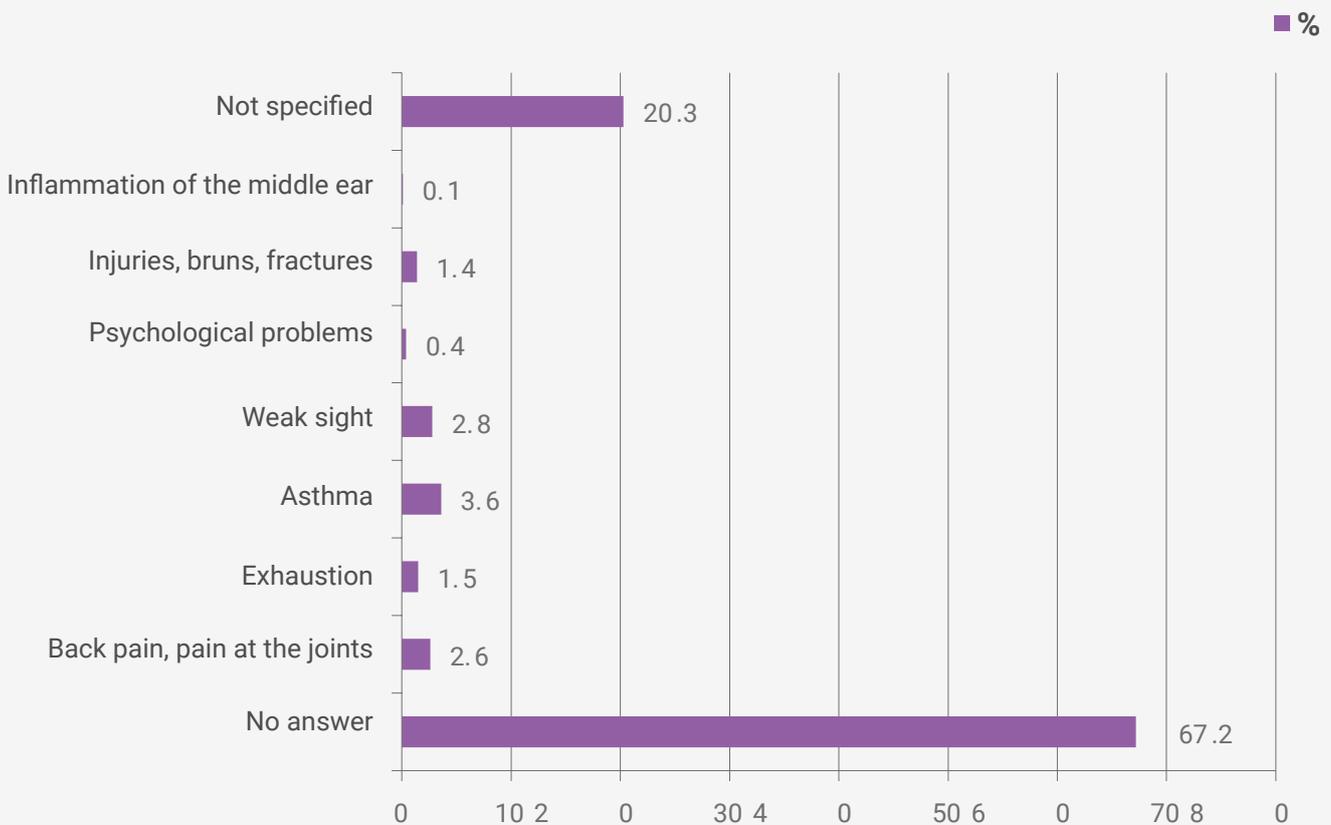


**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Second: Types of Health Problems

Children suffer various health problems. While some know what their health problem is, some are unable to say what it is exactly but say they feel tired and sick in general. From reading findings in Chart no. (51), it is clear that the sickness that the working children have said they have is directly associated with the type of work the child is engaged in, and is the result of spending long hours at work or on the streets. These children need medical care, treatment, and follow-up.

**Chart no. 51: Distribution of Respondents by Types of Medical Problems**



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

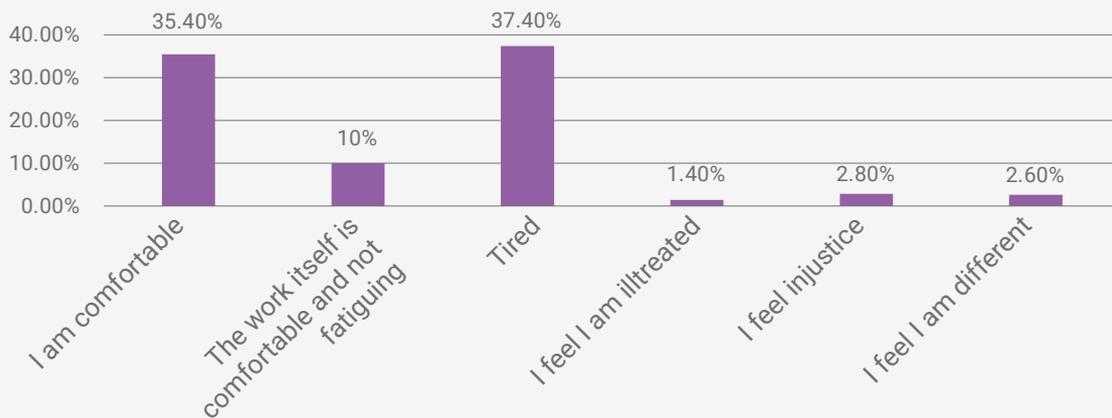


### Third: The Children’s Thoughts and Feelings about Work

37.4% of the children have stated that they feel exhausted from work (See Chart no. 52). The remaining percentage is divided between many other options. No doubt that these children suffer in silence, feel exhausted, discriminated against, and tired, without receiving appropriate support.

Chart no. 52: Distribution of Respondents by The Children’s Thoughts & Feelings about Work

How would you describe your situation and feelings about work



■ How would you describe your situation and feelings about work

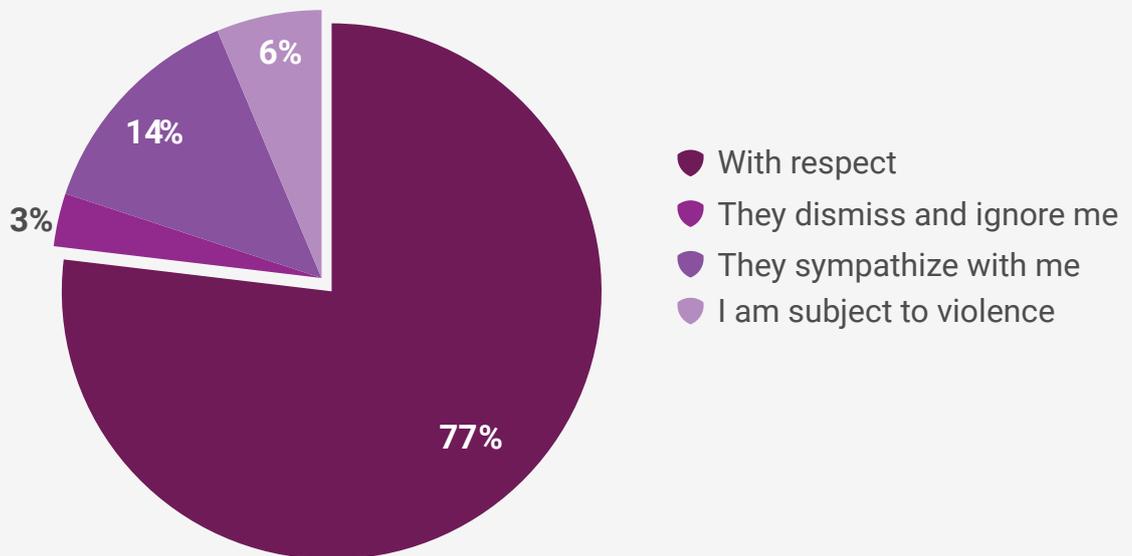
Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



#### Fourth: How Older People deal with Working Children

77% of working children consider that older people respect them, while 14% feel that older people sympathize with them. 9% are subject to moral and physical violence (See Chart no. 53). These findings indicate that a large percentage of children get treated well by older people (respect and sympathy 77+14 = 91%), as such, these children and treated positively by older people.

Chart no. 53: Distribution of Respondents by How Older People deal with Working Children



Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Fifth: People Who are Violent with Working Children

In the pool of children who have said they are subject to violence (Table no. 54), it seems that these children have fallen victim of numerous people who are violent with them both in the street and at work, and not primarily by the parents. The highest percentage (92.8%) of children is not subject to violence, and that is a positive thing.

**Chart no. 54:** Distribution of Respondents by Source of This Violence

|  |                              | Number       | %           |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Who is exercising this violence on you?</b> | I am not subject to violence | 668          | 92.8        |
|  | My father                    | 3            | .4          |
|  | Many people                  | 20           | 5.5         |
|  | Friends at school            | 2            | .3          |
|  | Children my age              | 2            | .3          |
|  | My employer                  | 5            | .7          |
|  | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>694</b>   | <b>96.4</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>720</b>                   | <b>100.0</b> |             |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Sixth: Nature of Violence against Working Children

The nature of the violence that the children are subject to is not the same. In 5.5% of the cases, it is physical violence (hitting), but there is sexual rape albeit in a very low percentage (0.4%); this puts the child in danger and commands legal protection and action against perpetrators.

**Chart no. 55:** Distribution of Respondent by Nature of Violence against Working Children

|  |                              | Number       | %           |
|--|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Nature of the violence you are subject to</b> | I am not subject to violence | 671          | 93.2        |
|  | Hitting                      | 39           | 5.5         |
|  | Screaming                    | 6            | .8          |
|  | Rape                         | 3            | .4          |
|  | Other                        | 1            | .1          |
|  | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>695</b>   | <b>96.5</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>720</b>                   | <b>100.0</b> |             |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Seventh: Frequency of this Violence

In terms of frequency of this violence, 93% have pointed out that they are not subject to violence. Only 6% are subject to violence and have to endure it constantly. As such, there is not much danger, but still violence towards children – no matter in what small percentage – is a danger in itself.

**Chart no. 56:** Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Violence

|  |                              | Number     | %            |
|--|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Are you frequently subject to violence?</b> | I am not subject to violence | 674        | 93.6         |
|  | Constantly                   | 45         | 6.2          |
|  | Sometimes                    | 1          | .10          |
|  | <b>Total</b>                 | <b>689</b> | <b>95.7</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                                   |                              | <b>720</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

To conclude, this chapter has shown that the physical health situation of the children is better than their psychological health, and that they are not heavily subject to harm by older people at work (the vast majority saying they are comfortable). It is clear that working children do not suffer a lot of violence– moral and physical – from older people and are not frequently subject to abuse and rape in a high percentage.

Despite the fact that the figures of violence against children are not high, working children are suffering in silence and their rights are being violated as they do not seek legal protection and quick interventions to correct their situation and end the violations they have to endure. This point leads us to another point which is the lack of a clear social policy in Lebanon to protect working children and combat child labor of all forms. Generally speaking, the social protection policy is weak.

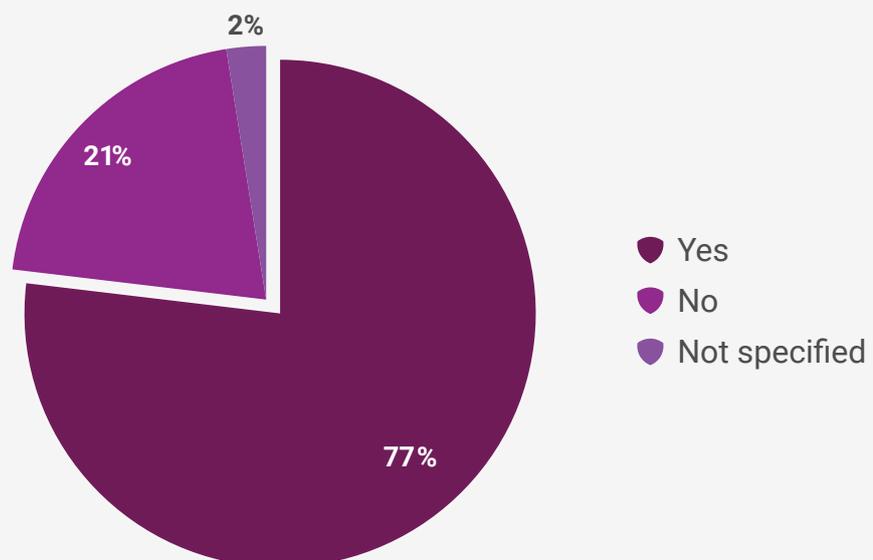
## Chapter Six: The Children's View on Work and Dropping out of School

This chapter will present the main views and tendencies among working children vis-à-vis child labor and dropping out of school.

### First: Children's view on leaving school

77% of the working children see that leaving school at a young age before finishing school education is rather a problem (See Chart no. 58), as if they are expressing their internal pain and their regret and wish to go back to school.

**Chart no. 58:** Distribution of Respondents by Children's view on leaving school (problem or not)



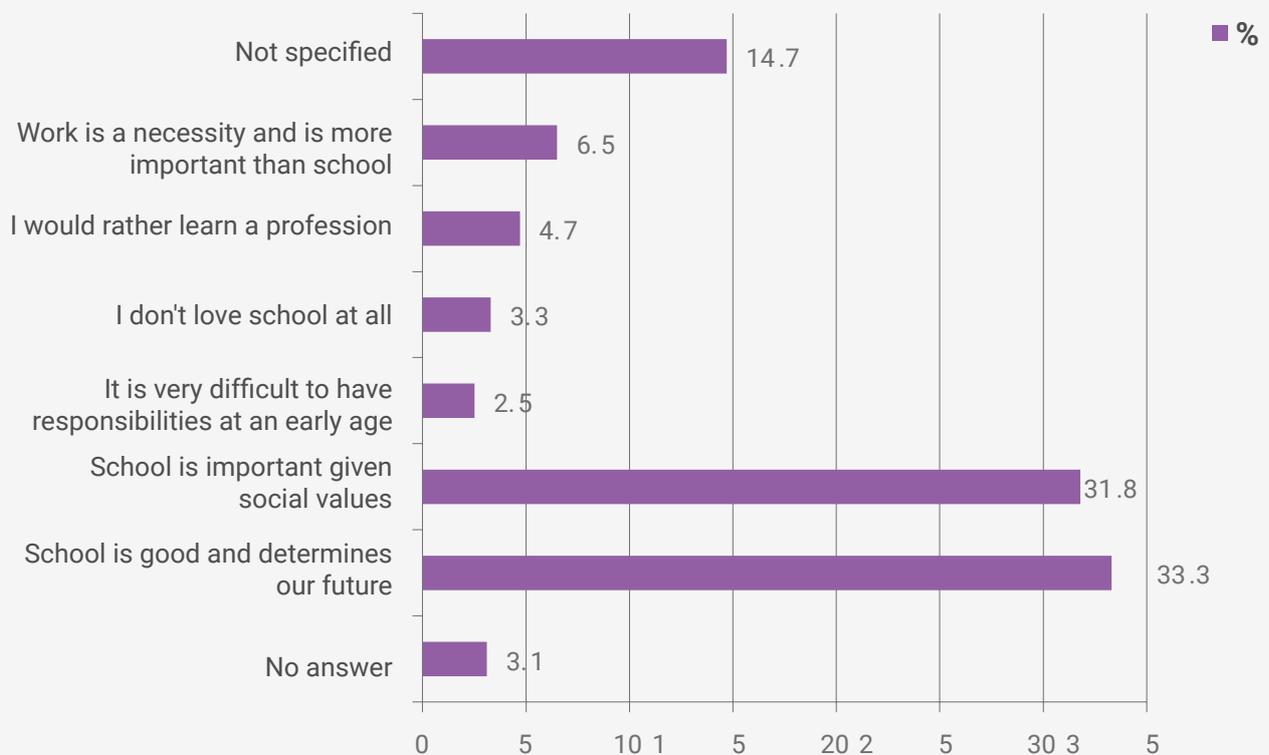
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



## Second: Children's view on leaving school before finishing their education

33% of the working children see that leaving school early on is a problem since school is a decisive factor in our destiny and future (See Chart no. 59). These children see that education is a matter associated with social values, as educated people gain more respect. This statement reflects a feeling of deprivation, loss, and future ambiguity because of leaving school.

**Chart no. 59:** Distribution of Respondents by Children's view on leaving school before completing their education (problem or not)



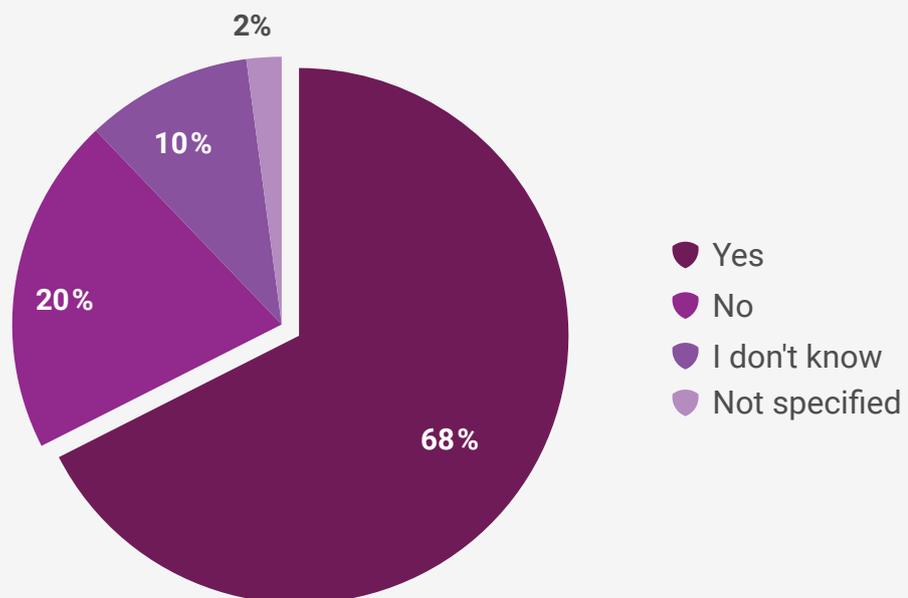
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Third: Children's View on Child labor before the age of 15

68% of the working children believe that child labor under the age 15 is a problem (See Chart no. 60). They are thus talking about themselves actually.

**Chart no. 60:** Distribution of Respondents by Children's View on Child labor before the age of 15 (problem or not)



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

In conclusion to this chapter, we see that working children have a negative look at early child labor and dropping out of school as they see it as a problem that affects their current and future personal life. Leaving school jeopardizes their destiny. We also see in this assessment that children wish to stop work and return to school; this is a call from working children to competent authorities that can help.



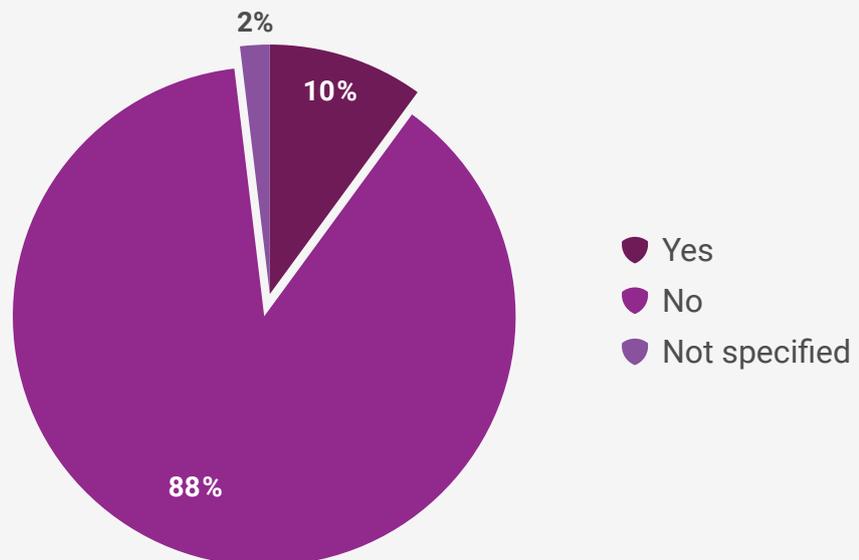
## Chapter Seven: Interventions and Bodies around Working Children

We present in this chapter the children's main views and aspirations vis-à-vis organizations that cater to child needs around them, the assistance and things they ask for, and their outlook and wishes for the future.

### First: Surrounding Organizations that cater to Childhood

Children were not able to identify organizations around them. Only 10% said there are around them organizations that cater to childhood (Chart no. 62). This percentage is very low and commands that organizations work on spreading knowledge, reach out to the children, and let them know they exist and the services they can offer.

**Chart no. 62:** Distribution of Respondents by Surrounding Organizations that cater to Childhood



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

## Second: Organizations that Children Reach out to for Help

It appears from Table no. (65) that working children, and despite the difficulties and problem they have, do not ask for help from anyone in 83.8% of the cases. This percentage is very high compared to the size of the needs and problems that were presented in this study. This fact may be explained by the children's lack of trust in organizations or their non-awareness of the roles of these organizations, and the services and assistance they offer.

**Chart no. 65:** Distribution of Respondents by Organizations that Children Reach out to for Help or Grievance

|   |  | Number     | %            |
|---|--|------------|--------------|
| <b>Whom have you approached to ask for help or submit a grievance on what you have suffered</b> | I have never asked any agency for help | 603        | 83.8         |
|   | Association                            | 20         | 2.8          |
|   | MOSA center                            | 8          | 1.1          |
|   | Parents                                | 43         | 6.0          |
|   | Friends                                | 12         | 1.7          |
|   | Other                                  | 20         | 2.8          |
|   | <b>Total</b>                           | <b>706</b> | <b>98.1</b>  |
|   | Not specified                          | 14         | 1.9          |
| <b>Total</b>  |  | <b>720</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

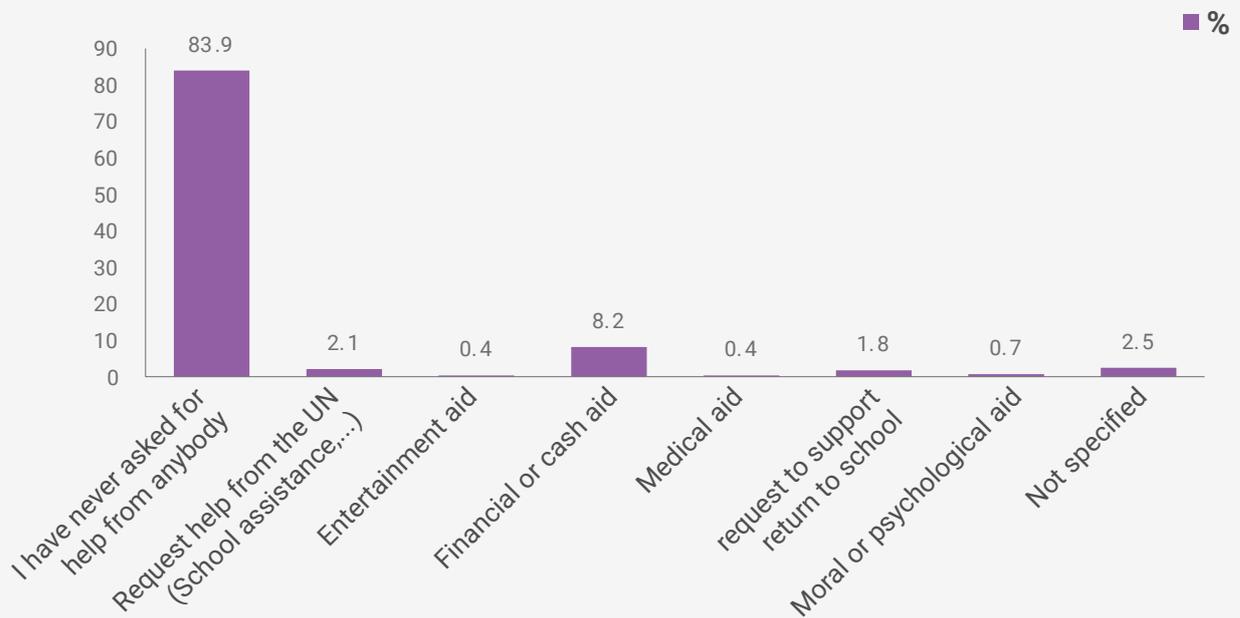
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Third: Type of Assistance or Grievance submitted

Findings in Chart no. (64) indicate that 83.9% of working children have not asked for help from any association or organization. 8.2% have asked for financial or cash assistance. This is the most urgent request for this group and comes in number one. School/educational assistance and heating come in number two. Although these children are subject to violence, ill-treatment, and rape in a small percentage, but they have never submitted a grievance, nor have they asked for protection and addressing of the situation.

Chart no. 64: Distribution of Respondents by Type of Assistance or Grievance Submitted



Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

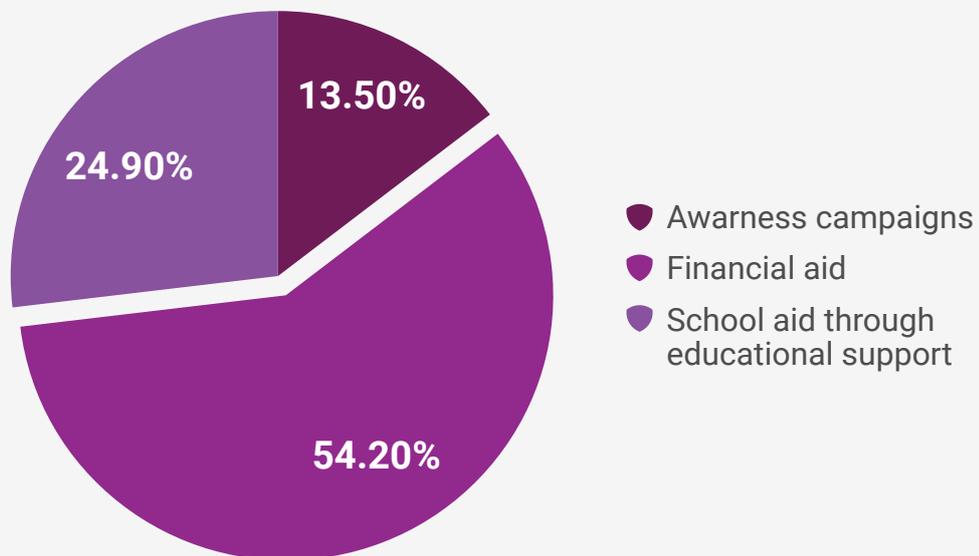


#### Fourth: Children's Views on Assistance Requested from Surrounding Organizations

Findings in Chart no. (65) indicate that what children want the most is financial assistance to support them and probably alleviate their workload, then school/ educational assistance for those children who are weak at school as prevention from dropping out of school and to support their right to education and continue their studies.

**Chart no. 65:** Distribution of Respondents by Type of Assistance Requested from Surrounding Organizations

#### Assistance requested from organizations



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

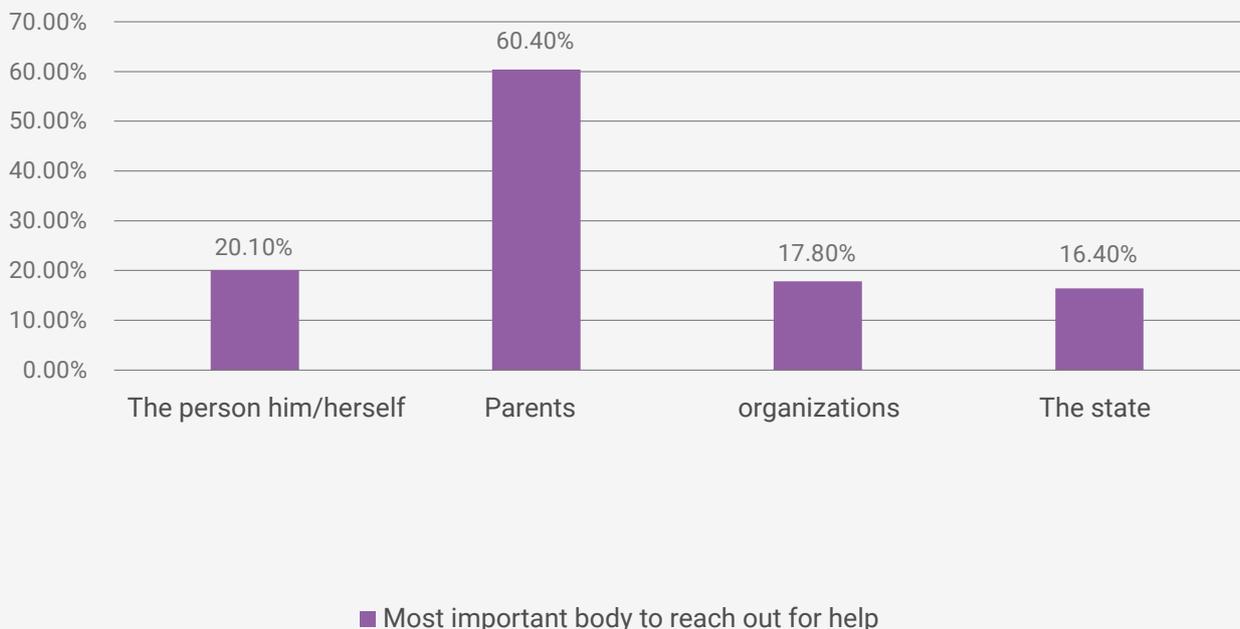


### Fifth: Children’s View on Most Important Bodies that can help them Solve their Problems

Working children see that their parents are the most important reference for helping them in addressing and solving their problems (60.4% of respondents, see Chart no. 65), then the person him/her self, then organizations. The government comes in last. For children, parents are the first and final reference, and children’s reliance on their parents to solve their problems is a reasonable answer given the children’s understanding and experience with life at this age. The answers to this question reflect a weak trust in the government, or that the government is simply not there to meet the needs of this category, and that the important role of organizations is not within the range of sight of these children.

**Table no. 66:** Distribution of Respondents by Type of Assistance Requested from Surrounding Organizations

#### Most important body to reach out for help



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

**Sixth: Children's suggestions regarding Assistance they need for their problems**  
**Solutions that children have suggested to help out with their problems are: asking for financial assistance, school aid, educational support, support the return to school, and vocational training (Table no. 70). These suggestions are born out of the basic needs that are not fulfilled, and reflect in general the need to nurture working children and return them to school i.e. their natural place, and to offer them necessary psychological, social, and educational support.**

**Table no. 70: Distribution of Respondents by Children's Suggestions re Assistance they Need for their proble**

|   |  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>%</b>     |
|---|--|------------------|--------------|
| <b>Suggestions to help solve problems</b> | No answer  | 183              | 25.4         |
|   | Provide suitable living                                      | 28               | 3.9          |
|   | Return to school   | 80               | 11.1         |
|   | The state must carry out its duties vis-à-vis citizens       | 80               | 11.1         |
|   | Put in place laws against early marriage                     | 1                | .1           |
|   | Ban child labor  | 7                | 1.0          |
|   | Facilitate curriculum so that Syrian students can succeed    | 8                | 1.1          |
|   | Awareness campaigns on the importance of school to children  | 32               | 4.4          |
|   | Compulsory education   | 25               | 3.5          |
|   | Support parents at all levels by various agencies            | 4                | .6           |
|   | Support from community and social agencies across all levels | 35               | 4.9          |
|   | Vocational training  | 22               | 3.1          |
|   | Protection against sexual transgressions                     | 1                | .1           |
|   | Job opportunities  | 13               | 1.8          |
|   | Catch up classes to help students improve                    | 33               | 4.6          |
|   | Financial aid or cash distributions                          | 186              | 25.8         |
|   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>690</b>       | <b>95.8</b>  |
|   | Not specified  | 30               | 4.2          |
| <b>Total</b>                              |  | <b>720</b>       | <b>100.0</b> |

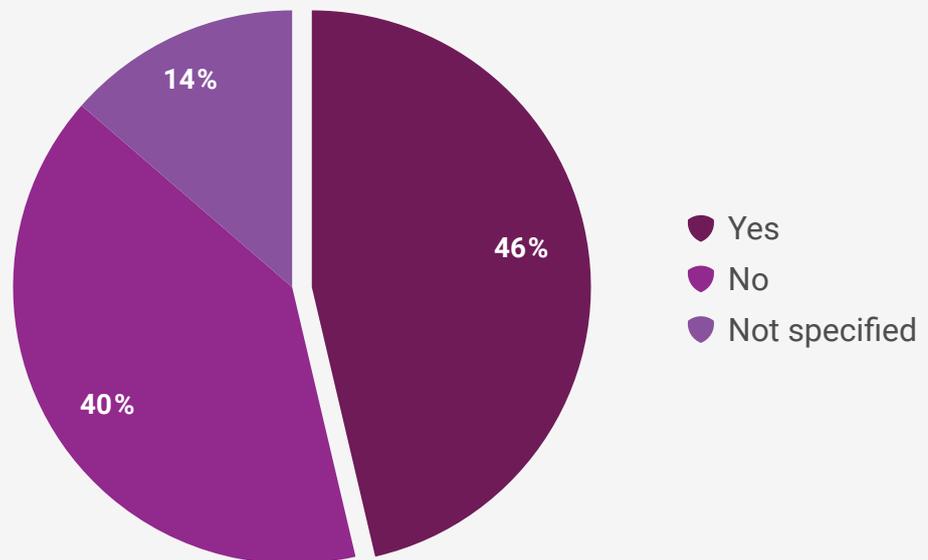
**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



### Seventh: Children's Views on Staying in their Jobs

Working children's views are split whereby 46% consider that they want to stay at work and earn an income while 40% do not wish to stay at work and would like to go back to school (See Chart no. 68). This percentage indicates that the children have an inner need to abandon work and that they are not working out of their own will, possibly pressured and unable to leave work for this reason.

Chart no. 68: Distribution of Respondents by Wish to Stay in Work

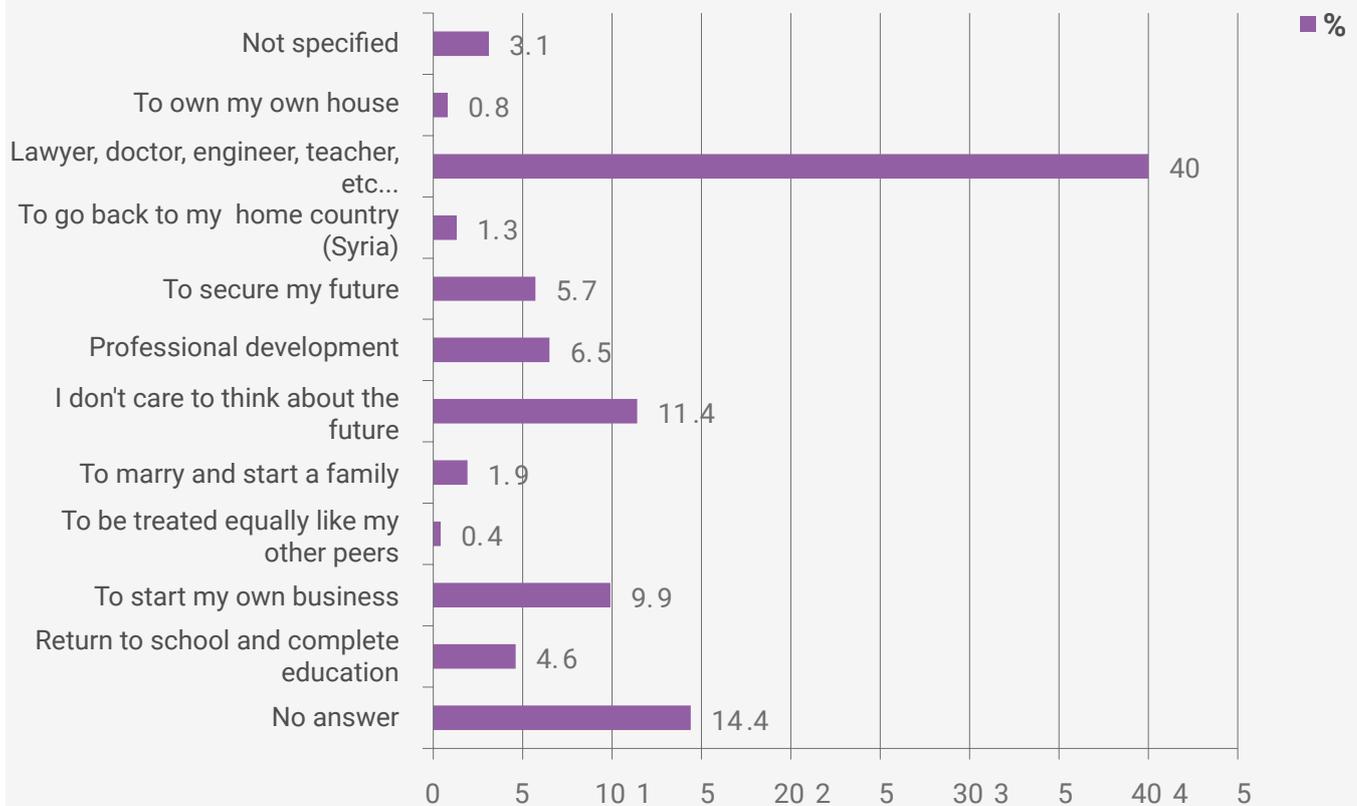


Source: Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021

### Eighth: Aspirations for the Future

Children have various aspirations & visions for their future, some are realistic and some are dreamt. 40% of the children dream of becoming professionals such as doctors or engineers while they know that the road to this is school and college. 11.4% do not care to think about the future because they are frustrated and live day to day without a clear vision for their future. 14.4% do not know how to answer (See Chart no. 69). These answers reflect that these children have a distorted image of their personal and professional future and they cannot actually see it. The psychological pain they go through can also make the situation even more dangerous for them as the time goes if an appropriate intervention and treatment is not put in place.

**Table no. 69:** Distribution of Respondents by Aspirations for the Future



**Source:** Child labor and School Dropouts in Lebanon, a study by SHEILD, 2021



To conclude this chapter, it appears that children ask for financial and educational help, dream of returning to school, are not aware of organizations that cater to childhood around them, and often seek their parents for help with their problems. They seem to rarely ask for assistance or submit a grievance against physical or sexual violence- albeit rare - they go through.

## Conclusion

Child labor is a social phenomenon in Lebanon as it has become widespread across multiple Lebanese provinces. To study this phenomenon, we need to see how it sits on numerous indicators, and we need to place it in its overall context in order to gain a deep understanding and come up with a detailed understanding and vision. Child labor is inter-related with various systems that interact with and influence one another, including the educational system, the family system, as well as the prevailing social and economic system.

This study has tried to approach child labor in tandem with another problem that the children face, and that can well be one of the contributing factors to this increase in child labor, that is the early dropping out of school.

This study has concluded that there is a statistical correlation between the dropping out of school and child labor. In this study, we have addressed the reasons behind the dropping out of school, highlighting the flaws in the prevailing education systems: i.e. the lack of schools in some villages and areas, the lack of follow-up on students who have educational weaknesses, the flaw in implementing compulsory education (although the Lebanese law has made primary education mandatory, numerous out-of-school students are in the primary education cycle), the difficulty some students face in learning some new educational subjects and curriculum, etc... which flaws are pushing many students to leave school and education, encouraged by their parents more often than not, or pushed by a need to emulate their peers in their social and family circles, or to support their family's need for money. For these reasons, these children find no harm in leaving school and joining the workforce.



And as these children join the job market, regardless of the nature of the work they are engaged in, they become prone to danger by the simple act of entering the market and leaving their school seats.

The children have expressed their wish to go back to school to get an education, or to join a vocational training program. Under current difficulties and sufferance, these children did not find a supporting hand without asking themselves for it. Most of the children demand financial aid for themselves and their families to alleviate their workload and their responsibilities towards their families as a first priority. Educational aid is their second priority. They did not mention psychological, and social aid or legal protection to address their situation.

The study has also highlighted that social, psychological, and health care afforded to children by competent public authorities and organizations are weak, and that the public social policy in Lebanon is not solid, namely in terms of protecting children against dangers, combatting child labor, implementing compulsory education, and curbing the rate of out-of-school children, etc...

It appears to us that the theme of child labor and out-of-school children, and their repercussions on the personal, family, social, and growth levels for these children and their families command that we press the alarm button and insist on shedding the light on this phenomenon to put it among other priorities on the social protection agenda in Lebanon.

Based on the above, we propose some general recommendations that should give this phenomenon the serious attention it commands as a priority.

- Stakeholders to hold a national workshop to present the findings of this and other similar studies, to discuss main findings and conclusions, and agree on a national action plan to curb child labor and out-of-school children, and to distribute roles among leading and support agencies.
- Reach out to stakeholders and invite them to improve their services, and to apply child labor and out-of-school children selection criteria in their actions plans, programs, and their services. Highlight the importance of reaching out to these children and introducing them to their rights.
- Third, prepare a pilot program to be run in a select region to look into the situation of working children and develop intervention plans to work with them and their parents to bring them back to school or vocational training depending on the case, and offer financial, psychological, and social support to them and their families. This pilot is to then be rolled-out on other areas where their phenomenon is prevalent such as Akkar and Mount Lebanon for example.



- Fourth, introduce school support and catch-up programs within school curriculum, namely in public schools, and give utmost importance to children who are behind compared to their peers and support them to prevent them from dropping out of school. This probably commands another national education workshop around reassessment and automatic pass in compulsory education, the implementation of new curriculum, the introduction and adaptation of special programs to integrate those students at school using an inclusive education policy.
- Fifth, improve the availability of associations, schools, and institutes and their services in remote areas such as Akkar and some areas in Mount Lebanon to facilitate equal provision of services across Lebanese Territories.
- Sixth, spread awareness on laws on the protection of juveniles and children in Lebanon, as well as on protection procedures for children and their parents and in various local communities, in coordination and liaison with competent social, judicial, and security agencies.
- Seventh, support families financially so that they do not have to prevent their children from continuing their education to send them to the street to beg or join the market place at an early age.

In conclusion, if you want to see how developed a country and its policies are, look at the situation of the children of that country. Children are a fragile category, and need care, protection, and empowerment. When the child is deprived, marginalized, exploited, and in need of basic rights and needs, we will have a weak society that is governed by weak social policies, where the values of social justice and decent living are simply not there

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