



Project funded by the European Union



Project title: Civil Society in Action for Sustainable Development.

Donor: European Union

Contracting Authority: The Ministry of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR)

Contract Number: ENPI/2016/375-264

Task: Analysis and delivery of results and compilation of the Survey "Youth responses towards sustainable development in Lebanon"

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A. Background & Process

The Project "Civil Society in Action for Sustainable Development" is led by the Makhzoumi Foundation in Lebanon within the AFKAR III-Programme: *"Reinforcing human rights and democracy in Lebanon and Active citizenship-Increase active citizenship"*. It is supported by the EU and managed by the Ministry of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR). The Project aims at fostering socio-economic sustainable development in the West, Mid and North Bekaa regions of Lebanon, through raising public awareness, empowering the capacities and skills of locals, and enhancing energy efficiency solutions in the communities. It covers different levels of interventions, including awareness raising, education, vocational training and other services as well as a survey about the *"Youth responses towards sustainable development in Lebanon"*. The survey task is coordinated by the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development ([MIO-ECSDE](#)). MIO-ECSDE has a long experience in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and since, 2002 is coordinating [MEdIES](#), the *"Mediterranean Education Initiative for Environment & Sustainability, a Type II Initiative on ESD, launched in the Johannesburg UN Summit on Sustainable Development"*.

The survey's tool was a questionnaire developed by the MEdIES experts based on:

- (I) The Mediterranean-wide online survey *"Mediterranean Youth Responses towards sustainable development and the current crisis"*, led by the UNESCO Chair and Network on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean/University of Athens, and MEdIES, under the scientific coordination of Prof. Michael Scoullas in 2015, (<http://medies.net/articles.asp?cID=27&aID=1107&ereg=>)
- (II) A desk study that took place in August-September 2016 on the recent research and papers about the young people's perceptions and behaviors related to sustainable development (see Bibliography in Annex iii).

The draft questionnaire was elaborated by the Makhzoumi Officers during the meeting organized back-to-back with the Kick-off Meeting of the project on 21 September 2016. The draft was adapted and then, it went through a **validation** process as following:

- (i) **External evaluation**: Evaluated by five experts on ESD: three members of the International MEdIES Task Group, one Education Officer of the Bekaa region, and one UNESCO Officer on ESD.
- (ii) **Pilot application** by 15 students giving comments and feedback.

Following the validation's results, the questionnaire was finalized by the MEdIES team and translated then into Arabic by the task team of the Makhzoumi Foundation. The final tool was distributed in the target-schools (December 2016 – February 2017). Totally, 1.053 students in the Bekaa region participated in the survey by completing the questionnaire.

B. Objectives

The overall scope of the survey is to track the youth's perceptions about sustainability-focused issues and educational problems, as well as their vision for the near-future.

More particularly the objectives and the respective questions of this survey were:

1. To find out the youth's acquaintance and understanding of the **concept** of sustainable development.
2. To identify the issues related to sustainable development and education that are **of concern** among the youth.
3. To outline whom and what behaviors and practices the young people link to the issues and problems related to unsustainability.
4. To trace what practices related to sustainable development the youth identify in their schools (if any).
5. To outline what ways the youth considers as effective for enhancing their role in dealing with the sustainability challenges.
6. To identify: (a) The sources of information and media the youth uses, (b) Which of these media and sources of information they consider as reliable and influential to the public.
7. To trace the youth's personal vision for the (near) future.

C. Sample

The survey engaged 1.053 students of secondary schools in the Mid, North and West Bekaa region in Lebanon. The respondents had the following demographic profile:

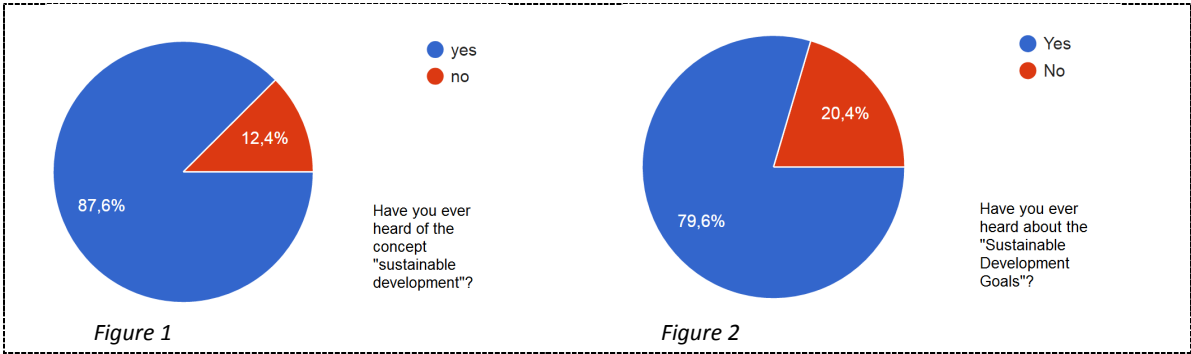
1. Almost two thirds were **girls** (62%).
2. In terms of age range, the great majority aged between **14-16** years old.
3. **Lebanese** was the dominant nationality of the respondents (92,5%) followed by the Syrian (5,6%).
4. Almost half of them live in the West Bekaa, while one third live in the North Bekaa, and the rest in the Middle Bekaa region.
5. About half of them had never taken part in any **voluntary** activity; however, the other half declared that they had a related **out-of-school, non-formal education experience** e.g. in scouting, in pro-environmental and peace activities.
6. Regarding the father's occupation: "**employee**" was chosen by the 35,6% and "**merchant**" by the 30,4% , while "**housekeeper**" was chosen by half of the respondents for the mother's occupation, and the 31,1% chose "**unemployed**".

In Annex i the full data about the demographics are presented in diagrammes.

D. Results

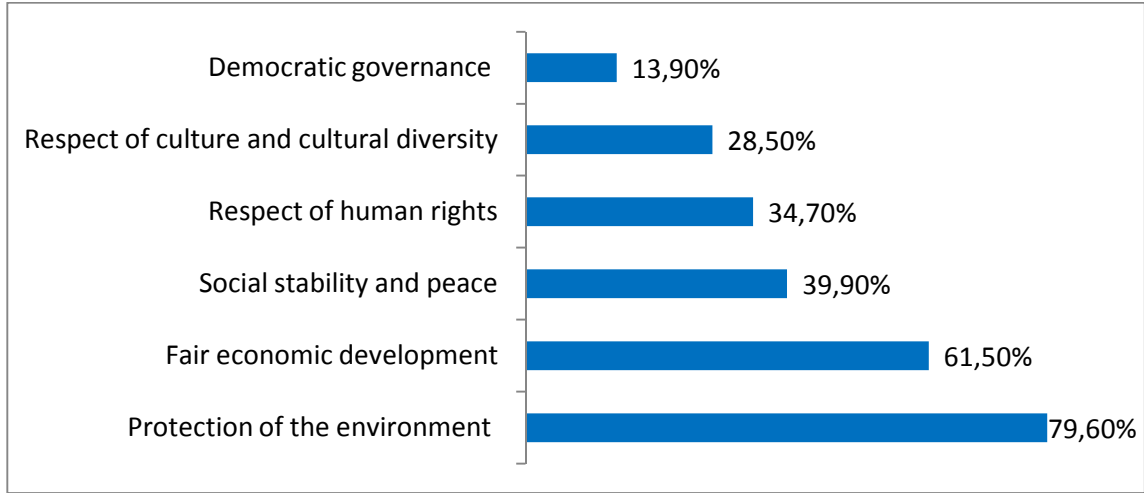
Objective 1. Youth’s acquaintance and understanding of the concept of sustainable development

Regarding the responses related to the youth’s acquaintance with the concept of “sustainable development”, the 87,6% of participants replied that they have heard about it. Additionally, the 79,6% replied that they have heard about the term of “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” (figures 01 and 02).



Moving on with the understanding of the pillars/dimensions of sustainable development, the majority (80%) is recognizing “the protection of the environment” as a component of sustainable development. The “economic dimension” of sustainable development was identified by 62% of the respondents while the social one (“social stability and peace”) by the 40%. “Respect of human rights” and “respect of culture and cultural diversity” are following and chosen by the 34,7% and 28,5%, respectively. Noteworthy to mention is that only one out of seven chose “democratic governance” among the components of sustainable development (Fig. 3)

Figure 3. Which of the following do you think that are included in “sustainable development”?

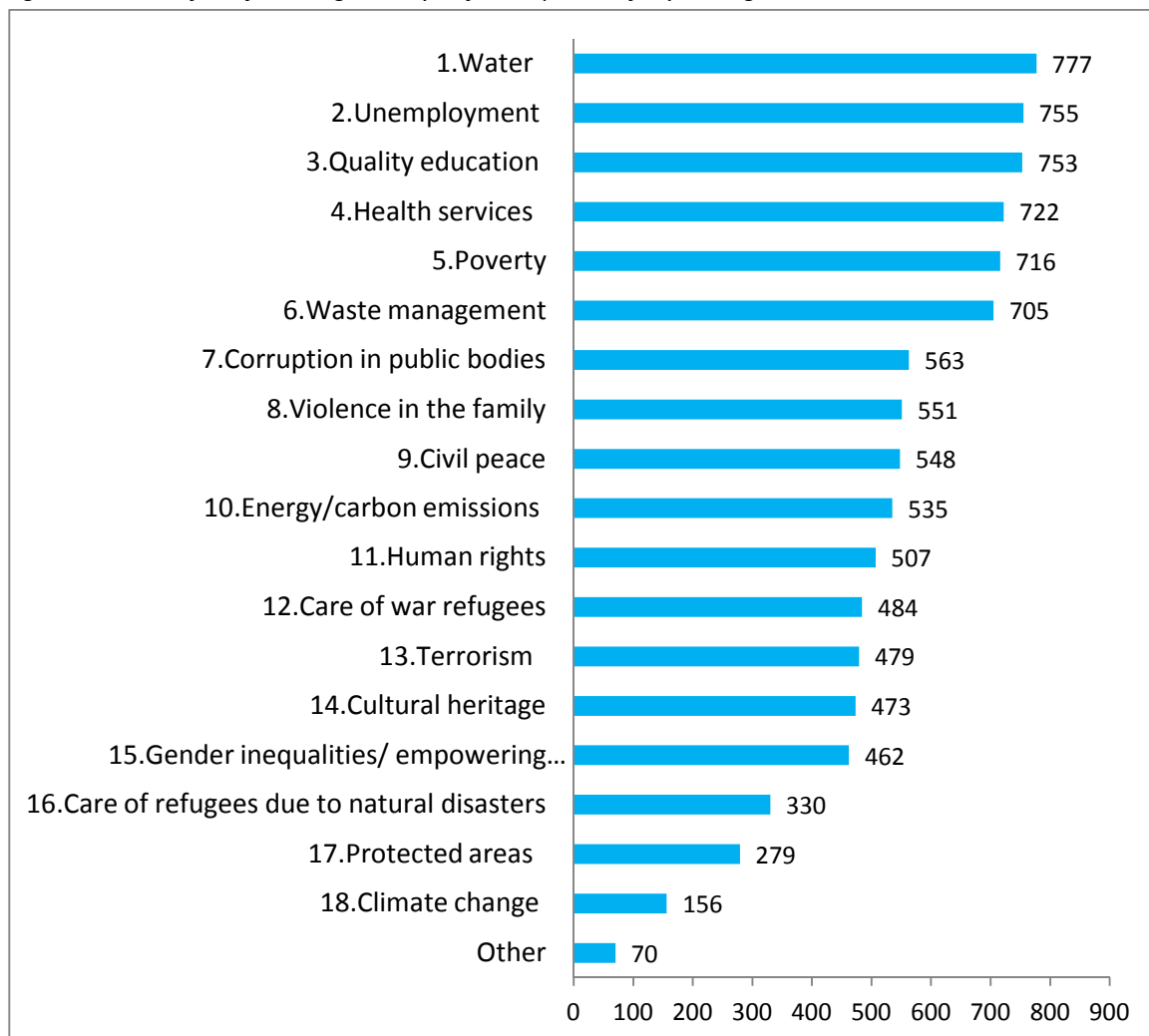


Objective 2. To identify the issues related to sustainable development and education that are of concern among the youth

Two items of the survey's tool: question 4 and 5 correspond to the second objective. More particularly, question 4 was about the issues the youth consider as important for the region they live. It seems that the issue of "**Water** of adequate quantity and good quality" comes first in their concern (73,8%), followed by the "Reduction of **unemployment**" (71,7%) and the "Quality **education** for all pupils" (71,5%). In other words, it seems that the young Lebanese are worried today about water security, employment as well as quality and inclusive education. The health care system (68,6%), poverty (68,2%) and the issue of waste management (67%) are of great importance for them, as well. About half of them consider the "corruption in public bodies", the "violence within the families", the "social understanding and peace", the "energy issue" and the "human rights" important for the Bekkaa region.

However, the issues related to the "Care of war refugees" scored not as high as expected (46%) despite the fact that the Bekkaa region is actually one the refugee-recipient regions of the country. Noteworthy to mention is that "Climate change" came last in their choices (14,8%).

Figure 4. Which of the following issues you find important for your region?



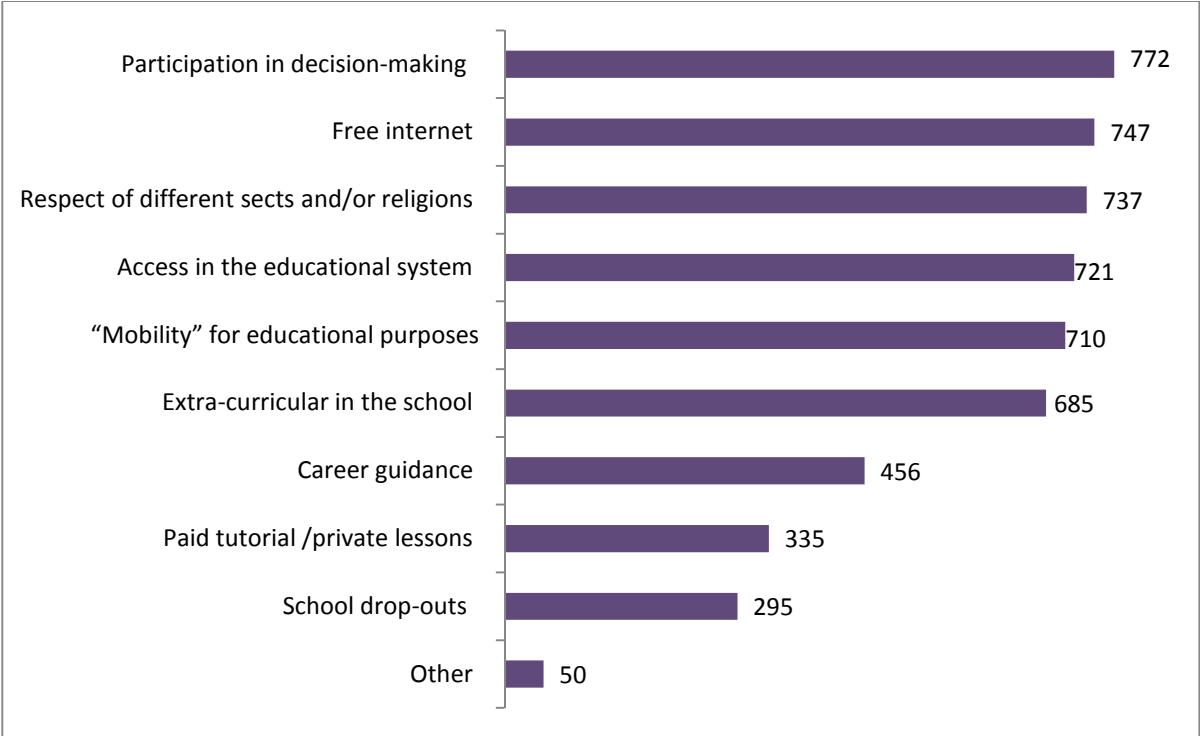
Coming to the educational issues of importance for the youth (question 5) the following issues came first in their choices, with small differences in the respective percentages, and namely, the “Students’ participation in the school **decision-making** processes” (73,3%), “Access to free **internet** at school” (70,9%), and, “**Respect** of different sects and/or religions” (70%).

It seems that the need for “Paid tutorial” (e.g. private lessons) is not concerning the youth so much (31,8%), while the “School drop-outs” was the last, identified only by the 28% of respondents.

Additionally, about two out of three selected as important educational issues the “Provision for equal opportunities in educational for all”; the “Provision of opportunities for “mobility” for educational purposes”; and, the “Existence of extra-curricular activities in the school (i.e. on environmental topics, cultural activities, etc.)”.

More analytically, the educational issues that seem to be important for the youth today in the Bekaa region are presented in Figure 5.

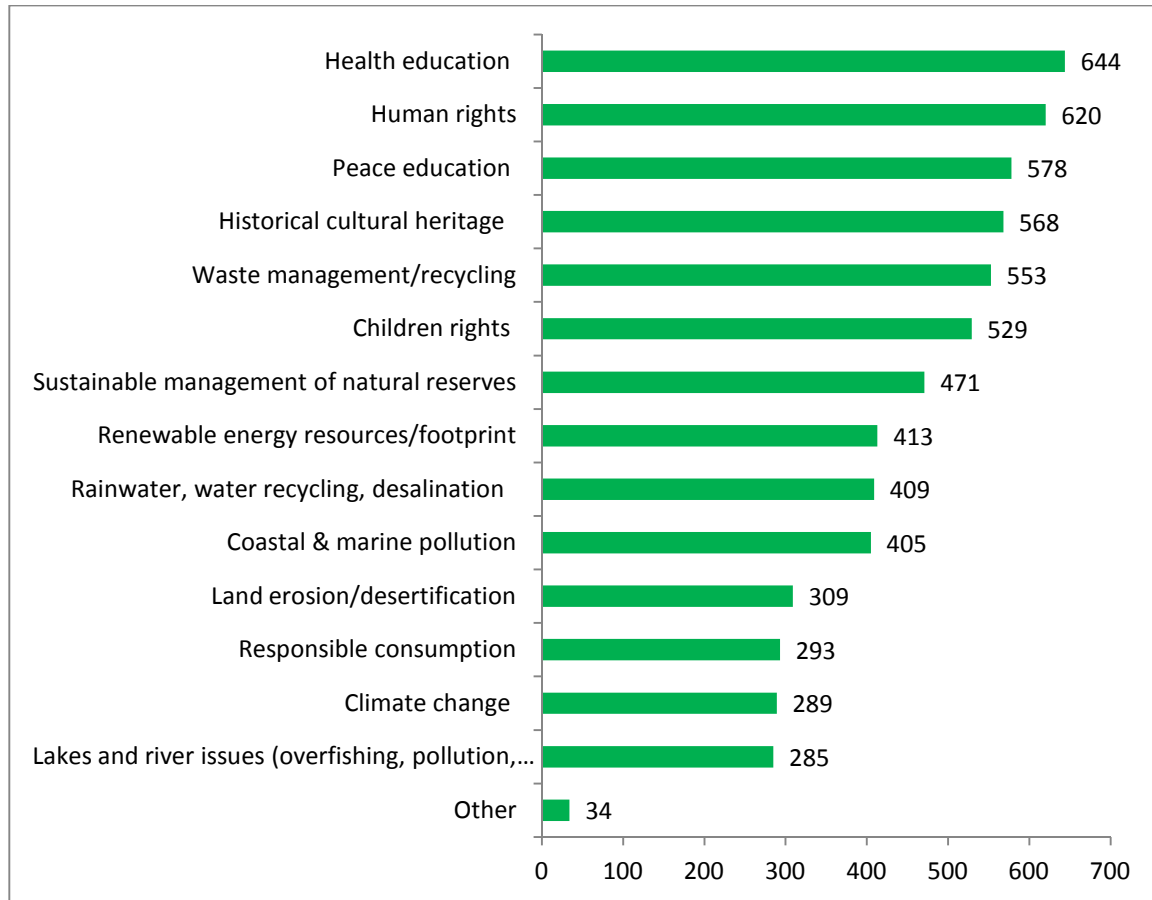
Figure 5. Which of the following educational issues you think as important for your region?



Additionally, the youth was asked to select the topics (related to sustainable development) which they wish to learn more about at school (question 6). Their choices showed that they wish to learn more about “**Health** topics” (61,2%), “Human **rights**, tolerance, respect and citizenship” (58,9%) and “**Peace** education” (54,9%).

Last in their choices came the “Pollution and overfishing of rivers and lakes (27,1%)”, “Climate change (27,4%)” and “Responsible consumption (27,8%)”. “Climate change” came last also in question 4 about the topics of importance of their region; it seems that the respondents have not adequately valorized the climate change issue yet.

Figure 6. Which of the following topics you would like to learn more about at school?



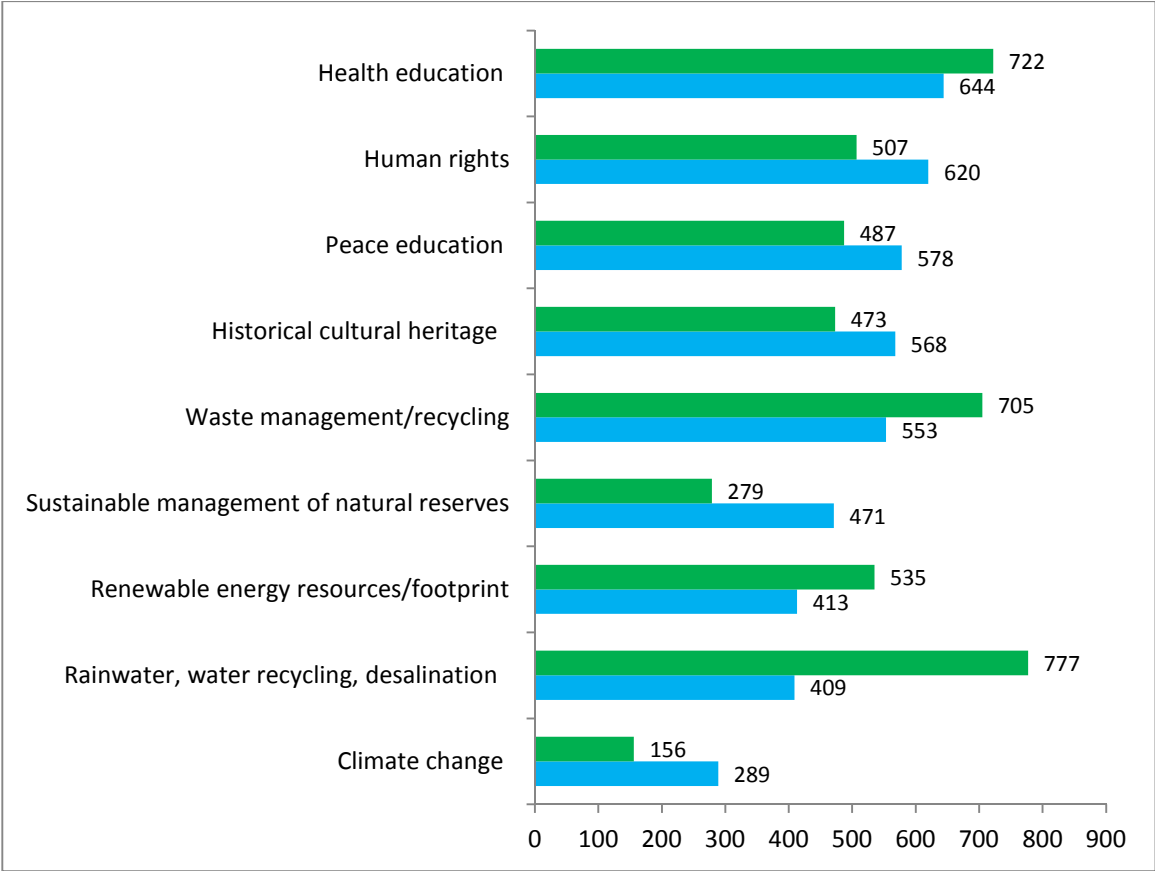
It is interesting that “Health issues” scored also high in question 4 about *the most important issues for their region*. However, while the majority chose “Water of adequate quantity and good quality” as the most important issue for the region, it seems that they did not choose to learn more about how to secure this: the non-conventional water resources practices (rainwater harvesting, water recycling, and desalination) were chosen by only the 38,8%.

Additionally, while the topics related to human rights were second in their preferences to learn more about, they were only 11th in the issues of importance for their region. A similar case is the topic of the historical/cultural heritage that it came 4th in their choices to learn more about, but only 14th as of issue of importance for their region.

However, the sustainable management of waste scored the 5th place as a topic they wish to learn more about and the 6th place as an issue of importance for the region.

Figure 7 presents in the same diagramme the identified topics that the youth consider as important for the Bekaa region (the blue bars) and the topics they wish to learn more about at school (the green bars).

Figure 7. *I think ... is important for my region & I wish to learn more...*



Objective 3. To outline whom and what behaviors and practices the young people link to the issues and problems related to unsustainability

A group of fifteen sub-questions under item 7 were included in the survey in order to trace which the young people consider are the responsibilities related to sustainable development challenges (many of them identified under Objective 2 in figure 4). To this end, the sample was asked to express the extent to which they agree (or disagree) with the given set of 15 statements. From the KMO and Bartlett's test that were conducted, the data were found to be suitable for conducting factorial analysis. So, the answers were analyzed by Factor Analysis, using Varimax's (*main component analysis*) key component analysis (*rectangular*) rotation. In addition, the indicator of "Cronbach α " expressing the intercorrelations among the surveys items (questions) was measured 0.644, that is consider as "questionable"; This can be explained by the fact that that the sub-questions of question 7 were intended to present an internal variation in order to provide a wider spectrum of information.

The factor analysis of question 7 revealed three main factors that seem to influence the respondents' opinions when asked about the responsibilities related to environmental crisis and problems of unsustainable patterns of production, consumption and development. The first factor is related to the attitudes acknowledging the **impact of unsustainable consumption and production patterns** to the degradation of the environment; and the need to change consumer behaviors. The following four sub-questions corresponded to factor 1:

7.13. The over-exploitation of natural resources causes a serious threat to the ecosystems and the welfare of current and future generations.

7.4. I would like to invest in switching to energy efficient light bulbs.

7.15. There is a need to change society's symbols of "success", helping the shift from consumerism towards less materialistic values

7.1 My consumption choices concern only myself and have no impact on the quality of life of people in other countries.

The second factor was related to **personal responsibility** and **willingness to commit themselves** into pro-environmental behavior and activities in line with sustainability. The following five sub-questions corresponded to factor 2:

7.14. I am willing to persuade my family to pay an environmental tax through the bills for e.g. supporting clean energy, water treatment projects, etc

7.11. I am willing to inform my family and friends about sustainable development and involve them in local activities

7.12 People as voters and consumers have responsibilities for the promotion of policies in favor of environmental protection and for their application

7.6. I would like to reduce water consumption in my everyday activities

7.10. My everyday life activities are not so important for the protection of the environment.

The third factor was related to the **responsibilities attributed at the "social" level**: the impact of the activities and behaviours of the neighborhood and the local community, the public, and the governance. The following five sub-questions corresponded to factor 3:

7.7. The different authorities do not cooperate to achieve the environmental protection and economic and social prosperity of my region.

7.9. The government does not apply any kind of development that is adequate to protect the natural resources: water, energy, biodiversity, etc

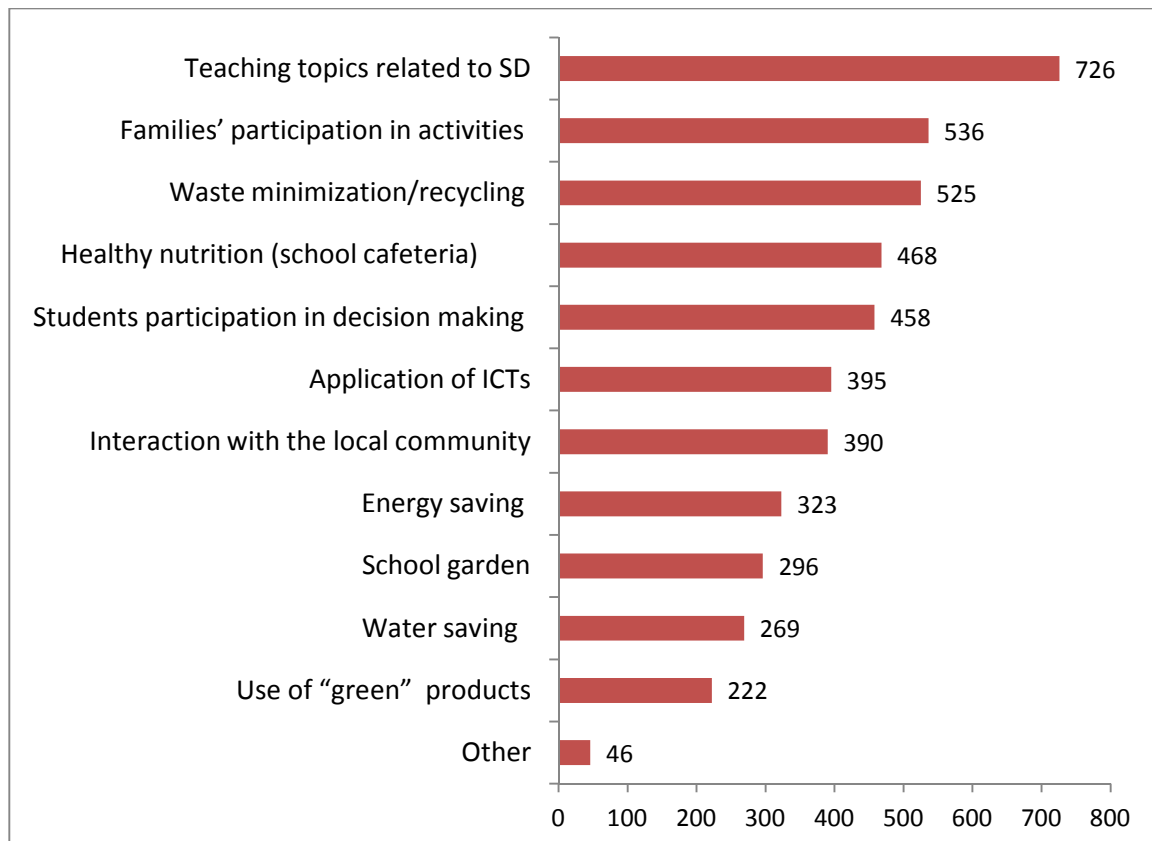
7.2. Sustainable development is not yet understood by the people in my region.

7.8. There is no point for people getting involved in efforts that address environmental issues since big companies and industries have the power and do whatever they want.

Objective 4. To trace what practices related to sustainable development the youth identify in their schools (if any).

In question 9 the respondents were asked to identify the practices that are applied in their school, even not so frequently, and that are in favor of Education for Sustainable Development. Their choices showed that **“Teaching the topics related to sustainable development within the school subjects”** (i.e. in Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Science, Home Economics, Civics/Citizenship, History) was identified as the most common practice in place to promote sustainable development (68,9%). Indeed, teaching and learning about sustainability is the starting point. Nevertheless, it is evident that in order to develop attitudes and behaviours compatible to sustainable development apart from the knowledge base, the school’s practices, governance and management need to be in line with the principles of sustainability. In this framework, it is important that half of the respondents selected the practice of **“Families’ participation in school (extra-curricular) activities”** (50,9%). Less than half (43,5%) chose that their school has **“Students’ committees and that student participate in decision-making”** (43,5%) and maybe this explains why this was the educational issue scored first in question 5 (*Which of the following educational issue you find important for your region?*). **“Healthy nutrition”** is promoted in the schools’ cantinas in many cases (44,4%) and **“Waste minimization & recycling”** is a common practice, as well (49,9%). It is noteworthy that water saving practices are applied by only one out of four schools (25%) despite the fact that the water issue was identified by the youth as the first important problem of their region (question 4). Also, the 37% replied that there is some kind of **“interaction with the school neighborhood and the local community”**.

Figure 8. Which of the following practices are applied in your school?



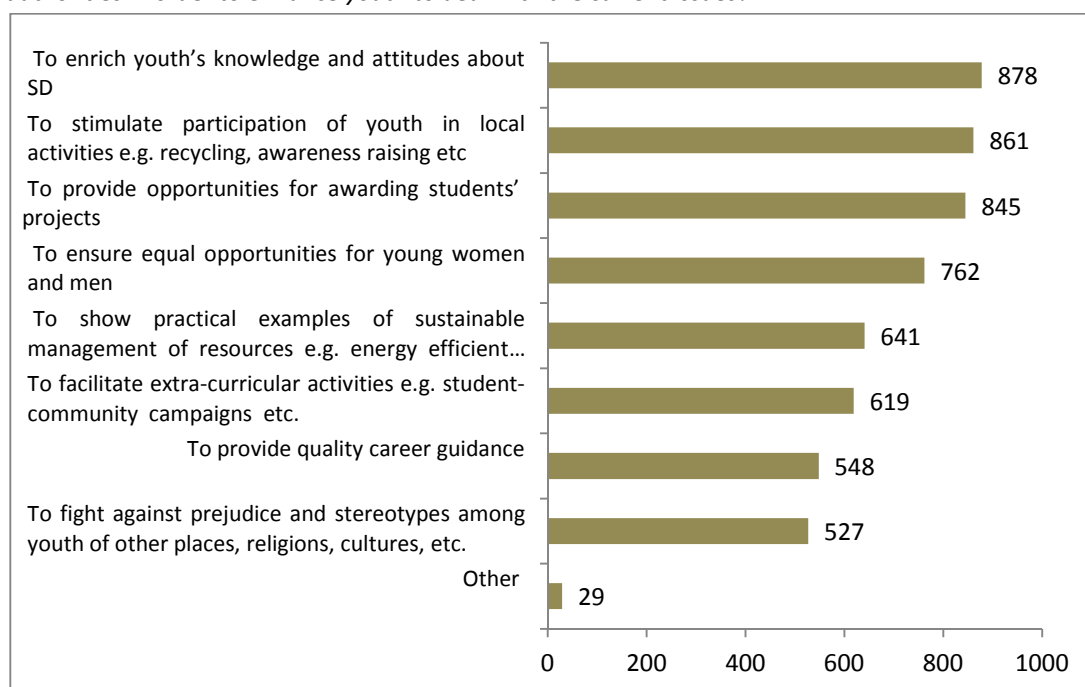
Objective 5. To outline what ways the youth considers as effective for enhancing their role in dealing with the sustainability challenges

Question 8 was dedicated to this objective highlighting the practices that the youth consider as necessary to be taken by the local and the government authorities, in order to enable the young people in dealing with the current issues (as identified previously in the results under Objective 2). The majority (83,4%) considers as the effective way to empower young people **“To raise their awareness (develop knowledge and attitudes) about sustainable development”** and **“To gain experiences through their participation** in awareness raising activities at the local level” (81,8%). The 80,2% of respondents considers also important for their empowerment **“To be given opportunities for awarding their projects”**. So, it seems that the **“triad” “knowledge-participation-rewarding”** is considered as the most effective enabling factor. Nevertheless, the participation in local activities and the interaction with the local community is applied only by the 37% of the schools, as it was shown in the results under the Objective 4.

Furthermore, the provision of equal opportunities to both boys and girls, in general, and the access to quality education, in particularly, scored high as an enabling factor (72,4%) (forth in their choices) as well as one of the important educational issues (having the forth place – see Objective 2).

Noteworthy to mention is that only half of the respondents acknowledged **“The fight against stereotypes and prejudices among the young people (of different origins, cultures, religions, etc)”** as important to empower them, coming last in their choices.

Figure 9. Which of the following practices you find necessary to be taken by the local and the government authorities in order to enhance youth to deal with the current issues?



Objective 6. To identify (a) the sources of information and media the youth uses (b) Which of these media and sources of information they consider as reliable and influential to the public

The youth was asked about the sources of getting their daily news. As expected, the TV and the Internet and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are prevailing. Particularly, the “television” came first in their choices (84,8%) followed by the “social media” (76,2%) and “online news sources” (68,1%). “Friends and family” seem also to be important sources of information for the respondents (68%), while the “traditional” press (magazines and newspapers) are scoring very low in their preferences (only 9,2% and 6,2% respectively).

Going into more details about the ICTs and in particularly, the applications that the youth mostly use on a daily basis, it seems that “whatsApp” (93,3%) followed by “facebook”(81,2%) are the ones mostly used to communicate and to get informed.

Furthermore, it is very interesting that “the media” -meaning all the aforementioned sources of information- seem to be the most influential to the public opinion according to the 77,1% of the respondents. The “political parties” are the second to influence mostly the public opinion (chosen by 67,4%). Interesting is also the fact that “youth movements” were chosen by half of the respondents as influential for the public opinion formulation. The later may result from period and events of the “Arab Spring”.

Figure 10. Which of the following you think that influences mostly the public opinion?

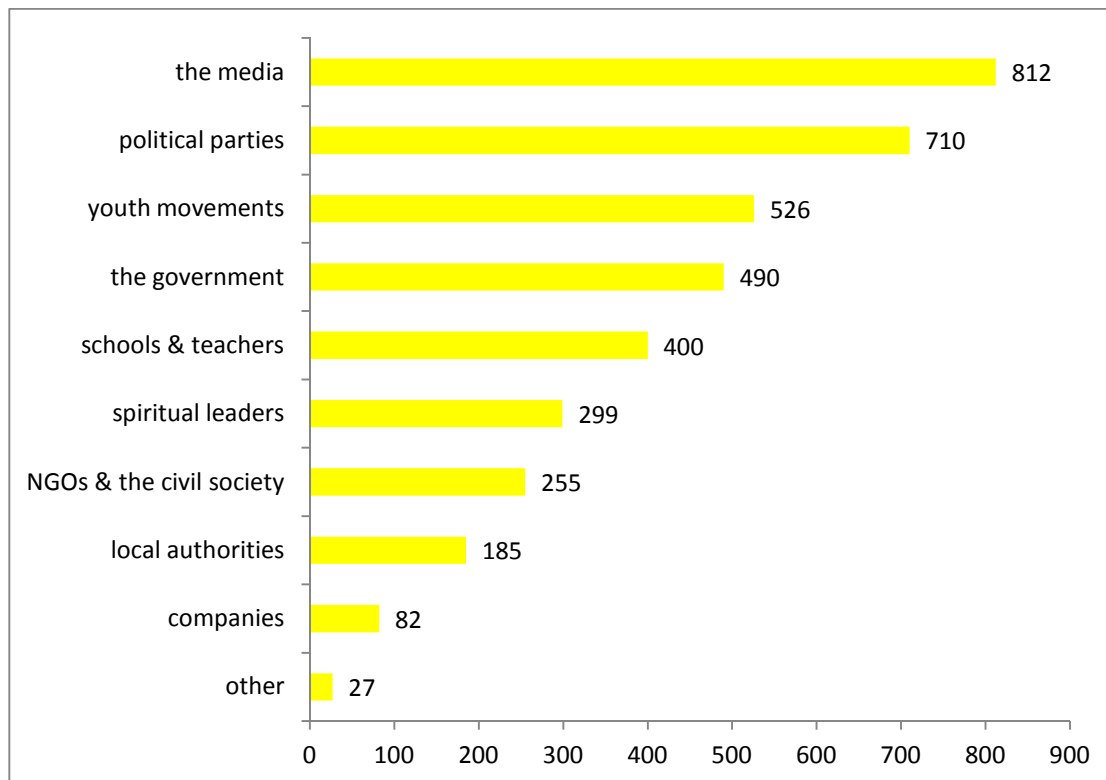
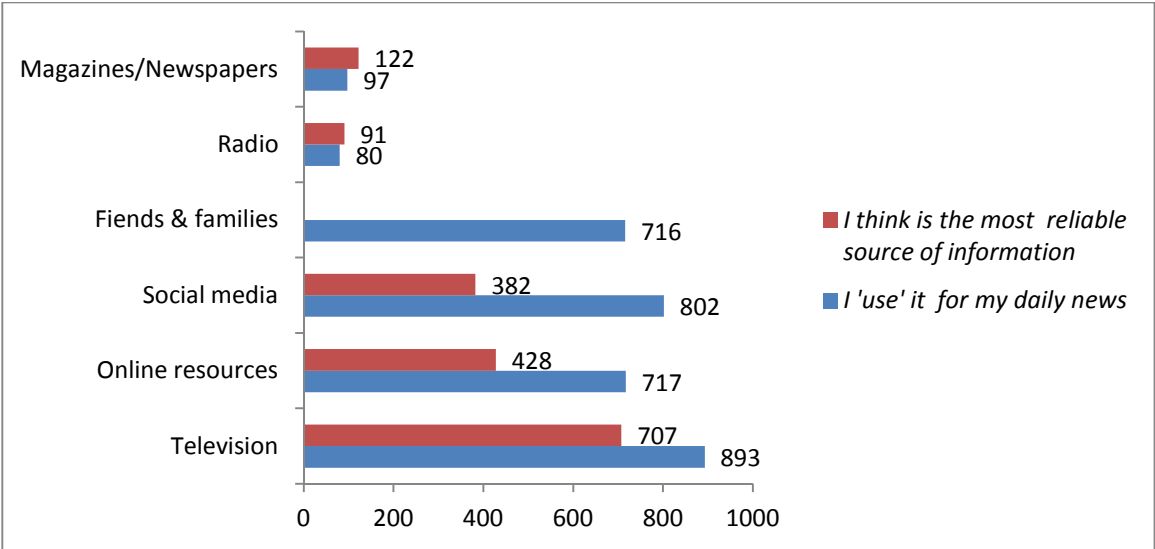


Figure 11 is compiling the responses in both questions about the sources of information reliability and use. Interesting is that the first two sources of information, the “television” and the “internet resources” are also considered as the most reliable sources of information in another question, with 67,1% and 40,6%, respectively. The 38,7% considers “the schools and teachers” as the most reliable source of information, and the “social media” were chosen as the most reliable by the 36,3%.

Figure 11. Which of the following sources of information (i) you use for your daily news (ii) you think is the most reliable?



Objective 7. To trace the youth's personal vision for the (near) future

The last item of the survey was an open-ended type question asking the youth to freely express what they wish to happen in the near future, e.g. in the coming ten years. A qualitative analysis of this question revealed three trends in the youth's visions:

(a) The first trend is about the achievement of personal wellbeing and happiness, through "prestigious" jobs, high societal status, good economic situation, etc. This **"ego-centric" approach** of the vision scored **45,9%**. Some characteristic responses are presented below: In 10 years from now I wish ...

"To be an officer at the army and to be married and have kids"

"I wish to become one of the big politicians"

"To have completed my education and specialized in a field I love and that my parents encourage"

"To be an officer in the General Security; I would also like to have a big house and a nice car"

"To be successful and to be a respectable professional so I can help my parents financially"

(b) The second trend includes not only the achievement of personal happiness and fulfillment but also the socio-economic welfare and sustainability acknowledging the personal responsibility in the achievement of these. In simple words, they see themselves, their profession and/or studies they will choose, as part of the way sustainable development is going to be approached. It is very interesting that the **37,5%** of the respondents expressed a very strong sense of responsibility and ownership; they wish to become a **responsible citizen** with a profession having a humanitarian/environmental/activism aspect in order to contribute to the efforts towards sustainable development. Some characteristic quotes are following: In 10 years from now I wish..

"To be active in society and working in my specialty, living in a safe country governed by peace and security both physical and financial"

"To fight corruption in my society in order to have a country that is free of corruption".

"To be an efficient member of society that spreads the notion of sustainable development to new generations and that participates in activities that move the society and lead to improvement and excellence"

"To be a contributor in solving environmental issues and spread awareness among people on how important the environment is"

"To live in a developing and advanced environment, having a say in changing society and decrease of pollution (garbage crisis) and to raise awareness through joining NGOs about sustainable development"

(c) A third trend focuses to the social welfare, peace, maintenance of natural resources, good governance, and respect of the human rights. This **"socio-centric approach"** of the vision scored **16,6%**. The youth wishes that issues like: *"peace among the countries"*, *"social peace"*, *"decrease of unemployment"*, *"elimination of the waste problem"*, *"drugs issue elimination"* to be resolved. However, in this cluster of responses they do not express any kind of commitment for the

achievement of these targets/wishes. Some characteristic responses are following: In 10 years from now I wish ...

“To be in a clean country that is free of conflict and that provides the needs of its citizens and in which people treat each other with respect regardless of religious belief”.

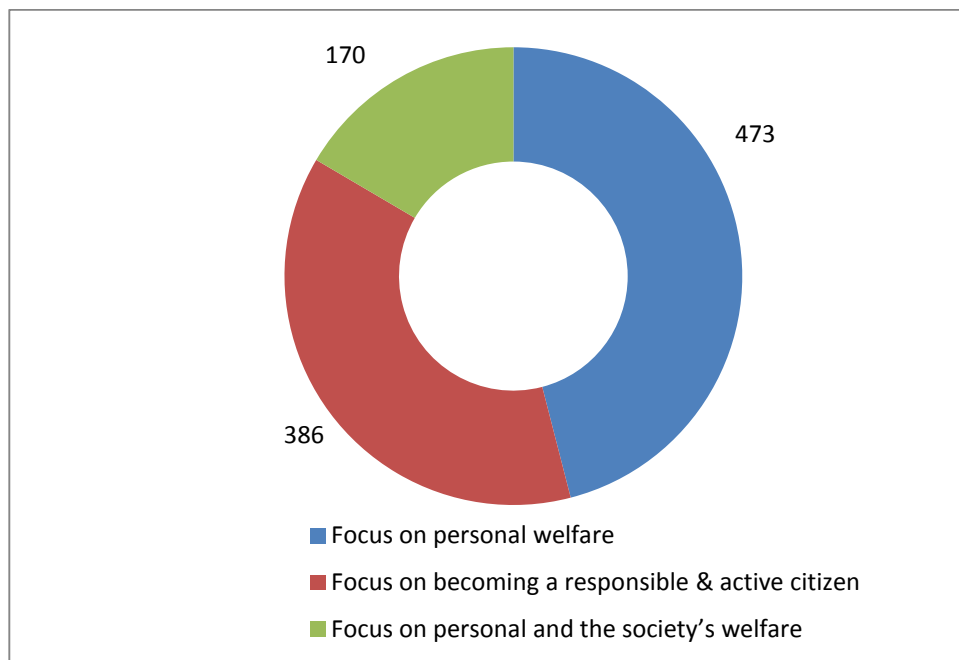
“To have a clean environment that helps protect us from diseases”.

“To be in a society based on equal opportunity, stability, and human rights including women and child rights”.

“To be in a developed society full of peace and cleanliness and respect regardless of religious beliefs”.

“To be in a society that is free of domestic violence and guarantees women rights and equates her to men. From an environmental point of view, i want a society that is free of garbage and full of green spaces which reflects on the environment in general (water pollution, soil...)” .

Figure 12. What is your vision for the future? Share your ideas about the ideal future for you personally ...



E. Compilation of the results & Discussion

The results of the Descriptive Statistical Analysis (questions 1-6, 8-11) together with the Factor Analysis (question 7) and the qualitative analysis (question 12) outline a picture of the youth in the Bekaa region who:

I. Are aware of the concept of sustainable development, particularly of its three “traditional” pillars: ***environment, economy and society***; However, it seems that only one out of three recognizes “respect of the human rights” and “culture” among the components of sustainable development and, a much lower percentage identifies the “democratic governance”. However, the majority have heard about the SDGs.

II. Consider ***“Water” “Unemployment” and “Quality education for all”*** as the most important issues that their region is facing today; Health services, poverty and waste management problems are also of concern for them, while the “war refugees” seem not to be considered so important as expected.

“Students’ participation in the school decision-making processes” is considered by them as the most important Educational issue, today, followed by the “Open access to **internet** at school” and, ***“Respect of different sects and/or religions”***.

III. Wish to learn more about ***“Health topics”, “Human rights/citizenship” and “Peace education”*** among the topics related to sustainable development; The “sustainable management of waste” seems to be considered as an issue of importance for the region and a topic they wish to learn more about at school, as well, in contrast with the “climate change” that has scored very low as issue of concern and as a topic they wish to learn more about.

IV. Seem to have ***a strong sense of civic responsibility and awareness of their behaviors’ impact*** (as consumers, etc.) to the environment and society, as well as increased willingness to commit themselves into behaviors and activities in line with sustainability; Two out of three believe that there is an urgent need to change the society’s symbols of success and to shift away from the materialistic/consumerism ones. They particularly acknowledge the impact of unsustainable consumption and production patterns to the degradation of the environment; the importance to commit themselves into pro-environmental behaviors and activities in line with sustainability; and they identify also the responsibilities of the local community, the citizens as voters, and the government/authorities in the sustainability challenges.

V. Identifies ***“Teaching the sustainability topics within the school subjects”*** as the most common practice that is taking place at school to promote sustainable development.

VI. Considers the “triad: ***knowledge – participation - rewarding***” as the most effective enabling factor for the youth in order to deal with the current challenges.

VII. Gets informed on a daily basis by the ***“television”*** and the ***“online resources/internet”*** and considers these two also as the most reliable sources of information; The particularly considers “the media” as the most influential to the public opinion, followed by the “political parties” and the “youth movements”.

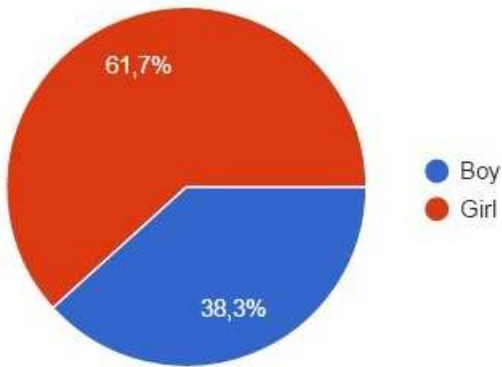
VII. Seems to be divided as far as their near-future vision is concerned: approx. 54% envisages **personal happiness together with social welfare, peace, maintenance of natural resources**, good governance, respect of the human rights and they see their personal contribution in these targets as **active/responsible citizens**; While a 46% is wishing only for their personal welfare.

The results of the survey seem to agree with the 3rd Edition of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) 2017 Survey about “Intercultural trends in the Euro-Mediterranean region” in which thousands of youth participated; More than 80% of respondents thought that Education and Youth Programmes fostering youth-led dialogue initiatives and supporting youth participation in public life would be effective measure to deal with conflicts and radicalisation. Additionally, they majority chose television as their trusted source (as in the present survey).

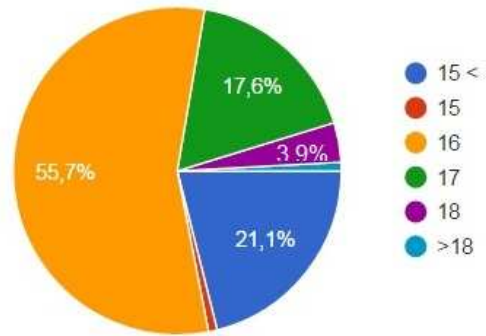
At this point is noteworthy to mention that the results of the present survey seem to be in line with the outcomes of the **1st Meeting of the Mediterranean Committee on Education for Sustainable Development** that took place on 22-24 November 2017 in Cyprus; During this meeting more than 60 representatives of Ministries of Education, Environment, Civil Society Organisations and International Organizations stressed the importance of engaging the Youth in the consultation and **participation processes** about **decision-making on Education**. The meeting also called for educating the students in the international processes and frameworks as important participatory processes (more information about this meeting can be found here: <http://medies.net/articles.asp?clD=8&alD=1165>)

F. ANNEXES

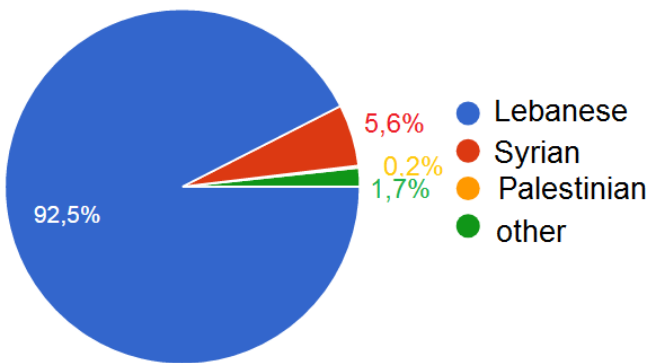
ANNEX I. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE SAMPLE



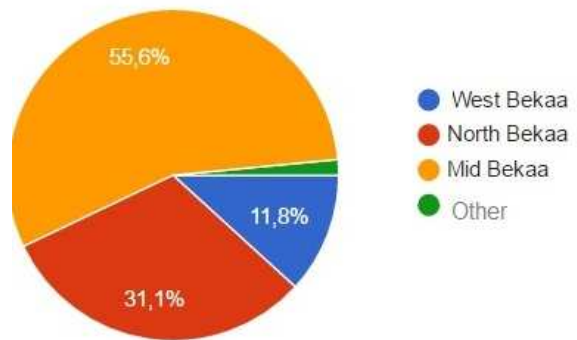
Gender



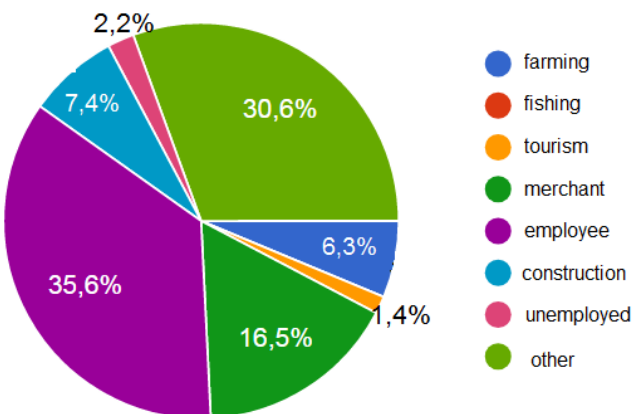
Age



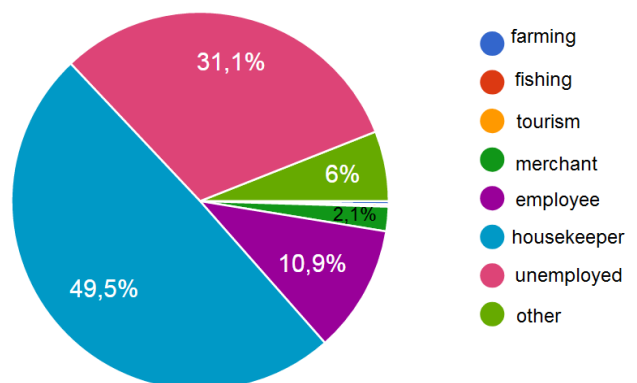
Nationality



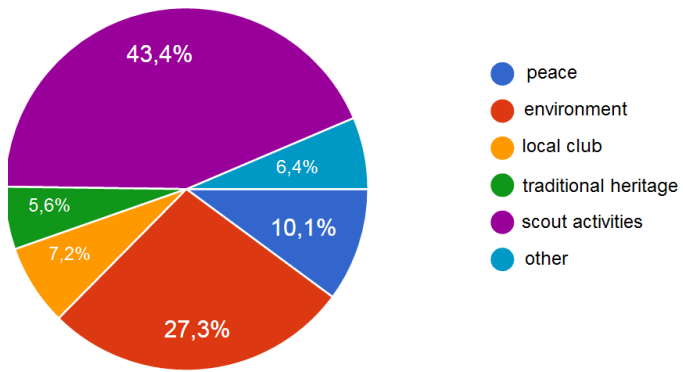
Residency



Father's occupation



Mother's occupation



Type of volunteering activities

ANNEX II. LIST OF FIGURES

1. Have you ever heard of the concept “sustainable development”?
2. Have you ever heard of the “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”?
3. Which of the following do you think that are included in “sustainable development”?
4. Which of the following issues you find important for your region?
5. Which of the following educational issues you think as important for your region?
6. Which of the following topics you would like to learn more about at school?
7. I think (issue) is important for my region / I wish to learn more about (issue)
8. Which of the following practices are applied in your school?
9. Which of the following practices you find necessary to be taken by the local and the government authorities in order to enhance youth to deal with the current issues?
10. Which of the following you think that influences mostly the public opinion?
11. Which of the following sources of information (i) you use for your daily news (ii) you think is the most reliable?
12. What is your vision for the future? Share your ideas about the ideal future for you personally.

ANNEX III. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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