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Community-based market assessment for skills development and economic empowerment

Adaption and implementation of the ILO Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology in Lebanon

Chtoura, Halba, Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, Minieh-Donnieh, North Beqaa, Saida, Wadi-Khaled

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List of abbreviations

ALMP	active labour market policy
BDS	business development services
CAS	Central Administration for Statistics
CDS	Consumer Demand Survey
CHUD	Cultural Heritage and Urban Development
CP	community profile
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	international non-governmental organization
ITS	informal tented settlement
LEDP	local economic development plan
MOS	Market Opportunity Survey
MSME	micro, small or medium-sized enterprise
NGO	non-governmental organization
PHC	primary healthcare centre
PWDs	people with disabilities
SAL	société anonyme libanaise [joint stock company]
SARL	société à responsabilité limitée [limited liability company]
SME	small or medium-sized enterprise
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VTE	vocational technical education

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» Executive Summary

The Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) programme was developed by the Skills and Employability Department of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and based on the principles of community-based training. It promotes income generation and local development, and emphasizes the role of skills and knowledge to create new, sustainable economic and employment opportunities for people who are poor, underemployed or unemployed, as well as informal economy workers.

Within a framework of strategic cooperation on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and employability programmes in Lebanon, the ILO and UNICEF, in collaboration with eight local partners[1], have adapted the TREE research approach and implemented it in seven regions of Lebanon: Chtoura and surroundings; Halba and surroundings; Wadi-Khaled; Minieh and Donnieh; North Beqaa (Hermel, Qaa, Labweh); Saida; and Marjeyoun and Hasbaya. These seven geographic areas were selected on the basis of their known vulnerability status. It was also important that a cooperation framework was already in place between UNICEF, ILO and local partners to link findings with implementation. Fieldwork was conducted in 2020 and early 2021.

Methodology

The TREE methodology assesses market needs and opportunities, and data were collected at three levels:

(1) The community level, using a community profiling tool;
(2) At the household level, using the Consumer Demand Survey (CDS);
(3) A t the business level, using the Market Opportunity Survey (MOS).

The community profile (CP) tool was administered to key local informants, including municipality council members, social activists, TVET programme designers and trainers, chambers of commerce and private businesses. On average, between 9 and 12 interviews were carried out in each region for a rapid mapping of each local community and its economy. The CP results informed the selection of sectors for inclusion in the CDS and MOS. Four sectors with potential for youth employment and entrepreneurship were prioritized, including accommodation and food services, food manufacturing, home construction and repairs, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles. Cross-cutting retail services were also considered. In order to deal with COVID-19 restrictions, the CDS and MOS were conducted by telephone, and sampling involved a snowball approach.

A total of 2,998 CDS questionnaires were administered, with an average of 428 surveys per geographic area. The sample comprised 52 per cent males and 48 per cent females. Around 20 per cent of respondents were youth, and 37 per cent had achieved university-level education, including higher technical education.

A total of 1,792 establishments were interviewed for the MOS across the seven regions. Respondents included owners or managers of firms, 88 per cent of whom were male. Female respondents tended to be more highly educated than men; 59 per cent of them had achieved university education compared to 24 per cent of men. Around 87 per cent of establishments operated under single ownership, 9 per cent were partnerships, 3 per cent were SARL (limited liability) companies, and around 1 per cent were SAL (joint stock) companies.

Findings

Community profile

The CP tool was used to create a socio-economic profile specific to each region, including potential economic opportunities and challenges, community structure, gender dynamics and mechanisms for including marginalized social groups into economic activities. Findings can be summarized thus for each region:

(1) Chtoura. The main economic activities are agriculture and dairy production. Potential sectors for localdevelopment and employment opportunities include food production, accommodation and food services, tourism, and repairs and maintenance (home, electronic appliances, vehicles and motorcycles). The area is under-serviced with respect to education, health services, and infrastructure.

(2) Halba. Agriculture is the main economic sector. The region witnessed a boom in greenhouse production but growers now face significant challenges in accessing finance for investment and input supplies as a result of the multifaceted crisis. Many residents work in the public sector, notably the army and security forces. Women who work in the public sector are predominately found in education. Infrastructure and socio-economic support services (such as health) remain weak and, to a certain extent, have failed to expand despite rapid urbanization.

[1]ANERA (Chtoura), Lebrelief (Halba), AVSI (Marjeyoun-Hasbaya), René Moawad Foundation (Minieh-Donnieh), LOST (North Beqaa), Mouvement Social (Saida), Akkar Network for Development (Wadi-Khaled), and DOTrust (all regions).

(3) Marjeyoun-Hasbaya. The main sources of income are from agriculture, livestock and public-sector employment. Other income comes from remittances from emigrants, and smuggling operations undertaken in certain villages. Syrian refugees work mostly in agriculture and construction. Tourism could potentially employ more youth, though the sector has been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and the economic crisis. Schools are in generally poor condition and health services are lacking and of low quality.

(4) Minieh-Donnieh. Education and health services are mostly concentrated in the larger towns and morepopulated areas.The area is highly dependent on agriculture for income. Trade and commerce are prominent along the main roads and in large towns. The rural eco-tourism sector was developing before the crises, and could be reprised in future.

(5) North Beqaa. Main sources of income come from agriculture, trade, and smuggling. In addition to agriculture,rural tourism and hospitality are promising sectors. Nonetheless, significant improvements could be made to both leisure and food services. The fisheries sector along the Orontes (al-Asi) river constitutes a major industry, producing affordable fish products for local markets and Beirut.

(6) Saida. The concentration of educational facilities in the city and immediate surrounds limits student enrolment from outer districts. Although diverse, higher education institutions are not interconnected academically and offer only undergraduate level or vocational training. This poses a major constraint on local economic development. Research and development functions and interlinkages between academic courses and local community needs are very weak. Most of the economic activities in Saida are within the tertiary services sector (tourism, confectionary production, restoration, craftwork and fishing). More than one third of economic activity is within the wholesale and retail trade sector, which is limited in terms of its contribution to productivity. The agriculture sector has been shrinking, giving way to real estate development and speculation, and local industries that once depended on agriculture are disappearing.

(7) Wadi-Khaled. The region suffers from weak infrastructure and poor quality education services, which affects students' environment for learning. The few technical schools available offer courses that are incompatible with labour market needs, leading youth to pursue education and employment elsewhere. Health services are historically scarce and of low quality, pushing residents to seek healthcare in Syria. Human resources in health are lacking. The region relies on the support of international organizations and humanitarian assistance programmes for these services. The region mainly relies on agriculture and cross-border trade, as well as illicit smuggling. Manufacturing is restricted to construction-related activities such as aluminium and steel production.

The Consumer Demand Survey

The CDS assessed level of demand and consumer satisfaction for a range of goods and services. The political and economic context at the time of research was further aggravated by the spring 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, and this certainly affected respondents' answers, as the price of goods and services has become a major concern.

Demand for selected food services varied across regions, with higher demand in urban areas, such as Saida, and lower demand in highly vulnerable rural areas, such as Wadi-Khaled and Minieh-Donnieh. Food services tended to be consumed more by younger age groups. Gender differences were identified in highly vulnerable areas. For example, in Wadi-Khaled, demand for food services was higher among men than women, with a difference of up to 20 per cent for specific services.

Demand for home repair services was relatively high in all regions – around 30 per cent of households in the sampled areas hired an electrician over the previous year and demand for plumbers was similar. Demand for air conditioning repairs was dependent on location, but high in coastal areas. Demand for home construction services was relatively lower than demand for home repairs, with 15 per cent of households hiring a skilled home construction worker over the previous year.

Car ownership ranged between 31 per cent in Minieh-Donnieh and Wadi-Khaled to 59 per cent in North Beqaa. Demand for car repair services remained relatively high, with at least 20 per cent of respondents having required such services over the previous year. As Lebanese purchasing power was drastically cut following the financial and economic crisis, it is expected that demand for car repairs will increase as cars age and are not replaced.

The survey also shows that, in some regions, 10 to 15 per cent of households purchased renewable energy equipment (mostly solar-heated water tanks). In some regions demand for health services reached similar levels,with 10 per cent of households requiring home nurse support in Chtoura, Minieh-Donnieh and Wadi-Khaled. Demand for child or elderly care remains low, even in urban settings such as Saida.

The CDS results show that because of the compound effects of the financial crisis and the first COVID-19 lockdown, between 70 and 80 per cent of respondents reported a loss of income, while around one third of respondents reported losing their jobs.

The Market Opportunity Survey

Labour force structure

Interviewed businesses employed, on average, 4.5 workers with around 20 per cent being women. In terms of nationality, around 69 per cent of employees were Lebanese and 27 per cent were Syrian. Around two thirds of employees were under 30 years old and around 80 per cent had a full-time permanent job. Around half of the workforce of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) were in low-skilled, elementary occupations; only a limited number were classified as either professionals or skilled workers. Women were also more likely to work in elementary occupations and women's participation in construction and car repairs remains limited.

The workforce structure reflects the low level of skills and technology utilized by surveyed MSMEs, with professional and technical and associate professionals not exceeding, respectively, 2 and 11 per cent of the total workforce. Additionally, the small proportion of clerical support workers (1 per cent), reflects the relative informality of enterprises, as well as the absence of bookkeeping, human resources management, and other general administrative support functions. It is assumed that these functions are carried out by managers, who, in most cases, were also the company owners.

Skills satisfaction

The level of employer satisfaction with their employees' skills tended to be low, with only technical skills reaching an intermediate score of 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). All other satisfaction scores ranged between 2.41 for basic IT skills and 2.93 for attitude and personality.

For managerial and clerical positions, satisfaction was higher, but these represented a limited share of the surveyed workforce. Level of satisfaction was around the overall average for elementary occupations, as well as intermediate-skilled occupations, such as services and sales, craft and related trades and agricultural workers. As for technical and machinery operators, satisfaction tended to be significantly lower than average. This was also reflected in the satisfaction rating per sector, which showed very low levels in the food and other manufacturing sectors, with most ratings lower than 2.

Job applicants' skills gaps

According to one third of respondents, technical skills were the most required and most lacking. This was common to all occupations, but lower for elementary occupations (18 per cent) and plant and machine operators and assemblers (10 per cent), compared with skilled and semi-skilled occupations (30 to 40 per cent of respondents). Furthermore, the lack of technical skills tended to be the main concern among specific sectors, notably car repairs (40 per cent) and construction (36 per cent).

Soft skills, such as communication and self-motivation, attitude and personality, and teamwork were also mentioned as lacking in job applicants, particularly in the construction and retail sectors where lack of motivation was cited by 25 per cent of respondents. Similarly, in the accommodation and food services sector, teamwork, communication skills and lack of motivation were the concern of approximately 20 per cent of respondents.

Surprisingly, lack of literacy and numeracy skills was a major concern not only for elementary occupations, but also for skilled occupations such as professionals (14 per cent), technicians and associate professionals (19 per cent), as well as services and sales workers (27 per cent). Such figures are assumed to reflect the practice of micro firms hiring unskilled labourers and family members and training them on the job to undertake skilled work. Such workers can exhibit high know-how yet still have limited literacy and numeracy skills.

Basic IT skills were not considered necessary for job applicants. Although basic IT skills are increasingly required in all sectors of activity, data from the study show that information technology is not yet integrated into the operations ecessary because of the limited prospects of firms to expand.

Firms' barriers to hiring

Primarily, firms exhibited a low capacity to provide adequate pay and working conditions. Some 60 per cent of interviewed employers revealed they were simply unable to afford sufficient wages to attract qualified applicants.

The second barrier to hiring was the labour market skills gap. Interviewed firms expressed difficulty in filling job vacancies requiring four types of workers: elementary (33 per cent of respondents); craft and related trade workers (26 per cent); technical and associate professionals (20 per cent); and, to a lesser extent, sales and services workers (12 per cent). There were slight differences between sectors, with more difficulties in hiring for elementary occupations in agriculture compared with other sectors, while demand for technical and associate professionals tended to be higher in food manufacturing, accommodation and food services and in retail and wholesale trade. Difficulties in hiring craft and related trade workers were relatively high for other manufacturing, car repairs and construction (cited by more than 50 per cent of respondents).

Business barriers to growth

The data indicate that the current economic situation and political instability remain major impediments to growth. Economic recession, the current political and social conjuncture (i.e. insecurity about the future, crime and social unrest), followed by a lack of access to finance were the major factors viewed as hampering MSME growth. Human resources and skills scored an average of 2.8, suggesting that firm owners tended to consider human capital as a secondary factor.

Recommendations

The importance of local economic development plans

Economic development, in the areas under study as well as in other vulnerable areas of Lebanon, will not be possible without substantial macroeconomic and institutional reforms. The Lebanese Government, together with relevant institutions, should develop a plan to escape the current economic and financial crisis, while at the same time implementing certain structural reforms.

The design and implementation of local economic development plans (LEDPs) will prove essential if firms are to improve their capacity for investment and growth. Such plans should take into consideration measures and policies that ensure the inclusion of all groups from the community.

LEDPs should be region-specific and rely on local resources and capacities. It is primarily the responsibility of local authorities, such as municipalities and unions of municipalities, to lead planning in a participatory manner. Nonetheless, in the absence of leadership from public authorities, local private-sector actors can initiate LEDP designs through coordinating with and lobbying public authorities for official endorsement and pro-active support in their implementation.

Economic opportunities by sector

Regarding sectoral interventions, in addition to the sectors proposed for inclusion into the LEDPs, the following sectors may provide opportunities across most (if not all) regions of the study:

- **Repairs and maintenance.** With the financial and economic crisis deepening, a significant increase in demand for repairs and maintenance services is expected. This demand refers to a wide range of products, from cars and motorcycles, to textiles, home appliances, computers, tables and phones, air conditioning, and home repairs. Efforts to support the repairs and maintenance sector may also include training on the manufacturing of spare parts, including electronic parts, within the technological and innovative capacity of Lebanon. The cost of entry into this sector is low, so it offers significant opportunities for employment and self-employment.

- **Hospitality,restaurant and catering (HORECA).**This sector offers significant opportunities for employment. The sector has significant skills gaps and high demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers. However, skills developmentin this sector at the local level will not yield the expected impacts unless linked to a LEDP.

- **Manufacturing (including food manufacturing).** The economic crisis has induced opportunities for some of the sub-sectors of the manufacturing sector. Food manufacturing, including dairy production, presents an opportunity for both employment and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, and depending on the context, several opportunities may exist, such as in the furniture, metals, plastics and chemicals sectors. Overall, the manufacturing sector is in need of technicians and associate professionals, as well as machine operators.

- **Agriculture.** This is a major component of local economies. Supporting farmers to improve their technical production is important and would help improve their income levels and standard of living. Furthermore, skills are needed to modernize agricultural production and living conditions. Modern agricultural practices would offer significant opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship for youth willing to engage in the sector. Nonetheless, for agriculture to have a local economic development impact, farmers should be able to keep a significant share of the value added. Thus, improving farmers' social capital and capacity to form associations and cooperatives is necessary.

- **Wholesale and retail trades.** Trade businesses were the most common type of business in the areas studied for this report. In fact, the sector has been booming since the start of Syrian crisis and the movement of people and goods to Turkey was agreed. However, with the recent reduction of purchasing power the sector may now be facing a crisis. Nonetheless, it still constitutes a significant opportunity for women's entrepreneurship in the regions examined and this will be sustainable if women are provided with the requisite business management skills.

Notwithstanding the macroeconomic challenges facing the country, which can only be resolved at the highest levels, local communities can still enact local solutions in preparation for economic recovery. Across most regions, and most sectors, there was a significant lack of skills among Lebanese and non-Lebanese workers. Significant efforts are required to improve workers› technical and soft skills, and training programmes will need to take into consideration not only the skills gaps of individual workers, but also the occupational gaps for each sector.

» Background

Prior to the 2019–2020 collapse of the Lebanese political, economic and financial system, average unemployment rates were 11 per cent, with women's unemployment at 14 per cent and men's at 10 per cent; 23 per cent of youth were unemployed compared with 9 per cent of older adults (CAS and ILO 2020). In fact, the Lebanese economy suffers from chronic structural issues,including high intra- and inter-regional inequalities, high levels of corruption[2] and difficulty conducting business,[3] with most economic sectors polarized between a few highly efficient and highly capitalized private-sector companies (often traceable to key political figures) and, on the other side, a myriad of small (often informal) firms struggling to sustain themselves.

In 2011 the Syrian crisis induced a significant loss of potential growth, and the subsequent deterioration of the internal political situation generated uncertainties that weakened investment and overall economic activity (David et al. 2019). Between 2011 and 2019 the main internal factor of stability, the fixed exchange peg of the Lebanese pound (LBP) to the US dollar, was maintained with a high level of gross foreign exchange reserves and liquidity in the financial system, but at a huge cost (David et al. 2019).

In fact, as early as spring 2016, the World Bank Lebanon Economic Monitor declared the socio-economic model of Lebanon to be bankrupt (World Bank 2016).the World Bank undertook a Systematic Country Diagnostic of Lebanon, with the aim of identifying the main constraints acting on the labour market. The study reported that the country's main challenges were: (a) the elite capture hidden behind a veil of confessionalism and confessional governance; and (b) conflict and violence (Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016). The report also pinpointed macroeconomic insecurity, lagging infrastructure, particularly in peripheral areas, skills gaps and mismatches, a fragile business environment, and an incompetent institutional and regulatory framework as challenges for economic growth (Le Borgne and Jacobs 2016).

Lebanon continues to face an ongoing multifaceted set of crises: the unresolved Syrian conflict, political and financial turmoil and the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and financial crisis have led to 20 per cent of businesses ceasing or suspending operations. The economic contraction, along with high inflation and increased levels of unemployment and associated income losses, as well as the steep depreciation of the Lebanese pound against the US dollar, all underlie the substantial increase in poverty and vulnerability (ILO 2020). The ILO estimated that between October 2019 and June 2020 some 250,000 jobs were temporarily lost, rendering the need for emergency support for households and businesses, such as direct cash transfers, restructuring of private-sector debt, and the introduction of strong active labour market policies (ALMPs) (ILO 2020).

[2]Transparency International ranked Lebanon 139th out of 180 countries on the corruption index. With a corruption index core of 72, Lebanon is considered significantly more corrupt than the world average of 56.9 and the Asian average of 59.2 (see www.transparency.org).

[3]The World Bank Group Doing Business 2019 report ranked Lebanon 142 out of 190 countries (see www.doingbusiness.org).

Box 1. The National TVET strategic framework vision

Recognizing that TVET produces individual and social benefits encompassing the individual, the economy, and society, a high-quality TVET system in Lebanon will seek to:

- **For individuals** – promote the employability of all residents of working age and improve their competencies and qualifications. The TVET system will positively contribute to the empowerment of individuals in their future careers as they contribute to Lebanese society. An inclusive TVET system will provide equal opportunities for all, welcoming marginalized populations, women, youth, minorities and PWDs.

- **For businesses** – ensure the availability of a competent workforce for the development of businesses in Lebanon. A quality TVET system will encourage foreign investment.

- **For the country** – contribute to inclusive and sustainable development, leaving no one behind. The TVET system will promote the principles of good citizenship, democracy and human rights, serving as a place for constructive dialogue between individuals and communities, and fostering social cohesion.

The financial system crisis and the Beirut Port explosion on 4 August 2020 struck the final blows to the post-war Lebanese economic model. The financial system, which had been showing signs of distress in 2016, finally collapsed in October 2019 in the form of a political and financial crisis. Political instability, social unrest and popular protests ensued, followed by a bank run with de facto capital controls, and the country defaulted on its foreign-denominated debt (bonds denominated in euros). The shocks were severe and immediate, and in less than a year the Lebanese pound lost 80 per cent of its unofficial value, while de facto banks capital controls and multiple exchange rates measures led to the loss of up to 65 per cent of foreign currency deposits value. The World Bank estimated that, before the Beirut Port explosion, 2020 would have witnessed negative double-digit growth, and that poverty and extreme poverty would affect 45 per cent and 22 per cent of the Lebanese households, respectively, an increase of 50 per cent and 175 per cent compared with 2008 (World Bank 2020). The Lebanese people are paying a high price for these crises and have become increasingly distrustful of the political and economic system, especially since the port explosion.

It is within this context, and in line with the National Strategic Framework for Technical Vocation Education and Training in Lebanon (2018–2022),[4] that the ILO and UNICEF are working together to enhance youth access to employment opportunities and livelihoods. UNICEF is partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)[5] operating across the country to deliver livelihood skills training for Lebanese and non-Lebanese youth (aged 15–24 years). The ILO is providing technical support to these NGOs to conduct local market surveys and implement skills training programmes. Within the framework of this joint initiative, the ILO aims to support and coach UNICEF's NGO partners in conducting community-based market assessments. NGOs will benefit from technical assistance to better understand, identify, and analyse labour market needs in order to better serve their communities and achieve their intended goals.

This hands-on technical support adapts the ILO Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) programme, and was implemented over two phases. Phase 1 adapted the TREE methodology to the Lebanese context, while phase 2 implemented the research.

This report presents the results of the main data collection tools, including a community profile (CP), the Consumer Demand Survey (CDS), and the Market Opportunity Survey (MOS), which focused on market opportunities, challenges and labour market skills in demand. Economic profiles of the seven geographic areas are described, and recommendations identify local economic development plans as an essential element of future solutions.

[4] https://www.ilo.org/beirut/publications/WCMS_633487/lang--en/index.htm.

[5] Partners included the Akkar Network for Development (AND), American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), AVSI, LOST, LEBrelief, Mouvement Social, the René Moawad Foundation and DoTRUST.

» Methodology

2

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE TREE METHODOLOGY

The TREE approach

TREE is a programme developed by the Skills and Employability Department of the ILO and based on the principles of community-based training.[6] It promotes income generation and local development, and emphasizes the role of skills and knowledge to create new, sustainable economic and employment opportunities for people who are poor, underemployed or unemployed, as well as informal economy workers.

The TREE methodology adopts a flexible approach towards the macro, meso and micro levels. At the macro level, the aim is to address institutional dynamics by regulating and promoting an environment that is conducive to local economic development. At the meso level, synergies are strengthened and the institutional competencies of partners and NGOs that provide training, including VTE schools are consolidated. At the micro level, skills training is based on market needs, followed up with support for trainees. The follow-up incorporates personal development training and context-specific, gender-inclusive advice to help beneficiaries set up a business, enter the workforce more confidently, and create stronger linkages with the market, in conjunction with financial support and coordination with microfinance schemes.

Critically, TREE engages directly with local partners and community members to ensure their commitment and trust throughout the entirety of a project's implementation. It also undertakes a needs analysis and comprehensive market-based research before implementing training, with the aim of understanding the national and local economic structures before providing post-training support. Ensuring that the macro, meso and micro levels intersect, and that long- and short-term goals are complementary means that both the methodology and the projects implemented are sustainable.

The TREE process

The TREE methodology consists of a set of distinct yet coherently linked processes that help articulate local development initiatives and systematically identify employment and income-generating opportunities at the community or local level, including the design and delivery of appropriate training programmes and the provision of post-training support. Specifically, the methodology includes:

1. The institutional organization and planning process, in which TREE partners:
    - (a) Define the target groups and geographical area based on transparent selection criteria;
    - (b) Establish national and local governance systems;
    - (c) Develop the capacity of organizations to participate and take on new responsibilities;
2. Community-based market assessment and planning, and the identification of economic opportunities and training needs, during which TREE partners:
    - (a) Assess the current and potential scenarios for employment and income generation through jobs and self-employment;
    - (b) Identify corresponding training and post-training needs;
3. The design and delivery of training, in which the partners follow well-defined training practices, including:
    - (a) Training that meets the needs of men and women who want to pursue income-generating activities or waged employment;
    - (b) Specific vocational and other skills, such as literacy, interpersonal skills and context-specific skills;
    - (c) Identifying the requisite materials and equipment;
4. Post-training support to help secure the sustainability of economic activities, such as job placement services, and linkages to credit, marketing assistance and other business support services for self-employment and micro businesses;
5. Monitoring, evaluation and documentation, in which the partners evaluate programme performance through a monitoring plan, taking into consideration gender and disability mainstreaming, training delivery, post-training follow-up and microenterprise creation. Within this process, TREE partners should document and share experiences and lessons learned.

[6] A detailed description of the TREE methodology is available in ILO (2009). Rural Skills Training. A Generic Manual on Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE). ILO, Geneva. Available at:https://www.ilo.org/skills/projects/WCMS_469456/lang--en/index.htm.

2.2 Selection of areas of interventionthe TREE approach

The present study reports on the implementation of the second TREE process – community assessment and planning. Community assessment was implemented in seven areas, selected on the basis of their level of vulnerability, as well as the presence of a framework of cooperation between UNICEF and local partners. This helps ensure that market assessments are linked to implementation.

Although the TREE methodology was initially focused on support for remote rural areas, adaption of the methodology[7] to Lebanon required the consideration that 88.5 per cent of the population lives in urban or peri-urban areas, and that the limits between rural and peri-urban are not necessarily well-defined. Thus, the selection of areas for intervention focused on:

- Vulnerability criteria, where areas demonstrated:
  - (a) A high incidence of poverty, underemployment and unemployment; or
  - (b) A high incidence of youth unemployment;
- Typology, whereby priority was given to:
  - (a) Areas defined as rural (i.e. Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, Minieh-Donnieh, North Beqaa and Wadi-Khaled);
  - (b) Peripheral townships around which the economic activities of smaller localities revolved (e.g. Chtoura, Halba and surroundings);
  - (c) Localities with strong potential for local economic development and supported by local public Institutions (e.g. Saida);
- Localities with potential for pilot research;
- Areas with an active presence of ILO and UNICEF partners to support the process, with capacity to provide relevant training.

Table 1 lists the seven selected regions and their respective coordinating partners.

Table 1. Areas selected for intervention

	Area	Coordinating partner
1	Chtoura and surroundings	ANERA
2	Halba and surroundings	Leb Relief
3	Marjeyoun and surroundings	AVSI
4	Minieh and Donnieh	René Moawad Foundation
5	North Beqaa (Hermel, Qaa, Ain/Labweh)	LOST
6	Saida	Mouvement Social
7	Wadi-Khaled	Akkar Network For Development

In addition to the seven coordinating partners, DOTrust collected data for the CDS and MOS for all selected areas.

2.3 Selection of areas of interventionthe TREE approach

This section reports the findings from each tool (CP, CDS and MOS) and includes relevant feedback from local committees.

Community profile

The CP tool was developed and administrated to key local informants, including municipality council members, social activists, TVET programme designers and trainers, chambers of commerce and private businesses. In each geographic area, willing individuals were selected for interview and then invited to participate as members of a local

[7] A rural area was defined for the purpose of this study as an area where population density is low and employment in agriculture is high.

The CP tool was used to:

- rapidly map the local community and economy;
- generate socio-economic data on target groups and communities;
- identify local economic opportunities and challenges;
- better understand gender dynamics, as well as the exclusion mechanisms towards marginalized social groups, such as people with disabilities (PWDs).

The CP survey was administrated by partner organizations' technical lead staff between October 2019 and February 2020. Note that data collection was delayed because of difficulties in organizing local community meetings as a result of the nationwide protests following the collapse of the Lebanese financial sector. In each area, between 9 and 12 participants were interviewed.

Results were reviewed and validated by the local committees and then used to inform the selection of sectors for the CDS and MOS, namely:

1. (for the CDS) food services, home repair and construction services, repair of motor vehicles, home healthcare services, and renewable energy;
2. (for MOS key sectors) accommodation and food services, manufacturing of food products, construction, repair of motor vehicles, wholesale and retail trades;
3. (for the MOS secondary sector) agricultural activities (excluding farms, but including nurseries, input supplies and post-harvest services), and other manufacturing activities (limited respondents).

Consumer Demand Survey

The CDS is a structured questionnaire used to assess supply shortages and unmet consumer demand. This was adapted to assess demand for selected goods and services, as well as the impact of COVID-19 on the income levels of participants (see Annex 4). Initially, the survey was planned for February 2020 using in-person interviews. However, because of the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, it was administrated over the phone between June and July 2020.

For each geographical area, the CDS targeted Lebanese residents. Sampling was based on an age and gender quota sampling methodology using a snowballing method, as follows:

(1) Partner NGOs provided DOTrust with an initial list of 40 potential respondents (i.e. 10 per cent of the target sample size) with equal representation for each gender.

(2) DOTrust administrated the survey to the initial list of respondents, requesting each one to nominate other adults residing in the area (preferably one male and one female of different age groups).

(3) DOTrust enumerators called the persons nominated and interviewed those willing to take part in the survey. These interviewees then nominated other potential participants.

(4) The DOTrust data collection supervision team ensured, within the limit of the approach adopted, that the sample was equally divided between men and women.

As the interviews were conducted by phone, random sampling through household geolocation was not possible. Additionally, random sampling from a population database was not possible because of the inability to access phone contact information. Given these constraints, the snowball method was considered the next most suitable approach to sampling.

Market Opportunity Survey

The MOS asked local producers why they do not or cannot adequately supply consumers, and whether they thought that local production could be expanded or improved. In the Lebanese context the MOS focused on market dynamics, barriers to growth and skills gaps.

This questionnaire followed a similar snowball sampling approach to the CDS and targeted small enterprises with between 2 and 10 employees. It surveyed businesses working in four key sectors: (1) accommodation and food services; (2) food industry; (3) construction; and (4) motor vehicle repairs. These sectors were identified as potential areas for intervention. The survey was also administered to the retail trade sector and, to a lesser extent, auxiliary agricultural services (non-farm value chain actors), as well as other services and manufacturing sectors.

Initially, data were collected face-to-face between October and November 2020. However, by the end of November COVID-19 restrictions meant that 30 per cent of the survey data needed to be collected by phone (mostly in Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, Halba and Minieh-Donnieh). Data were collected by DOTrust while partners' technical staff undertook regular data quality monitoring field visits. The MOS can be found in Annex 5.

2.4 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The researchers faced several challenges and the project was delayed several times. The first challenge was related to the restriction of mobility between October 2019 and January 2020 as a result of social unrest. This led to the delay of the CP interviews with key informants and local committee meetings.

The spring 2020 COVID-19 lockdown led to a delay in the CDS, which was, ultimately, conducted by phone in June 2020. This created difficulties in reaching out to older women. Cultural barriers in some areas, especially Wadi-Khaled and Minieh-Donnieh, prevented enumerators from obtaining older women's contact information, thus the women in the sample tend to be, on average, younger and more educated than the men.

The Beirut Port explosion and early autumn COVID-19 lockdown measures led to a delay in the MOS survey until October and November 2020. Towards the second half of November, additional COVID-19 restrictions forced the data collection team to undertake part of the survey over the phone.

» Consumer Demand Survey findings

3

3.1 Sample demographics

Overall, a total of 2,998 questionnaires were collected – an average of 428 per geographical area.[8] Respondents comprised 52 per cent males and 48 per cent females; around 20 per cent were youth, and around 37 per cent had achieved a university-level education (including higher technical education). Detailed descriptions of the sample are presented in Annex 2. Sample disaggregation by gender, age and education is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. CDS sample by gender, age and education (%)

Age group	Total	Male	Female
18–24	20	14	26
25–34	34	35	33
35–44	24	26	22
45+	22	26	18

Education	Total	Male	Female
Primary	25	30	19
Elementary	19	23	15
Secondary	19	19	20
University	37	29	45

At the time of data collection, the political and economic context almost certainly affected respondents' level of consumption and satisfaction, as the general price level of goods and services was a major concern. In fact, the survey was not able to identify specific consumer dissatisfaction with goods or services, as more than 90 per cent of respondents simply answered "too expensive" when asked about their reasons for dissatisfaction.

3.2 Demand for products and services and consumer satisfaction

Food services

Demand for selected food products and service outlets varied between regions, with higher demand in urban areas such as Saida, and lower demand in highly vulnerable rural areas such as Wadi-Khaled and Minieh-Donnieh.

For instance, as shown in Table 3, around 50 per cent of Saida respondents ate at a restaurant at least once per month, and around 25 per cent on a weekly basis. A similar demand pattern was observed for other food services outlets. In contrast, in Minieh-Donnieh around 85 per cent of respondents never or rarely went to a food services outlet, similar to Wadi-Khaled (around 75 per cent). In other regions, around 40 per cent of consumers regularly used food services – up to 50 per cent in North Beqaa, where the Orontes (al-Asi) river cafe and restaurant cluster seems to have contributed to increased demand.

Demand for furns[9] was relatively high in most of the surveyed communities, except in Minieh-Donnieh. Furns constitute a significant part of the Lebanese modern food diet, and play a significant role in food security.[10] In fact, demand for these products is associated with increasing levels of urbanization. Lower levels of demand may be attributed to the limited number of suppliers and the reliance, at least in rural areas, on more traditional home-made mouneh and fresh produce for breakfast (eggs, labneh, tomatoes and other vegetables).

Food services tended to be in greater demand among younger age groups. In Saida around 75 per cent of youth (18–24 years old) regularly used food services compared with only 40–50 per cent in other age categories. Similar patterns were found in other areas. Significant gender differences exist in Wadi-Khaled, where food services were in higher demand among men than women, with differences reaching up to 20 per cent with respect to cafes, furns and confectionary shops. On the other hand, no gender differences were observed in the demand for snacks and restaurants, as these seem to be perceived as a family activity. There were no significant gender differences in other regions.

In addition to age and, to a lesser extent, gender factors, demand for food services seems to be determined by level of income and level of urbanization. As shown in Table 4, the level of satisfaction from services was high, ranging from 64 per cent in North Beqaa to 84 per cent in Marjeyoun-Hasbaya. However, when asked to validate this high level of satisfaction with food outlets, members of local committees were sceptical, noting that significant improvement needed to be made in terms of food safety, consumer service provision, diversity of offerings, marketing and promotion.

Across all regions, prices of goods and services remained a major element of dissatisfaction and a reason for low levels of demand. The impact of the financial crisis and reduction of consumer purchasing power was clearly reflected in the results. For instance, between 55 and 83 per cent of respondents who were dissatisfied or who did not purchase furns stated that they were "too expensive", although furns are widely presumed to be relatively low-cost, high-calorie and nutritious food.

[8] With a minimum of 378 surveys in North Beqaa and a maximum of 447 surveys in Minieh-Donnieh.

[9] Manakish and other baked flatbreads, salted pastries and dough-based products.

[10] They are considered highly calorific yet relatively healthy and widely available at low prices.

Regarding restaurants, 84 per cent of respondents in Minieh-Donnieh stated that restaurants were "too expensive" – this was a reason for both dissatisfaction and lack of demand. However, in Marjeyoun-Hasbaya and North Beqaa these figures were as low as 54 and 57 per cent respectively. Such results reflect the existence of local, relatively affordable cafe and restaurant clusters around the Wazzani river in Marjeyoun and the Orontes (al-Asi) river in North Beqaa. In fact, the revival of restaurants and food services in these two areas and the improvement of existing clusters is a viable option to boost local and tourist demand for food services, and create local job opportunities in a sector that relies heavily on skilled labour.

Table 3. Demand for selected food and food services (%)

	Frequency	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
Snacks	Never/rarely	62	61	61	83	52	44	73
	Low *	20	26	22	11	27	33	12
	High **	18	13	17	6	21	23	15
Restaurants	Never/rarely	65	63	64	86	54	47	77
	Low	20	29	21	9	31	30	11
	High	16	9	15	5	15	22	12
Furns	Never/rarely	47	46	49	66	37	27	52
	Low	21	16	19	15	19	27	14
	High	32	39	32	18	44	46	34
Cafes	Never/rarely	62	67	67	85	66	55	75
	Low	22	13	18	7	18	23	12
	High	16	20	14	7	15	22	13
Sweets and patisseries	Never/rarely	58	64	60	79	55	44	71
	Low	28	27	26	16	30	42	16
	High	14	9	13	4	14	13	14

* Bi-weekly or monthly; ** weekly or daily.

Table 4. Satisfaction of selected foods and food services (%)

	Frequency	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
Snacks	Level of satisfaction	77	69	84	80	64	78	69
	Too expensive*	75	68	56	83	54	74	77
Restaurants	Level of satisfaction	82	72	90	84	71	82	72
	Too expensive	74	74	54	84	57	76	78
Furns	Level of satisfaction	95	80	84	80	69	84	87
	Too expensive	81	71	55	83	61	63	75
Cafes	Level of satisfaction	90	81	89	85	71	88	88
	Too expensive	77	65	46	79	49	55	70
Sweets and patisseries	Level of satisfaction	91	84	88	90	73	89	88
	Too expensive	83	72	50	85	57	66	75

* As a share of dissatisfied respondents and respondents that did not, never or rarely demanded food services.

Home repair and construction services

The demand for home repairs was relatively high in all areas, with demand for electricians ranging from 23 per cent in Minieh-Donnieh to 44 per cent in Wadi-Khaled, meaning that around 30 per cent of households in the selected areas had hired an electrician over the previous 12 months. Demand for plumbers was similar, while demand for AC repairs was dependent on location and only high only in Saida (the only coastal area among the regions studied where humidity is high).

On the other hand, demand for home construction services was relatively lower than demand for home repairs, because of the relatively lower frequency of homes needing major restructuring, such as painting, blacksmith or aluminium works. Nonetheless, demand was evident as approximatively 15 per cent of households had hired the services of a skilled home construction worker.

During validation with local committees, members stated that demand for repair services (including repair of household appliances, mobile phones, and personal computers and tablets) was likely to rise as most of these items, as well as services requiring raw materials and equipment, were imported and priced in US dollars. They predicted that the financial crisis and the sharp decrease in purchasing power will push households to opt for repair and maintenance instead of replacement.

The level of satisfaction with home repair and construction services, reported in Table 6, was between 70 and 90 per cent. Nonetheless, the research team believe that the satisfaction level is overestimated. We argue that a high level of demand, especially for electricians and plumbers, is also reflective of the poor quality of prior installations and repairs, requiring greater maintenance of a household's water and electricity infrastructure. The constant shift between public and private electricity providers is reflective of private generators causing damage or failures of electrical equipment. These, in turn, reflect the need to improve the technical skills and practices of maintenance and construction workers. Similarly, for other services the reasons for dissatisfaction could not be assessed as most respondents focused on the fact that they did not need the services or that the services were considered too expensive.[11] Overall, local committee members and key informants agreed that there were opportunities to improve the overall shelter and housing situation in the selected areas. For example, significant efforts could be made to improve Saida's old city and surrounding housing, as well as rural areas where improved housing and daily access to water is a concern for households.

Table 5. Demand for Home repair and construction services by region (%)

	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
Electrician	32	36	32	23	39	36	44
Plumber	35	36	27	20	42	40	41
Carpenter	17	15	11	5	17	16	13
Plasterer	7	6	5	4	8	8	5
Blacksmith	10	11	7	5	12	7	7
Aluminium*	11	8	9	4	11	12	11
Tiler	7	7	4	3	7	7	7
Painter	16	13	11	6	13	12	13
Upholsterer	6	6	4	4	9	6	5
AC Repairer	5	11	11	3	16	26	4

*Fitter and joiner.

Table 6. Level of satisfaction with home repair and construction services (%)

	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
Electrician	77	76	78	66	79	80	76
Plumber	75	76	73	69	69	79	73
Carpenter	89	75	72	74	77	89	90
Blacksmith	85	69			67		
Aluminium*	73				64	71	74
Painter	86	85	84		64	68	86
AC Repairer		71	74		62	65	

Note: Figures are not reported where the number of respondents was less than 5 per cent of the total, or no answer/"don't know" was given.
*Fitter and joiner.

[11] For example, in Chtoura the figures were as follows: "No need": electrician (65%), plumber (63%), carpenter (72%), plasterer (77%), blacksmith (75%), aluminium fitter and joiner (74%), tiler (76%), painter (70%), upholsterer (79%), AC repairer (82%). "It was expensive": electrician (32%), plumber (33%), carpenter (27%), plasterer (23%), blacksmith (25%), aluminium fitter and joiner (26%), tiler (24%), painter (30%), upholsterer (22%), AC Repairer (18%). Other areas showed similar figures.

Vehicle repairs

Car ownership ranged between 31 per cent in Minieh-Donnieh and Wadi-Khaled to 59 per cent in North Beqaa.[12] There was a clear gender difference in ownership, with only 8 per cent of women owning a car in Wadi-Khaled (compared with 51 per cent of men). Table 7 shows that gender-based differences in car ownership were evident in all areas, although greater in Wadi-Khaled, Minieh-Donnieh and Halba.

Table 7. Car ownership by area and gender (%)

	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
Male	51	58	65	40	69	59	51
Female	41	21	42	13	47	49	8
Total	46	41	53	31	59	54	31

Although fewer women tend to own cars than men, Table 8 shows that women tended to maintain their cars more often than men. Overall, demand for standard car maintenance services, such as replacing oil and tyres was high, with 80 per cent or more of respondents having done so over the previous year, except for Minieh-Donnieh (64 per cent).

Demand for other car repair services was also relatively high; at least 20 per cent of respondents required car repair services over the previous 12 months. As Lebanese purchasing power has been drastically reduced, and banks have cut back lending for new cars, demand for car repairs is expected to increase with the ageing of vehicles. However, respondents' satisfaction with car repair services was relatively low, especially in rural areas, with satisfaction levels below 50 per cent in Halba, Minieh-Donnieh and North Beqaa.

In fact, there is significant need to upgrade the car repair industry in Lebanon. The industry has a low entry cost (low investment) and presents a significant opportunity for youth, particularly vulnerable youth and school dropouts, to gain skills through apprenticeships or re-insertion into mixed vocational education and on-the-job training programmes. Such programmes can be designed in cooperation and coordination with local municipalities through public–private partnerships with branded local repair franchises, which are likely to put additional emphasis on after-sales services, as direct sales of new cars are expected to remain on a downward trend over the medium term.

Table 8. Motor vehicle repair services by area and gender over the past 12 months (%)

	Frequency	Replace oil/tyres	Painting and body repairs	Repair of electric system	Repairing/replacing hardware[13]	Wadi-Khaled
Chtoura	Total	84	15	20	43	24
	Male	80	13	18	46	26
	Female	90	17	22	40	22
Halba	Total	83	13	18	22	9
	Male	84	10	16	23	10
	Female	81	22	24	20	5
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Total	78	10	16	27	11
	Male	76	11	16	24	12
	Female	80	8	17	32	10
Minieh-Donnieh	Total	64	7	14	29	9
	Male	62	6	10	27	6
	Female	Not reported because of low number of respondents (less than %1)				
North Beqaa	Total	82	15	17	36	9
	Male	78	13	15	38	9
	Female	89	16	20	32	9
Saida	Total	69	17	20	22	13
	Male	73	20	21	23	15
	Female	66	13	18	22	12

[12]The vast majority of vehicle owners (99 per cent) own a car. Only around 1% owned either a truck or a motorcycle as a primary mean of transportation, thus the data are only reported for car owners.

[13]Motors, gears, brakes and exhausting systems.

Wadi-Khaled	Total	87	21	17	39	15
	Male	86	22	18	41	16
	Female	Not reported because of low number of respondents (less than %1)				

Table 9. Satisfaction with vehicle repair services by region (%)

	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
Replace oil and/or tyres	52	43	60	35	48	65	52
Painting and body repairs	79	55	71	33	47	73	77
Repair of electric system	53	42	68	42	49	75	52
Buying accessories	52	33	70	42	45	70	74

Note: Repairing/replacing hardware was not reported because of the low number of respondents.

Individual health services and renewable energy[14]

The survey was not able to assess demand for individual health services and renewable energy, as these two sectors are considered niche. Nonetheless, data presented in Table 10 show that, in some regions, 10 to 15 per cent of households use solar energy (mostly for heating water), while 10 per cent of households require home nursing support in Chtoura, Minieh-Donnieh and Wadi-Khaled. Demand for child and elderly care in the regions under study remains low, even in urban settings such as Saida.

Table 10. Demand for individual health services and renewable energy by area (%)

	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
General home nursing care	11	4	5	10	5	4	8
Child and newborn care	4	1	3	1	1	2	3
Elderly care	7	2	3	8	4	4	5
Renewable energy	10	2	15	3	13	6	5

Other services

Respondents highlighted the absence of health services in all regions, except for Saida, and the lack of health services seems to be a significant issue in Minieh-Donnieh and Akkar. Similarly, although to a lesser extent, access to education and social services were considered an issue in all regions except Chtoura and Saida. In fact, there is scope for working with local authorities and relevant ministries to improve access to basic services. This could help keep skilled youth in rural areas and improve the situation of the local vulnerable population, especially in the current crisis context.

Interestingly, maintenance and repair (all kinds), as well as hospitality services, were mentioned as “missing” in Saida, while retail trade was an issue for around 10 per cent of respondents in Minieh-Donnieh.

3.3 Impact of COVID-19 on individuals

Taking into consideration that the impact of COVID-19 during the first wave of winter/spring 2020 cannot be dissociated from the impact of the financial and economic crisis, the CDS asked respondents about the impact of the first COVID-19 lockdown on their income and household duties.

Results, presented in Table 11, show that between 70 and 80 per cent of respondents reported a decrease in income, while around a third of respondents reported job losses. These findings are consistent with the ILO rapid assessment

[14] Solar water heaters and solar panels.

on the impact of COVID-19 (ILO 2020), which reported that 39 per cent of surveyed vulnerable Lebanese respondents temporarily lost their jobs, while 38 per cent permanently lost their jobs.

A limited number of respondents mentioned an increase in household and childcare duties, perhaps a result of the relatively younger age of the surveyed sample.

Table 11. Impact of COVID-19 spring 2020 lockdown by region (%)

Questionnaire item	Chtoura	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Saida	Wadi-Khaled
My household income has increased because of the crisis							
My household income has decreased because of the COVID19- crisis	73	80	88	72	79	84	81
My household duties have increased while I have been at home	19	35	25	12	45	34	13
My childcare tasks have increased since the crisis emerged	11	19	15	9	22	17	7
I may lose my job in the coming months	15	14	13	9	20	14	10
I (permanently) lost my job because of the COVID19- crisis	30	29	24	40	25	22	28

» Market Opportunity Survey

4

4.1 SAMPLE

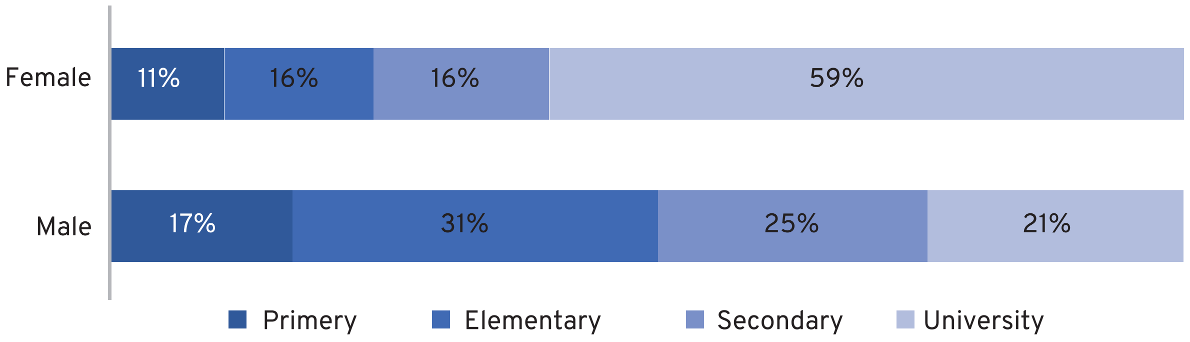
The survey interviewed a total of 1,792 business owners or managers. The distribution of respondents by area surveyed is presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Distribution of firms sampled by region)

Region	Percentage
Saida	16
Halba	15
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	15
Minieh-Danniyeh	10
North Bekaa	10
Wadi-Khaled	18
Chtoura	16
Total	**100**

Around 88 per cent of respondents were male and 12 per cent were female. Figure 1 shows that women were more likely to have achieved university education (59 per cent) than men (24 per cent).

Figure 1. Education level of owners/managers by gender

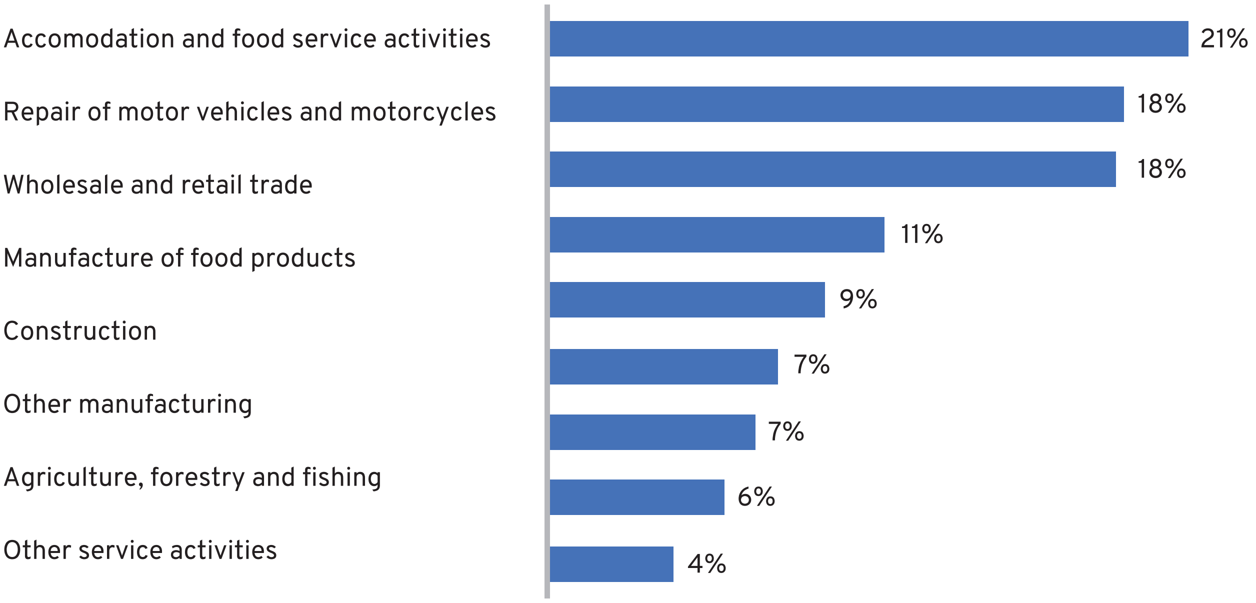


Economic sectors were selected on the basis of the CP survey, which identified specific activities with potential to employ vulnerable youth. The survey prioritized four sectors, namely accommodation and food services, food manufacturing, home construction and repairs, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles. Retail establishments constituted the vast majority of micro and small enterprises.

In addition to the priority sectors, data were collected on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) working in the non-food manufacturing sector, the agriculture sector (non-farm activity), as well as other activities. Overall, an average of 256 surveys were collected per region. Figure 2 shows the distribution of surveyed MSMEs per sector. More than 80 per cent of surveyed MSMEs operated within the priority sectors or related wholesale and retail trade, with 21 per cent working in the accommodation and food services sector, and 18 per cent in the repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

In term of ownership, around 87 per cent of interviewed firms were single ownership, 9 per cent were partnerships, 3 per cent were société à responsabilité limitée (SARL) and around 1 per cent were société anonyme libanaise (SAL). Note that the survey did not aim to represent the sectoral distribution of MSMEs at either the national or local level, but primarily aimed at collecting information on sectors of interest.

Figure 2. Distribution of MSMEs by sector of economic activity



4.2 Regional differences

Compared with the average of all regions in the survey (12 per cent), the proportion of women was higher in the Chtoura and Halba samples, and lower in Minieh-Donnieh and North Beqaa. This trend of women increasingly engaging in retail business was confirmed by the local committees in Chtoura, Halba and, to a lesser extent, Wadi-Khaled. These areas are also characterized by a high concentration of Syrian refugees, and several development programmes have supported entrepreneurship among vulnerable women. Grants are often focused on home-based businesses, food production and trade. The low levels of women entrepreneurship in Minieh-Donnieh and North Beqaa may be attributed to the cultural challenges that discourage women from operating businesses in conservative rural areas. Detailed data can be found in Annex 2, while Table 13 shows the key characteristics of respondents by region.

Between 81 and 92 per cent of businesses were owned by a single owner, with slight variation across regions. Two figures are particularly interesting:

(1) In Chtoura 13 per cent of businesses were shareholding companies (SAL and SARL) This may be attributed to the relatively high presence of wholesale trade, formal food processing companies and a relatively high number of service-based companies. Chtoura has a reputation as a business "melting pot", where micro and small businesses are concentrated.

(2) In North Beqaa 17 per cent of businesses were partnerships, mostly between brothers or first-degree cousins. North Beqaa remains highly patriarchal, with strong family and clan ties. Men typically exercise most control over resources, including land and finance, as well as business opportunities. Strong kinship ties are also reflected in patterns of firm ownership.

Table 13. Regional characteristics

Region	Key sectors	Women (as a percentage of sample)	Single ownership (%)
Chtoura	Wholesale and retail trade (22%) Accommodation and food services (19%) Food manufacturing (13%)	23	83
Halba	Wholesale and retail trade (30%) Accommodation and food services (18%) Car repairs (18%)	14	85
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Accommodation and food services (%26) Car repairs (%21) Food manufacturing (%16)	7	87
Minieh-Donnieh	Accommodation and food services (%26) Wholesale and retail trade (%18) Car repairs (%13)	8	93

North Beqaa	Accommodation and food services (24%) Other manufacturing (24%) Car repairs (21%)	5	81
Saida	Car repairs (34%) Accommodation and food services (27%) Food manufacturing (14%)	11	85
Wadi-Khaled	Wholesale and retail trade (%28) Accommodation and food services (%14) Car repairs (%13)	10	92

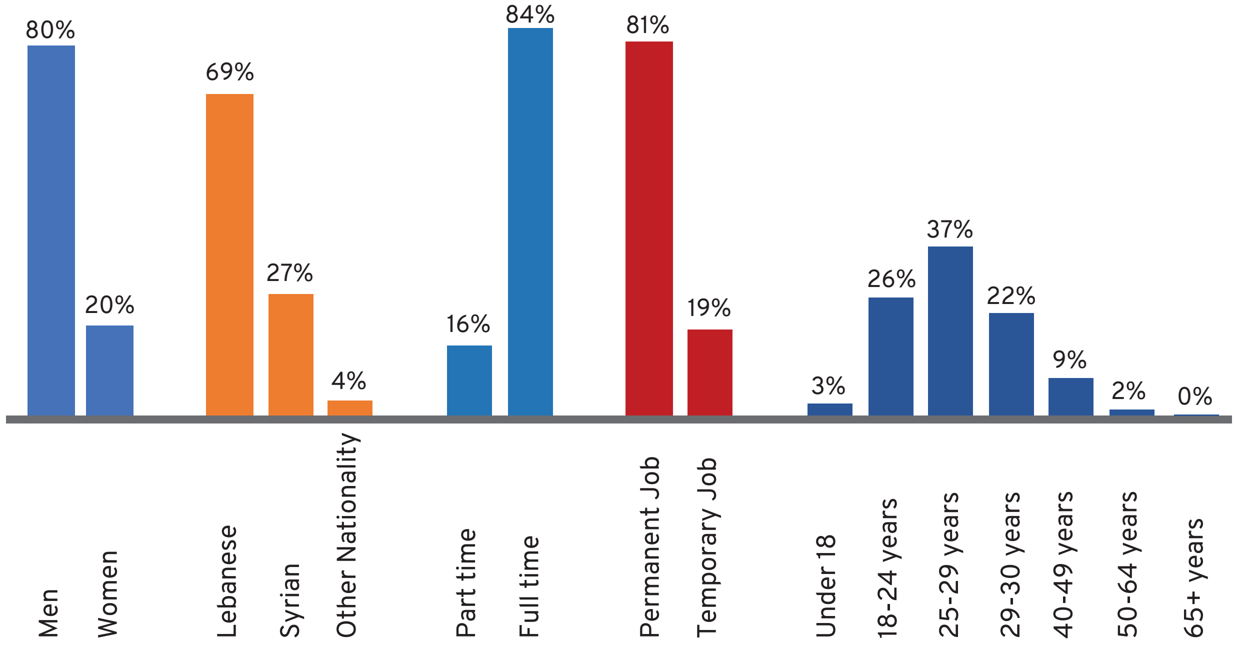
4.3 Labour force structure

On average, firms employed 4.5 workers, around 80 per cent of whom were men (see Figure 3), and around 80 per cent of employees had full-time permanent jobs. Around 69 per cent of employees were Lebanese and 27 per cent were Syrian. Two thirds of workers were under aged under 30 years, and 90 per cent were aged under 40 years. This was much younger than the national average where 34% of the labour force are aged under 30 (CAS and ILO 2020). The younger nature of this sample may be because:

- The type of sectors surveyed (food services and accommodation, construction, and car repairs) tend to hire younger workers;
- The higher prevalence of employees with low skills (i.e. people working in elementary occupations), who have not yet acquired experience and thus tend to be younger;
- Syrian refugees in the labour market tend to be, on average, younger than the Lebanese population;
- Respondents tend to be younger, and managers of small informal businesses may not be aware of the exact age of their employees as they are hired informally.

In terms of economic sectors, women represented around half of agricultural workers, as well as those in "other services". Some 26 per cent of workers in food production and 22 per cent in retail trade were women. Syrian workers represented two thirds of the agricultural workforce, and between 20 and 30 per cent of the workforce in other sectors. However, the data show that Syrian labour was not limited to the sectors in which they are officially allowed to work (i.e. agriculture, cleaning and construction).

Figure 3. Distribution of employees by gender, nationality, type of employment and age



Around half of MSME workers were in low-skilled elementary occupations; only a limited number were professionals or skilled workers. Women were also more likely to work in elementary occupations, especially Syrian women in the agriculture sector.[15] Women's participation in construction and car repairs was limited.

Overall, data on the workforce structure (see Table 14) reflect low levels of skill and technology within the surveyed MSMEs, with professional and technical categories not exceeding, respectively, 2 and 11 per cent of the total workforce. Additionally, clerical support workers comprised just 1 per cent of the total workforce, reflecting the relative informality of enterprises, as well as an absence of (either full-time or part-time) bookkeeping, human resources management or other administrative support functions. It is assumed that these functions are carried out by managers who, in most cases, also owned these businesses.

4.4 Distribution by labour structure: regional analysis

All regions showed a similar labour structure (i.e. low levels of technology and limited administration) among micro and small enterprises. Minor differences are presented in Table 14 below. Detailed employment structure are presented in Annex 2 (tables 28 to 35).

Table 14. Key characteristics of surveyed MSMEs by region

Region	Women (%)	Syrian workers (%)	Elementary occupations (%)	Average number of employees
Chtoura	22	30	50	5.5
Halba	22	25	40	4.8
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	7	21	46	4.7
Minieh-Donnieh	8	30	35	2.8
North Beqaa	30	46	72	5.7
Saida	16	11*	35	4.0
Wadi-Khaled	18	33	46	3.5

Note: * Other nationalities, mostly Palestinian, represent 22 per cent of the workforce in Saida.

In Halba, firms seem to demand a higher level of skills than in other regions. Skilled workers (technical and associated professional, services and sales workers, as well as craft and related trade workers) represent more than half of the workforce. Although firms in Halba operate at a relatively low level of technology for both management and production, they tend to hire a higher number of skilled workers. It is assumed that this is due to the presence of higher number of skilled Syrian refugees.

For surveyed firms in Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, women and Syrians represent, respectively, 7 and 22 per cent of the workforce. The figure for women was lower than the overall MOS average. The low level of women entrepreneurship reflects the difficulties faced by women in engaging in business activities in the rural periphery, where men tend to control access to, and decisions over, resources, including agricultural land and family savings, even when they are legally owned by women. Around 21 per cent of the workforce are Syrian, a lower figure than in other regions as Syrian migrant workers only started working in the area after the Israeli occupation in 2000. In addition, the region has witnessed a limited influx of Syrian refugees. Nonetheless, there are significant work opportunities for Syrian migrant labour in the area, in all sectors.

In Minieh-Donnieh women's labour participation rate (8 per cent) is characteristic of peripheral rural areas, where gender dynamics and local norms tend to restrict women to household work and childcare roles. There is significant competition between Syrians and Lebanese over skilled jobs. Around 30 per cent of workers are Syrian, around half of which work in elementary occupations. In fact, Syrians in this area tend to compete with Lebanese for skilled jobs, as close to 40 per cent of Syrian labour works in services and sales, as well as craft and related trade occupations. However, local committee members commented that competition over skilled occupations is primarily an issue in Minieh and larger towns in Donnieh such as Syr, while in other parts of Donnieh the presence of Syrian workers in skilled jobs is primarily due to the low-density Lebanese population in the area.

In North Beqaa, women's participation in the workforce is significantly higher than in other regions, but with a lower number of women entrepreneurs. Interviewed local activists believed that this was due to two factors:

[15] Note that the data collection protocol, including time limitations, did not allow for disaggregation by both gender and nationality.

(1) The predominance of family businesses and family paid labour, whereby Lebanese women are often employed as extended family labour in businesses owned by relatives;
(2) Many women work in agriculture, especially Syrian women. This factor was considered significantly more important.

Most women in the workforce in North Beqaa are Syrians working in elementary occupations in the agriculture sector. Within the surveyed sample, there were no female managers, suggesting that even where a business was owned by a woman, it was likely to be managed by a male relative, generally a husband or son. In terms of nationality, Syrians represent 45 per cent of the MSME workforce – significantly higher than in other regions. However, this is likely due to the sampling approach, as 10 per cent of surveyed firms worked in agriculture, a sector in which Syrian labour constitute the vast majority of workers.

More than 70 per cent of the workforce in North Beqaa work in elementary occupations. This is above the regional average (regardless of nationality and gender), with 63 per cent of men working in elementary occupations. Some 62 per cent of respondents were Lebanese. Demand for skills remains extremely low, with the proportion of technicians and associate professionals not exceeding 6 per cent of the workforce.

Men comprised 84 per cent of the workforce in Saida. This is due to the fact that more than 40 per cent of surveyed business establishments were working in the car repair and the construction sectors , where men workforce is predominant.

Saida is characterized by a high presence of Palestinian refugee workers, who represent the vast majority of workers under the category "other nationalities". In fact, while Lebanese comprised 69 per cent of the workforce in surveyed establishments in Saida, the proportion of Palestinian workers (20 per cent) exceeded that of Syrian workers (11 per cent).

The workforce in surveyed establishments in Wadi-Khaled is composed of 82 per cent of men and 18 per cent women, and around 32 per cent of the workforce is Syrian. Workers' distribution across occupations follows a slightly different pattern compared with other regions. While the data still reflect the low level of technology and administrative processes common to MSMEs across all regions, 14 per cent of the workforce were managers. This high share of managers is due to the relatively low number of employees per firm. The average business in Wadi-Khaled has just three employees, fewer than Chtoura (5.5) and Saida (4.4). Managers, in the context of the areas under investigation were also, in most instances, businesses owners with varying levels of skills and education.

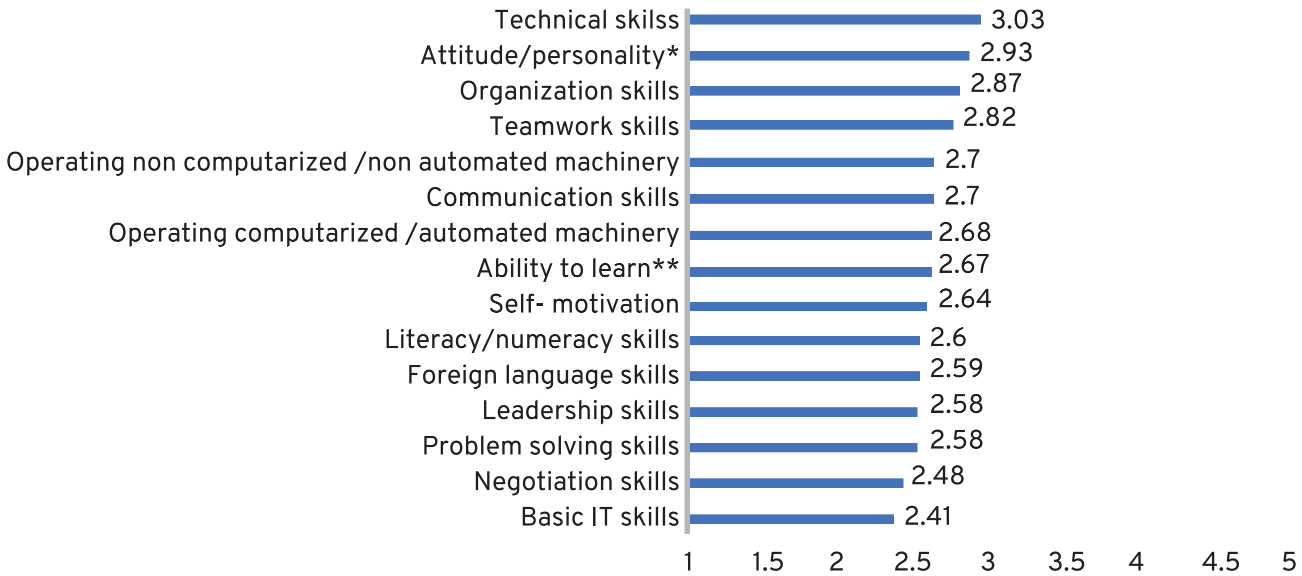
4.5 Demand for skills

Detailed national and regional data on businesses' demand for skills can be found in Annex 2 (tables 36 to 39).

Current staff skills: Employers' satisfaction

Level of satisfaction with employees' skills tended to be low, with only technical skills reaching an average score of 3 out of 5 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). Figure 4 shows that other scores ranged between 2.41 for basic IT skills and 2.93 for attitude and personality.

Figure 4. Employers' average satisfaction scores by skill level of current staff



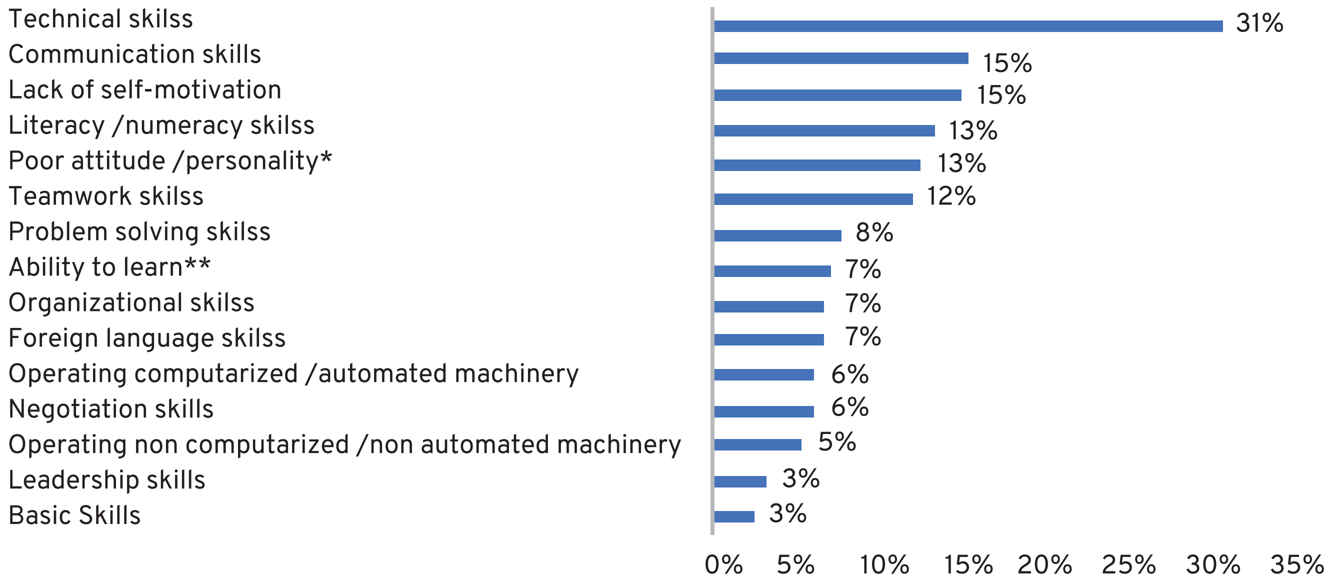
1= not at all satisfied, 2= not satisfied, 3= neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 4= satisfied, 5= extremely satisfied.
* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Satisfaction was higher for managerial and clerical positions, but lower for technical and machinery operators. This was also reflected in the very low satisfaction scores given in the food and other manufacturing sectors, with most employers giving scores below 2.

Skills gaps among job applicants

According to employers, technical skills were the most sought after; Figure 5 shows that 31 per cent of respondents considered that such skills were lacking. This was in line with the low levels of satisfaction among employers with technicians and associate professionals.

Figure 5. Employer ratings of skills lacking in job applicants



* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Lack of technical skills of job applicants was common to all occupations, although relatively lower for elementary occupations (18 per cent) and plant and machine operators and assemblers (10 per cent), compared with skilled and semi-skilled occupations where it was mentioned by 30 to 40 per cent of respondents. Furthermore, lack of technical skills tended to be a main concern in specific sectors, particularly car repairs (40 per cent) and construction (36 per cent).

Soft skills, such as communication skills and self-motivation, attitude/personality and teamwork, were also often mentioned as lacking in job applicants. This was particularly important in the construction and retail sectors where lack of motivation was cited by 25 per cent of respondents. Similarly, in the accommodation and food services sector, teamwork, communication skills and lack of motivation were mentioned by approximatively 20 per cent of respondents.

Surprisingly, lack of literacy and numeracy skills was a major concern not only for elementary occupations but also for skilled occupations such as professionals (14 per cent), technicians and associate professionals (19 per cent), as well as services and sales workers (27 per cent). We propose that two factors are responsible:

(1) For professionals, technicians and associate professionals a significant number of MSMEs tend to hire workers for elementary occupations and train them on the job. After these workers have acquired enough experience, they may be required to undertake tasks that are usually the responsibility of trained professionals. These workers may then be in a situation in which they have acquired specific technical knowledge but still lack numeracy and literacy skills.

(2) For services and sales workers, retail MSMEs tend to be family-operated businesses. Workers responsible for shop inventory, basic accounting, customer services, and relations with suppliers may often be family members, or workers initially hired as elementary workers on low wages who, over time, learn to undertake more complex tasks and responsibilities.

The tendency of MSMEs to hire elementary workers and train them on the job is due to both a lack of skilled applicants, as well as firms' lack of financial capacity to afford the wage levels of skilled workers and professionals. The low financial capabilities of MSMEs are reflected by firms' view that the ability to operate machinery (whether computerized or not) was not considered a major skill lacking in job applicants. The vast majority of MSMEs operating in the regions studied do not use machinery and rely on low-skilled, low-waged labour.

Also, basic IT skills were not considered necessary for job applicants. Although IT skills are increasingly required in all sectors of activity, data show that information technology is not yet integrated into the operations of MSMEs in the areas surveyed.

Similarly, respondents did not identify negotiation and leadership skills as lacking in job applicants, not because most applicants carry these skills but because managers do not perceive the need for such skills. In fact, growth prospects for MSMEs in Lebanon remain limited. According to the Ministry of Economy and Trade national strategy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (MEOT 2014), most Lebanese firms are unable to break through to the next stages of growth and face issues of maintaining long-term sustainability. With such limited prospects, negotiation and leadership skills, which would normally support a firm's growth, were not considered a priority by the MSMEs surveyed.

4.6 Demand for skills by region

Chtoura

In Chtoura, only a quarter of surveyed companies declared difficulties in hiring staff, reflecting the relative abundance of available labour in the area. Other points to note include the following:

- **Technical skills were lacking in job applicants – 41 per cent of respondents reported difficulties in hiring staff.** This was particularly the case for service and sales positions, and technicians and associate professionals across all sectors. Technical skills were less of a concern for elementary positions, where self-motivation and teamwork were the major skills lacking. In fact, the lack of soft skills was a major concern for employers across all occupations, with lack of self-motivation, poor attitude and personality mentioned by 28 per cent and 21 per cent of respondents, respectively.

- **Communication skills (50 per cent), teamwork skills (38 per cent), and negotiation skills (38 per cent) were lacking in job applicants for service and sales positions.** These skills gaps were identified by firms in wholesale and retail trade, and to a lesser extent, in other services and manufacturing sectors. Improving sales and marketing strategies through employing qualified workers may help local businesses to grow, especially if Chtoura is to follow a local economic development strategy based on food production, tourism and trade.

- **Job applicants lack basic IT skills (mentioned by 10 per cent of respondents).** Although the figure was low, it was significantly higher than the overall average of the MOS (3 per cent). On the one hand, this indicates a low level of reliance on IT systems for managing production and sales. On the other hand, a number of local businesses in Chtoura rely on IT systems (e.g. point-of-sales systems, bookkeeping and inventory systems, as well as digital platforms used by money transfer offices and exchange bureaux, which are highly concentrated in Chtoura).

Halba

Some 70 per cent of the companies surveyed expressed difficulties in hiring staff, indicating a relatively high skills gap in Halba and surrounding areas. Other points of note:

- **Lack of technical skills was a major barrier to hiring applicants for skilled and semi-skilled occupations.** On average, 27 per cent of respondents expressed a lack of technical skills among applicants. However, this figure was significantly higher (35 per cent) for skilled occupations (technicians and associate professionals) and craft and related trade workers (59 per cent). The technical skills gap was also demonstrated by the high number of job applicants lacking basic numeracy and literacy skills across all occupations and sectors (mentioned by 24 per cent of respondents).

- **Soft skills, such as self-motivation and personality, were also key concerns for employers in Halba.** The lack of these skills was mentioned by 24 per cent and 10 per cent of respondents, respectively. Concern for soft skills was higher for skilled positions compared with elementary jobs. In fact, lack of motivation (40 per cent) and poor attitudes and personality (19 per cent) were concerns for respondents looking to hire services and sales workers. Communication skills (16 per cent) and teamwork (11 per cent) were also lacking. Knowledge of machine operations and basic IT skills were mentioned by just 5 per cent and 1 per cent of respondents, respectively, reflecting the low level of reliance on technology by MSMEs in Halba.

Marjeyoun-Hasbaya

In Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, 78 per cent of surveyed companies declared difficulties in hiring staff. This figure was significantly above the 50 per cent MOS average and reflects a skills gap in the region. This might be related to the low population density and the relatively smaller presence of migrants in the workforce willing to accept the low wages offered by MSMEs in the area. Several other points were noted:

- **Lack of technical skills among job applicants was the major concern (39 per cent) expressed by firm owners and managers.** This was especially the case for:
  - The construction sector, where it was mentioned by 64 per cents of respondents. In fact, the relatively lower presence of Syrian workers in the area might explain the difficulties faced by construction companies seeking skilled construction workers.
  - Technicians and associate professionals (48 per cent), and craft and associated trade workers (49 per cent).

  At the level of elementary occupations, one third of respondents mentioned difficulties hiring workers with basic skills, and a quarter of them expressed difficulties in hiring elementary workers with basic literacy and numeracy skills.

- **Soft skills – attitudes and personality (17 per cent) and self-motivation (21 per cent) – were a major concern for firm owners and managers in Marjeyoun-Hasbaya.** Contrary to other regions, soft skills seem to constitute a barrier for elementary occupations, with attitude and personality mentioned by 21 per cent of respondents and self-motivation by 38 per cent. Communication, negotiation and teamwork skills seem to be less of a concern for firms in this region compared with other regions surveyed. This might be the result of the lower share of trade firms in the sample, as these firms often require these particular skills.

- **Although demand for skilled workers was generally significant, this was not the case for basic IT skills.** Only 4 per cent of respondents found difficulty hiring staff with basic IT skills. However, as in the case of Saida, there seems to be relatively significant demand for skilled workers with basic IT skills in the motor vehicle repairs sector, as electronic systems maintenance and repairs require this specific skill. Demand for machine operation skills remains relatively low.

Minieh-Donnieh

In Minieh-Donnieh only 24 per cent of surveyed companies declared difficulties in hiring workers. Such a low figure might be linked to increased competition over jobs between Syrian and Lebanese workers, especially in a context where economic activities and opportunities are limited. Nevertheless, it seems that this 24 per cent has a significant demand for skills, mostly IT skills (28 per cent), non-computerized machinery operators (29 per cent) and computerized machinery operators (17 per cent). This pattern does not contradict the overall low level of technology and management practices of micro and medium-sized firms in Minieh-Donnieh, but rather sheds the light on a minority of firms that need to overcome labour market skills gaps in order to grow. For these firms, attitude and personality, as well as teamwork were important, as they were mentioned by 29 and 34 per cent of respondents respectively. Basic literacy and numeracy skills seems also to be significantly lacking among job applicants, not only in elementary occupations (mentioned by 32 per cent of respondents) but also for skilled occupations, such as craft and related sales workers (mentioned by 21 per cent of respondents).

North Beqaa

In North Beqaa, 57 per cent of surveyed companies declared difficulties in hiring staff. This figure was above the 50 per cent MOS average and might seem in contradiction with the low level of skills used by companies. However, local companies found difficulties in hiring elementary workers:

- **The main concerns were the attitudes and personalities of job applicants** (27 per cent of respondents) and communication skills (18 per cent). Basic technical skills (23 per cent) and basic literacy and numeracy skills (18 per cent) were also a source of concern.

- **Operating computerized (14 per cent) and non-computerized machinery (18 per cent) were also concerns for employers when hiring elementary workers.** Local committee members pointed out that, since local businesses cannot afford high wages, they may instead hire skilled workers but place them in an elementary position on low wages. This suggests that a significant share of workers who were classified by business owners as working in elementary occupations may actually be skilled workers receiving low wages, with minimal influence on business operations.

SAIDA

Some 42 per cent of surveyed companies declared difficulties in hiring staff. The skills gap in Saida was mostly driven by the local need for higher levels of production technology. Other points noted include the following:

- **Lack of technical skills among job applicants was the major concern.** Some 56 per cent of respondents expressed this concern, a rate significantly higher than the overall average of the MOS of 31 per cent. The technical skills gap was especially significant for the car repairs (66 per cent) and accommodation and food services (58 per cent) sectors. In fact, 48 per cent of firms considered that applicants for elementary job categories lacked even elementary skills. Demand for workers able to operate computerized and automated machinery was mentioned by 10 per cent of respondents, compared to 5 per cent in the survey average.

- **Lack of elementary and basic numeracy skills was a concern of 12 per cent of respondents, similar to the survey average.** Although residents of Saida might be assumed to have greater access to education because of its urban setting, compared with other regions, this figure may reflect significant levels of inequality within the city, with the most vulnerable residents limited in their access to education. Note that the Saida workforce is not highly mobile compared with Chtoura or Halba. Some 90 per cent of the population is comprised of Lebanese and Palestinians, who are assumed to be long-term residents.

- **Soft skills were less of a concern for firms.** Issues regarding attitude/personality and self-motivation were mentioned by only 8 and 5 per cent of respondents, respectively. Communication and teamwork skills tend to reflect the survey averages (between 13 and 15 per cent).

- **The significant demand for skilled workers does not apply to basic IT skills.** The latter was mentioned by only 4 per cent of respondents. Nonetheless, in the car repairs sector it was mentioned by 11 per cent of respondents, presumably because the demand for maintenance of new cars with electronic systems is higher in urban locations, where middle and upper middle-class households are more prevalent than rural areas.

WADI-KHALED

A significant proportion of surveyed companies (52 per cent) declared having difficulties in hiring staff. However, there were no major concerns regarding the skills and attitudes of job applicants, but rather with businesses' capacity to invest and expand.

- **Given the low level of technology implemented by MSMEs in Wadi-Khaled, there was limited concern among business owners and managers (24 per cent) regarding the technical skills of job applicants.** Similarly, a limited number of respondents were concerned with jobseekers' communication (17 per cent) and teamwork skills (11 per cent).

- **For higher-skilled occupations (i.e. technicians and associate professionals) 38 per cent of respondents expressed concern about the lack of applicants' communication skills.** Local committee members suggested that this high level of concern might be related to conflict between workers and managers, especially when workers are more educated and skilled than managers.

- **Similarly, 20 per cent of firm owners and managers expressed concern about the attitudes and personalities of technicians and associate professionals,** compared with only 10 per cent concerned about applicants for elementary occupations. Demand for basic IT skills and machinery operators was extremely low (less than 2 per cent). Note that internet infrastructure, including mobile 4G services, are significantly weaker in Wadi-Khaled compared with other regions of Lebanon.

4.7 Firms' barriers to hiring

General observations

The primary barrier to hiring new staff was that firms generally lack capacity to provide adequate employment terms and conditions. Poor terms and conditions, including low salary or wages offered, was mentioned by 60 per cent of interviewed employers (see Figure 6). This, in turn, attracts a low number of applicants with the requisite skills (26 per cent) and low levels of interest in the job (24 per cent).

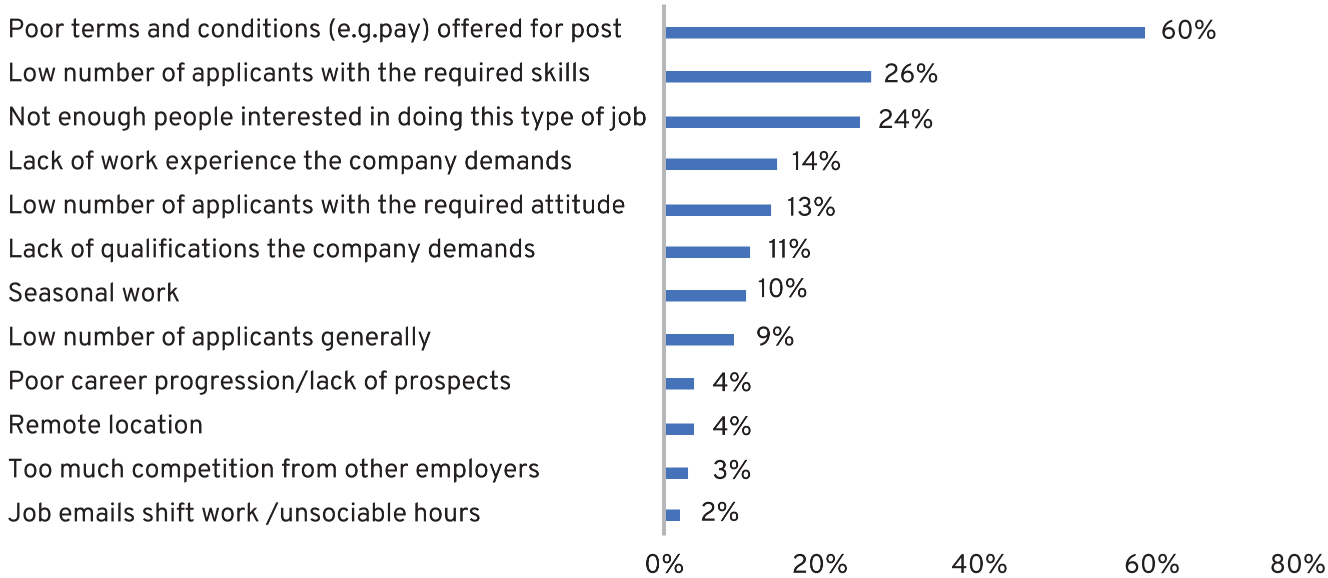
The second main barrier to hiring was the labour market skills gap. Firms experienced hiring difficulties in four categories: elementary occupations (33 per cent); craft and related trade workers (26 per cent); technical and professional (20 per cent); and, to a lesser extent, sales and services workers (12 per cent). Differences between sectors were slight: the agriculture sector reported more difficulties in hiring elementary workers compared with other sectors, while demand for technical and professional skills tended to be higher in food manufacturing, accommodation and food services and retail and wholesale trade. More than 50 per cent of respondents reported difficulties in hiring craft and related trade workers in the other manufacturing, car repairs and construction sectors.

Firms tend to be caught in a catch-22 situation, in which they need skilled labour to ensure the firm's sustainability, growth and profitability, but they cannot afford decent wages to attract skilled workers. The challenges and barriers to hiring were not primarily a skills gap issue but were related to firms' capacity to grow and expand – in other words, their capacity for investment.

The abovementioned pattern was present in all sectors of activity, except for agriculture, where it was only cited by approximatively one third of respondents. This confirms that employment terms and conditions are understood in terms relative to the level of skills required, as well as the absolute value of the wages offered (which tend to be lower for agricultural jobs). Nonetheless, the lack of suitably skilled applicants tends to be a major concern for the food manufacturing and construction sectors, cited by 34 and 41 per cent of respondents, respectively.

Data suggest that firms do not want to hire managers or clerical workers; few respondents cited difficulties in filling these roles. This confirms that firms' financial capacity was the major barrier to hiring skilled workers, such as professionals (76 per cent) and technicians and associate professionals (69 per cent). Detailed national and regional data on barriers to hiring can be found in Annex 3 (tables 40 to 56).

Figure 6. Firms' barriers in hiring



Regional analysis

All regions showed similar patterns. However, the following points were noted for specific regions:

- **Chtoura.** A third element acting as a barrier to hiring was the low supply of labour (i.e. a lack of people interested in doing a particular type of job). This factor was mentioned by 24 per cent of respondents across all regions. However, in Chtoura the figure was low (15 per cent) compared to other regions. Although the figure rises to 27 per cent for elementary occupations, it remains lower than the 34 per cent overall average for this labour market segment. Chtoura sits at an economic crossroads for both vulnerable populations and goods, and has a relatively higher population density compared with other areas (with the exception of Saida city). Small and medium-sized firms in Chtoura do not face significant difficulties in finding job applicants as "low number of applicants in general" was cited by only 12 per cent of respondents.

- **Halba.**The low supply of labour plays a role for specific occupations. Low numbers of applicants with required skills was mentioned by only 13 per cent of respondents. However, this figure reaches 31 per cent for craft and related trade workers and 40 per cent for the wholesale and retail trades sector, suggesting that, with increased competition, the sustainability of craft and retail shops relies on better management and, thus, on skilled workers.

- **Marjeyoun-Hasbaya.**The low number of applicants with the required skills was striking across all occupations and sectors. This was mentioned by 55 per cent of respondents for technicians and associate professionals and by 40 per cent of respondents for craft and related trades. Also the issues of labour supply in general (i.e. not enough people interested in applying for the job), was particularly important for services and sales workers, and was mentioned by 31 per cent of respondents.

- **Minieh-Donnieh.** Lack of work experience and lack of qualifications (respectively cited by 34 and 28 per cent of respondents) represented the key barriers to hiring, followed by competition between firms (18 per cent, compared with the MOS average of around 3 per cent). The firm's capacity to provide adequate job conditions was less of a concern than in other regions, mentioned by only 29 per cent of respondents, compared with the 60 per cent average of the MOS. This lower figure may be due to:

  (1) Competition between Syrian and Lebanese workers, which places downward pressure on wages, giving firms greater bargaining power;

  (2) The readiness of a minority of firms in Minieh-Donnieh to pay adequate wages for skilled workers.

- **Saida.** The first barrier for hiring was related to firms' capacity to offer good working conditions, particularly in the accommodation and food services sector (72 per cent of respondents) and for elementary occupations (79 per cent). Hotels and restaurants in Saida compete with Beirut, as many skilled workers commute daily to Beirut. For elementary occupations, the wage level required by workers in urban Saida to access basic needs tends to be higher than for other regions, which are mostly rural or peri-urban.

  The second barrier for hiring was related to the lack of applicants with required skills, particularly for craft and related trades (54 per cent) and the food manufacturing sector (36 per cent).

  Similarly, the third barrier relates to labour supply, mentioned by 27 per cent of total respondents, which tended to be significantly higher for accommodation and food services (34 per cent), and for craft and related trade workers (46 per cent). The low supply of skilled labour in Saida may be related to the relative ease of daily commuting to Beirut, where wages offered by firms are significantly higher.

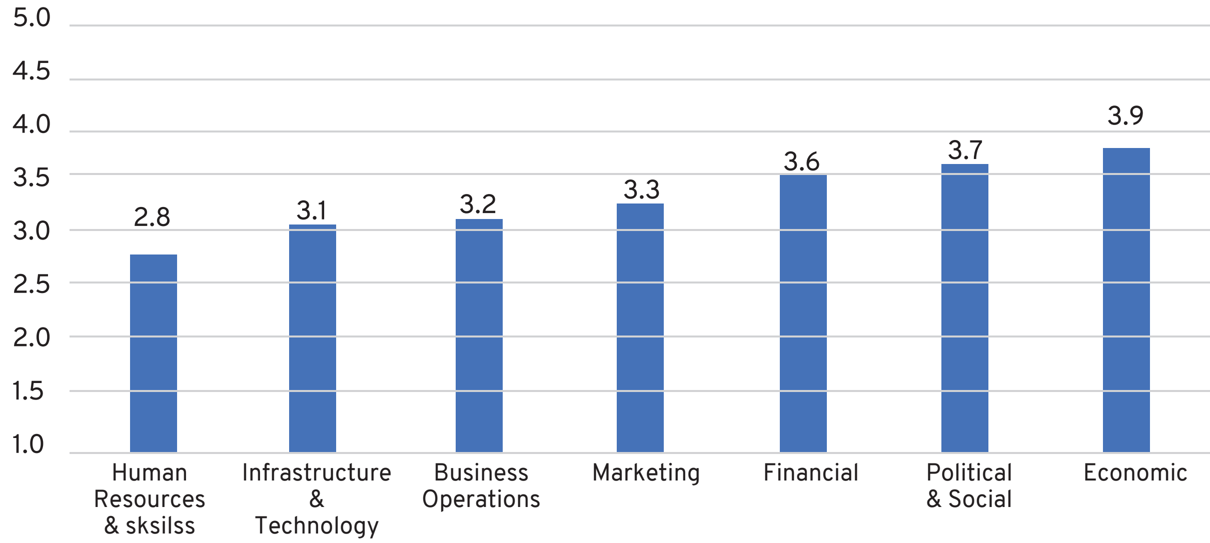
- **Wadi-Khaled.** Low supply of labour (i.e. a lack of people interested in doing a particular type of job and low number of applicants with required skills), was mentioned by just 18 per cent of respondents, which was lower than the survey average. Since the Syrian crisis, the increased number of refugees meant a significant increase in the number of people living in Wadi-Khaled, thus an increase in the labour supply. Furthermore, a significant number of Lebanese who previously worked in Syria or in cross-border trade have lost their jobs with the bordure closure. Both factors have contributed to an increase in labour supply and a relatively high level of unemployment. Nonetheless, the oversupply of labour did not overcome the skills gap issue, as respondents expressed concerns for the low number of skilled applicants (56 per cent) for craft and related trades and for the car repairs sector (46 per cent). These figures suggest a significant skills gap within the car repairs sector in Wadi-Khaled.

Overall situation

Data show that the current economic situation and political instability is the greatest impediment to growth. Economic recession, the current political and social conjuncture, insecurity about the future, increased crime, social unrest and lack of financial liquidity are all major factors that are hampering MSMEs' growth.

Figure 7 presents the range of scores given by respondents for specific barriers to growth. Human resources and skills was rated the lowest (2.8), suggesting that firm owners and managers tend to consider human capital as the least important factor. This was the case across all sectors.

Figure 7. MSME barriers to growth by importance rating (1–5)



Note: Scoring scales ranged from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important).

The presence of a skills gap was not perceived by MSMEs as a major barrier to growth, as it is assumed to be the case for larger companies. In fact, MSMEs have yet to create skilled positions through investment in improved production or management processes. However, firms' limited prospects for growth was a major factor impeding job creation and employment.

Specific regional concerns

In all regions considered in the study, business owners and managers perceive the current economic and political situation, as well as the lack of access to finance, major barriers to growth. The US dollar cash shortage, economic recession and political instability were the top three barriers to growth according to respondents. Nonetheless, some regions expressed particular concerns, which are presented in Table 15. Notably, issues with skills, location, business networking and workforce experience tended not to be regarded as the most important barriers to growth. Lack of internal employee training and the shortage of skilled labour typically scored lower than 3.

Table 15. Top five barriers to growth by region and importance rating (1–5)

Chtoura		Halba	
Cash shortage (US dollars)	4.5	Political instability in the country	4.6
Recession of the economy	4.5	Cash shortage (US dollars)	4.5
Insufficient government support	4.5	Recession of the economy	4.5
Political instability in the country	4.4	Corruption	4.3
Lack of financial support	4.2	Lack of financial support	4.1
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya		**Minieh-Donnieh**	
Cash Shortage (US dollars)	4.7	Insufficient government support	4.5
Recession of the economy	4.5	Cash shortage (US dollars)	4.5
Lack of financial support	4.3	Political instability in the country	4.5
High inflation rate	4.2	Lack of financial support	4.4
Political instability in the country	4.0	Corruption	4.4

North Beqaa		Saida	
Political instability in the country	3.9	Insufficient government support	4.8
Insufficient government support	3.7	Recession of the economy	4.7
Recession of the economy	3.7	Political instability in the country	4.6
High inflation rate	3.4	Cash shortage (US dollars)	4.6
Lack of financial support	3.4	Poor electricity supply	4.4
Wadi-Khaled			
Insufficient government support	4.8		
Recession of the economy	4.7		
Cash shortage (US dollars)	4.6		
Political instability in the country	4.6		
Lack of financial support	4.4		

In **Chtoura,** the security situation was a major concern (4.1), presumably because of increased reports of criminality, and a lack of law enforcement in the Beqaa. Such concerns were magnified by the financial crisis and the loss of purchasing power of the local population. This factor was not scored above 4 in other regions.

In Halba, businesses identified corruption as a major barrier to growth (4.3), showing the lack of trust between local businesses and the state administration, including local municipalities. Interviewed local committee members also mentioned that there was overall a perception of unfair distribution of technical and businesses support coming from development programmes.

In **Marjeyoun-Hasbaya,** perceived barriers to growth follow the same patterns as other regions, with an emphasis on access to finance (4.3). In **Saida,** businesses considered energy supply infrastructure as a major barrier. It is assumed that demand for skills is also related to an increased demand for energy as improved production methods and large-scale operations use more machinery and equipment, as well as energy.

North Beqaa, Minieh-Donnieh and **Wadi-Khaled** have historically been neglected by the State in terms of economic infrastructure and socio-economic policies. As a consequence, business owners tend to hold the Government responsible for their inability to grow. Thus, insufficient government support was rated among the most important constraints to growth in these areas, scoring 4.8. In fact, the region was, until 2011, totally marginalized by the Lebanese Government. For many local businesses and municipal council members, the Syrian crisis has been viewed as an opportunity for the region to improve infrastructure and services, while attracting international NGO development projects. Other very important barriers to growth were linked to the economic and political situation of the whole country, as was the case across the surveyed areas.

In North Beqaa, and similarly in Minieh-Donnieh, lack of financial support, lack of access to loans from banks, lack of collateral and bad credit records were among the top barriers to firms' growth, as perceived by respondents. Only two branches of Lebanese banks operate in the region, one in Hermel[16] and one in Labweh. Entrepreneurs' capacity to invest and engage in business is limited; often they rely on family support (as shown by the relatively high level of partnerships) and sometimes borrow from local, informal moneylenders. Such informal forms of credit attract very high interest rates and often use real estate assets as collateral. Often moneylenders intimidate borrowers for repayment. Scarcity in bank credit leads to a lack of investment capacity to meet long-term business plans, thus holding back broader economic activities.

Unexpectedly, respondents in Wadi-Khaled gave a very low score of 1.9 to the business location, indicating that local businesses, especially wholesale and retail trade, as well as car repair businesses, perceive the location (near the border and in a relatively populated area) as a business opportunity. Similarly, the security situation scored a low 2.7. According to local committee members, the security situation in Wadi-Khaled has improved since armed conflict across the Syrian borders, as well as in Aarsal (2013–2107) and Tripoli (2013–2015) ceased. Nonetheless, it is important to note that data collection in Wadi-Khaled followed a 3-day clash between the army and a local jihadist armed group. Thus the low score regarding the security situation might be a reflection of returning to normal following the ceasefire.

[16] Prior to 2020 there were two bank branches in Hermel. The first one opened in 2001, followed by the second one a few years later. In 2020 one of the bank branches closed and moved operations to the Labweh branch. The Labweh branch opened around the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011.

» Recommendations

5

The research shows that three interconnected factors are impeding employment: (1) lack of investment and low capacity for growth; (2) labour market skills gap; and (3) lack of interest in the jobs on offer, mostly because of poor working conditions or low pay. Within that context, interventions at the macro, meso and micro levels are required.

5.1 THE ROAD OUT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS: MACRO-LEVEL ACTIONS AND POLICIES

Economic development in the areas studied in this report, as well as other vulnerable areas of Lebanon, will not be possible without macroeconomic interventions and institutional reforms. The Lebanese Government, together with relevant institutions, should develop a plan to resolve the current economic and financial crisis, including in-depth structural reforms.

National policy should aim at improving the capacity of businesses to grow while raising the overall skill levels of the Lebanese workforce. This could be implemented through national TVET strategic frameworks and by developing the necessary legal framework to institutionalize on-the-job vocational training and apprenticeships. As recommended by the ILO TREE institutional framework, a national strategic committee is required to oversee the review and implementation of an effective TVET strategy.

5.2 LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS ARE KEY TO FIRMS' GROWTH

The design and implementation of local economic development plans (LEDPs) are essential for firms to improve their capacity for investment and growth. LEDPs should also include interventions and policies that provide equal opportunities for both men and women and encourage youth participation in the workforce, as well as youth entrepreneurships.

LEDPs should be region-specific and rely on local resources and capacities. It is primarily the responsibility of local authorities, such as municipalities and unions of municipalities, to lead the LEDP design process in a participatory manner. In the absence of leadership from public authorities, private-sector actors can initiate LEDPs by coordinating with and lobbying public authorities for official endorsement, as well as seeking their pro-active support in implementation.

In Chtoura and surroundings, an LEDP could focus on improvements in the following sectors:

(1) Wholesale and retail trade, including the creation of a dry port with access to the new Arab Road motorway linking Beirut to both Damascus, to the east, and Homs, to the North.

(2) Food production, especially dairy foods, since the area is well known for food production and can capitalize on its leading medium-sized and large food producers in the area.

(3) HORECA tourism (hotels, restaurants and catering), which has significant potential in Chtoura and surroundings. The area is already home to major wineries and rural tourist attractions and connected to major archaeological sites, the most important being the Baalbek roman ruins (40-minute drive). Chtoura already hosts the only two 4-star hotels in the Beqaa, as well as several luxury rural tourism resorts. There is scope to expand the range of tourism offerings and improve the quality of tourism services.

In Halba and surroundings, local economic development should focus on the role that the town plays as the centre of administration for the newly established Akkar governorate. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on the provision of services, including health services, formal and vocational education, but also leisure and HORECA tourism. Furthermore, Halba and surroundings should consider establishing a local, environmentally sustainable industrial zone for SMEs. This zone, if developed, could cater to the manufacturing needs of Akkar and Tripoli, and potentially aim to export agro-food products. In fact, although Akkar is a region that relies on agriculture, it still lacks basic post-harvest and processing infrastructure. The wider Halba area is well-positioned to be a processing platform for agricultural products from the coastal areas, Wadi-Khaled and upper Akkar. The area should capitalize on its potential for sustainable agriculture and improve its greenhouse sector, as the region has the capacity to become the major supplier of vegetables to Lebanese markets.

In Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, a local economic plan may focus on three key sectors:

(1) Rural tourism, as the area is one of few that have preserved a certain level of rurality. In addition to the experience, several attractions can play a key role in attracting Lebanese, as well as expatriate and foreign tourists, including the Hasbaya fortress and old town, Druze pilgrimage sites, a traditional weekly livestock market, and the Lebanon Mountain Trail. Interventions are needed to improve local bed and breakfast business plans and ensure quality of supply.

(2) The restaurant sector, especially through improving quality of services provided by the Wazani river restaurant clusters. Technical support could help restaurants form a common association and develop a local quality assurance label.

(3) Agriculture, as the region has the capacity to provide a wider range of agricultural products, including intensive production in the Khiyam area.

In Minieh-Donnieh, local economic development may focus on developing tourism and agriculture in upper Donnieh. Recently, a natural reserve was established and several villages are now investing in hospitality and tourism products. As for North Beqaa and Marjeyoun-Hasbaya, the development of the tourism and hospitality sector requires support to improve business-to-business cooperation to develop common quality standards, as well as a common marketing and promotion strategy. For Minieh, the development of a sustainable industrial zone, as well trade services, might be a significant opportunity since the city, like Halba, falls under the economic catchment area of the Tripoli Special Economic Zone. Finally, agriculture, which supports a large part of the population, should be a pillar of any LEDP for the area.

In North Beqaa, the local economic development plan must focus on improving the overall level of skills within the workforce. These efforts may include on-the-job training for business staff, business training for owners and managers, improved vocational training and education, including increased efforts to avoid students dropping out. The plan should emphasize better management of the Orontes river watershed, including regulation and support for economic activities around the river. In terms of economic sectors, the LEDP may focus on:

(1) Tourism, including sporting activities and hospitality on the Orontes river, including fisheries. Specific attention should focus on supporting local businesses to establish, in coordination with local authorities, common quality standards for hospitality and leisure services, and establish a charter for environmental protection and the conservation of the Orontes watershed.

(2) Agriculture, including post-harvest infrastructure (storage and sorting centres). For tourism and hospitality services, cooperation between business and institutional actors is key to ensuring competitiveness in North Beqaa. Farmers should be encouraged to create their own associations, learning groups and cooperatives, helping them to improve yield and quality of production, as well as bargaining power with buyers and input suppliers.

In Saida, the municipality has developed an urban sustainability strategy and is currently, with limited resources, implementing it. The strategy identified the following key development sectors:

(1) Health and education services, including the provision of services for vulnerable populations, especially youth dropouts from school. In fact, Saida possesses the basic infrastructure that would allow the city to become competitive in terms of:

   (a) Technical education, including university-level technical education through the Lebanese University – Institute of Technology; and

   (b) Health services, through the city health services network, including Hammoud hospital.

(2) HORECA tourism and cultural heritage. These sectors offer opportunities for growth, as well as a way to generate growth but also fight marginalization and youth crime and improve the living conditions of the vulnerable population residing within the old city. Cultural heritage in Saida is abundant, and includes two major archaeological sites and a culturally rich and diverse, and partially renovated, old city.

(3) Fishing and seaside leisure and attractions could be significantly improved in terms of the supply of leisure activities, and sustainable increase and valorization of the total fish catch. These sectors, which are ultimately linked to HORECA tourism, may provide jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for both youth and women.

The Wadi-Khaled area has been neglected by the State since the creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920. Interest in the region started with the Syrian crisis and the influx of Syrian refugees. As such, the region lacks basic economic and services infrastructure, and an LEDP for the area should first focus on improving roads, education and health, and access to electricity, water and sanitation. Improved infrastructure and the creation of an official border crossing may, in the medium term, improve cross-border trade.[17] In addition to trade, local economic development should focus on improving agricultural production capacity and managing natural resources and forests. Any expansion of agricultural production should be linked to increased support for local cooperatives and farmers' associations. These organizations would help local farmers improve profit margins by reducing production costs, and ensure an efficiency of scale of inputs and sales. In this respect, a post-harvest structure that allows for the short- and medium-term storage of agricultural products would be an important factor for the sector's growth and may support job creation.

5.3 ECONOMIC SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

With respect to sectoral interventions, the following sectors could provide economic opportunities across most (if not all) regions in the study:

(1) **Repairs and maintenance.** The financial and economic crisis has witnessed a significant increase in demand for repairs and maintenance services. This demand involves a wide range of products, from cars and motorcycles to textiles, home appliances, computers, tablets and phones, air conditioning and complex home repairs. Efforts to support the repair and maintenance sector may also include training on the manufacturing of spare parts, including electronic spare parts, as well as waste recycling and upcycling within the technological capacity of Lebanon. The entry costs to this sector are low and it offers significant opportunities for employment and self-employment.

(2) **The HORECA** sector offers significant opportunities for employment. The research shows that the sector has significant skills gaps and skilled and semi-skilled workers are in demand. However, support for skills development at the local level would not yield the expected impact unless it was linked to an LEDP. Otherwise, trained youth may not be able to find a job locally and would have no option other than to move to Beirut or migrate abroad. Note that local economic experts are predicting a post COVID-19 boom of the sector.

(3) **Manufacturing,** including food manufacturing. Economist Paul Romer once said, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste". The economic crisis has brought significant opportunities for the manufacturing factor. Food manufacturing, including dairy production, presents opportunities for both employment and entrepreneurship. Depending on the context, further opportunities may arise in the furniture, metals, plastics and chemicals sectors. Overall, manufacturing requires more technicians and professionals, as well as machine operators.

(4) **Agriculture.** In the regions studied agriculture is a major contributor to local economies. Supporting farmers to improve their technical production would help them improve their incomes and standard of living. Furthermore, skills are needed to modernize agricultural production processes and improve living conditions. Furthermore, modern agriculture, using good agricultural practices, constitutes a significant opportunity for self-employment and entrepreneurship for youth willing to engage in the sector. Nonetheless, for agriculture to have a local economic development impact, farmers should be able to keep a significant share of the value added locally. Thus it is necessary to improve farmers' social capital and their capacity to cooperate and form associations and cooperatives.

(5) **Wholesale and retail trade.** Trade businesses were the most common type of business in the regions examined. In fact, the sector has been booming since the start of Syrian crisis and the agreed facilitated movement of people and goods with Turkey. However, with the recent reduction of purchasing power the sector could now be facing a crisis. Nonetheless, it still constitutes a significant opportunity for women's entrepreneurship and will be sustainable if women are taught the necessary business management skills.

The study has emphasized that the challenges and barriers to hiring are not primarily a skills gap issue but are related to firms' capacity for growth, and thus, ultimately, their capacity for investment. Therefore, it is essential to support business entrepreneurs to improve their business strategies, while ensuring access to formal channels of finance, as a precondition for job creation.

[17] But may also exacerbate smuggling.

5.4 Recommended training opportunities and occupations in demand

Across most of the regions and sectors in the study, there was a significant lack of skills within the Lebanese and Syrian workforces. Significant efforts should be made to improve technical skills, but also soft skills such as personal attitudes and motivation. In most sectors, but more especially in the trade and services sectors, improvement of communication and teamwork skills is also a priority. In some cases, there may be a need to improve overall numeracy and literacy skills, especially among vulnerable youth and women. Table 16 summarizes the skills gaps identified in the study by occupational grouping, while Table 17 identifies occupational shortages by sector.

Table 16. Skills gaps by occupation

Occupation	Skills
Technicians and associate professionals	Sector-relevant technical skills Soft skills (personality, attitude and self-motivation)
Services and sales workers	Sector-related technical skills Communication and teamwork Leadership Basic numeracy and literacy Basic IT skills
Craft and related trade workers	Sector-relevant technical skills Soft skills
Elementary occupations	Basic technical skills Soft skills Numeracy and literacy skills

Table 17. Occupational gaps by sector

Sector	Occupation	Position
Cross-cutting with all sectors	Technicians and associate professionals	Assistant accountant Procurement officer Office administrator Assistant administrator
	Services and sales workers	Salesperson Sales assistant Shop attendant
	Elementary occupations	Sales assistant
HORECA and tourism	Services and sales workers	Tourist guide Cook/assistant cook Attendant, restaurant seating Waiter/waitress Operator, bed and breakfast Operator, guest house
	Craft and related trade workers	Pastry cook
	Elementary occupations	Cleaner Chef, fast food Kitchen assistant
Manufacturing of food product	Technicians and professionals	Engineering technician – sector-specific Machinery mechanic

	Services and sales workers	Salesperson, market Baker Pastry cook
	Plant and machine operators	Machine operator – sector-specific
Car repairs	Technicians and professionals	Engineering technician – sector-specific
	Craft and related trade workers	Mechanic, car/motorcycle Technicians – automotive brakes, systems and other motor vehicle services
Maintenance and repairs (all)	Technicians and professionals	Engineering technician – sector-specific
	Craft and related trade workers	Repairer (home appliances) Tiler Plumber Electrician

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» Annex

Community Profiles

Chtoura

The region under study is the Chtoura–Saadnayel–Taanyel triangle and the towns that fall within this region and around it (Jdita, Zebdol, Hawsh el Omara, Mekseh). The region falls within the caza of Zahle in the Beqaa governorate. In this report we refer to the triangle and region as Chtoura.

Demographics

According to the most recent Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018–2019 (LFHLCS) CAS and ILO 2020), the population of the Zahle caza is around 177,000 residents, of which 79 per cent are Lebanese and 21 per cent are non-Lebanese. Data from the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) population package in 2020 indicated that Zahle was host a total of 243,000 Syrian refugees (Trovato et al 2020). Many of these refugees reside in informal tented settlements (ITSs), which were not covered by the LFHLCS. Thus these figures significantly underestimate the number of non-Lebanese living in the region.

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

Although there are no statistical figures on poverty in Choutra, the poverty level in the overall Beqaa and Zahle regions may be considered indicative of the situation in Chtoura. The Beqaa governorate is known to be one of the poorest regions in Lebanon, with some disparities between different districts. Data from OCHA (2016) indicate that around 21 per cent of Lebanese residents in the Zahle district were living in poverty or a state of deprivation. These figures are higher among Syrians, where, according to VaSyR (2020) report, more than 90 per cent of Syrian refugees in Zahleh Cazaare were living below the Survival and Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) indicating that these households are extremely economically vulnerable. These figures are expected to have increased significantly since the onset of the economic and financial crisis.

Education and health

Chtoura is under-serviced when it comes to educational and health institutions and infrastructure. The region is serviced by two public high schools, one public intermediate school and two private elementary and intermediate schools.[18] The area is also serviced by only two private hospitals with a total of 78 beds (including maternity beds).

Interviewees from the local community said that everyone in Chtoura goes to school in Taanyel or Saadnayel, and everyone in Taanyel goes to the hospital in Chtoura. The administrative division of the region into many municipalities is not reflected in the perceptions and practices of residents, who move between the various towns daily seeking goods and services.

Unemployment

No official statistics on unemployment exist at the municipal level in Lebanon that would allow us to look at unemployment in the target region. Therefore, data at the caza level were used to estimate the situation in Chtoura and its surrounding areas. The LFHLCS (CAS and ILO 2020) reported that unemployment in the Zahle caza was around 14 per cent (see Table 18 below), higher than the national average of around 11 per cent or any other region in the Beqaa.

Table 18. Unemployment by caza in the Beqaa

Caza	Unemployment rate among Lebanese
Zahle	14.4%
Baalbek	11.1%
Hermel	10.2%
West Beqaa	12.3%
Lebanon Average	11.4%

Source: CAS and ILO, 2020.

Unemployment among Syrian refugees is much higher; in 2019 it reached 61 per cent in the Bekaa (VaSyR 2020), representing the highest rate of unemployment among Syrians in the country.

[18]CRDP database.

Local economy

The Chtoura region lies along a major trade route, strategically located at the crossroads between the Beirut–Damascus highway and the main road connecting North and South Beqaa. Therefore, municipalities along this road rely heavily on commerce, with many retail and wholesale shops located along the international road. Similar to the rest of the Beqaa, agriculture is the main economic activity among the villages and towns of this region. Main crops include onions, potatoes and other vegetables.

Dairy production is common in this region, and dairy products, particularly from the villages of Jdita, Chtaura, Tanaël and Mrayjat, have acquired a national reputation for being traditional fresh products. In fact, dairy production has a history in this area where the oldest dairy in the Bekaa, Convent de Tanaël, was established in Tanaël before the First World War, followed by Laiteries Jarjoura in Chtaura in 1922 and Hedouan in Mrayjat in 1928.[19] Today, 24 per cent of the formally registered dairy producers in Zahle (12 out of 50) are located in this triangle.

Table 19. Medium-sized and large dairy Producers in Chtoura and surrounding areas

Town	Number of Dairy Producers
Bawarej	4
Jditta	5
Taalabaya	1
Taanayel	1
Makseh	1
Total	12

More generally, the food production sector, including both dairy and other food preparations, offers various opportunities for women in Chtoura, as well as in the Beqaa in general. Findings from Mercy Corps (2020) identified the existence of various local agro-food processing initiatives in the Beqaa, supported by NGOs and led by women that can cater for the predicted increase in demand for local production in the current economic crisis. Indeed, a significant number of businesses supported by development programmes are run by women and focus on mouneh, home catering, dairy products, as well as other traditional and innovative foods.

Accommodation and food services have also significant potential for growth in the area, especially if efforts are made to improve local rural tourism infrastructure and services. Three important rural tourism centres are located in the area, the Arcenciel eco-lodge, the Dayr Taaynayel farms and artificial lake, as well as the newly established Al-Haoush Eco-lodge, the Clot Saint Thomas and the Masaya wine estate. More importantly, rural tourism development relies on improved regional networking and linkages with nearby tourism attractions, such as the Amiq wetlands, other attractions of the Beqaa wine road (Ksara, Kefraya and others), in addition to the key archaeological sites of Baalbek and Anjar.

Expansion of the tourism sector could bring about many job opportunities because of the high multiplier effect. In other words, the more rural tourism grows, the more related hospitality activities, food services, local food production, artisanal and craftsmanship production and other vocations will develop and create new job opportunities, especially for women and youth. However, this would require parallel training and formation for people working in the sector (LEADERS 2017).

In addition, repair activities, whether home electronic appliances, cars or motorcycles, represent a significant opportunity for skills improvement and job creation, especially for vulnerable youth through the implementation of apprenticeships and on-the-job training in coordination with the private sector. This was so for all surveyed regions, although more populated regions with a greater economic catchment area may have more capacity for job absorption in these sectors.

HALBA

Demographics

The region under study includes Halba (considered the capital of Akkar governorate) and its direct surroundings (i.e. municipalities bordering Halba)[20]. No data are available on the demographics of the surrounding municipalities but, according to estimates by the municipality in 2017, Halba's population consists of around 27,000 Lebanese residents and 17,000 Syrian refugees – around 10 per cent of Akkar's total population. Syrians mostly reside in informal settlements, but some rent apartments inside the city.

[19] Interviewed stakeholders .
[20] Including Cheikh Mohammad, Nfayseh, Aadbel, Cheikh Taba, Jdaidet El Joumeh, Kroum El Arab, Ilat, Qantara, Minyara.

However, the Halba economic catchment goes beyond its direct surroundings. As the administrative centre of Akkar, the town attracts a significant number of people from the region on a daily basis.

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

Halba is one of the poorest regions in Lebanon. In 2008 poverty in Akkar was found to be 63 per cent (CAS and UNDP 2008), and the situation has not improved significantly since then. The economic crisis has undoubtedly deepened poverty in Halba, as it has across the entire country.

Education and health

Akkar is known to have the highest levels of illiteracy in Lebanon, reaching 30 per cent. Figures on educational attainment in Halba are not available. There are 11 schools in Halba, including five private schools, three public schools (one preschool), and three free private pre-schools that are usually affiliated with religious organizations. The closest higher education institutions are in Tripoli. There are several TVET schools that offer a range of technical programmes.

The state of health services in Halba is quite like the rest of Akkar – largely characterized by neglect and a shortage of services, staff and equipment. Halba is differentiated, however, by the presence of the Arcenciel Rehabilitation Centre, which offers physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and neurological and orthopaedic services to PWDs. Halba has two hospitals with a total of 130 beds.

Unemployment

Unemployment in Akkar reached 9 per cent in 2018 according to the LFHLCS (CAS and ILO 2020). There are no statistics on unemployment in Halba, but it is estimated to be higher than average because of its urban nature and the larger concentration of labour supply in search for jobs. In fact, some of Halba's residents still work in the surrounding agricultural fields to earn a living, as the city does not offer many job opportunities.

The Syrian crisis brought about significant international aid to the Akkar region, and many NGOs and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) set up their offices in Halba, creating job opportunities for local residents and refugees. This situation is considered somewhat controversial in that there is a reluctance to remain dependent on aid and a general perception that Halba is only receiving assistance because of the Syrian refugee presence. In Akkar, only a third of refugee households had at least one working member in 2020 (VaSyR 2020)

Local economy

Being a semi-urban area surrounded by rural villages, Halba is a small city that forms a commercial and administrative hub for the surrounding regions. Its strategic location between Homs and Tripoli rendered it a main market for the area. However, in recent years local markets have largely disappeared.

Rapid and unorganized urbanization has reduced Halba's agricultural areas, where cotton used to be cultivated. In addition, infrastructure and services have not kept pace with urbanization and are generally insufficient. Rather than offering new economic opportunities, rapid urbanization has led to competition over resources and jobs across similar social strata (Carpi 2019).

Yet, agriculture remains a key sector in Halba and its surroundings, especially with the recent boom in greenhouse production, which yields greater profits. This boom was possible because of increased demand for food and higher availability of labour after the influx of Syrian refugees. Prior to the financial crisis, relatively low investment costs combined with readily available formal and informal credit, including credit provided by input suppliers and traders, to make greenhouse production attractive. However, following the crisis and devaluation of the Lebanese pound, the greenhouses sector is facing significant sustainability challenges.

In addition to agriculture and trade, many residents of Halba, similar to the rest of Akkar, work in the public sector, especially the army and security forces. Women who work in the public sector are predominantly in education.

MARJEYOUN-HASBAYA

Demographics

The Nabatiyeh governorate, of which the Marjeyoun-Hasbaya region is a part, has a population of about 180,200 (CAS and ILO 2020). Other estimates by OCHA (2016) include Palestinian and Syrian refugees in camps and informal settlements, and total around 383,839, with 37,784 for Hasbaya caza, and 85,960 for Marjeyoun caza.

The Marjeyoun-Hasbaya region hosted around 14,000 refugees according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data. [21]

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

In 2011, the CAS and World Bank poverty study showed that the poverty rate in Nabatiyeh governorate was 25 per cent, slightly lower than the national average of 27 per cent. In the two cazas subject of this report, only 10 villages have 7 per cent or more of their population living under US$4 per day. The four largest towns of each of the sub-region are also the only four towns to be defined as most vulnerable, namely Hasbaya (with 17 per cent of all Lebanese living under US$4 per day), Khiyam, (14 per cent), Chebaa (12 per cent), and Marjaayoun (9 per cent) (UNDP,2016) These towns comprise the greatest proportion of people in poverty as well as the highest number of refugees. As for Syrians, according to VaSyR 2020 data, 87 per cent of Syrian refugee households in Nabatiyeh governorate were living in extremely vulnerable conditions, compared with 43 per cent in 2019. This situation has certainly worsened with the economic crisis and vulnerability has increased for both Syrians and Lebanese.

Education and health

Some 71 per cent of children and youth in Nabatiyeh governorate between the age of 3 and 24 are enrolled in an educational institution, while 28 per cent are not. In terms of infrastructure, there are 14 schools in Marjeyoun and nine in Hasbaya. The total number of students in Marjeyoun is 2,744 with 46 per cent Syrian students, and there are 1,679 students in Hasbaya schools with 43 per cent Syrians. Some of these schools have more Syrian students than Lebanese, such as the Shebaa public school. Overall, schools are in poor condition in terms of buildings, heating, toilets, classrooms and equipment (Shield, 2014) .

Health services are also lacking and of low quality. There are two public hospitals in Marjeyoun, and one in Hasbaya. The private hospitals are in Nabatiyeh. In addition, there are three public health centres in Hasbaya and six in Marjeyoun.

Unemployment

According to the LFHLCS (CAS and ILO 2020), unemployment in Nabatiyeh governorate (8.5 per cent) was lower than in other places. VaSyR 2020 also mentioned that Nabatiyeh has one of the highest labour force participation rates of 75 per cent, as Syrian refugee households had at least one working member. Most refugees worked in construction and agriculture.

Conversely, according to local community members, the rate of unemployment in Marjeyoun-Hasbaya region is remarkably high, with estimates as high as 30 per cent for youth. This perception of high unemployment is most likely due to the impact of the economic crisis on the region. Note that young graduates in this region often expect to work in public administration, including the army. However, as the government is not currently employing new civil servants, graduate unemployment may be perceived by local community members to be unusually high.

Women's economic participation differs between regions across the same governorate, and women generally work in schools, public administrations, small shops and in food production.

Local economy

Economic activity in the two cazas varies by sub-region, although the main sources of income are agriculture and livestock, and employment in the public sector. Remittances from migration is the main source of income for the Arqoub residents (mainly from migrants in the Gulf countries, particularly Kuwait) and Marjeyoun residents (mainly from migrants in Latin America and West Africa). Agriculture is the main economic activity in most of the Druze villages of Hasbaya and in some of the southern Marjeyoun villages. Another major source of income for border villages is revenue from smuggling, predominantly exports of goods into Syria across the mountainous borders of Chebaa. In the larger towns of Marjeyoun and Hasbaya, there is also a limited number of government and private-sector employees. Syrian refugees work mostly in agriculture and construction.

Tourism has also been identified by local community members as a promising sector for job opportunities for youth. However, this sector has been negatively impacted by instability, the economic crisis and the pandemic.

[19]UNCHR data can be accessed at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71.

MINIEH-DONNIEH

Demographics

The caza of Minieh-Donnieh has a population of around 140,800 residents, forming 3 per cent of the national population. 87 per cent of residents are Lebanese (122,073) and 13 per cent are non-Lebanese (18,726). Other estimates by OCHA 2016 report 57,852 Syrian refugees, much more than the CAS estimate, because CAS figures do not include refugees in informal settlements. In fact, according to these refugee figures, Minieh-Donnieh hosts the highest number of Syrian refugees in North Lebanon. In addition, the area hosts around 44,502 Palestinian refugees. Only Minieh-Donnieh and Tripoli host Palestinians among the North T5 regions.

Caza	CAS 2018	OCHA 2016
Lebanese	122 073	118 540
Non-Lebanese	18 726	
Syrian		57 852
Palestinian		44 502
Total	140 800	220 849

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

Deprivation among Lebanese is estimated at around 58 per cent in the region (OCHA 2016). Similarly, extremely vulnerable Syrian households reached 47 per cent in the North in 2019 (VaSyR 2019). This number is expected to have increased significantly in 2020 as VaSyR (2020) reports that 91 per cent of Syrian households in Lebanon were living below the SMEB of 130,500 pounds in 2020. Therefore, overall poverty in Minieh-Donnieh is expected to have increased given its large share of vulnerable communities.

Education and health

Overall, educational attainment in the region is low. CAS statistics in 2018 show that 25 per cent of children and youth between the ages of 3 and 24 years in Minieh-Donnieh are not enrolled in any academic institution. According to Ministry of Education and Higher Education statistics in 2010, Minieh-Donnieh has 72 schools (58 public and 14 private), distributed among 44 villages. Many of these schools (61 per cent) are concentrated in the larger towns and more populated areas. There are three vocational schools in the caza.

There are 12 health dispensaries spread across nine villages. These centres provide general healthcare (available in nine villages), paediatrics (seven villages), dental care (six villages) and gynaecology (four villages). Private clinics with doctors of all types of specialties are also available but are concentrated in three of the most important villages of the caza. There is one public hospital in Aassoun town with only 20 beds and 10 full-time doctors. There are two more private hospitals in Minieh-Donnieh.

Unemployment

According to CAS statistics from 2018, the highest rate of unemployment in Lebanon is in Minieh-Donnieh (18.0 per cent, compared with the national average of 11.4 per cent). The situation has worsened with the economic crisis, and unemployment is currently even higher.

Local economy

The Minieh-Donnieh area is highly dependent on agriculture for primary or secondary income. Agricultural crops include fruit trees, olives, tobacco and grains, as well as summer vegetables in some areas. Other activities include beekeeping (with 750 beekeepers), as well as livestock and poultry.

Trade and commerce are more prominent along the main roads and in the larger towns. The smaller villages are largely comprised of seasonal residents, so trade and commerce are almost absent in those villages (refer to section 3).

Prior to the economic crisis and the pandemic, the area attracted tourists for its scenery and biodiversity, especially those looking for rural eco-tourism experiences. It is expected that the summer season of 2022 will bring about some renewed tourist activity and the region will regain some momentum.

NORTH BEQAA

Demographics

The area under study does not cover the entire governorate of Baalbek-Hermel, but rather the towns in the upper part of the Baalbek caza leading up to Hermel city in the Hermel caza. Apart from Hermel, the other towns covered by the study fall administratively within the caza of Baalbek.

The caza of Hermel is the least densely populated area in Lebanon with no more than 66 inhabitants per square kilometre. The 2018 CAS population figures show that Hermel caza has 30,500 residents, while the neighbouring Baalbek caza has 214,600 residents. Data from OCHA (2016) estimates the total Baalbek-Hermel population at around 448,700 residents, including Syrian refugees in ITSs, which CAS does not count in their population estimate.

The region studied forms around one third of the geographical area of the governorate. We can assume that it also includes around one third of the population, which ranges between 116,000 and 150,000 residents, including both Lebanese and Syrians.

Table 21. Population estimates for Baalbek-Hermel

	2018 CAS	2019 OCHA	Local Community
Lebanese residents	222 000	263 740	250 000
Non-Lebanese	24 000		
Syrian refugees		185 000	100 000
Total	**246 000**	**448 740**	**350 000**

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

According to 2019 data from OCHA, 24 per cent of Lebanese residents in the Baalbek-Hermel area were poor. Poverty among Syrian refugees was much higher: 78 per cent of refugees experienced extreme economic vulnerability (VaSyR 2019). This figure increased to 96 per cent in 2020 – the highest in Lebanon. Poverty in North Beqaa has also been very high. The CAS and UNDP (2008) poverty report estimated that in Baalbek-Hermel region 33 per cent of the population were living below the national poverty line, while 13 per cent were in extreme poverty. These numbers are most probably much higher in the current economic crisis, which has rendered these populations even more vulnerable.

Education and health

Education faces the same challenges as the public education system generally across the county – low quality with increased pressure on the education system since the onset of the Syrian crisis. There are two public schools and one private school in Hermel. The average years of education in Baalbek caza and Hermel caza were 10.9 and 10.3, respectively (CAS and ILO 2020).

There are around 15 schools in the remaining area (elementary, intermediate and high schools). This represents about 16 per cent of all schools in the Baalbek-Hermel governorate. There are no higher education institutions in the region. The closest universities are in Baalbek city.

In 2019, enrolment of Syrian refugee children between the ages of 6 and 14 years was 57 per cent, the lowest rate of enrolment in Lebanon after the Beqaa (54 per cent) (VaSyR 2020).

As for health, a total of 19 primary healthcare centres (PHCs) in the entire Baalbek-Hermel area. The surveyed area has about seven of them, while hospitals are located in the cities of Hermel (three hospitals) and Baalbek (three hospitals). The PHCs are not well equipped and have been strained from additional demand from Syrian refugees.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates in both Baalbek and Hermel caza were lower than the national average in 2018 (CAS data) at 11 per cent in Baalbek and 10 per cent in Hermel. This was probably due to the large share of people working in agriculture, who are, in fact, underemployed. In addition, the very low labour force participation rate of women could be a factor that drives down the unemployment rate. As for Syrians, the lowest percentage of Syrian households with be a factor that drives down the unemployment rate. As for Syrians, the lowest percentage of Syrian households with working members is in Baalbek-El Hermel, with only 30 per cent. Unemployment among Syrian refugees reached 49 per cent in 2019 (VaSyR 2019).

The unemployment situation for both Lebanese and Syrians has undoubtedly worsened since the economic crisis. Although there are no recent official unemployment figures, rates can be assumed to have significantly increased.

Local economy

Residents of the Baalbek-Hermel area rely on agriculture and trade, including smuggling, as main sources of income. Many families also have members working in the public sector (teachers and public servants), as well as in the army. However, often such families also engage in agriculture as a secondary source of income, either in cash or in kind. Illicit drug production and trade also represents a significant source of income for the area.

In addition to agriculture, rural tourism and hospitality services on the Orontes, or al-Asi, river and in the mountains (Jerd) appear promising. Since 2006 leisure and sport activities on the river have been attracting visitors from all over Lebanon, albeit restricted by the security situation and COVID-19 controls. Nonetheless, significant improvements could be made to both leisure and food services in the Orontes watershed.

The fishery sector along the Orontes constitutes a major industry for the area. In addition to affordable fish products for the local population and restaurants, it produces significant quantities for the Beirut market and for export to Syria and Iraq.

SAIDA

Demographics

Table 22 describes the residential population of Saida and surrounding areas. The 250,901 Lebanese residents represent around 66,000 families (national average household size is 3.8). The LFHLCS 2018–2019 shows that there were 209,000 Lebanese citizens and a total of 88,000 non-Lebanese (excluding Palestinians) residing in camps. Overall, the data show that the ratio of Lebanese to non-Lebanese has increased because the exclusion of Palestinians from the large Ain el Helweh and Mieh Mieh camps underestimates the size of the non-Lebanese resident population of the Saida region.

Table 22. Distribution of Saida residents per nationality by year

	Individuals (2014)	Share		Local Community	Share (2018)
Lebanese population	250 901	66%	Lebanese	209 000	70%
Registered Syrian refugees	42 639	11%	Non-Lebanese	88 000	30%
Palestinian refugees	73 000	19%			
Palestinian refugees from Syria	16 000	4%			
Other non-Lebanese	-	-			
TOTAL	**382 540**	**100%**		**297 000**	**100%**

Sources: OCHA, March 2014; CAS, 2018

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

The latest available data on poverty from 2011 shows that the South ranked third after the Beqaa and North in terms of individuals in poverty (CAS and World Bank 2015). However, current poverty rates are expected to have increased significantly, not only in the South, but all over the country. In fact, a recent communication by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)[22] suggests that national levels of poverty jumped from 28 per cent in 2019 to 55 per cent in 2020, and extreme poverty increased from 8 per cent to 23 per cent in 2020.

With a high concentration of Palestinians and pockets of extreme urban poverty among people living in the old city, Saida is expected to be deeply affected by the economic crisis. A drastic increase in the levels of poverty and vulnerability among its residents is predicted.

[22] Available at https://www.unescwa.org/news/lebanon-population-trapped-poverty.

Education and health

Saida is not short of educational facilities. However, their distribution is concentrated in the city and immediate surroundings, limiting enrolment for students from distant districts. According to CAS and ILO (2020), the average years of education in Saida is 11.7, which is close to the national average. There are some discrepancies based on nationality, where the average years of education for Lebanese is 12.1, compared with 10.3 for non-Lebanese.

A number of higher education institutions are located in Saida, but they are not interconnected academically and cater mainly to undergraduate level or vocational training. The city lacks research and development functions and the connections between academic courses and local community needs are very weak.

As for the health sector, the larger Saida area is served by one public and nine private hospitals. The total capacity of these hospitals is about 645 beds, equivalent to 1.68 beds per 1,000 residents – lower than the study average of 2.90.

Unemployment

In 2018 unemployment in Saida caza stood at 14 per cent, slightly higher than the national rate of 11.3 per cent (CAS and ILO 2020). Up-to-date official data does not exit at the level of the city or the caza, but interviewed experts estimate that under the current economic crisis, unemployment may have doubled.

Youth unemployment, according to local stakeholders, may be as high as 30 per cent. The main barriers that prevent youth from finding and retaining a job are the lack of job opportunities, clientelism and political connections distorting the labour market, and a general disregard towards TVET degrees among employers.

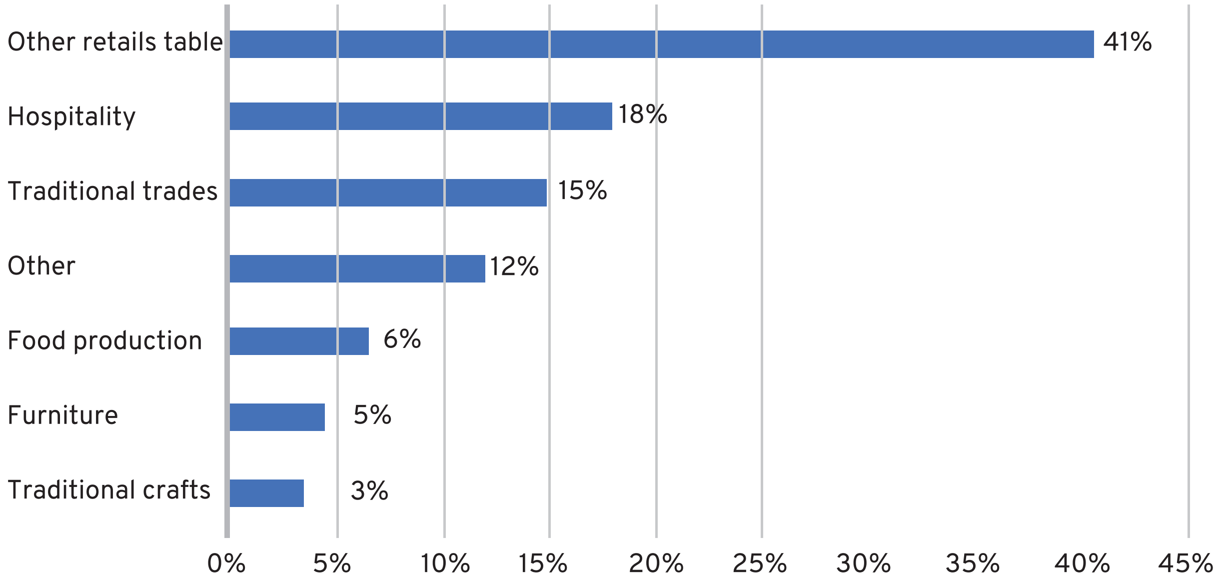
Women's economic participation, according to the community profiles, reaches 35 to 40 per cent in Saida. Women are hindered in their labour market participation by the cultural norms of patriarchal society. According to the local community members, women are mostly employed in the banking sector and local administration. In addition, they run small entrepreneurial initiatives in food preparation, artisanal crafts and sewing. A study on women's employment in Saida conducted by Danish Refugee Council (2012) shows that employed Lebanese women tend to be aged between 25 and 44 years; Palestinian women living in Saida are predominantly unemployed. The same study showed that 81 per cent of employed women in Saida work in the private sector and 14 per cent in the public sector. One of the largest employers of women in Saida is the health sector, and the highest number of managerial positions for women are in the NGO sector. The DRC study recommended training women on transferable skills that improve their overall employability and competitiveness in the labour market, as well as in industrial sewing, caregiving and medical support, computerized accounting, insurance and entrepreneurial skills.

Local economy

More than one third of economic activity in Saida is wholesale and retail trade. Members of the local community also identified tourism, sweets production, restoration, craftsmanship and fishing as sectors traditional to the city and its vicinity. Thus, most economic activity in Saida is within the tertiary services sector, which has limited capacity to add value to the local economy. Agriculture, once a mainstay of economic life for the city and its surroundings, has been shrinking, giving way to real estate development and speculation. Local industries that previously depended on agriculture are in decline. Over the past years, retail-oriented investments have emerged in the form of shopping malls, exacerbating the rentier mentality of local landowners, and concentrating investments into schemes promising short-term economic gains (Medcities and Municipality of Saida 2013).

The Cultural Heritage and Urban Development Project (CHUD) impact assessment in 2009 highlighted the economic activities within Saida's souks and their surroundings. Figure 8 indicates the predominance of trade, depending on whether it was "traditional" (related to the cultural heritage and tourism sector), or "other", meaning ordinary kinds of retail business. Hospitality includes small traditional restaurants in the old city, as well as modern restaurants, mostly located along the sea boulevard. Since many of these restaurants benefit from their proximity to Saida›s fishing port, citadel and old city, their turnover and other characteristics reflect the state of tourism in Saida.

Figure 8. Distribution of SMEs in the old city of Saida and vicinity (2009)



Source: CHUD Wave One Impact Assessment, Business Census, 2009.

WADI-KHALED

Demographics

It is estimated that the population of Wadi-Khaled (and Akroum) region has around 50,000 Lebanese residents, and hosts 21,500 Syrian refugees. The region is home to around 6 per cent of Akkar's Lebanese population and 8 per cent of Syrian refugees residing in Akkar.

Table 23. Residents in Wadi-Khaled

Region	Lebanese residents	Syrian refugees
Wadi-Khaled Akroum	50 000	21 500
Total Akkar	791 446	256 126

Source: Wadi-Khaled data – Swiss Agency for Development, 2014; Akkar data – OCHA, 2016.

Socio-economic conditions

Poverty and vulnerability

Wadi-Khaled is one of the poorest areas in Lebanon, located on the Lebanon-Syria border. It was among the first regions to receive a large influx of Syrian refugees escaping the war in 2011. This led to further deterioration of livelihoods and socio-economic conditions of the host communities. Later, assistance from national and international organizations mitigated some of the adverse effects of the crisis, and many municipalities in the region reported their municipal councils' dependency on donor funding to implement almost all development projects, but especially those related to water, wastewater, livelihoods and public spaces. Today, the villages and towns of Wadi-Khaled are worried about reductions in aid, especially under the current economic and financial crisis, which has rendered them in a very precarious socio-economic situation.

Education and health

Prior to the refugee crisis, Wadi-Khaled and Akroum were already suffering from the poor quality of educational services. The 13 schools that service the area between elementary, intermediate and high schools suffer from overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate facilities and supplies, which affect students' learning environment. The influx of Syrian students has placed additional strain on an already weak educational infrastructure.

The Akkar region, of which Wadi-Khaled is a part, has sever vocational schools, which are overstaffed by teachers and provide majors (such as computing, accounting) that are incompatible with the agricultural needs of the region, prompting students to migrate to Beirut and Tripoli for jobs in line with their education (International Alert 2015).

Healthcare services have historically been scarce and of low quality, leading residents to seek affordable quality healthcare on the Syrian side of the border prior to the Syrian war. The closest hospital is in Qubayat, a 45-minute drive from Wadi-Khaled. Doctors in Wadi-Khaled are limited and just a few pharmacies are open. In 2013, there was a total of six medical dispensaries (two public and four private) in Wadi-Khaled and Akroum, but they were in bad condition (International Alert 2015). In addition, clinics also prioritized Syrian refugees over Lebanese residents due to their contracts with humanitarian organizations. Generally, the region relies on the support of international organizations and humanitarian assistance programmes to provide healthcare services.

Unemployment

Unemployment in Wadi-Khaled is estimated at an alarming 58 per cent (LCRP 2019). This is significantly higher than the average for Akkar reported in 2018 official CAS statistics at 9 per cent (CAS and ILO 2020). However, interviewed local committee members believe that a the LCRP figure is an over-estimate of unemployment, which is believed to stand at around 20 to 25 per cent of the population.

Local economy

The local economy of the Wadi-Khaled region relies mainly on agriculture and cross-border trade, including illicit smuggling. Manufacturing is restricted to construction-related activities such as aluminium and steel works.

After the northern border between Lebanon and Syria was closed trade substantially decreased. This was accompanied by a decrease in employment opportunities, which made life hard for both Lebanese and Syrians. Increased competition over jobs in agriculture and crafts led to tensions in the community and an unstable security situation. Insecurity has also been linked to the spillover of armed conflict in Syria, especially between 2011 and 2017.

Development projects and job-creation programmes were implemented in the region as part of the crisis response plan, and these mitigated economic hardship to some degree. Humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes also eased pressure on services and infrastructure. However, they also increased tensions between host and refugee communities, as Lebanese residents largely perceived that aid was going only to Syrians, and that Lebanese did not receive any type of support. In contrast, several interviewed local committee members, especially members of municipal councils, were worried that the end of the Syrian crisis will mean the end of humanitarian and development programmes.

» Annex

2

DATA TABLES

CONSUMER DEMAND SURVEY: RESPONDENTS

Table 24. Respondents by region, gender, education and age by region (%)

	Gender		Educational level				Age			
	Male	Female	Primary	Elementary	Secondary	University	18–24	25–34	35–44	45+
Chtoura	49	51	22	12	22	45	16	41	25	17
Halba	54	46	26	17	16	41	16	33	24	27
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	49	51	6	19	25	50	28	29	21	22
Minieh-Donnieh	66	34	54	26	11	9	17	30	24	29
North Beqaa	51	48	9	14	21	55	13	34	26	26
Saida	44	56	15	14	25	47	24	29	26	22
Wadi-Khaled	54	47	30	15	16	40	25	43	22	10

MARKET OPPORTUNITY SURVEY: MSME RESPONDENTS

Table 25. Economic sector by region (%)

	Saida	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Bekaa	Wadi-Khaled	Chtoura	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1	9	3	6	10	7	4	6
Manufacture of food products	14	7	16	11	0	10	13	11
Other manufacturing	3	2	8	9	24	5	7	7
Construction	9	5	13	11	9	9	6	9
Wholesale and retail trade	8	30	9	18	2	28	22	18
Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	34	18	21	13	21	14	10	18
Accommodation and food services	27	18	23	26	24	13	19	21
Other services	3	2	2	4	2	6	7	4
Other activities	1	8	6	2	8	8	12	7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 26. Surveyed SMEs by type of ownership and region (%)

	SAL	SARL	Partnership	Single owner	Total
Saida	1	6	8	85	100
Halba		2	13	85	100
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya		5	8	87	100
Minieh-Donnieh	1	1	6	93	100
North Bekaa	2		17	81	100
Wadi-Khaled			8	92	100
Chtoura	6	7	4	83	100
Total	**1**	**3**	**9**	**87**	**100**

Table 27. Surveyed SMEs by type of ownership and economic sector (%)

	SAL	SARL	Partnership	Single owner	Total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing		1	18	81	100
Manufacture of food products	2	5	15	78	100
Other manufacturing	2	3	8	87	100
Construction		9	9	82	100
Wholesale and retail trade	2	2	7	90	100
Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles		1	5	93	100
Accommodation and food services	1	3	8	88	100
Other services	6	6	7	81	100
Other activities	3	2	9	85	100
Total	**1**	**3**	**9**	**87**	**100**

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE

Table 28. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), total

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Technicians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agri-cultural wor-kers	Craft and related trade wor-kers	Plant and machine oper-ators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	89	53	77	68	79	72	94	100	76	80
Women	11	47	23	32	21	28	6	0	24	20
Lebanese	89	92	84	80	80	80	74	78	56	69
Syrian	8	7	13	12	17	17	21	20	40	27
Other nationality	3	2	3	8	3	3	5	2	4	4
Part-time	9	16	16	24	20	11	8	18	18	16
Full-time	91	84	84	76	80	89	92	82	82	84
Permanent	96	90	90	85	83	80	90	90	72	81
Temporary	4	10	10	15	17	20	10	10	28	19
Age under 18				7	2		2	2	5	3
Age 24–18	8	15	19	34	34	14	19	30	30	26
Age 29–25	25	46	43	37	42	40	34	35	36	37

Age 39–30	33	26	26	11	18	22	27	25	20	22
Age 49–40	22	9	10	8	3	20	13	6	7	9
Age 64–50	10	3	1	2	1	5	3		1	2
Age above 64	3	1		2				1		
Total	**6**	**2**	**11**	**1**	**13**	**1**	**16**	**3**	**46**	**100**

CHTOURA

Table 29. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), Chtoura

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Techni-cians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricu-ltural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occupa-tions	Total
Men	77	58	83	60	77	80	90	100	74	78
Women	23	42	17	40	23	20	10		26	22
Lebanese	94	87	78	75	77	95	73	91	58	70
Syrian	6	13	21	25	23	5	27	9	41	30
Other nationality									2	1
Part-time	8	16	19	10	35	10	6	2	21	19
Full-time	92	84	81	90	65	90	94	98	79	81
Permanent	100	87	93	95	67	80	94	88	80	83
Temporary		13	7	5	33	20	6	13	20	17
Age under 18	1			25	2	0	1		2	2
Age 24–18	4	0	22	35	31	0	20	16	25	23
Age 29–25	36	45	40	30	46	40	32	46	36	38
Age 39–30	30	32	31	5	19	30	28	32	23	25
Age 49–40	19	16	6	5	2	20	14	5	13	11
Age 64–50	10	5				10	5		1	2
Age above 64		3								
Total	**5**	**2**	**13**	**1**	**15**	**1**	**13**	**4**	**46**	**5**

HALBA

Table 30. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), Halba

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Technicians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agri-cultural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	90	55	79	67	75	100	93	100	73	78
Women	10	45	21	33	25	0	7		27	22
Lebanese	97	95	95	89	94	100	71	82	51	74
Syrian	3	5	5	11	6	0	25	18	46	25
Other nationality							4		2	1
Part-time	24	18	23	36	16	0	17	39	20	21
Full-time	76	82	77	64	84	100	83	61	80	79
Permanent	97	93	97	75	92	100	91	94	86	90
Temporary	3	7	3	25	8		9	6	14	10
Age under 18					1		5		7	4
Age 24–18	17	11	14	25	34	0	20	27	38	28
Age 29–25	28	43	47	61	42	0	31	39	35	38
Age 39–30	41	30	28	6	20	100	33	29	15	22
Age 49–40	10	16	10	8	2	0	11	4	5	7
Age 64–50	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Age above 64	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	**2**	**3**	**17**	**3**	**16**	**0**	**15**	**4**	**39**	**2**

MARJEYOUN-HASBAYA

Table 31. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), Marjeyoun-Hasbaya

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Technicians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agri-cultural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	88	41	68	50	81	78	95	100	84	85
Women	12	59	32	50	19	22	5	0	16	15
Lebanese	99	94	91	100	92	56	80	88	67	78
Syrian	1	6	9	0	8	42	17	13	33	21
Other nationality						2	3		1	1
Part-time	8	12	7	17	19	22	5	11	21	14
Full-time	92	88	93	83	81	78	95	89	79	86
Permanent	90	88	88	83	81	78	92	84	67	78
Temporary	10	12	12	17	19	22	8	16	33	22
Age under 18					2		3	2	5	3

Age 18–24	5	12	17	50	30	22	15	27	27	22
Age 25–29	12	59	41	33	32	56	35	34	36	35
Age 30–39	45	12	28		24	11	32	27	22	26
Age 40–49	28	18	12	17	9	0	13	9	8	11
Age 50–64	6		1		2	11	2	2	2	2
Age above 64	5		1							
Total	**7**	**1**	**10**		**10**	**1**	**21**	**4**	**46**	**100**

MINIEH-DONNIEH

Table 32. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), Minieh-Donnieh

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Techni-cians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agri-cultural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	100	30	73	70	85	70	98	100	82	83
Women		70	28	30	15	30	2		18	17
Lebanese	100	100	93	90	72	70	72	50	59	71
Syrian			8	10	28	30	28	50	41	29
Other nationality										
Part-time	28	15	15	40	30	30	15	50	20	23
Full-time	72	85	85	60	70	70	85	50	80	77
Permanent	89	100	95	100	88	70	94	89	80	87
Temporary	11		5		12	30	6	11	20	13
Age under 18					2		1	11	11	5
Age 18–24	22	10	18	40	26	10	25	44	32	27
Age 25–29	17	65	50		55	50	28	22	43	42
Age 30–39	28	5	15	40	11		16	17	11	13
Age 40–49	17	5	15	10	3	40	23	6	2	9
Age 50–64	17	10	3		3		7		2	4
Age above 64		5		10						
Total	**4**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**21**	**2**	**19**	**4**	**35**	**100**

NORTH BEQAA

Table 33. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), North Beqaa

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Techni-cians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricu-ltural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	100	58	81	100	97	100	100	100	62	70
Women		42	19		3				38	30
Lebanese	100	100	78	100	44	100	50	90	47	54
Syrian			22		56	0	50	10	53	46
Other nationality										
Part-time	2		5	33	13			25	14	12
Full-time	98	100	95	67	87	100	100	75	86	88
Permanent	93	100	63	67	61	43	93	100	43	53
Temporary	7		37	33	39	57	7		57	47
Age under 18									3	2
Age 18–24	4	23	17		31	14	26	20	29	26
Age 25–29	33	45	57	100	56	43	55	30	39	42
Age 30–39	20	32	22		13	29	19	40	22	22
Age 40–49	20		3			14		10	6	6
Age 50–64	16									1
Age above 64	7									1
Total	**5**	**3**	**6**		**7**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**72**	**100**

SAIDA

Table 34. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), Saida

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Techni-cians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricu-ltural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	95	82	78	66	72	100	94	100	88	84
Women	5	18	22	34	28		6		12	16
Lebanese	81	86	73	66	78		72	53	59	69
Syrian			12	3	8	100	7	21	15	11
Other nationality	19	14	15	31	13	0	20	26	26	20
Part-time	15	23	17	14	10	0	12	21	13	13
Full-time	85	77	83	86	90	100	88	79	87	87
Permanent	97	68	86	83	96	100	90	79	86	89
Temporary	3	32	14	17	4		10	21	14	11
Age under 18				10	1		2	11	5	3

Age 24–18	3	32	23	38	43		16	47	25	26
Age 29–25	15	27	41	21	36		39	26	37	36
Age 39–30	28	36	22	17	15	75	25		21	21
Age 49–40	33		13	7	3	25	12	5	8	10
Age 64–50	16	5	1	7	1		5		4	4
Age above 64	5						1	11		1
Total	**6**	**2**	**13**	**2**	**21**		**19**	**2**	**35**	**100**

WADI-KHALED

Table 35. Occupational group by gender, nationality, job status and age (%), Wadi-Khaled

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Techni-cians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricu-ltural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Total
Men	88	33	68	100	93	36	95	100	78	82
Women	12	67	32		7	64	5		22	18
Lebanese	79	76	77	70	76	93	77	54	56	67
Syrian	21	24	23	30	24	7	23	46	44	33
Other nationality										
Part-time	3	29	9	20	7		1		20	12
Full-time	97	71	91	80	93	100	99	100	80	88
Permanent	99	90	95	100	86	100	81	100	76	84
Temporary	1	10	5		14		19		24	16
Age under 18			3		10		2	4	10	5
Age 24–18	12	29	25	50	31	36	25	58	40	31
Age 29–25	30	48	37	30	29	36	31	23	31	32
Age 39–30	32	24	16	0	17	7	24	12	16	20
Age 49–40	17		13	10	7	21	16	4	2	9
Age 64–50	8		5	0	5		1		1	2
Age above 64	1			10	2					0
Total	**14**	**2**	**7**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**23**	**2**	**46**	**100**

SKILLS AND BARRIERS TO HIRING

SATISFACTION WITH LEVEL OF STAFF SKILLS

Table 36. Firms' satisfaction ratings (skill level, current staff) by occupational group (0–5)

	Managers	Profe-ssionals	Techni-cians and associate profe-ssionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricu-ltural workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators	Elemen-tary occu-pations
Technical	4.60	3.27	2.87	3.53	2.53	3.00	3.06	2.29	3.20
Literacy/ numeracy	4.40	3.47	2.54	3.87	2.58	3.67	2.30	2.00	2.44
Attitude/ personality*	3.80	3.63	2.67	4.13	3.07	3.00	2.50	3.50	3.05
Self-motivation	3.40	2.80	2.28	3.47	2.69	3.00	2.57	2.93	2.80
Foreign language	3.40	2.90	2.66	3.07	2.62	2.33	2.62	1.93	2.34
Commu-nication	4.00	3.48	2.24	3.73	2.76	1.33	2.57	3.14	2.71
Teamwork	4.00	3.25	2.49	3.47	2.53	2.00	2.62	2.07	3.28
Basic IT	3.40	2.85	2.22	3.20	2.62	2.33	2.33	1.86	2.33
Problem-solving	4.20	3.33	2.22	3.33	2.44	2.33	2.55	2.43	2.56
Negotiation	4.20	2.98	2.06	3.07	2.56	1.67	2.43	2.21	2.62
Leadership	4.20	3.60	2.11	3.33	2.55	3.00	2.56	2.00	2.52
Organi-zational	4.00	3.97	2.64	3.60	2.76	2.67	2.62	2.36	2.87
Ability to learn**	4.20	2.82	2.33	3.20	2.71	3.00	2.68	2.29	2.82
Operating compute-rized /automated machinery	3.40	2.68	2.48	3.00	2.64	2.00	2.75	2.21	2.80
Operating non-compute-rized/non-automated machinery	3.40	2.50	2.14	2.33	2.45	2.67	3.11	2.07	3.05

1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = extremely satisfied; * work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 37. Firms' satisfaction ratings (skill level, current staff) by sector (0–5)

Skills	Agricu-lture, forestry and fishing	Manufa-cture of food products	Other manufa-cturing	Constru-ction	Whole-sale and retail trade	Repair of motor vehicles and motor-cycles	Accommo-dation and food services	Other services	Other activities
Technical	3.11	3.01	1.54	3.75	2.62	2.90	2.73	3.24	3.63
Literacy/ numeracy	3.00	2.29	1.46	3.00	2.45	2.26	2.81	3.00	3.16
Attitude/ personality*	3.05	2.97	1.46	3.14	2.51	2.72	3.03	3.24	3.76
Self-motivation	2.37	2.10	1.46	2.73	2.45	2.72	2.92	2.72	3.39
Foreign language	2.32	1.91	2.38	2.55	3.16	2.69	2.68	3.21	2.26
Commu-nication	2.47	2.54	1.85	2.86	2.41	2.63	2.98	2.97	2.95
Teamwork	3.21	2.89	1.62	3.46	2.38	2.66	2.81	3.00	2.74
Basic IT	2.11	1.87	2.00	2.55	2.57	2.42	2.48	2.66	2.84
Problem-solving	2.63	2.30	1.69	2.74	2.29	2.70	2.67	2.66	2.95
Negotiation	2.58	2.14	1.54	2.60	2.38	2.60	2.55	2.66	2.74
Leadership	2.63	2.37	1.92	2.66	2.48	2.64	2.63	2.83	2.74
Organizational	3.26	3.01	2.08	3.26	2.51	2.62	2.83	3.31	3.11
Ability to learn**	2.68	2.18	2.00	2.82	2.48	2.89	2.68	3.03	2.87
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	2.16	2.35	2.62	2.56	2.97	2.84	2.68	2.48	2.92
Operating non-computerized/ non-automated machinery	2.47	2.47	2.15	2.87	2.42	3.20	2.63	2.14	2.47

1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = extremely satisfied; *e.g. work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

SKILLS LACKING IN JOB APPLICANTS

Table 38. Skills lacking in job applicants by occupational group (%)

Skills	Professionals	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators/ assemblers	Elementary occupations
Technical	41	39	31	42	10	18
Literacy/ numeracy	13	19	27	4	8	14
Attitude/ personality*	11	19	17	10	13	9
Self-motivation	20	19	20	12	6	15
Foreign language	11	9	17	3	0	5
Commu-nication	17	16	38	9	21	12
Teamwork	4	11	20	10	17	13
Basic IT	2	3	4	4	0	0
Problem -solving	11	8	21	6	6	4
Negotiation	9	7	21	3	4	3
Leadership	0	4	8	3	4	2
Organizational	9	10	16	3	10	4
Ability to learn**	4	9	8	7	10	5
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	2	9	5	10	2	2
Operating non-computerized/ non-automated machinery	2	4	5	8	8	4

*Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.
Note: Because of the low number of responses, data for some occupations are not reported. Respondents were first asked, “What are the occupations most difficult to fill?” Manager was cited by very few, thus not included here.

Table 39. Skills lacking in job applicants by sector (%)

Skills	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Manufacture of food products	Other manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail trade	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommodation and food services	Other services	Other activities
Technical	20	32	21	36	28	40	31	30	32
Literacy/ numeracy	5	12	12	13	24	7	16	7	14
Attitude/ personality*	4	12	8	6	12	10	19	20	17
Self-motivation	5	20	2	25	25	8	16	3	14
Foreign language	3	8	0	10	11	4	7	10	3
Communication	6	12	16	10	19	7	22	23	25
Teamwork	7	10	13	13	10	6	20	3	8
Basic IT	0	3	0	3	1	7	2	3	2
Problem-solving	4	10	5	12	8	4	11	0	5
Negotiation	4	7	5	6	5	3	10	0	5
Leadership	1	3	3	6	2	2	5	3	0
Organizational	2	3	5	6	10	1	11	10	8
Ability to learn**	2	9	3	5	8	7	8	17	7
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	2	4	10	9	3	10	6	10	3
Operating non-computerized/ non-automated machinery	5	1	15	6	5	6	6	3	2

*Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

DIFFICULTIES IN HIRING

Table 40. Hiring difficulties among sectors by occupational group (%)

Skills	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Manufacture of food products	Other manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail trade	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommodation and food services	Other services	Other activities	Total
Managers				1						0
Professionals	5	3		4	8	2	1	20	2	3
Technicians and associate professionals	6	22	2	8	28	9	31	10	27	20
Clerical support workers					3		1	7	5	1
Services and sales workers	4	10	6	4	20	3	19	30	8	12
Skilled agricultural and forestry workers	15	2	1							2
Craft and related trade workers	3	24	57	56	8	58	11	7	25	26
Plant and machine operators/ assemblers	3	3	2	4	1		7		5	3
Elementary occupations	63	36	32	24	33	27	29	27	27	33

(1) Other manufacturing includes all manufacturing as per the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) code Section C, with the exception of ISIC code 10 (manufacturing of food). (2) Other service activities includes ISIC code Section S, mostly ISIC code 95 (repair of computers and personal and household goods) and ISIC 96 (other personal services). (3) Other activities included: all other activities not listed in the table.

Table 41. Reasons given for hiring difficulty by occupational group (%)

Skills	Professionals	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators/ assemblers	Elementary occupations
Too much competition from other employers	7	4	4	2	4	2
Not enough people*	13	8	32	22	31	34
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	76	69	65	57	60	55
Low number of applicants with the required skills	30	28	25	43	19	11
Low number of applicants**	9	21	16	14	10	9
Low number of applicants generally	7	4	12	12	13	7
Lack of work experience the company demands	9	24	11	18	4	8

Lack of qualifi-cations the company demands	4	21	10	12	2	7
Poor career prospects	7	4	8	2	10	2
Job entails shiftwork/unsociable hours		1	3	3	2	1
Seasonal work	9	11	10	11	6	10
Remote location		3	9	3	8	4

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.
Note: Because of the low number of data points, data for some occupations are not reported. Respondents were first asked to name the occupation for which they find difficulty in hiring. Manager was cited by very few.

Table 42. Reasons given for hiring difficulty by sector (%)

Skills	Agricu-lture, forestry and fishing	Manufa-cture of food products	Other manufa-cturing	Constru-ction	Whole-sale and retail trade	Repair of motor vehicles and motor-cycles	Accommo-dation and food services	Other services	Other activities
Too much competition from other employers	2	6	2	4	3	3	3	10	2
Not enough people*	22	26	24	34	21	19	28	13	15
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	32	61	64	68	71	53	66	50	44
Low number of applicants with the required skills	10	34	22	41	11	28	30	23	24
Low number of applicants**	7	11	10	9	17	11	18	7	14
Low number of applicants generally	2	7	4	14	9	11	8	17	17
Lack of work experience the company demands	1	18	11	14	5	12	22	17	10
Lack of qualifications the company demands	1	13	6	8	6	8	19	13	10
Poor career prospects	2	3	1	4	3	4	6	13	3
Job entails shiftwork/ unsociable hours	0	1	1	5	2	1	3	3	0
Seasonal work	13	7	13	12	8	8	12	10	15
Remote location			3	7	9		3	8	4

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

SKILLS AND BARRIERS TO HIRING BY REGION

CHTOURA

Table 43. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupational groups and sectors (%), Chtoura

Skills	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elementary occupations	Manufacture of food products	Accommodation and food services	Total
Technical	57	63	35	17	42	45	41
Literacy/numeracy	29	44		3	12	25	14
Attitude/personality*	36	31	16	13	24	28	21
Self-motivation	32	25	32	27	39	30	28
Foreign language	7	25			6	10	5
Communication	21	50	3	10	18	20	16
Teamwork	21	38	23	17	12	38	21
Basic IT	18	13	13	3	9	10	10
Problem-solving	18	31	6	3	9	18	11
Negotiation	7	38		10	9	15	10
Leadership	14	25	3	7	9	13	10
Organizational	14	13		10	6	10	9
Ability to learn**	29	13	19	10	18	25	17
Operating computerized/automated machinery	21	13	13	7	9	13	13
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery	7		6	3	3	3	4

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 44. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupations and sectors (%), Chtoura and surroundings

Skills	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elementary occupations	Manufacture of food products	Accommodation and food services	Total
Too much competition from other employers	4			3	3	3	**2**
Not enough people*	7	6	19	27	18	15	**15**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	86	75	68	60	85	85	**71**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	46	38	74	20	36	45	**47**
Low number of applicants**	43	31	32	13	36	35	**27**
Low number of applicants generally		13	13	20	6	5	**12**
Lack of work experience the company demands	54	50	39	23	33	50	**39**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	54	38	35	20	30	48	**35**
Poor career prospects	7	44	3	10	12	10	**15**
Job entails shiftwork or unsociable hours	4	6		3		5	**3**
Seasonal work	7		3			8	**3**
Remote location							

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

HALBA

Table 45. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupations and sectors (%), Halba

Skills	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elementary occupations	Wholesale and retail trade	Repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	Accommodation and food services	Total
Technical	35	26	59	6	30	36	28	**27**
Literacy/ numeracy	36	33	7	27	36	11	28	**24**
Attitude/ personality*	15	19	12	4	10	7	16	**10**
Self-motivation	30	40	19	19	33	11	19	**24**
Foreign language	22	26	10	15	17	9	19	**16**
Communication	12	48	8	8	18	2	28	**16**
Teamwork	3	26	12	10	12	5	19	**11**
Basic IT		2					2	**1**
Problem-solving	8	24	5	4	10	5	12	**9**
Negotiation	9	21	5	1	8		12	**7**
Leadership	3	14	3		3		7	**3**
Organizational	11	33	7	7	14	5	25	**12**
Ability to learn**	8	14	8	7	10	11	11	**8**
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	11	5	7		3	2	12	**5**
Operating non-computerized/ non-automated machinery	4	7	10	3	4	2	12	**5**

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 46. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupations and sectors (%), Halba

Skills	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elementary occupations	Wholesale and retail trade	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommodation and food services	**Total**
Too much competition from other employers	5			1	8	3	2	**2**
Not enough people*	3	40	19	45	36	25	33	**27**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	81	88	80	54	52	88	74	**70**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	8	19	31	4	40	8	16	**13**
Low number of applicants**	28	26	34	11	16	27	18	**21**
Low number of applicants generally			3	6	4	4	4	**3**
Lack of work experience the company demands	11	5	10	3	8	4	12	**6**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	5	2	5	1	4	2	5	**3**
Poor career prospects							2	**0.3**
Job entails shiftwork or unsociable hours	3	2				1	4	**1**
Seasonal work			7	5	4	2	4	**3**
Remote location		2					2	**0.3**

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

MARJEYOUN-HASBAYA

Table 47. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupations and sectors (%), Marjeyoun-Hasbaya

Skills	Technicians and associate profess-ionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Manu-facture of food products	Constru-ction	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommo-dation and food services	Total
Technical	49	13	48	33	49	64	44	34	**39**
Literacy/ numeracy	8	5	5	26	10	15	7	14	**11**
Attitude/ personality*	25	18	12	21	10	9	24	27	**17**
Self-motivation	25	13	13	38	20	30	12	30	**21**
Foreign language	4	8	4	5	7	9	3	4	**5**
Communication	9	18	8	18	5	9	14	22	**13**
Teamwork	17	5	5	13	5	6	8	17	**9**
Basic IT	6		7	1		3	15	2	**4**
Problem-solving	6	5	6	5	7	9	8	7	**6**
Negotiation	8	10	4	4	5	9	7	8	**6**
Leadership	2	0	3	3	2	6	5		**2**
Organizational	9	3	3				2	7	**3**
Ability to learn**	8		4	1	0	3	8	5	**4**
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	6		10	0	2	6	15	2	**5**
Operating non-computerized/ non-automated machinery		3	7	3		6	8	2	**5**

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 48. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupations and sectors (%), Marjeyoun-Hasbaya

Skills	Technicians and associate profess-ionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Manufa-cture of food products	Cons-truction	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommodation and food services	**Total**
Too much competition from other employers	2	5	3	1	2		8		**3**
Not enough people*	11	28	23	49	39	42	29	29	**29**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	64	38	57	75	73	64	51	66	**61**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	55	26	40	26	37	42	37	43	**37**
Low number of applicants**	23	8	13	16	10	9	15	25	**14**
Low number of applicants generally	17	31	16	14	12	18	15	12	**17**
Lack of work experience the company demands	42	5	15	16	22	6	15	29	**18**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	36	13	11	16	12	6	15	27	**16**
Poor career prospects	2	3	4		0	3	5	1	**2**
Job entails shiftwork/ unsociable hours			3		0	3	2		**1**
Seasonal work	21	10	13	13	10	15	14	16	**14**
Remote location	6	13	5	6	7	9	8		**7**

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

MINIEH-DONNIEH

Table 49. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupations and sectors (%), Minieh-Donnieh

Skills	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elementary occupations	Total
Technical	13	22	21	16	**18**
Literacy/numeracy	6	11	21	32	**17**
Attitude/personality*	38	44	14	16	**29**
Self-motivation	13	33	14	5	**12**
Foreign language	6				**2**
Communication			7	5	**3**
Teamwork	38	33	43	37	**34**
Basic IT	38	33	29	26	**28**
Problem-solving	25	22		5	**11**
Negotiation			14	5	**6**
Leadership			21	5	**6**
Organizational	6	22			**6**
Ability to learn**	13	22	21	16	**18**
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	6	11	21	32	**17**
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery	38	44	14	16	**29**

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 50. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupational groups (%), Minieh-Donnieh

Skills	Technicians and associate professionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elementary occupations	Total
Too much competition from other employers	13	22	21	16	**18**
Not enough people*	6	11	21	32	**17**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	38	44	14	16	**29**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	13	33	14	5	**12**
Low number of applicants**	6				**2**
Low number of applicants generally			7	5	**3**
Lack of work experience the company demands	38	33	43	37	**34**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	38	33	29	26	**28**
Poor career prospects	25	22		5	**11**
Job entails shiftwork/ unsociable hours			14	5	**6**
Seasonal work			21	5	**6**
Remote location	6	22			**6**

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

NORTH BEQAA

Table 51. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupations and sectors (%), North Beqaa

	Elementary occupations	Accommodation and food services	Other manufacturing	Total
Technical	23	15	24	**11**
Literacy/numeracy	18	17	2	**15**
Attitude/personality*	27	17		**8**
Self-motivation	5	8		**3**
Foreign language		2	3	**1**
Communication	18	20	14	**17**
Teamwork	5	8		**9**
Basic IT			10	
Problem-solving	5	7	10	**7**
Negotiation	14	7	2	**6**
Leadership		2	7	**2**
Organizational	9	10	2	**7**
Ability to learn**	5	2	19	**2**
Operating computerized/automated machinery	14	7	26	**7**
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery	18	12	24	**13**

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 52. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupations and sectors (%), North Beqaa

Skills	Elementary occupations	Accommodation and food services	Other manufacturing	Total
Too much competition from other employers				
Not enough people*	32	37	40	**28**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	44	52	60	**44**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	6	18	14	**14**
Low number of applicants**	4	18	12	**12**
Low number of applicants generally	2	7		**5**
Lack of work experience the company demands	2	3		**3**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	1			**1**
Poor career prospects	2			**1**
Job entails shift work/unsociable hours				
Seasonal work	7	18	5	**11**
Remote location	6	17	12	**10**

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

SAIDA

Table 53. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupations and sectors (%), Saida

	Techni-cians and associate profess-ionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Manu-facture of food	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommo-dation and food services	Total
Technical	49	62	68	48	36	66	58	**56**
Literacy/numeracy	9	24	5	7	21	8	6	**12**
Attitude/personality*	6	15	3	7	4		12	**8**
Self-motivation	3	6	5	7	11	3		**5**
Foreign language	9	21	3	3	4	8	12	**9**
Communication		24	16	7	4	3	14	**11**
Teamwork	6	15	22	14	7	5	22	**13**
Basic IT		6	11		4	11		**4**
Problem-solving	9	32	14	10	11	5	24	**15**
Negotiation	6	24	3	3	7	3	16	**9**
Leadership		3	5	3	0	5	2	**3**
Organizational		15	3	3	4		8	**5**
Ability to learn**	3	15	5	3	4	5	8	**6**
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	3	6	30	7	7	21	2	**11**
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery	3	6	22			16	6	**8**

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 54. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupations and sectors (%), Saida

	Techni-cians and associate profess-ionals	Services and sales workers	Craft and related trade workers	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Manu-facture of food	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommo-dation and food services	Total
Too much competition from other employers	6	9			11		4	**3**
Not enough people*	20	21	46	21	29	26	34	**27**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	57	59	43	79	50	61	72	**59**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	29	26	54	7	36	32	26	**33**
Low number of applicants**	6	9	5	3			6	**5**
Low number of applicants generally	3	12	32	10	7	18	14	**14**
Lack of work experience the company demands	11	6	38	7	7	21	12	**15**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	14		11	3	4	8	8	**7**
Poor career prospects	3	12	8	3	0	8	6	**7**

Job entails shift work/ unsociable hours	3	9	16	3	0	3	12	**8**
Seasonal work	6	18	16	7	7	8	20	**13**
Remote location	3	3	3	3	4	5	2	**3**

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

WADI-KHALED

Table 55. Skills lacking in job applicants by selected occupations and sectors (%), Wadi-Khaled

	Techni-cians and associate profess-ionals	Craft and related trade workers	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Manufacture of food	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommodation and food services	Total
Technical	27	28	23	21	29	24	**24**
Literacy/numeracy	9	1	0	5	4	9	**4**
Attitude/personality*	20	9	10	15	11	11	**13**
Self-motivation	9	5	6	5	11	9	**7**
Foreign language	2						**1**
Communication	39	7	13	10	11	17	**17**
Teamwork	9	7	13	13	4	17	**11**
Basic IT	2					4	**1**
Problem-solving	7	4	4	13		7	**5**
Negotiation	2	3	3	10		7	**4**
Leadership	2		1			9	**2**
Organizational	11	1	3	3		13	**5**
Ability to learn**	9	7	6	8	7	7	**7**
Operating computerized/ automated machinery	2	4	1	3	4	4	**2**
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery	2	1	1			4	**2**

* Work ethic, punctuality, appearance and manners; ** new ideas, methods and concepts.

Table 56. Difficulties in hiring by selected occupations and sectors (%), Wadi-Khaled

	Techni-cians and associate profess-ionals	Craft and related trade workers	Elemen-tary occu-pations	Manufacture of food	Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Accommo-dation and food services	Total
Too much competition from other employers		4	4				**3**
Not enough people*	7	17	20	18	4	24	**18**
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post	70	68	48	56	71	83	**61**
Low number of applicants with the required skills	23	57	8	31	46	41	**27**
Low number of applicants**	5	1	7			13	**5**

Low number of applicants generally		7	5	5	11	7	**5**
Lack of work experience the company demands	14	15	3	10	7	20	**9**
Lack of qualifications the company demands	16	13	4	8	7	17	**9**
Poor career prospects	9	1	2	3		15	**4**
Job entails shift work/ unsociable hours		1	1	3			**1**
Seasonal work	30	11	19	13	14	9	**17**
Remote location		1	5	10			**2**

* Interested in doing this type of job; **with the required attitude, motivation or personality.

BARRIERS TO GROWTH ACROSS REGIONS

Table 57. Reasons given for lack of growth by region and rating of importance (0–5)

Barrier to growth	Saida	Halba	Marjeyoun-Hasbaya	Minieh-Donnieh	North Beqaa	Wadi-Khaled	Chtoura
Lack of financial support	4.19	4.11	4.30	4.44	3.39	3.67	4.21
Lack of access to loans from banks	3.76	3.27	3.07	4.40	3.14	3.39	3.79
Lack of collateral	3.75	3.13	2.95	4.33	3.05	3.39	3.70
Bad credit record	3.84	3.04	3.06	4.34	2.96	3.46	3.67
Insufficient government support	4.75	4.41	4.12	4.53	3.66	3.92	4.46
High taxes and other tariffs	3.87	3.72	3.32	4.11	2.85	3.25	3.64
Costs of registration and licences	3.42	3.13	3.11	4.12	2.85	3.06	3.52
High interest rate	3.35	3.15	3.30	4.07	2.75	3.13	3.70
High inflation rate	4.41	3.87	4.24	4.30	3.42	3.57	4.07
Recession of the economy	4.73	4.46	4.53	4.38	3.74	3.86	4.52
Political instability in the country	4.57	4.63	3.96	4.47	3.86	3.78	4.44
Syrian crisis impact on Lebanon	3.52	3.74	3.18	3.64	2.67	3.29	3.58
Cash shortage (US dollars)	4.56	4.52	4.69	4.50	3.37	3.84	4.52
Supplier payment terms	4.14	3.72	4.34	4.27	2.66	3.56	3.99
Clients payment terms	3.29	3.18	3.76	3.73	2.45	3.38	3.27
Corruption	4.31	4.32	3.34	4.40	3.36	3.47	4.18
Clientelism	3.67	3.58	3.23	3.87	3.02	3.27	3.59
Crime	3.94	3.01	2.93	3.98	2.74	2.89	3.63

Security situation	4.00	3.75	3.34	4.01	2.58	2.68	4.06
Inadequate demand	3.48	3.43	3.75	3.85	2.85	3.44	3.84
High competition	3.06	3.20	3.47	2.81	2.55	2.81	3.29
Inadequate market research	3.13	3.36	2.97	2.85	2.68	3.15	3.15
Lack of experience	2.88	2.71	3.01	2.59	2.11	2.63	2.95
Lack of business skills	2.90	2.83	2.62	2.73	2.39	2.65	2.84
Inability to keep qualified employees	3.11	2.91	3.42	2.59	2.48	2.96	3.38
Location of the business	2.09	2.59	2.59	2.08	1.81	1.93	2.41
Lack of networking	2.42	2.57	2.86	2.12	1.96	2.43	2.71
High production costs	3.99	3.33	3.81	3.80	2.23	3.25	3.43
Lack of information technology	2.86	2.69	2.47	2.85	2.19	2.76	2.57
High transport costs	3.08	2.61	2.93	2.81	2.49	3.20	2.89
Shortage of skilled labour	2.88	3.03	3.23	2.38	2.25	2.79	2.87
Lack of internal employee training	2.62	2.61	2.91	2.27	2.19	2.65	2.62
Poor electricity supply	4.42	4.10	4.00	3.30	2.68	3.34	3.30
Poor roads	4.03	3.52	3.47	2.61	2.52	3.43	3.20
Poor water supply	3.96	3.57	3.66	2.95	2.61	3.37	3.46

» Annex

3

Community Profiling Tool

The interviewer should present the project and methodology, and mention that information shared will remain confidential and used solely for research purposes. Ask for interviewee consent before recording the interview.

1. We would like to understand the socio-economic dynamics of the region. Can you share with us information regarding:
   a. Total population and estimated number of households;
   b. An estimate of the number of Syrian refugees (population and households);
   c. An estimate of:
      i. The unemployment rate;
      ii. The youth unemployment rate;
      iii. Women's participation in the economy.
   d. What are the main constraints faced by youth regarding employment and income-generating activities? What are the main sectors of activity that have the capacity to employ youth?
   e. We would like to focus on women's economic participation. What do you think are the main constraints faced by women? What are the main sectors of activity that currently employ women?
   f. Is there a migration and diaspora dynamic specific to the region?

2. In your opinion what are the main sectors of activity in the region?
   a. I would like to discuss with you one that is currently well-developed but constitutes an opportunity for the region in the near future?
   b. I would like to discuss with you, for each of the sectors you mentioned, what are the main challenges and the main opportunities?

3. We would like to discuss with you any ongoing development project near the community (implemented by local and international NGOs, or by public agencies). What are the main projects? And what are their main activities?
   a. Do you think these projects have been successful?
   b. What can be done to improve the interventions?

4. What types of micro and small enterprises exist in the region?
   a. What are their main challenges and opportunities?
   b. According to your knowledge, are these enterprises currently looking to employee people? What type of employees/skills are they looking for?
   c. Do small enterprises employ apprentices?
   d. What about medium-sized and large enterprises, and local investor initiatives?

5. Now, we would like to discuss services facilities in the area, especially in regard to:
   a. Public and private TVET providers in the area. Who are they and what programmes do they provide?
   b. Microcredit institutions active in the area. What are their main activities and programmes?

6. Finally, we would like to conclude by undertaking an overview of the public services in the area – water, transport, lighting and waste management.
   a. Are people satisfied with the level of services provided?
   b. What can be done to improve them?

7. Is there anything you would like to mention that we did not have the opportunity to talk about?

8. Could you please share with us any relevant document or study on the area?

» Annex

4

CONSUMER DEMAND SURVEY

Section 1: Survey ID

(a) Name of surveyor:
(b) Date (DD/MM/YYYY):
(c) Governorate:
(d) Caza:
(e) Do you reside (permanently or as a resident) in [name of AREA]? Answer must be YES – if answer is No, survey shall not be carried out.

- ◻ Yes, permanently
- ◻ Yes, secondary residence
- ◻ No

If secondary residence – do you stay:

- ◻ Over weekend (almost every weekend)
- ◻ 2 weekends per month on average
- ◻ Weekends and summer months
- ◻ Summer months only
- ◻ Other, please specify

(f) Cadastre of residence:

Section 2: Demand satisfaction of goods and services

A. Food services

(1) Sandwiches/snacks

In the past 12 months, how frequently did you buy (including delivery) from sandwiches/snacks shops in your area?

- ◻ Never/rarely
- ◻ Daily
- ◻ Weekly
- ◻ Bi-weekly
- ◻ Monthly
- ◻ No answer

Have you been satisfied with the existing sandwiches/snacks shops in your area?

- ◻ Satisfied
- ◻ Dissatisfied
- ◻ No answer

If dissatisfied [or never/rarely], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction [or never/rarely]?

- ◻ Insufficient number of outlets and/or variety
- ◻ too expensive – I cannot afford it
- ◻ The quality of the product/service did not meet my expectation
- ◻ Poor customer service
- ◻ I do not trust the vendor/supplier
- ◻ No answer

(2) Restaurants

In the past 12 months, how frequently did you go to (or ordered delivery from) a restaurant in your area?

- ☐ Never/rarely
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Bi-weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with the existing restaurants in your area?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied [or never/rarely], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction [or never/rarely]?

- ☐ Insufficient number of outlets and/or variety
- ☐ Too expensive – I cannot afford it
- ☐ The quality of the product/service did not meet my expectation
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ I do not trust the vendor/supplier
- ☐ No answer

(3) Furns

In the past 12 months, how frequently did you go to (or ordered delivery from) a "furn" in your area?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ No answer
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied [or never/rarely], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction [or never/rarely]?

- ☐ Insufficient number of outlets and/or variety
- ☐ Too expensive – I cannot afford it
- ☐ The quality of the product/service did not meet my expectation
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ I do not trust the vendor/supplier
- ☐ No answer

(4) Cafes

How often do you go to cafes in your area?

- ☐ Never/rarely
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Bi-weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with the existing cafes your area?

- ◻ Satisfied
- ◻ Dissatisfied
- ◻ No answer

If dissatisfied [or never/rarely], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction [or never/rarely]?

- ◻ Insufficient number of outlets and/or variety
- ◻ Too expensive – I cannot afford it
- ◻ The quality of the product/service did not meet my expectation
- ◻ Poor customer service
- ◻ I do not trust the vendor/supplier
- ◻ No answer

(5) Sweet and patisseries

How often do you go to sweets and patisseries shops in your area?

- ◻ Never/rarely
- ◻ Daily
- ◻ Weekly
- ◻ Bi-weekly
- ◻ Monthly
- ◻ No answer

Have you been satisfied with the existing sweets and patisseries in your area?

- ◻ Satisfied
- ◻ Dissatisfied
- ◻ No answer

If dissatisfied [or never/rarely], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction [or never/rarely]?

- ◻ Insufficient number of outlets and/or variety
- ◻ Too expensive – I cannot afford it
- ◻ The quality of the product/service did not meet my expectation
- ◻ Poor customer service
- ◻ I do not trust the vendor/supplier
- ◻ No answer

B. Household repair and construction

(1) Electricians

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired an electrician from your area?

- ◻ Yes
- ◻ No
- ◻ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no electrician in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(2) Plumber

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired a plumber from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no plumber in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(3) Carpenter

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired a carpenter from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no carpenter in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(4) Plasterer

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired a plasterer from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no plasterer in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(6) Blacksmith

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired a blacksmith from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no blacksmith in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(5) Tiler

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired a tiler from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no tiler in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(6) Painter

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired a painter from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no painter in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(7) Aluminium fitter and joiner

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired an aluminium fitter and joiner from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no aluminium fitter/joiner in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(8) AC Repairer

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired an AC repairer from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no AC repairer in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(9) Upholsterer

In the past 12 months, have you ever hired an upholsterer from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

If yes, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied (DS)
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There is no upholsterer in my area/I did not know how to contact them
- ☐ He/she did not have the right expertise
- ☐ He/she executed the work poorly
- ☐ It was expensive
- ☐ Poor interpersonal relationship skills
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

C. Car repair

Do you own a motor vehicle (car/motorbike all kinds/truck, pick-up)?

- ☐ Yes, a car
- ☐ Yes, a motorbike
- ☐ Yes, a pick-up
- ☐ Yes, a truck
- ☐ No

If yes, proceed to next questions.

(1) Oil and tyre replacements

In the last 12 months and in your area, did you replace oil and/or tyres for your motor vehicle?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, I am bound to go to the company workshop
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with what is existing in the area?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ The right expertise is not available in my area
- ☐ Service not available
- ☐ Not the right product (oil brand, tyre brand, etc.)
- ☐ Too expensive in my area
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ I did not need to
- ☐ No answer

(2) Paint and car body repairs

In the last 12 months and in your area, did you paint or repair the body of your motor vehicle?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, I am bound to go to the company workshop
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with what is existing in the area?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied [or no], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ The right expertise is not available in my area
- ☐ Service not available
- ☐ Not the right product (brand etc.)
- ☐ Too expensive in my area
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ I did not need to
- ☐ No answer

(3) Electronic/electric Systems

In the last 12 months and in your area, did you repair the “electric system” of your motor vehicle?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, I am bound to go to the company workshop
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with what is existing in the area?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ The right expertise is not available in my area
- ☐ Service not available
- ☐ Not the right product (brand, etc.)
- ☐ Too expensive in my area
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ I did not need to
- ☐ No answer

(4) Hardware: Motors, gears, breaks, exhausting system etc.

In the last 12 months and in your area, did you repair the “electric system” of your motor vehicle?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, I am bound to go to the company workshop
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with what is existing in the area?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ The right expertise is not available in my area
- ☐ Service not available
- ☐ Not the right product (brand, etc.)
- ☐ Too expensive in my area
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ I did not need to
- ☐ No answer

5) Accessories

In the last 12 months and in your area, did you repair the “electric system” of your motor vehicle?

- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ No
- ☐ No, I am bound to go to the company workshop
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied with what is existing in the area?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or [no], what is the main reason for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ The right expertise is not available in my area
- ☐ Service not available
- ☐ Not the right product (brand, etc.)
- ☐ Too expensive in my area
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ I did not need to
- ☐ No answer

D. Individual health services

(1) General home nursing (injections, serums, etc.)

In the past 12 months and in your area, have you hired a qualified registered nurse or assistant nurse (all levels)?

- ☐ Yes, registered nurse
- ☐ Yes, assistant nurse
- ☐ Yes (I don't know her/his qualification)
- ☐ No

Have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied or no, what are the reasons for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There are no nurses in my area/I don't know how to contact them
- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ He/she did not have the right qualification
- ☐ Poor care service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(2) Childcare (babysitting, newborn care, etc.)

In the past 12 months and in your area, have you ever hired a caregiver to help you with childcare and newborn care?

- ☐ Yes, postnatal care (under 2 years old)
- ☐ Yes, babysitting
- ☐ No
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied, what are the reasons for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There are no caregivers in my area/I don't know how to contact them
- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ He/she did not have the right qualification
- ☐ Poor care service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

(3) Elderly care

In the past 12 months and in your area, have you ever hired a caregiver to help you with elderly care for yourself or or a relative?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ No answer

Have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied, what are the reasons for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ There are no caregivers in my area/I don't know how to contact them
- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ He/she did not have the right qualification
- ☐ Poor care service
- ☐ Lack of trust
- ☐ No answer

E. Renewable energy

(1) Solar water heaters

Have you ever bought a solar water heater, from a supplier in your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

If dissatisfied (no), what are the reasons for dissatisfaction?

- ☐ Insufficient number of outlets and/or variety
- ☐ Too expensive – I cannot afford it
- ☐ The quality of the product/service did not meet my expectation
- ☐ Poor customer service
- ☐ I do not trust the vendor/supplier
- ☐ No answer

(2) Solar panel

Have you ever bought to buy solar panel, from a supplier from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

(2) Solar panel

Have you ever bought to buy solar panel, from a supplier from your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you been satisfied or dissatisfied?

- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ No answer

Section 3: Respondent profile – COVID-19 and financial crisis

(a) Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
(b) Age:
(c) Education level: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ High school University
(d) Marital status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced
(e) Do you have children? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(f) How many children?

(f) What were the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis? [Agree or disagree].

A. My household income has increased as a result of the crisis

B. My household income has decreased as a result of the coronavirus crisis

C. My household duties have increased while I have been at home

D. My tasks of taking care of children have increased since the crisis emerged

E. I may lose my job in the coming months

F. I lost my job due to the coronavirus crisis

(g) Please name a product or a service that you cannot find in your area.
Was this product/service available prior to "the crisis" (i.e. in 2019)?

(h) How many employees' contracts were terminated because of COVID-19 or the financial crisis______-
(a) How many were women? __________

(I) For how long you did you stop activity since October 2019 (in months)? ____________

(J) Since October 2019 you witnessed:
(a) A revenue loss, please estimate revenue loss ____________
(b) A revenue gain, please estimate revenue gain ___________
(c)No change

(k) What is your business's average sales level for _________ (type of product) per day/week/month/cycle? ____ ________ per ______

» Annex

5

MARKET OPPORTUNITY SURVEY

Section 0: Survey ID

(a) Name of surveyor:
(b) Date (DD/MM/YYYY):
(c) Governorate:
(d) District:
(e) Locality:

Section 1: Enterprise profile

(a) Name of enterprise:
(b) Name of interviewee:
(c) Position of interviewee:
- ☐ Owner/partner
- ☐ HR manager
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Other

(d) Gender:
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

(e) Achieved education level of interviewee:
- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ High School
- ☐ University

(f) Address:
(g) Contact number:
(h) Year of establishment in its current activity:
(i) Type of ownership:
- ☐ SAL
- ☐ SARL
- ☐ Partnership
- ☐ Single owner
- ☐ Other

(j) Description of economic activity: (text to be entered by enumerator)

ISIC list: to be used by data coding officers (at the two digits)

(k) Employment structure (total employee number)

	Total	Managers	Professionals	Technicians and associate professionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Elementary occupations
Men										
Women										
Lebanese										
Syrian										
Other										
High season										
Low season										
Part-time										
Full-time										
Permanent										
Temporary										
Age: below 18 years										
24–18										
29–25										
39–30										
49–40										
64–50										
above 64										

Section 2: Business demand for skills

A. Hiring new staff

Now we would like to ask questions about any hiring that your establishment has attempted over the past 12 months.

(a) What is the recruitment situation currently faced by your company?

	Overall	Low skill	Medium skill	High skill
Very easy	1	1	1	1
Easy	2	2	2	2
Difficult	3	3	3	3
Very difficult	4	4	4	4

If overall = 3 or 4, go to next questions

(b) What are the three most difficult occupations to fill? (Interviewee to list the job and sorted afterwards as per ISCO)

Managers	
Professionals	
Technicians and associate professionals	
Clerical support workers	
Services and sales workers	
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	
Craft and related trade workers	
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	
Elementary workers	

(c) Overall, what are the main factors for hiring difficulties (up to five options for occupations that are hard to fill)?

Difficulty	Occ	Occ	Occ
Too much competition from other employers			
Not enough people interested in doing this type of job			
Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post			
Low number of applicants with the required skills			
Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality			
Low number of applicants generally			
Lack of work experience the company demands			
Lack of qualifications the company demands			
Poor career progression/lack of prospects			
Job entails shiftwork/unsociable hours			
Seasonal work			
Remote location			
Other (specify:______________________________)			

(d) If you mentioned that some applicants lacked the necessary skills, could you please indicate which skills were lacking? (You can select all the skills that are lacking.) To be answered for occupations for which the company experiences problems hiring.

	Managers	Professionals	Technicians and associate professionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machinery operators and assemblers	Elementary workers	Elementary occupations
Technical skills required for the job										
Literacy/numeracy skills										
Poor attitude/personality (e.g. poor work ethic, punctuality, appearance, manners)										
Lack of self-motivation										
Foreign language skills (specify_______________)										
Communication skills										
Teamwork skills										
Basic IT skills										
Problem-solving skills										
Negotiation skills										
Leadership skills										
Organizational skills										
Ability to learn new ideas, methods and concepts										
Operating computerized/automated machinery										
39–30										
49–40										
64–50										
above 64										
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery										
Other specific skills (_________________________)										

(e) What, if anything, is your establishment doing to overcome the difficulties in finding candidates to fill these hard-to-fill vacancies? (You can select all relevant answers.)

Increasing salaries	1
Increasing the training given to existing workforce	2
Redefining existing jobs	3
Increasing advertising/recruitment spend	4
Increasing/expanding trainee programmes	5
Using new recruitment methods or channels	6
Recruiting foreign workers	7
Outsourcing	8
Being prepared to offer training to less qualified recruits	9
Increase working hours in the establishment	10
Nothing	11
Other (please specify...)	12

B. Existing staff

(a) For each of your staff, how would you rate your satisfaction with their level of skills (1 is not satisfied at all, 5 is highly satisfied?

	Managers	Professionals	Technicians and associate professionals	Clerical support workers	Services and sales workers	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	Craft and related trade workers	Plant and machinery operators and assemblers	Elementary workers
Technical skills required for the job									
Literacy/numeracy skills									
Poor attitude/personality (e.g. poor work ethic, punctuality, appearance, manners)									
Lack of self-motivation									
Foreign language skills (specify_______________)									
Communication skills									
Teamwork skills									
Basic IT skills									
Problem-solving skills									
Negotiation skills									
Leadership skills									
Organizational skills									
Ability to learn new ideas, methods and concepts									
Operating computerized/automated machinery									
Operating non-computerized/non-automated machinery									
Other specific skills (_________________________)									

C.Overcoming skills gap

(a) What is being done to overcome the problem of skills gaps (you can select more than one answer)?

1	Hiring has increased
2	Further training has been provided
3	Other strategies have been used to promote learning
4	Work practice has been changed
5	Work location within the company has been changed
6	No special measures have been taken
7	Influence has been used on(providers of) education in order to ensure the inflow of newcomers
8	Other measures

Section 3: Barriers to growth and business development services (BDS) needs

A.Barriers to growth

How would you rate these barriers as important for the growth of your enterprise? (1 to 5 with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important.)

Barriers	1	2	3	4	5
Financial					
Lack of funds					
Lack of access to loans					
Lak of collateral					
Bad credit record					
High taxes and tariffs					
Costs of registration and licences					
Political and social					
Political instability in the country					
Syrian crisis impact on Lebanon					
COVID19-					
Corruption					
Clientelism					
Crime					
Security situation					
Insufficient government support					
Economic					
High inflation					
Recession					
High competition					
Business operations (accounting, management, sales)					
Supplier payment terms					
Client payment terms					
High production costs					
Lack of experience					
Marketing					
Inadequate demand					
Inadequate market research					
Lack of experience					

Infrastructure and technology					
Lack of information technology					
high transport costs					
Lack of networking					
High cost of logistics					
High costs of utilities					
Business strategy					
Location of the business					
Target clients					
Target markets					
Lack of experience					
Human resources					
Inability to keep qualified employees					
Shortage of skilled labour					
Lack of internal employee training					

B.Demand for BDS

(a) Have you ever received management assistance for your business?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(b) If yes, from whom? And what type?
- ☐ Government
- ☐ NGOs
- ☐ Others (please specify): ______________________________

(c) Did such assistance help you develop your business? Whether yes or no, briefly tell us why.
- ☐ Yes: ______________________________
- ☐ No: ______________________________

(d) In general, how important are the following management skills to your business? (On a scale from 1 to 5.)
- → Planning and budgeting: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Acting quickly in response to changes in the environment: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Maintaining good customer relations: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Assessing sales problems: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Attracting and keeping competent employees: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Focusing on design and quality of the product: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Management expertise: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Working together with other businesses in the same industry: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Delegating responsibility to employees when necessary: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Marketing strategy skills: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5
- → Access to finance: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5

Section 4: Impact of COVID-19 and the financial crisis

(a) On a scale from 1 (no difficulties) to 5 (high difficulties), please score the following challenges you are facing because of COVID-19

- ☐ Purchase of raw materials and supplies
- ☐ Cash flow shortage
- ☐ Long closure period
- ☐ Working at lower capacity
- ☐ Cancellation/decrease of client orders
- ☐ Implementing safety measures
- ☐ Facing increased demand from consumers
- ☐ Finalizing new investment/expansion

» Annex

6

LOCAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chtoura		
1	Hakeem El-Mijiblee	Director of medical centre – Faour area
2	Haitham Khalifa Toaimi	Director of local NGO
3	Hind Ibrahim Majhoub	Director of Lebanese union for PWDs – Bar Elias Centre
4	Skiekh Ahmad Alouaisi	Owner of private school
5	Tarek Al Sayed	Local activist
6	Ahmed Bewarshiu	Business owner
7	Rida Al-Meis	Local cooperative
Halba		
1	Iad Al Jamous	Owner of paint factory
2	Hisham El Sheikh	Local investor
3	Basam Othman	Vice President of Mhammara Municipality
4	Sally Sayed	Head of local NGO women's charity committee
5	Salwa Hazim	Women's activist/community mobilizer with INGO
6	Mourada Alhaj	Women's activist/community mobilizer with INGO
7	Khadra Ouwayed	Women's activist/community mobilizer with INGO
8	Rim Telaoui	Women's activist/community mobilizer with INGO
Marjeyoun-Hasbaya		
1	Rafic Najad	Director of Hasbaya Technical School
2	Maher Khaled	Municipality police officer
3	Bassam Lahoud	Director of Marjeyoun Technical School
4	Ziad Haidar	Tutor with AVSI Khiam
5	Lena Ghazzi	Social worker – Caritas
6	Elie Nemer	President of youth club
7	Amal Hourany	President of agricultural cooperative
Minieh-Donnieh		
1	Mayez Makdessi	Head of honey association and beekeeper
2	Jousarah Moukhayel Doumit	Farmer
3	Mohamad el Samad	Project manager at an NGO
4	Nasser Chami	Vice President of Donnieh Municipalities Union
5	Rabih Ghabati	President of Nemrin Association
6	Youssef Karim Jawhar	Secretary of the Union of Sports in Donnieh
7	Ouwais Abdel Kader	NGO president and owner of a community centre
8	Sahar Abou Deleh	President of a women's association
9	Nadine Ali deeb	Livelihood project manager
10	Ahmad Latife	Business owner and activist
11	Ranime Abdel Kader	Project manager at an NGO
North Beqaa		
1	Abbas El Haj Hussein	Teacher
2	Ali Nazha	Teacher
3	Hala Dabbous	Teacher
4	Nazih Ghodban	Teacher

5	Hussein El Mawla	Teacher
6	Jihad Sakr	Director of SDC
7	Isam Blaybl	Vice President of Hermel Municipality
8	Zeinab Shamas	Social activist
9	Donia Sahli	School director
10	Fedaa Sahli	Social activist
11	Rima Allaw	Director of an NGO
12	Achraf al Rachini	Business owner
13	Ismail Chahine	Founder of an NGO
Saida		
1	Mohamade al Saoudi	President of Municipality of Saida
2	Mohamad Saleh	President of Chamber of CIA
3	Majed Hmato	Coordinator of Saida NGO network
4	Thouraya Hachem	Social activist
5	Mohamad Abed El-Menhem	Food safety expert
6	Mohamad Nasredine	NEO
7	Mohamad Baathiri	Moukhtar Hay Al-Derkman
8	Mostafa Habli	Social activist
Wadi-Khaled		
1	Fadi el Assaad	Doctor and former president of the Wadi-Khaled Union of Municipalities
2	Rana Obeid	Teacher and local social activist
3	Haysam Hamad	President of Wadi-Khaled Municipality
4	Hamzeh Ezzo	Member of Municipality of Hisheh
5	Ahmad Btayen El Ali	Trader
6	Ramia Khaled Ali	Nurse and social activist
7	Ahmad Mozar El Saleh	Director of Wadi-Khaled TVET school
8	Najah Khamis	Lawyer and social activist
9	Abdallah Said	Cheikh and social activist
10	Ikram Abdallah	Vice President of Cultural Centre of Wadi-Khaled

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