

PRESS RELEASE

Lebanese crisis forcing youth out of learning, robbing them of their futures: UNICEF survey

“The crisis is depriving adolescents and youth of the stability that is so important at their age. It should be a time for them to focus on their learning, their dreams, their future.”

Ettie Higgins, Representative a.i., UNICEF Lebanon.

BEIRUT, 28 January 2022 – Lebanon’s crisis is increasingly forcing young people to drop out of learning and engage in ill-paid, irregular and informal work just to survive and help feed their families, UNICEF said in a report released today.

The report – **Searching for Hope** – says that more than 4 in 10 youth in Lebanon reduced spending on education to buy basic food, medicine and other essential items, and 3 in 10 stopped their education altogether.

Citing a UNICEF Youth-Focused Rapid Assessment¹, the report also indicates that:

- 31% of young people are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).
- Enrolment in educational institutions dropped from 60 per cent in 2020-2021 to 43 per cent in the current academic year.

Dropping out of education and learning can severely affect young people’s life-long learning and employment prospects. Unless action is taken to reverse current trends, this will worsen and have serious implications for future growth and social cohesion in Lebanon.

While more and more young people are forced to drop out of education, they often find themselves **ill-equipped to compete for increasingly scarce jobs and frequently end up taking up low-paying work in the informal sector.**

- Working youth have an average monthly income of about 1,600,000 Lebanese pounds (LBP) – equivalent to about US\$64 at the black-market rate.
- For Syrian youth in Lebanon, this number is about half, equivalent to a daily income of around a US\$1 a day.
- Seven in ten were considered unemployed and without any source of income, not having generated any money to live over the week prior to the survey.

Lebanon’s crisis has also led to **an increase in other negative coping mechanisms besides reducing education costs.**

- Thirteen per cent of families sent children under 18 to work as a coping strategy. This number could rise if the situation worsens further.

¹ The YFRA was conducted in September 2021 among 900 youth. UNICEF describes youth as persons aged 15-24.

- Almost one in two young people reduced expenses on health, and only 6 of 10 received primary health care when they needed it.

Haneen, 17, said: “The money we receive now is no longer enough. Inflation is so high, and incomes haven’t matched this. Every month we have to choose a priority – rent, medicines, food. But we can never have them all.”

Hind², 22, said: “*My outlook for the future here is bleak. For the first time in my life, I want to leave my country, I want to leave Lebanon.*”

“Young people in Lebanon urgently need support. Investments are needed to ensure financial concerns do not prevent them from getting the education and skills they need to eventually find decent work and contribute to the stability and prosperity of Lebanon,” Ettie Higgins, Representative a.i., UNICEF Lebanon.

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Note to editors

Learn more

UNICEF’s report “[Searching for Hope](#)”

Listen to youths’ voices in this [VIDEO](#)

Download multimedia material [HERE](#)

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