



YOUTH MIXED MIGRATION IN BEIRUT

DRIVING FACTORS, LIVED EXPERIENCES, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS PILOT STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Since the middle of the last century, and due to the constant turbulent and insecure situation in some nearby countries, Lebanon has become host to migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers. Today, as a result of Palestine Naqba in 1948, the number of Palestinian refugees is estimated at around 174,422¹, out of over 500,000 registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The uprising of the war in Syria in 2011 forced thousands of Syrians to seek refuge in Lebanon, which received about 1.5 million Syrian as per the government estimates² (including 995,512 registered Syrian refugees with UNHCR as of January 31, 2018)³. Add to these numbers around 42,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria⁴, but many are no longer present in the country due to emigration. More so, thousands of Iraqi refugees fled to Lebanon via Syria as a direct result of the instability and violence that followed the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Statistics for Iraqi refugees in Lebanon vary. While the Beirut office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that approximately 40,000 Iraqis are currently in Lebanon, security officials in the Lebanese Ministry of Interior and Municipalities estimate the number as closer to 100,000⁵.

It is well known that during times of conflict and humanitarian situations, adolescents and youth are among the most vulnerable and affected populations. A situation analysis of youth in Lebanon affected by the Syrian crisis conducted in 2014⁶ confirms these vulnerabilities, i.e. separation from social and community networks, including family; discontinuation of formal and non-formal education; loss of livelihood; weakened security and protection mechanisms and networks; disruption of, or decreased access to health services and adaptation to a new environment.

OBJECTIVES

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has partnered with the Danish Refugee Council's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4MI), on a broader regional scale, to collect primary data on the policy and service needs of young migrants in four urban hubs – Beirut, Cairo, Tunis and Nairobi. The four cities have been selected in view of their current experience in facing major forced and voluntary mobility, both internal and international, but also given that they represent locations where UNFPA has strong country support programs.

The main objective of the study was to generate new and timely data on the situation of youth refugees and migrants in Greater Beirut⁷, as they seek integration and opportunities.

The specific objectives of the study were:

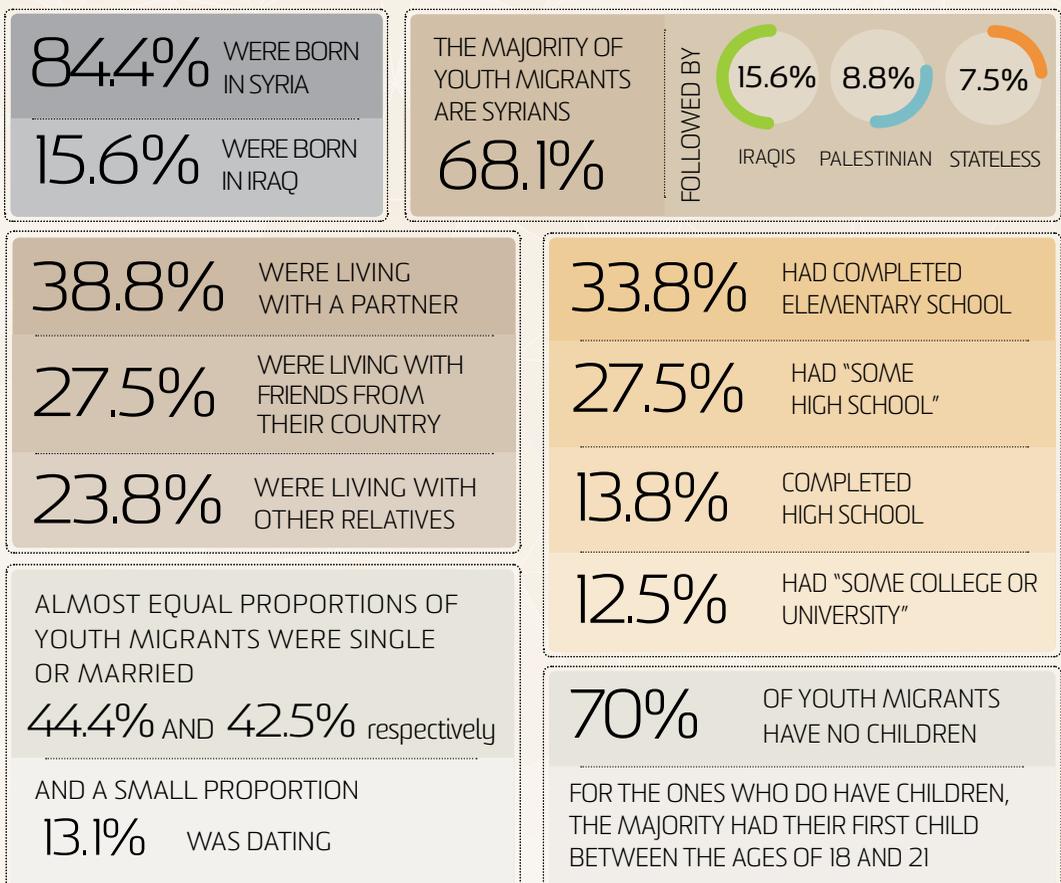
- To identify the drivers of youth migration, including both push and pull factors, among youth migrants in Greater Beirut, and
- To determine the service needs, experiences, and accessibility issues of youth migrants in the areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), youth empowerment, and Gender Based Violence (GBV).

METHODOLOGY

The Beirut Mixed Migration project is part of a multi-country initiative. The study included a quantitative and a qualitative part. It utilized a cross-sectional design and was conducted in the area of the Greater Beirut. Data collection targeted migrants (15 to 24 years) of three nationalities: Palestinians (Non-Lebanon origin), Iraqis, and Syrians. It included a closed-ended questionnaire to collect quantifiable data on the drivers and experiences of migration from 160 youth migrants (80 males and 80 females), in addition to in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with service providers as well as female and male migrants. A two-stage process was applied, where during the first stage a list of primary locations and hotspots in Greater Beirut was generated and this list was used during the second stage to guide data collection and respondents selection at or around these hotspots.

FINDINGS

I. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH MIGRANTS

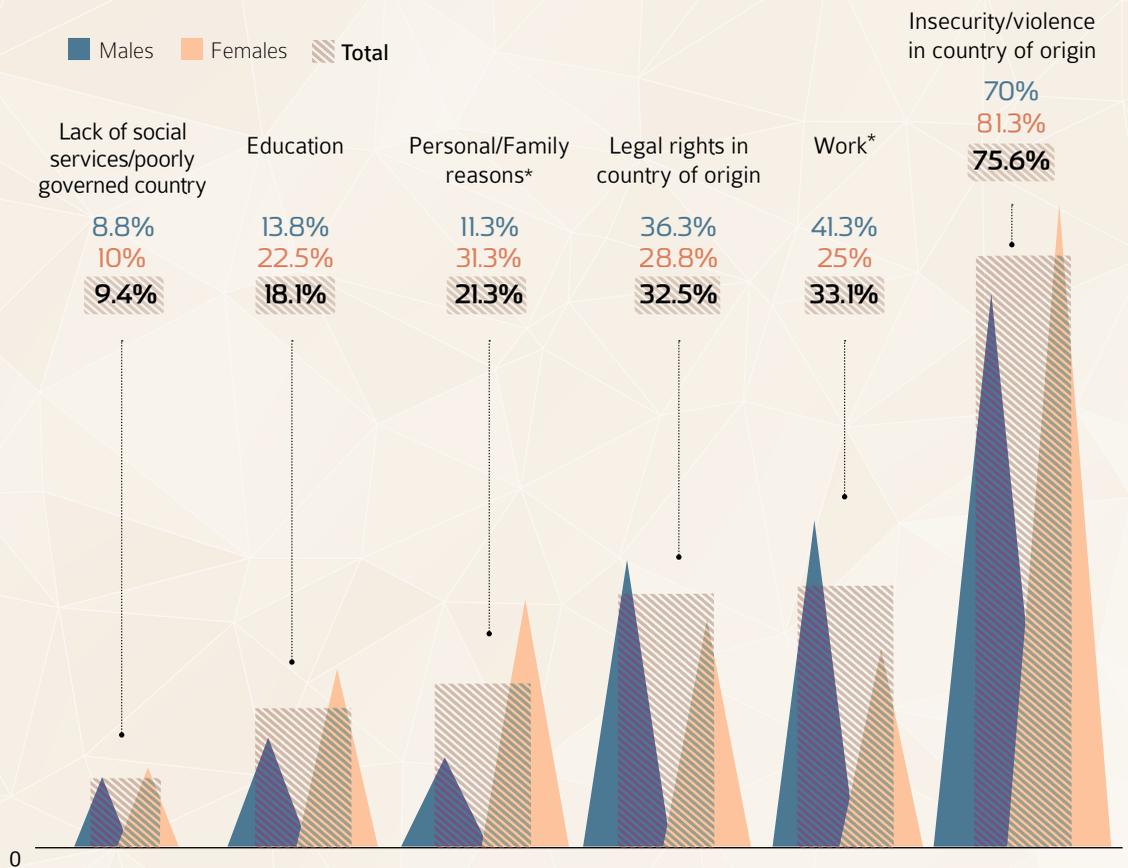


II. PUSH AND PULL DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

*"My husband said that we have to flee because the war is getting worse. We held out for a while and then we had to leave the country... A lot of our relatives left Syria."
Young Syrian woman*

"Insecurity and violence in the country of origin" was the most commonly-cited primary driver that pushed the immigrants away from their country. Other important drivers included work, legal rights in country of origin and personal/family reasons. Significantly more males said they left their home country for work related reasons; while significantly more females left for personal/family reasons.

FIGURE 1: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY PRIMARY MIGRATION DRIVERS AND SEX



*Significant difference at 0.05 confidence level between males and females (P value <0.05)

As for the main drivers that might have pulled the youth migrants into their host country, these include the following:

76.3%

said they received encouragement from family/friends to migrate.

72.3%

had at least one family member or friend living in host country.

51.3%

received positive feedback from family members or friends on the new life they started in the host country.

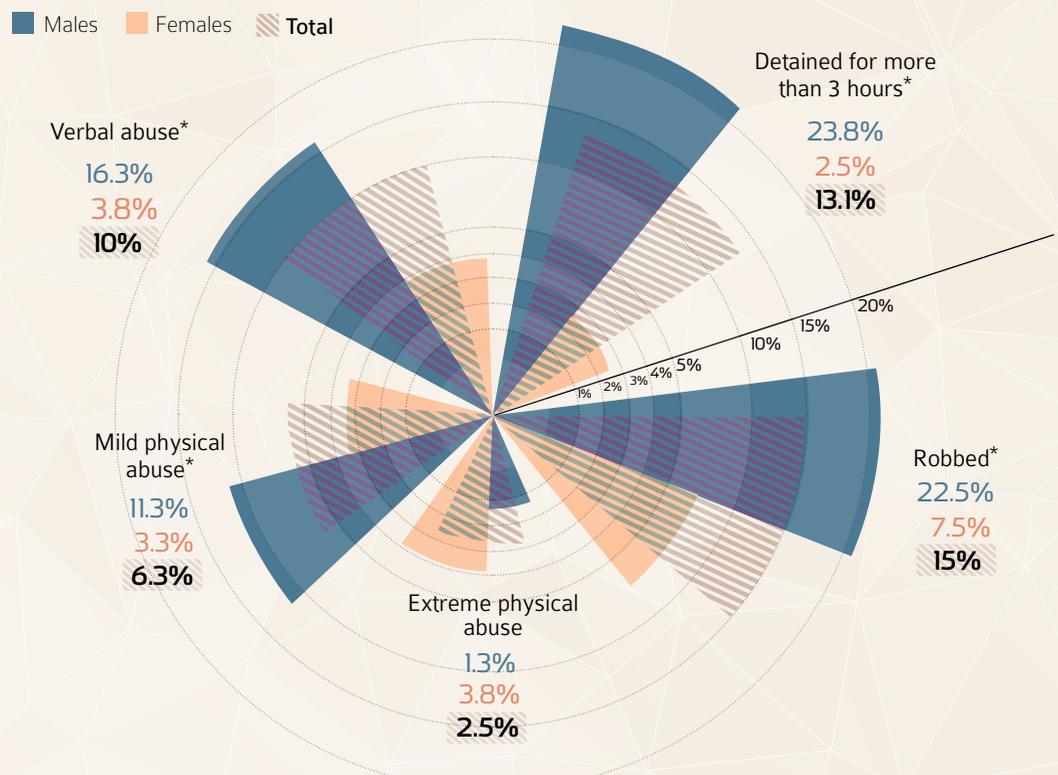
III. DIFFICULTIES AND ABUSE FACED DURING MIGRATION JOURNEY

"We came by bus, the way was too long... there were a lot of checkpoints. All the way, I was scared to death that someone would arrest my husband at the checkpoints."

Young Syrian woman

The youth migrants experienced various degrees of difficulties and abuse during their journey such as being robbed, detained, and subjected to verbal abuse and mild physical abuse, all the way to extreme physical abuse. On most of these instances, males were significantly more affected than females.

FIGURE 2: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY INCIDENTS EXPERIENCED DURING JOURNEY AND SEX



*Significant difference at 0.05 confidence level between males and females (P value <0.05)

IV. LIFE IN GREATER BEIRUT

"...There is more freedom for the Lebanese women than the Iraqis... Perhaps because the society here is more open, modern, and western, while in Iraq everything is immoral. It is unethical for a woman to work in many careers, she must have a curfew, must not sleep outside the house, and a lot of other things."

Young Iraqi woman

The majority of the youth migrants said that life in Greater Beirut has been more difficult than expected and did not meet their expectations. Yet, **57.5%** said that they would still have migrated knowing what they now know. There were no significant differences in the expectations between males and females.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY LIFE EXPECTATIONS IN GREATER BEIRUT AND SEX

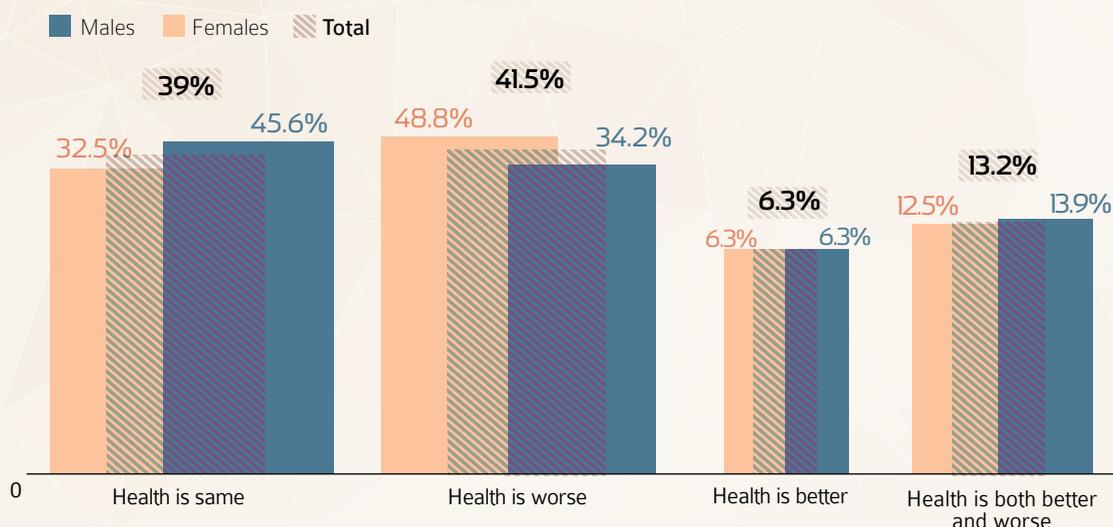
TIME IN THIS CITY HAS BEEN	MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL		P-value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
MORE DIFFICULT THAN EXPECTED	61	76.3	58	72.5	119	74.4	0.776
AS EXPECTED	15	18.8	16	20.0	31	19.4	
LESS DIFFICULT THAN EXPECTED	4	5.0	6	7.5	10	6.3	
THE LEVEL OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THIS CITY							
DID NOT MEET MY EXPECTATIONS	65	82.3	58	72.5	123	79.9	0.212
MET MY EXPECTATIONS	13	16.5	16	20.0	29	18.8	
EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS	0	0.0	2	2.5	2	1.3	
WOULD YOU HAVE MIGRATED KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW?							
YES	53	66.3	39	48.8	92	57.5	0.057
NO	9	11.3	18	22.5	27	16.9	
MAYBE	18	22.5	23	28.8	41	25.6	

V. HEALTH STATUS, BARRIERS AND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

"My health and the physical situation here differ a little from what I had in Syria. It's deteriorating, not improving." Young Syrian man

The majority of youth migrants indicated that their life in Beirut is worse than their life in their country of origin (**41.5%**) whereas **39%** indicated it was still the same. There was no significant difference between males and females.

FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR SELF-REPORTED HEALTH STATUS CHANGE IN BEIRUT AND SEX



- 62.9% of youth migrants ever visited a health facility or health care professional of any kind in this city.
- 47.8% said there were times where they felt they should have sought medical help but could not with the main cited reason being "not having enough money to pay".
- 18.2% felt that staff working in a health facility in greater beirut treated them or their friends in a manner that made them feel upset with the main cited reason being "their origin".
- 13.2% said they have been denied access to a health facility in the city with the main cited reasons being "a foreigner" and "unable to pay".

VI. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH)

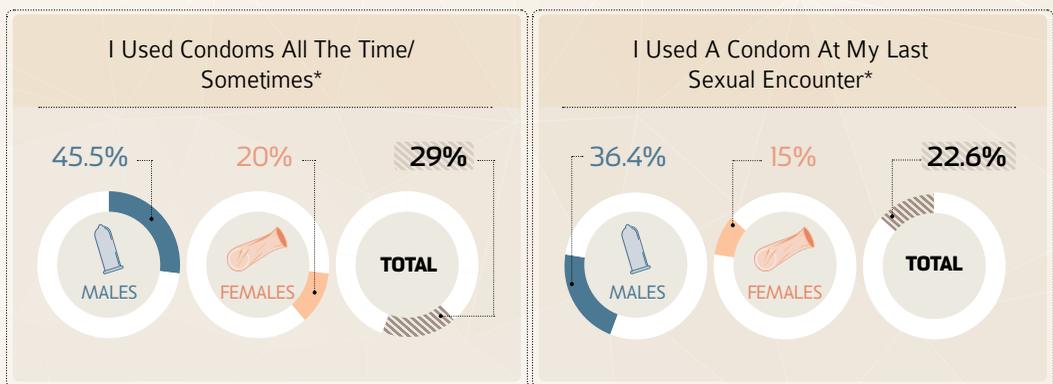
► SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- The most important source of information on **SRH** as cited by youth migrants consisted of friends (**39.6%**), followed by the mother (**16.2%**), and other family members (**15.5%**)
- Only **10%** of the migrants said that they ever had any form of comprehensive sexuality education at school
- **57%** said that they feel they are well informed when it comes to **SRH**
- **39%** said they learned something new about **SRH** since they arrived to Lebanon.

► PRACTICES, KNOWLEDGE, AND ATTITUDE

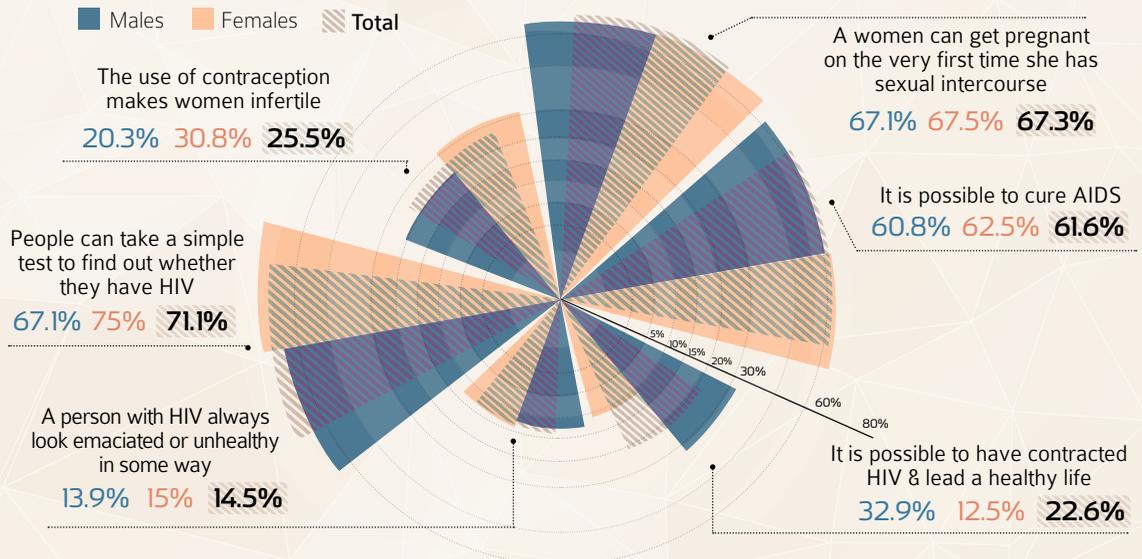
- **93** youth migrants (**58.5%**) said they ever had sexual relations, and **45** (**67.2%**) indicated they are currently sexually active. Figures 4, 5 and 6 represent the distribution of respondents by **SRH** related variables on practices, knowledge and attitude.

FIGURE 4: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS WHO EVER HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BY SRH RELATED PRACTICES AND SEX



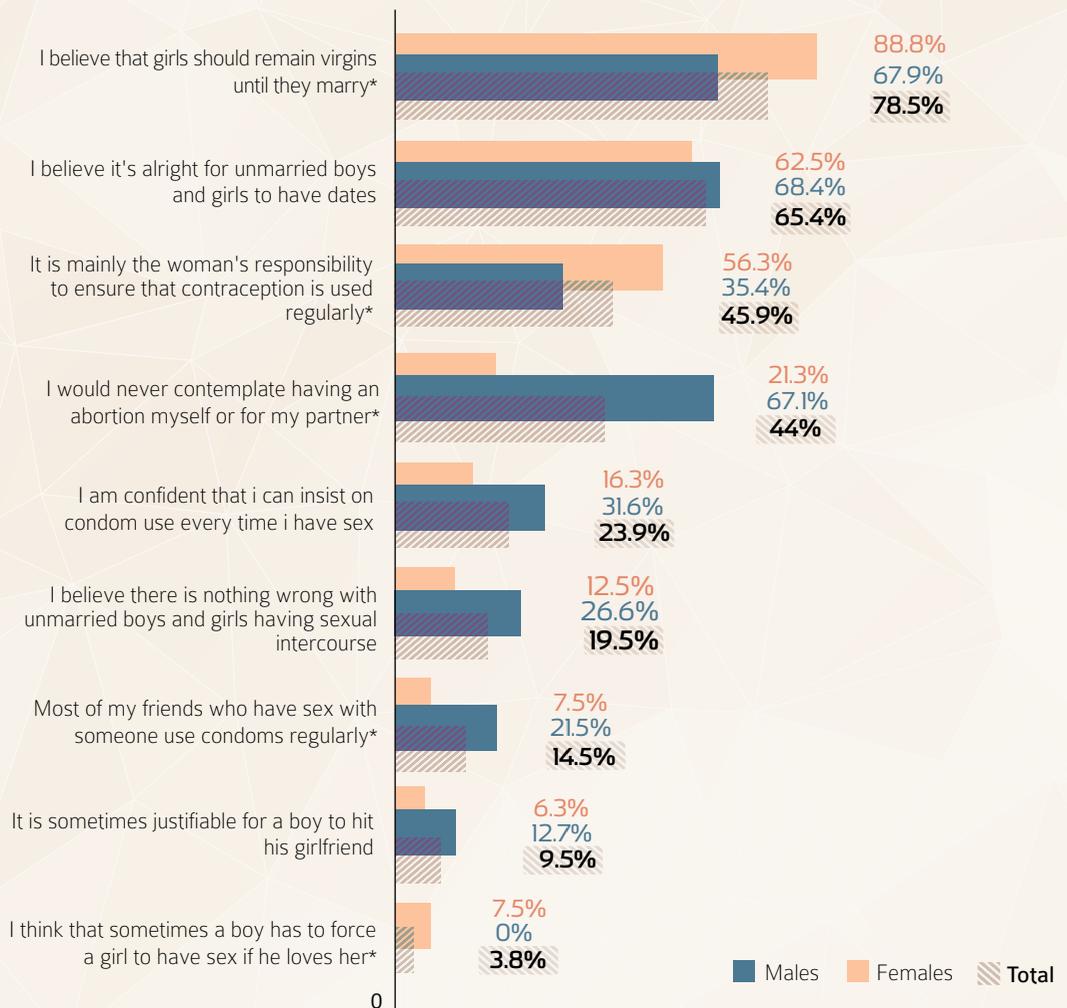
*Significant difference at 0.05 confidence level between males and females (P value <0.05)

FIGURE 5: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON SRH KNOWLEDGE RELATED VARIABLES BY SEX



*Significant difference at 0.05 confidence level between males and females (P value <0.05)

FIGURE 6: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF SRH ATTITUDE RELATED VARIABLES BY SEX



*Significant difference at 0.05 confidence level between males and females (P value <0.05)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The present pilot study could be replicated on a larger scale to include a greater sample representing all the different categories of migrants in Lebanon.
- Provide a comprehensive service package including psychosocial, health and legal support; this can be done through referral systems between different sectors or by creating one-stop centers.
- Youth migrants in the city require comprehensive sexuality education, and should benefit from gender-based violence prevention programs that tackle inequitable norms.
- Provide information about how and where youth migrants can access contraception especially for the sexually active ones.
- Since finances seem to constitute the main barrier to access healthcare, efforts should be made to secure free healthcare to all.
- Healthcare providers in various health facilities must be sensitized and receive proper training to eliminate discrimination against youth migrants' rights to access healthcare.

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¹State of Palestine, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, New census: 174422 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?tabID=512&lang=en&ItemID=3013&mid=3171&wversion=Staging>

²OCHA, Lebanon Overview (February 2016):file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/25022016_LebanonOverview%20(1).pdf

³Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122> (Accessed on 20/2/2018)

⁴UNRWA, registration numbers as at January 2016. See: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), The Situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, February 2016, p.2: <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/56cc95484.pdf>

⁵Assyrian International News Agency (AINA), Invisible Lives: Iraqis in Lebanon (Posted 2007,04.09): <http://www.aina.org/news/2007049133807.htm> (Accessed on January 4, 2018)

⁶Situation Analysis of Youth in Lebanon Affected by the Syrian Crisis, April 2014. UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, UNHCR. <http://www.unfpa.org.lb/Documents/Situation-Analysis-of-the-Youth-in-Lebanon-Affecte.aspx>

⁷Greater Beirut is the urban agglomeration comprising the city of Beirut (Beirut Governorate) and the adjacent (municipalities) over the Mount Lebanon Governorate.

Greater Beirut is the major migration hub where youth migrants and refugees are disproportionately clustered and their needs can easily outstrip available resources.