



SHEILD

The Situation of Public Schools in South Lebanon After the Syrian Crisis

« Problems and needs »

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I- Introduction

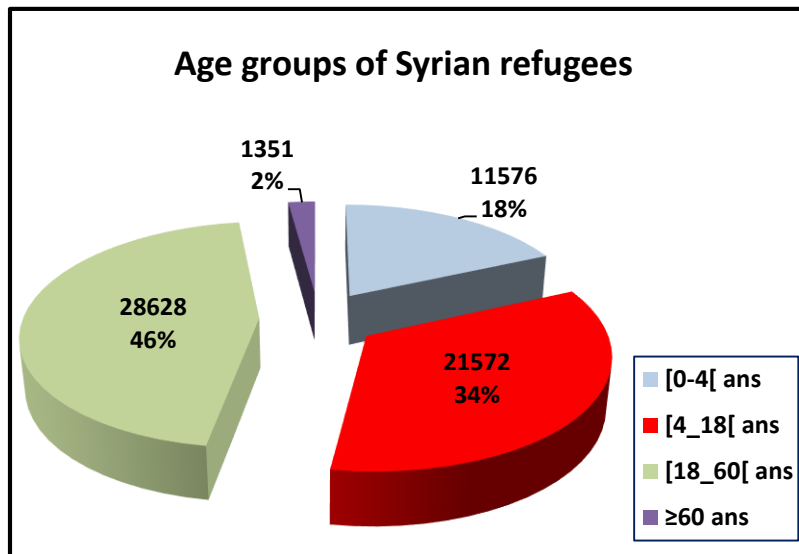
Education is the act of developing and making produce. It more commonly means the learning and development of moral, physical, intellectual and scientific knowledge and values, which are considered as essential to reach the desired level of knowledge.

Education is thus considered an important element of the development of persons. After the inclusion of the **right to education** in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, it was reiterated in many conventions, including the **Child Rights Convention (adopted by the United Nations in 1989)**.

Although internationally recognized, the right to education is not accessible to a large number of children due to armed conflicts. In fact, it is estimated that the number of children who are out-of-school amounts to 72 million.

II- Objective

After the Syrian crisis and the enormous influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon, **13868** families (63127 persons), registered with UNHCR, have settled in the five districts of the South (Bint Jbail, Nabatieh, Marjaayoun, and Hasbaya) until the end of 2013.



Procr  er fr  quente is one of the main criteria of the Syrian agricultural community¹.

One can notice, based on this chart, that half of the Syrian refugees (**52%**) are children aged between 0 and 18. Among them, **34%** of the total refugees in the South (63127 persons) belong to the age group [4-18]. So **21572** children refugees should have access to education based on children's right to education.

In view of this great number of children refugees in the South,

many questions are raised:

- Do all children have access to education?
- Since each country has its own particular education system, do Syrian students have the capacity to follow the Lebanese education system?
- Doesn't the Lebanese-Syrian mix of students in the same classroom have negative effects on the students coming from different environments and cultures?
- Does the teaching staff of the public schools in the South seem enough in number to teach all these children?

¹ Despite the development of the trade sector, agriculture continues to be the most important economic sector in Syria.

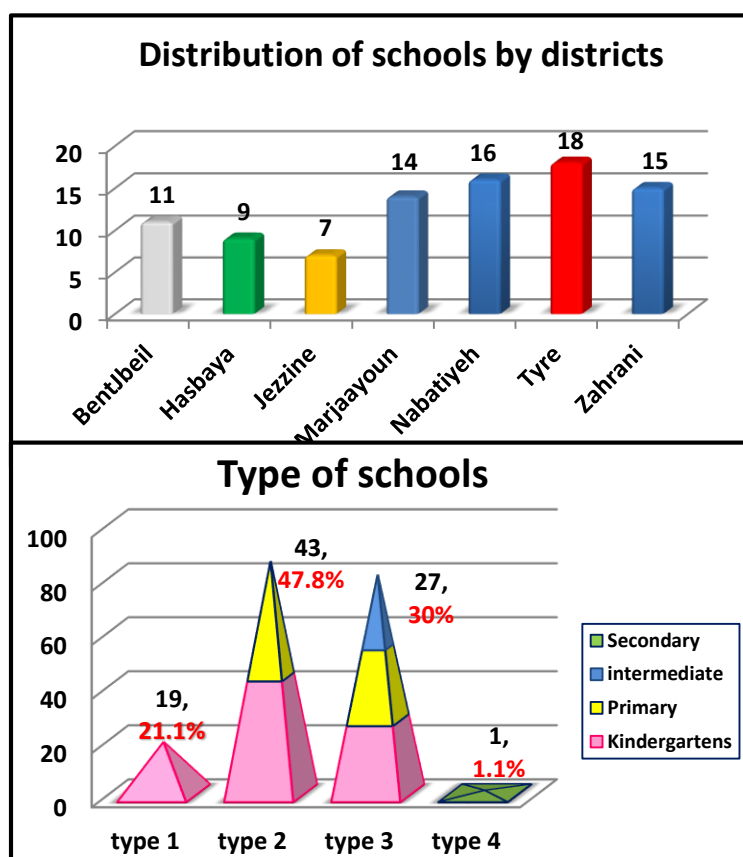
- Do public schools in South Lebanon have the capacity to accommodate this enormous and sudden influx of students?

In order to highlight the situation of education and schools in South Lebanon following the sudden development of the number of students resulting from the Syrian crisis, we will focus in this study on:

- ✚ The situation of public schools in the South and their ability to absorb this influx of new students.
- ✚ The problems that schools face in the absence of the role of the Lebanese State.
- ✚ The main needs of public schools in the South.

III- Data Analysis

SHEILD's group of collectors² visited 90 schools representing the schools in South Lebanon, and distributed in an ascending manner in all 7 districts. The more the district contains Syrian refugees, the more schools it is represented by, and so on, in order to obtain a well representative sample.



According to this bar chart, there are **18** schools in Tyre, which is the biggest district in the South and contains the largest number of Syrian refugees. This number is respectively followed by Nabatieh (16 schools), Zahrani (15 schools) and Marjaayoun (14 schools).

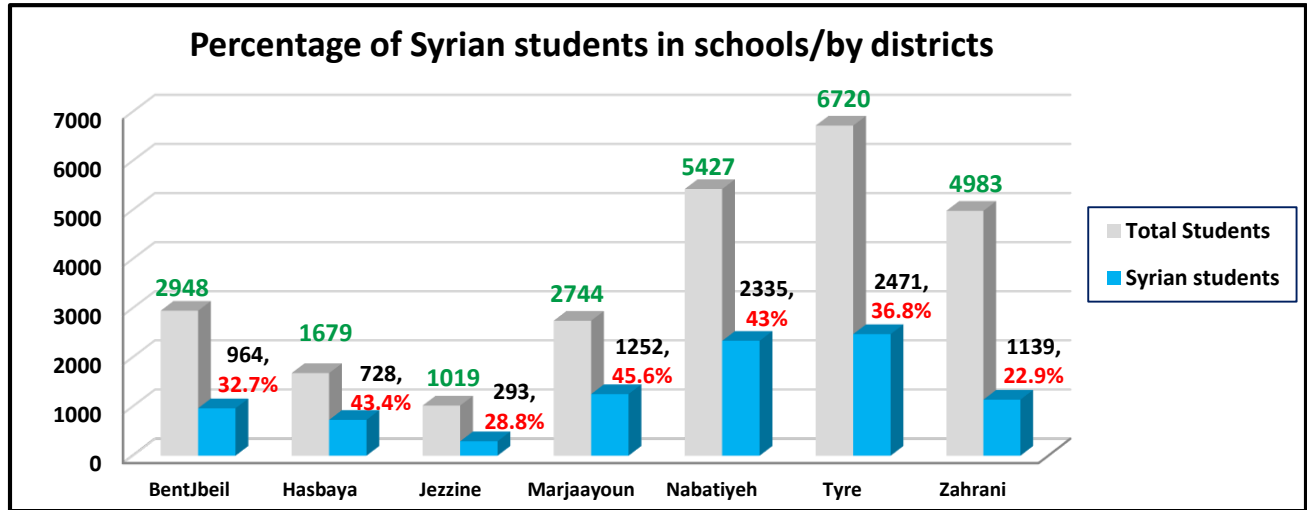
The district of Jezzine is represented by **7** schools only, because it includes the smallest number of refugees in the South.

99% of the schools including Syrian students are intermediate schools. In fact, children refugees seek to work, when at the age of secondary school, to contribute in supporting their families. Only the secondary school of Jezzine, amongst the schools that we visited, contains 2 Syrian students.

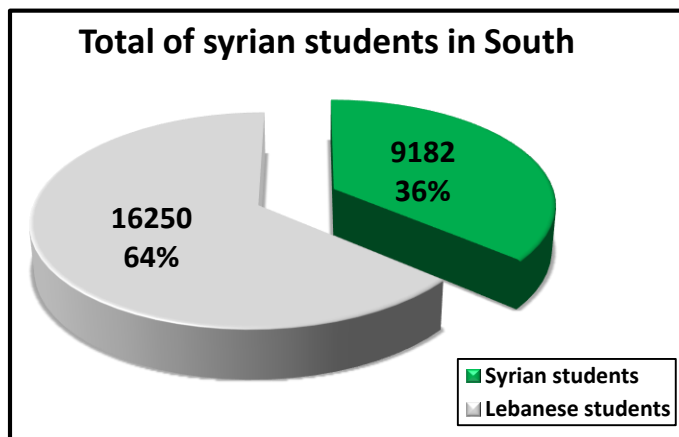
It is also worth noting that kindergartens are the most frequent

as they existed in all the visited schools.

² 14 researchers were distributed in the 7 districts of the South including, 3 in Tyre, 3 in Nabatieh, 6 equally distributed in Marjaayoun, Zahrani, and BeintJbeil, 1 in Jezzine, and 1 in Hasbaya.

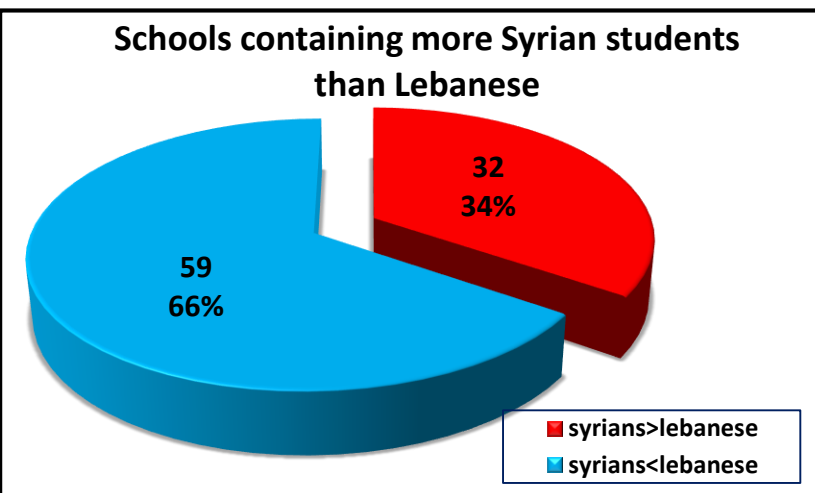


The above chart shows that the percentage of Syrian students at schools in all districts is rather significant. In the districts of Marjaayoun, Hasbaya and Nabatieh, the percentage of these students is almost as equal as that of Lebanese students (**45.6%**, **43.4%** and **43%** respectively). Also in Tyre, the percentage of Syrian students is **36.8%**.



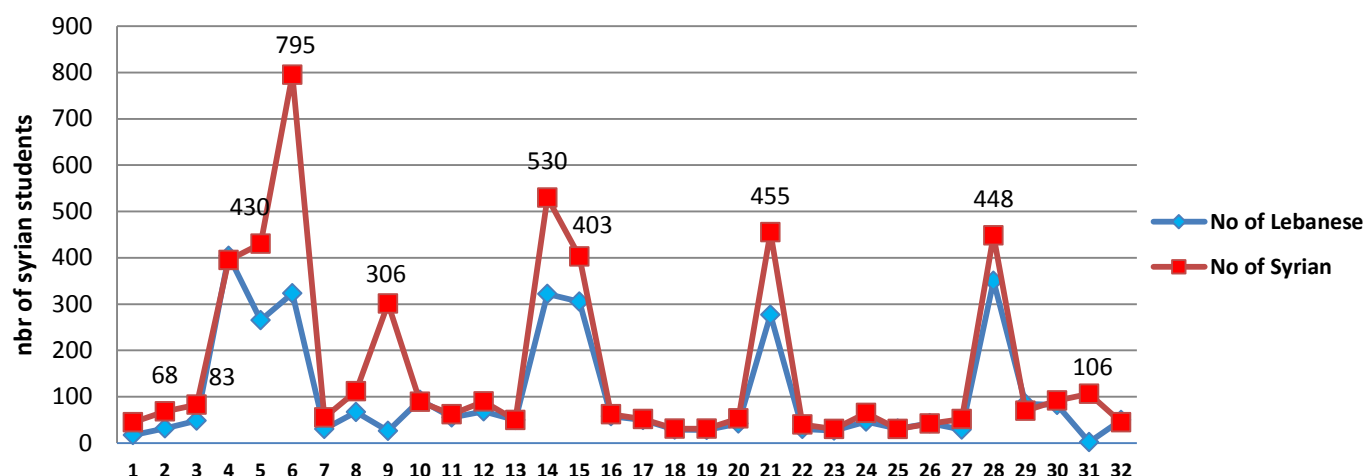
In general, one can notice that the percentage of Syrian students in the South reaches **36%** of the total number of students.

In fact, the calculation of the average number of Syrian students in the schools of the South has shown that there is, in average, more than **102** Syrian students per school compared to only **180** Lebanese students.



Among the 90 visited schools, we noticed that **34%** (32 schools) of the schools, distributed in all 7 districts, contain more Syrian students than Lebanese students.

Schools containing more Syrian students than Lebanese



The chart above shows the difference between the numbers of Lebanese and Syrian students at the 32 schools that contain more Syrian students than Lebanese.

A noticeable peak of the number of Syrian students (795 students) is reached at school number 6; this is the **intermediate public school of Al Masaken**.

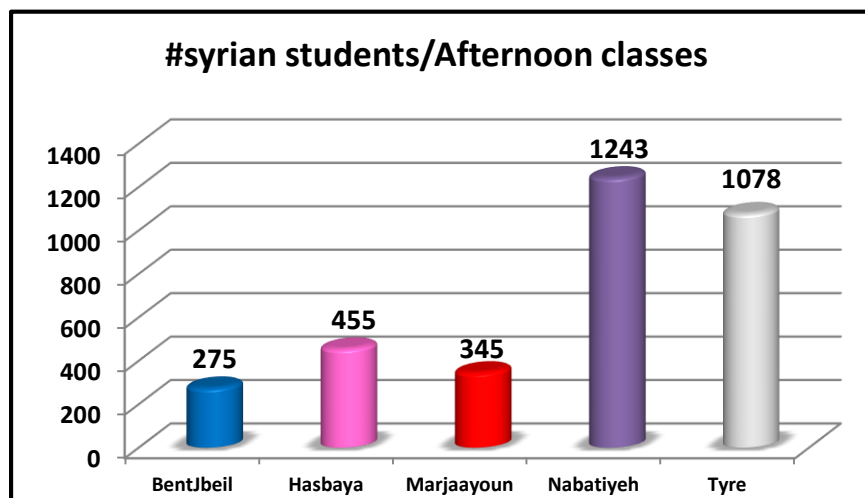
Even for other cases (schools number 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 21 and 31), we notice that the number of Syrian students is as significant; it actually exceeds by far that of Lebanese students.

To fully estimate the situation of these schools, we have listed them in the table below :

# School	Name of school	District	Total no of students	No of Lebanese	No of Syrian
2	Kalaway Official School	Tyre	100	32	68
3	Ayta Al Jabal Public School	Bint Jbeil	131	48	83
5	Hanaway Intermediate Public School	Tyre	695	265	430
6	Al-Masaken Intermediate Public School	Tyre	1118	323	795
9	Nabatieh 3rd. Public School	Nabatieh	332	26	306
21	Shebaa Public School	Hasbaya	732	277	455
31	Jdeidet Marjayoun Public School	Marjayoun	108	2	106

The table shows that there are schools where the number of Syrian students is more than the double of that of Lebanese students. This is the case of the **public school of Kalaway** (school number 2 in the chart) in the district of Tyre (68 Syrian students versus 32 Lebanese). In other schools, the situation is quite frightening as almost all the students are Syrians. This particularly shows in the **third public school of Nabatieh** (number 9 in the chart) and the **public school of Jdeidet Marjaayoun** (number 31 in the chart), since they respectively contain 306 Syrian students versus 26 Lebanese only, and 106 Syrian students versus 2 Lebanese.

The most serious situation is at the **intermediate schools of Al- Masaken** (number 6 in the previous chart) where the number of Syrian students reaches 795.



This chart illustrates the number of Syrian students attending afternoon classes in the different districts of the South.

We notice that the number is rather high in Nabatieh (1243 Syrian students) and Tyre (1078 Syrian students).

In Hasbaya, all the 455 Syrian students who attend afternoon classes are in the

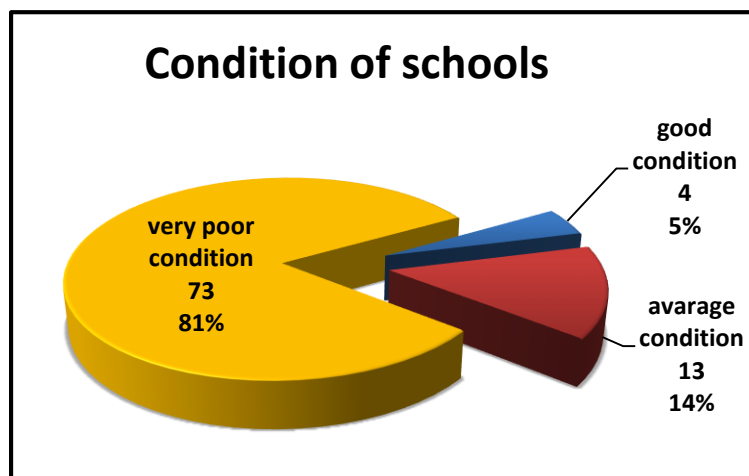
public school of Chebaa, where the total number of students reaches **732** after the influx of Syrians to the village, knowing that the number of Syrian refugees has up till now exceeded the double of the village's population.

The administration of the public school of Chebaa, like the administrations of all schools accommodating more Syrian students than Lebanese, is obligated to give afternoon classes for Syrian students because of the lack of essential needs at the school that is preventing it from handling this inflation in the number of students.

The main questions that are raised are: **What are the needs of public schools? And what difficulties do they encounter?**

The visits we made to the 90 public schools distributed in the seven districts of the South have allowed us to fully estimate the situation of those schools. In fact, needs vary according to the schools, depending on:

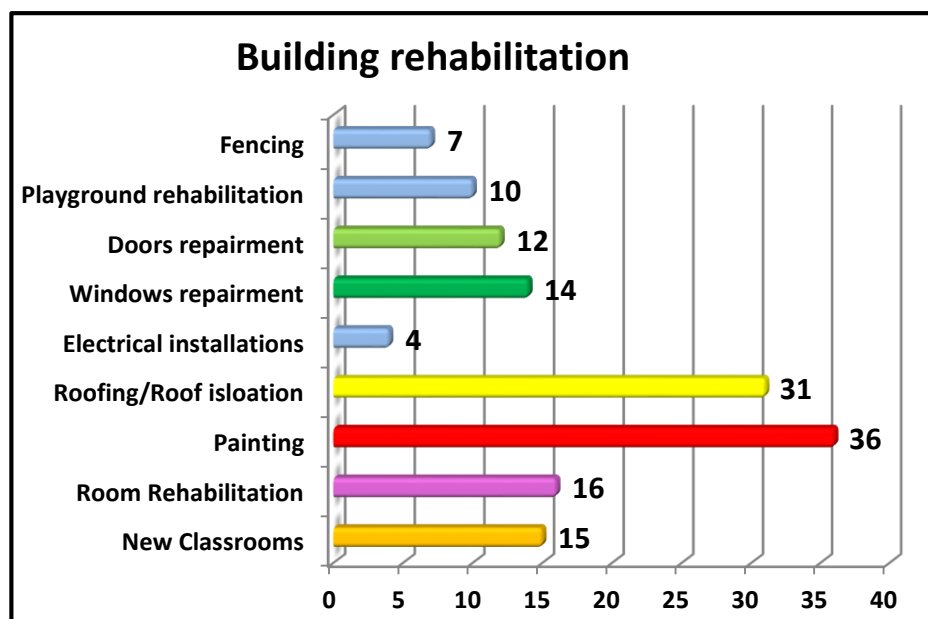
- The age, size and location of the building
- The available equipment in each schools
- The growth of the number of students, as a result of the crisis.



Only **5%** of the visited schools are deemed in good condition. The latter need additional needs like for instance music instruments.

14% of the total schools are in an average condition and their needs are limited to equipment.

The remaining schools constitute the largest portion (**73 schools, 81%**) and suffer from serious problems at all levels.



The suggested rehabilitation works for each are many and varied and are always necessary.

There are in fact schools in very old buildings that need renovation works at all levels, like is the case of the 35-year old public primary school of Kfarkila in Marjaayoun.

According to the chart above, **36** schools should be repainted and **31** schools suffer from severe water leakage in their ceilings that could lead to collapses. **16** schools need complete rehabilitation of their classrooms while others need doors and windows.

The lack of places for the new students of Syrian nationality in the classrooms is the problem of most schools especially those that are forced to give afternoon classes. In fact, the administrations of **15** schools out of the visited schools have reported needing to build new classrooms to be able to absorb this influx of students.

In Chebaa, the school administration needs to build an entire floor. This school suffers from a lack of places even for morning classes, since the number of students (**732** students) exceeds its capacity. As shown in the following figure (fig.1), students at this school take classes in containers placed in the school's playground.



Fig.1 Containers at the public school of Chebaa- Hasbaya District

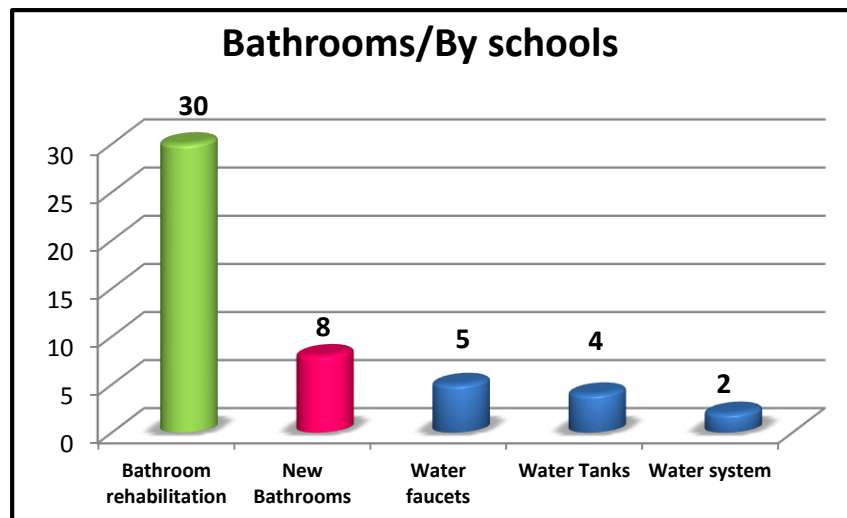
In most schools, toilets are in a very poor condition.

The following figure (fig. 2) which represents a toilet in the **public intermediate school of Qulaaia** in Marjaayoun district is a good example. The toilet should undergo a complete rehabilitation to become useable.

In fact, the problem of hygiene is the most dangerous one since it leads to an invasion of germs, hence causing diseases that will be transferred from one student to another.



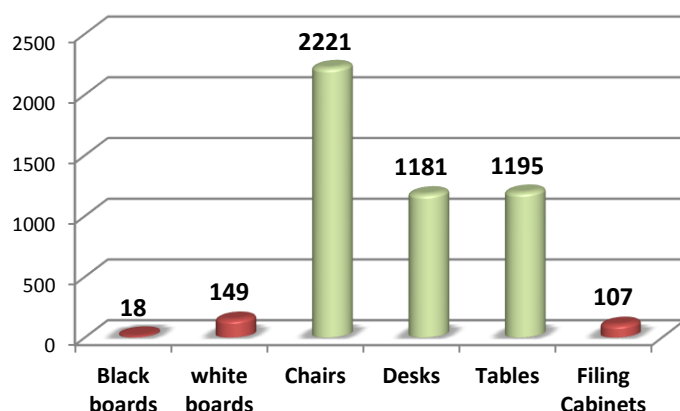
Fig.2 A toilet at the public intermediate public school of Qulaaia-Marjaayoun District



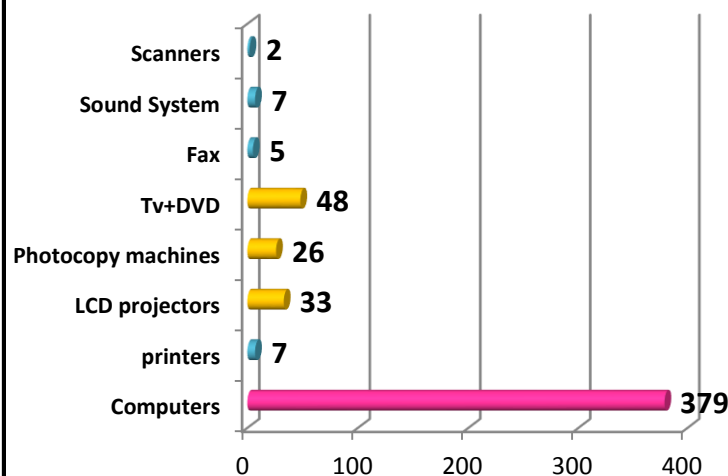
30 schools among those visited need complete toilet rehabilitation while **8** others need to build new toilets. There are also schools that need faucets, water pumps and tanks. **2** schools need a new water network.

It is worth mentioning that **19** schools have a problem of potable water pollution, endangering the health of students. These schools have requested water filtering machines.

Main equipment/quantities

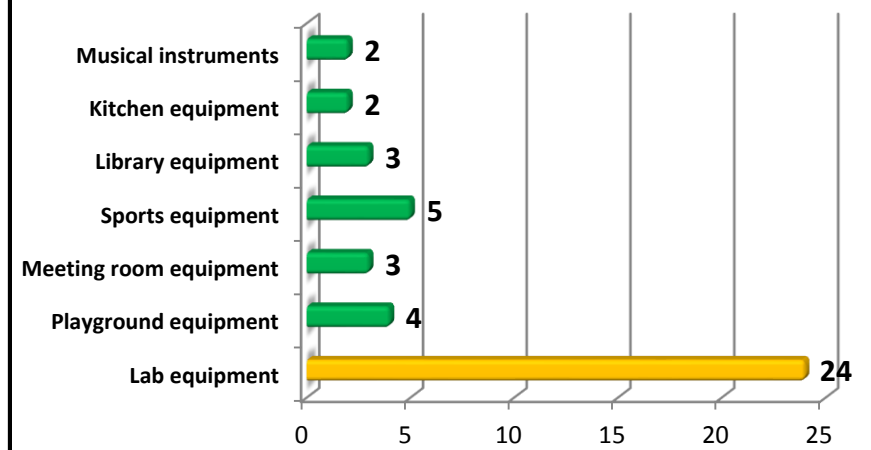


Electronics/quantities



The equipment is numerous. All the visited schools need chairs (**2221** chairs), tables (**1195** tables), desks (**1181** desks), computers (**379** computers), and many other necessary education tools such as the boards, overhead projectors, photocopiers and printers.

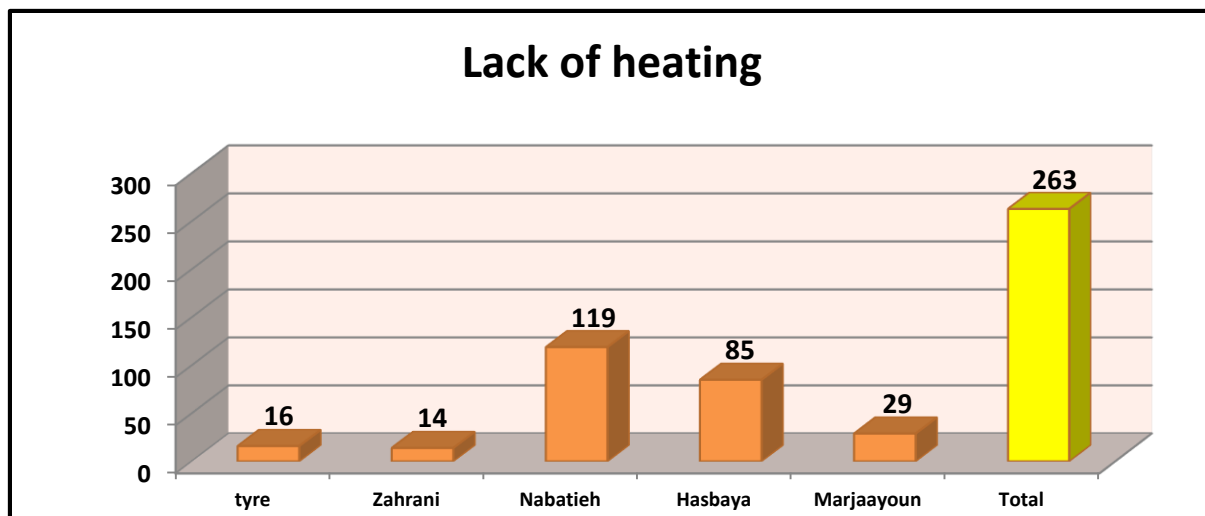
Others equipment/by school



Lab equipment is needed in many schools (**24** schools) as shown in the previous chart. Music and sport instruments are needed as well.

A few schools need complete equipment for libraries (**3** schools).

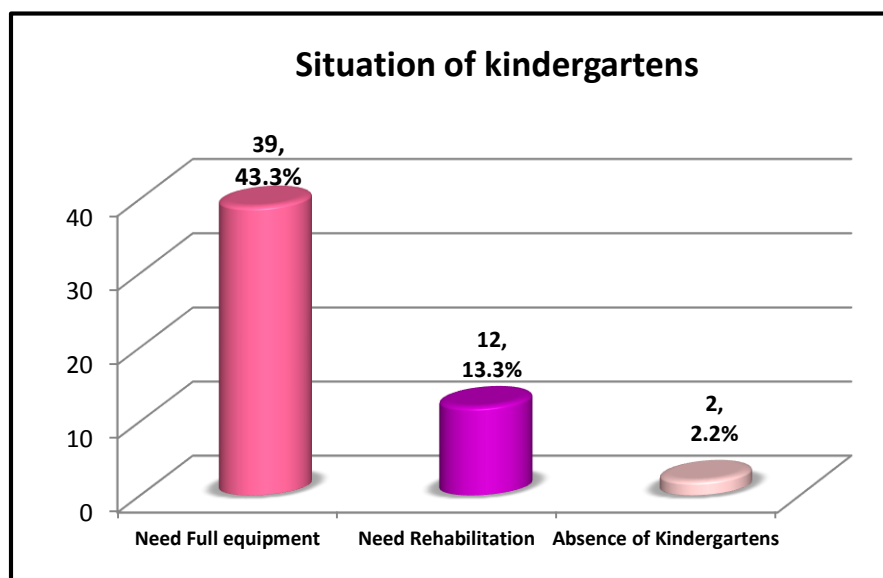
It should be noted that the construction of new rooms at the schools should be accompanied with complete equipment so that the rooms are ready to accommodate the students.



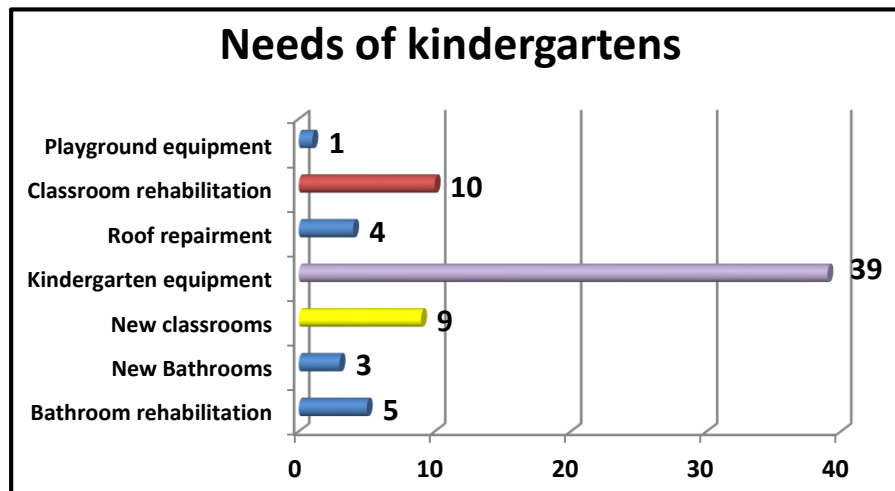
The problem of heating is commonly raised especially for the schools in Hasbaya, Jezzine and Marjaayoun, which are located at high altitudes above the sea level and have students attending afternoon classes. Most schools of these districts suffer from a lack of fuel and some need a complete heating system.

Kindergartens

One of the major problems that attracted us during the data collection is that of kindergartens. In fact, **99%** of the visited schools comprise kindergartens.



Among the latter, and as shown in the following chart, **43.3%** need complete class equipment, **13.3%** need complete rehabilitation and **2.2%** of schools don't have kindergartens at all.



During the visits, we noticed that **14** schools need complete rehabilitation works for their kindergartens, **39** schools need full equipment, **8** schools have problems in their toilets and **9** schools need the construction of new classrooms.

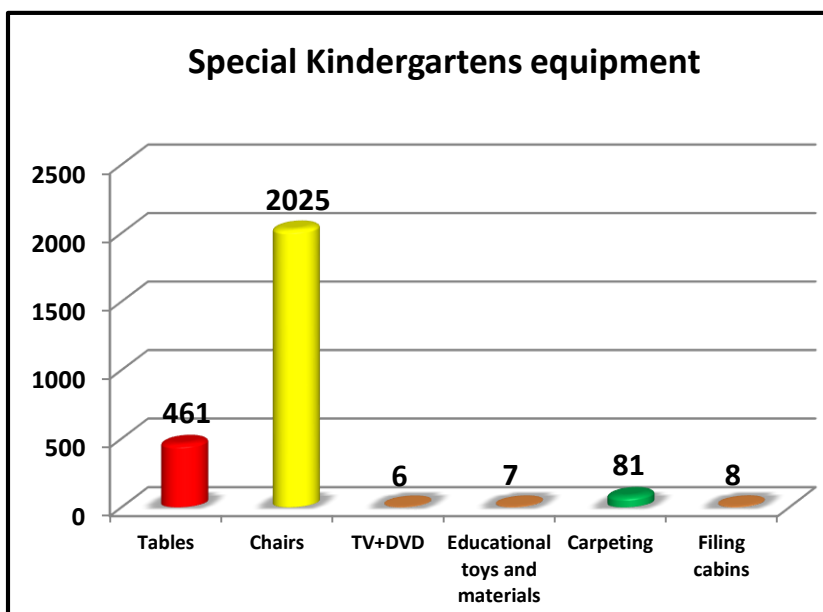


Fig.3 A kindergarten at the public school of Marwanieh-Zahrani District.

The equipment needed for the kindergartens are numerous but the most needed equipment, as shown in the previous figure (fig. 3) of a kindergarten at the public school of Marwanieh, are the chairs, tables and carpets. In fact, these classrooms need specific equipment since they require small-size chairs (**2025 chairs**), round tables (**461 tables**) and carpets (**81 carpets**). Some schools suggest other equipment like educational games and televisions with DVD players.

In fact, kindergartens need appropriate care, for it is very dangerous to place small children in poor conditions, as it will have a negative effect on their health and on their physical, moral and intellectual growth.

IV- Conclusion

The situation of public schools in South Lebanon is worrying. Based on the visits conducted by our group of 14 collectors to 90 schools in the districts of **Bint Jbail, Nabatieh, Tyre, Marjaayoun, Zahrani, Jezzine** and **Hasbaya**, and on the analysis of the collected data, we observed that **95%** of the visited schools need either:

- Renovation works,
- Complete equipment,
- Or enlargement.

Schools are already in poor conditions, as some have very old buildings and need a complete rehabilitation of their classrooms, toilets, ceilings, etc., others lack the necessary equipment especially for kindergarten classes, and certain schools have a lack of places in the classrooms because of the growing number of students. The enormous influx of new Syrian students following the crisis has increased the needs of these schools, making them incapable of absorbing this tremendous and sudden increase in the number of students.

Indeed, this unexpected phenomenon has forced public schools in the South, especially those accommodating more Syrian students than Lebanese, to give afternoon classes for these new students because of the lack of places first and the lack of teaching staff second.

With all these problems encountered by public schools in South Lebanon after the Syrian crisis, remains to be asked:

Who is the main entity responsible of solving these problems? Will the essential message of education, that is to Lebanese as well as Syrian students develop and make them produce, be successfully achieved?

V- References

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