



# OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN PROFILING: Barriers to Education for Syrian children in Lebanon

November 2014



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

# OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN PROFILING: Barriers to Education for Syrian children in Lebanon

## Contents

- Context
- Information Gaps & Assessment Objectives
- Coordination
- Methodology
- Challenges & Limitations
- Assessment Timeline
- Key Findings
- Contact Us

# CONTEXT

- Since 2011, more than **one million refugees** have arrived in Lebanon
- Significant socio-economic impact
- Public services under pressure including education
- **Majority of refugees are children**
- Exact number of out of school children (OOSC) is unknown
- UNHCR estimates that **420,000 Syrians aged 6-14 are in need of education services**, and many of these children have been out of school for 2 or more years.
- Providing them with an education is a **top priority**

# INFORMATION GAPS & ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

## Significant Information Gaps

- **WHO** out of school children are
- **WHERE** they are
- **HOW MANY** there are
- **WHAT** types of education opportunities are available to them.

## Assessment Objectives

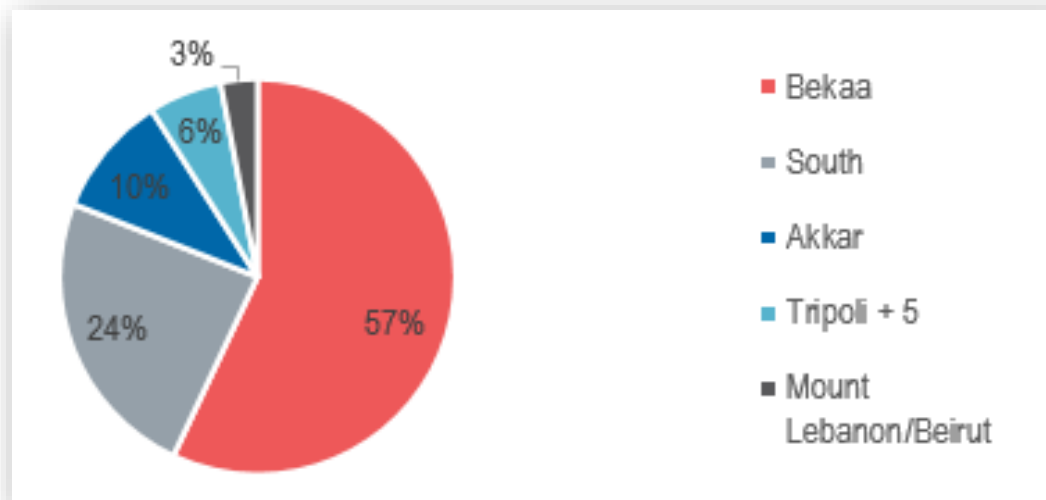
1. To better understand who out-of-school children are, where they are, how many there are, and what types of education opportunities are available to them.
2. Creating a snapshot of the various profiles of out of school children and to better understand the problems, and potential solutions, related to accessing education.

- **REACH & UNHCR partnership**
  - Mid July for preliminary findings
  - End July for final report
  - End October for presentation
  
- **Assessment tools**
  - Designed with UNHCR

# METHODOLOGY

## Two stage process

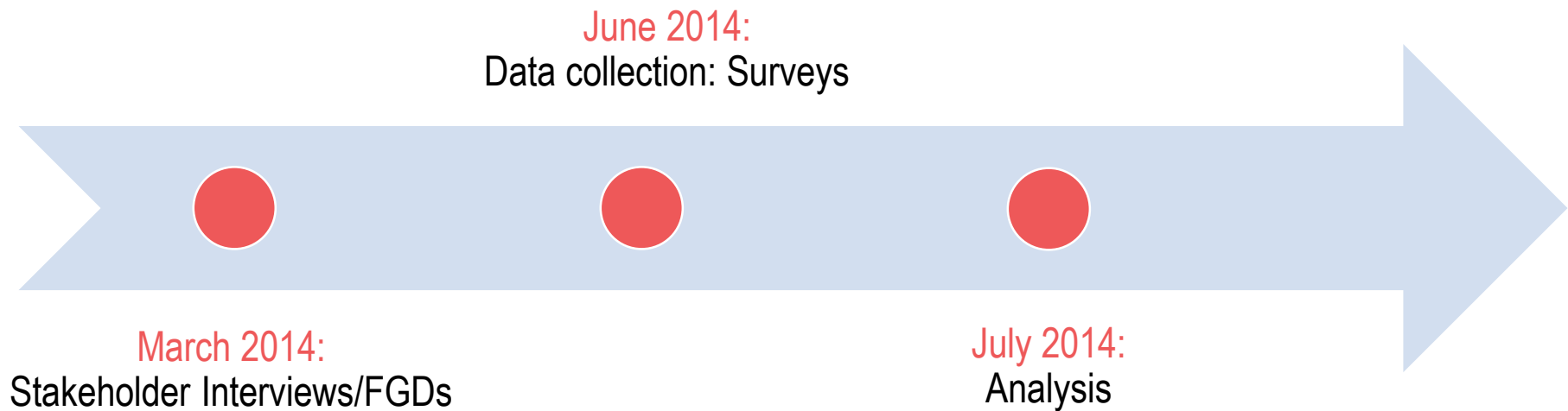
- Secondary data review conducted in each field-offices through a combination of remote assessments and field visits.
- Series of household level assessments conducted with the families of out of school children.



# CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

- ❖ Non-representative sampling strategy for primary data collection.  
**Results are not representative**, geographically or numerically, at the national, field office, or district level (profiling, not an assessment).
- ❖ **Insufficient data for spatial analysis**, not very accurate at the micro level.
  - Limitations of UNHCR registration data (refugees move)
  - Limited information on enrollment (no data on private and Syrian schools)
  - Cadaster different from catchment area
- ❖ Stakeholder interviews skewed towards **INGO staff**.

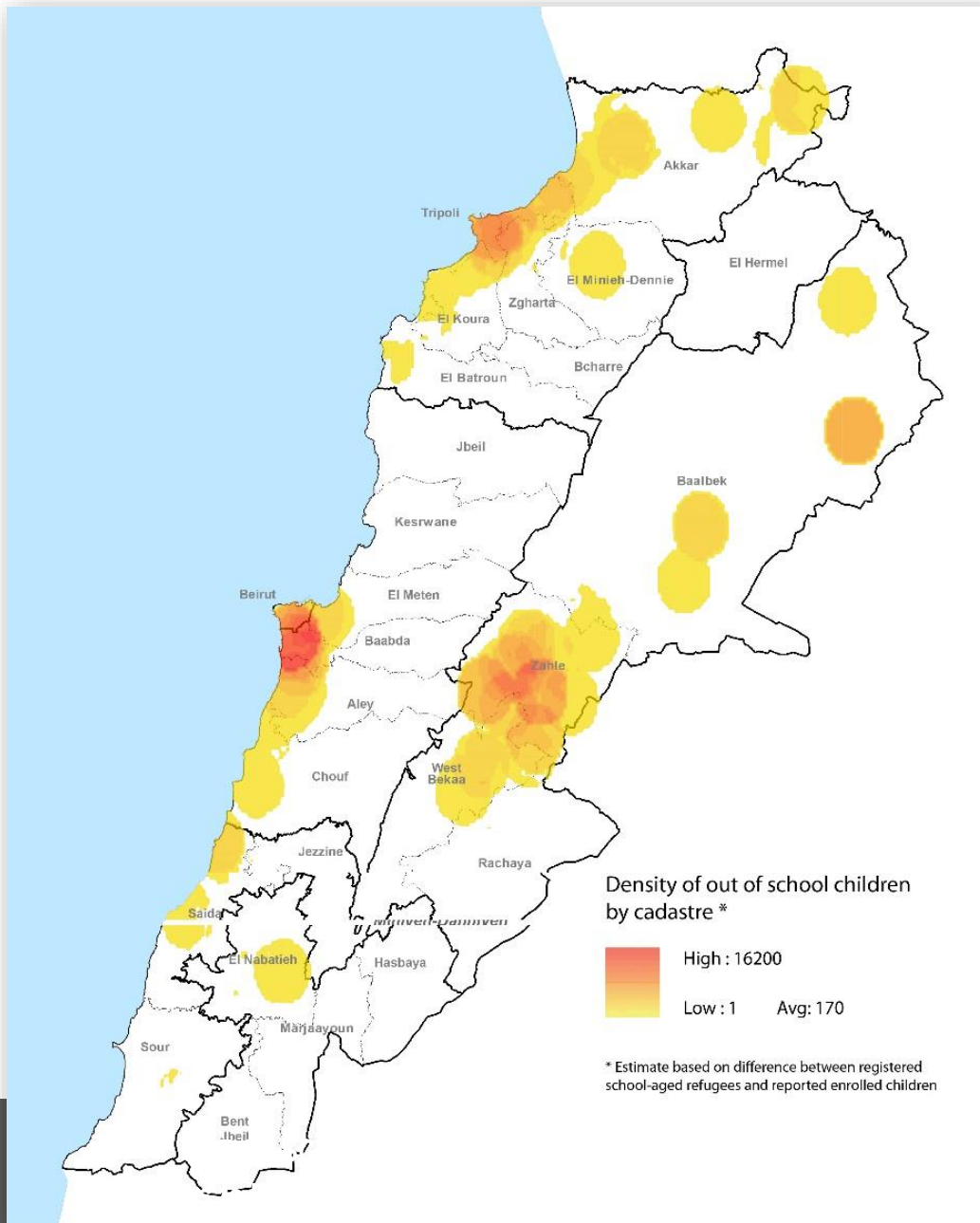
# ASSESSMENT TIMELINE





## KEY FINDINGS

# LOW LEVELS OF ENROLMENT



## ❖ Areas with high numbers of OOSC:

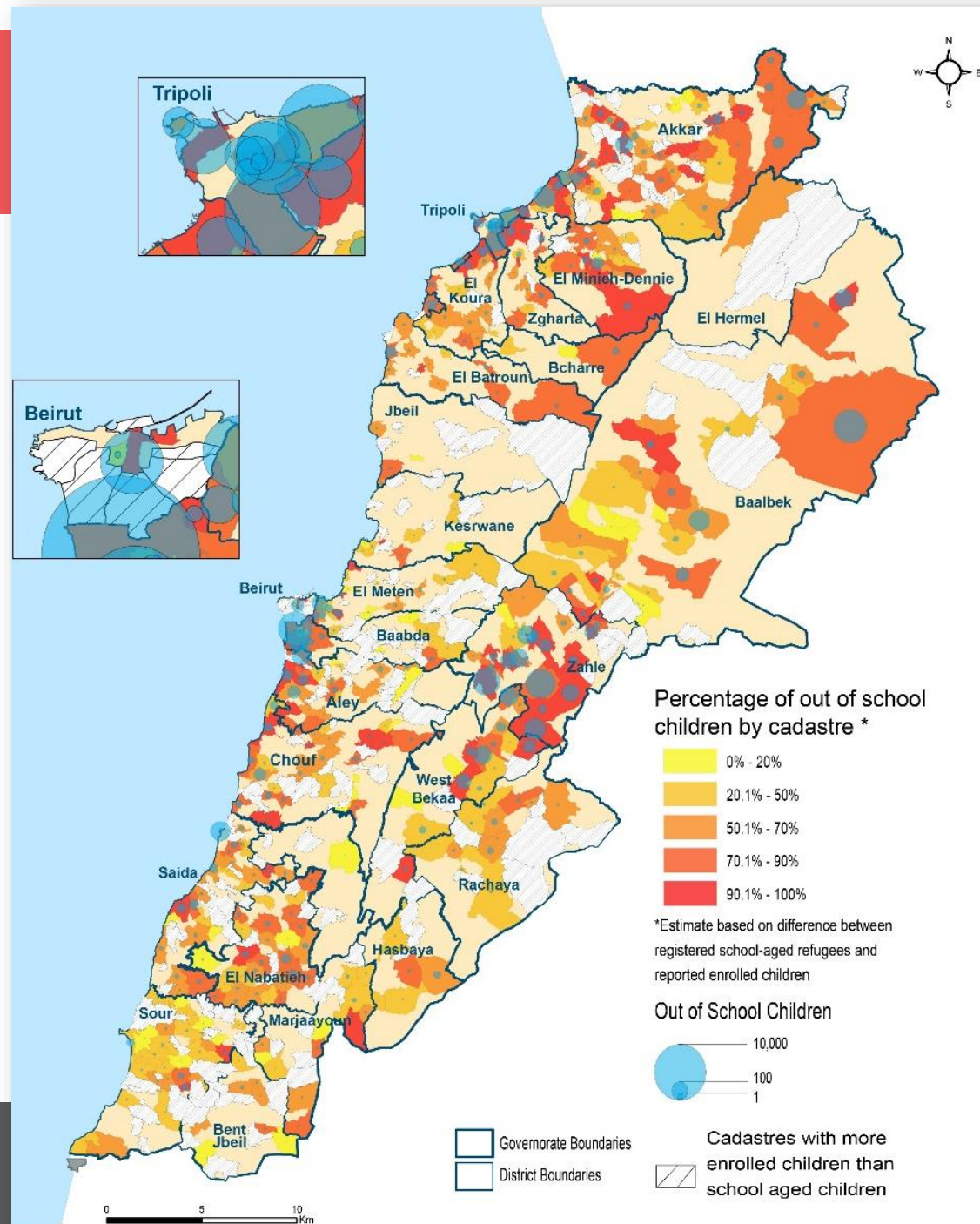
- Beirut and its southern suburbs
- Tripoli and its surrounding areas
- Parts of Akkar
- Areas around Zahle and Baalbek in Bekaa

N.B: Keep in mind data limitations

# ESTIMATED NUMBER OF OOSC

❖ More than 50% of Syrian refugee children aged 5 to 17 are out of any form of education – April 2014 (some children might be enrolled in private schools, but numbers are unknown).

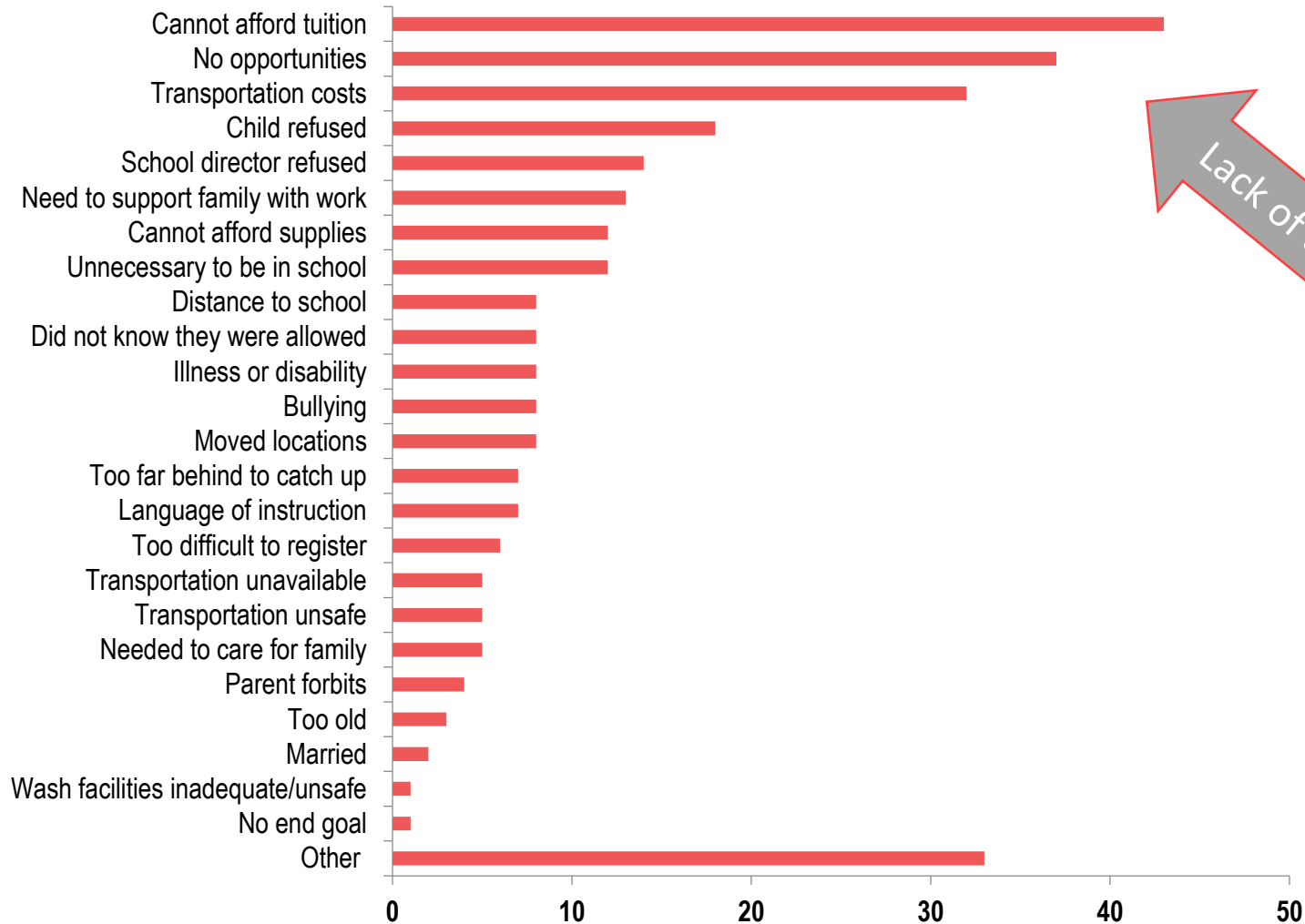
❖ The majority of Syrian refugee households would like to send their children to school.



# MAJOR BARRIERS TO ACCESSING EDUCATION AND CAUSES OF DROPOUT

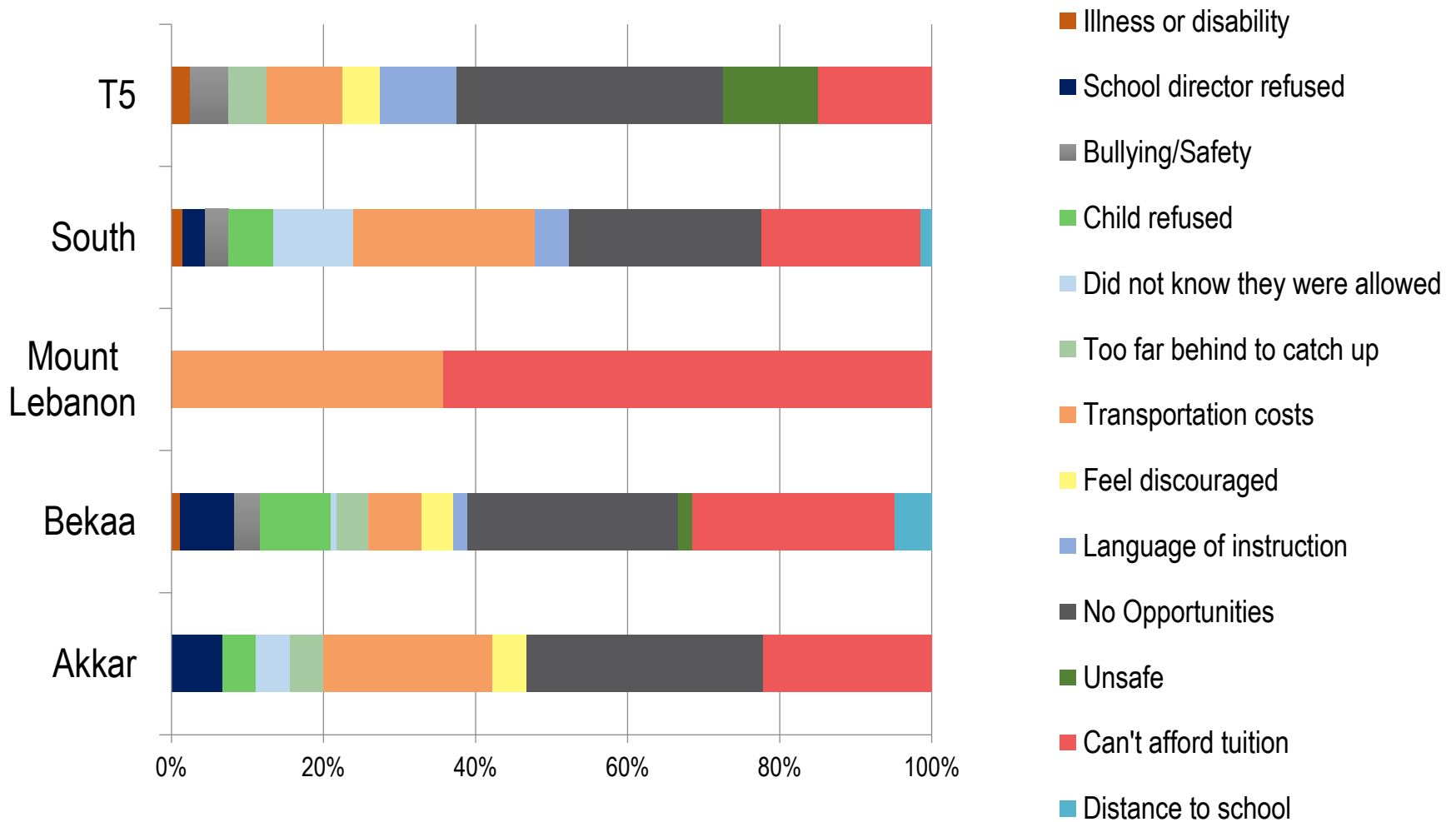
- ❖ **“Hard barriers”**: Barriers to enrolment such as lack of awareness of education opportunities or financial constraints.
- ❖ **“Soft barriers”**: Do not impede a child from enrolling but may be the cause for his or her dropout. These range from bullying and mistreatment to language barriers.
- ❖ Some barriers on Syrian refugee children can be **both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ barriers concurrently**.
- ❖ **Vary** from one region to another depending on geography, the security situation or the availability of services.
- **Relative weight of each barrier to be further assessed.**

# MAIN REASONS FOR NON-ATTENDANCE



Lack of awareness?

# MAIN REASONS FOR NON ATTENDANCE BY SUB OFFICE



# “HARD BARRIERS” OR BARRIERS TO ENROLMENT

# LACK OF AWARENESS

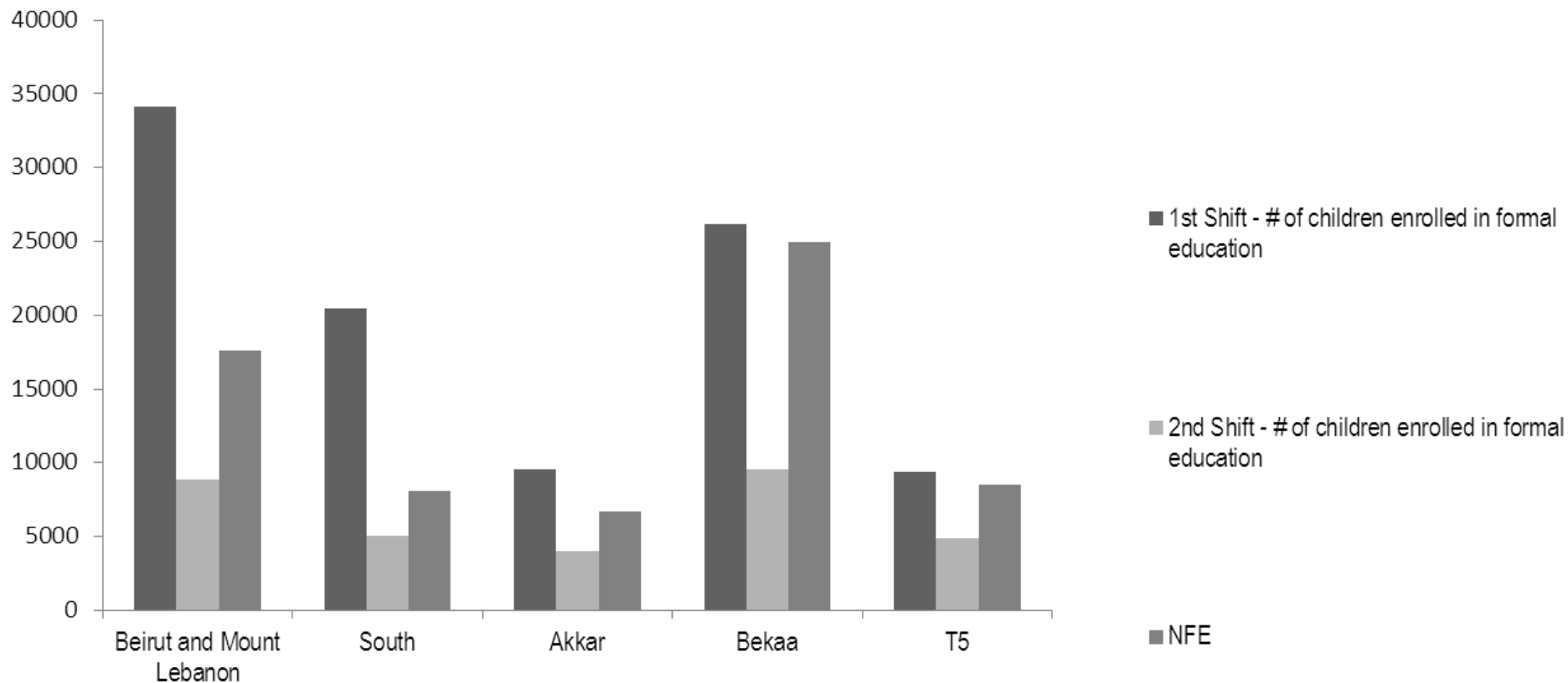
- ❖ Most prevalent barrier: ‘Cannot afford tuition’ and “No opportunities” point towards a **lack of awareness of education opportunities and funding opportunities** amongst Syrian refugees.
- ❖ Refugees living in **small shelter units** face more barriers related to costs and availability of opportunities more often than refugees living in informal settlements
- ❖ Refugees are more informed about funding opportunities after having been in the country for a significant amount of time.
- ❖ **Safety** is mentioned by respondents living in Tripoli +5 and Bekaa
- **Need to investigate further: Cost of information? Access to information more limited in scattered areas vs. high concentration areas?**



# LACK OF CAPACITY

- ❖ Uneven results
  - Arsal: major gaps in capacity. According to partners, all schools are overstretched.
  - Syrian run schools are the second type of education most attended by Syrian refugees in Bekaa
  - **First shifts, particularly in rural areas, have significant space for additional students** (cf. Akkar).
  - **Bringing public schools to capacity** with Syrian refugees in areas where they are not overcrowded is an option.
- **Need for capacity mapping at national level**

# ENROLMENT BY TYPE OF EDUCATION



# LOSS OF INCOME AND CHILD LABOUR

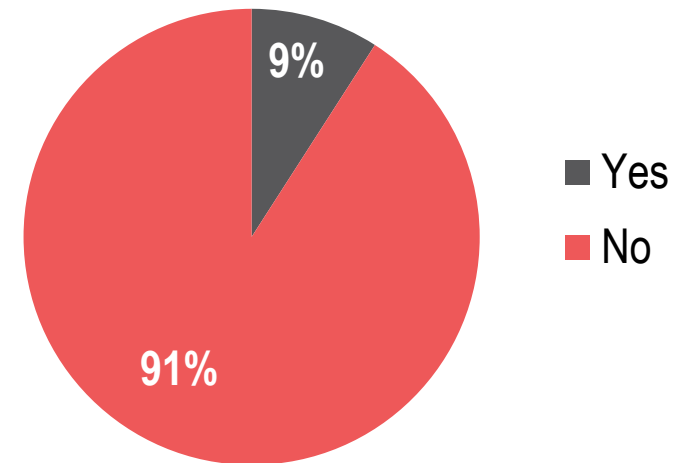
- ❖ Child labour prevalent among older Syrian children particularly those living in rural areas or informal settlements (IS).
- ❖ Some community leaders, such as *Shawishes*, preventing children from going to school as they receive financial benefit when they work.
- **Need for more life skills or vocational opportunities.**

# OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION NEEDED FOR ENROLMENT

- ❖ Some school directors **request registration information** to allow child to enroll (occurs despite MEHE's flexibility and international donor commitment to paying fees for registered and unregistered children alike)
  - > number of unregistered now lower
- ❖ The need for official documentation or proof of education in order to pass official tests is also a **major hurdle for Syrian children**
- ❖ Only 9% of parents surveyed had access to documentation proving school attendance in Syria

➤ **Need for better awareness and enforcement of MEHE's decision regarding documentation**

Access to documentation proving school attendance in Syria



# SAFETY

- ❖ In **Tripoli, Wadi Khaled, Arsaal and Dahieh**, Syrian refugees have safety concerns about having their children travel in or through certain areas due to checkpoints
- ❖ **Harassment** on the way to schools and in the bus is a major problem
- ❖ In informal settlements (IS), the inability for many children to travel due to safety concerns necessitates the **use of non-formal learning programmes within the settlements**
- **Need to gather additional data in order to better understand the education needs of these areas and to design tailor-made evidence-based programs**

# “SOFT BARRIERS” OR CAUSES OF DROPOUT

# LANGUAGE BARRIERS

- ❖ **Bilingual system** is both a barrier to enrolment and an obstacle to retention. In the Syrian education system, Syrian pupils are used to being taught all of their courses in **Arabic**.
- ❖ Language barriers also impede Syrian students from pursuing **vocational training** as technical schools have bi-lingual requirements.
- ❖ Second shift classes in public schools are taught in Arabic. Finding out how many children transition from first to second shift and why they do so is necessary.
- **Needs for more research to identify the exact grade at which Syrian refugees tend to drop out from school and understand what type of support would be most helpful to keep them in school**

# BULLYING AND MISTREATMENT

- ❖ Issues can range from verbal harassment or neglect by **pupils and staff** to corporal punishment and physical mistreatment
  - ❖ **Bullying** or, in the case of girls particularly, **sexual harassment** from both peers and drivers in public transport or school buses. Need of bus monitors or accompanying parents
  - ❖ **Scope of bullying and mistreatment is not known**
- **Need for more action on prevention and referral**



# OUTREACH

- ❖ **Insufficient outreach** which relies on either pre-enrollment lists from schools, MEHE waiting or school aged children lists, local government lists of residents, or some combination thereof.
  - ❖ Confusion of parents between types of educational programmes available
  - ❖ **Most effective outreach tools:** Refugee outreach volunteers (ROVs), community centers and SMS campaigns.
  - ❖ Communication between agencies, schools and agencies, MEHE and schools, and MEHE and agencies is insufficient.
  - ❖ High security risk areas are particularly of concern, but also substantial issues in reaching rural communities and small or highly dispersed IS.
- **Need for SOPs for adequately making referrals for education programming (between NFE and formal schools) and to improved coordination for outreach.**
  - **Need for increased technical capacity by MEHE to manage official enrollment and pre-enrollment lists.**

# COMPARISON WITH VASYR RESULTS

- ❖ Some consistency between OOSC profiling results and the 2014 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees ([VASYR](#)) in Lebanon.
- ❖ **1,567 (34%)** of children are attending school. But a **large number of school age children remain out of school.**
- ❖ The main reason why children did not attend school was **lack of financial resources**. The second reason for non-enrollment was that **schools have reached their maximum capacity**. In some areas, there were simply no schools available, or there was a lack of transportation preventing children from attending classes.
- ❖ **Reasons differed significantly by region:** while lack of financial resources was more reported in BML and the South (**44-50%**), difficulties or differences in curriculum was more common in Akkar, lack of school in the community was reported more in Bekaa and transport cost was also mentioned more in the South.

## CONTACT US

For more information about REACH:

[www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org)

[www.reachresourcecentre.info](http://www.reachresourcecentre.info)

@REACH\_info

REACH team in Lebanon:

[lebanon@reach-initiative.org](mailto:lebanon@reach-initiative.org)