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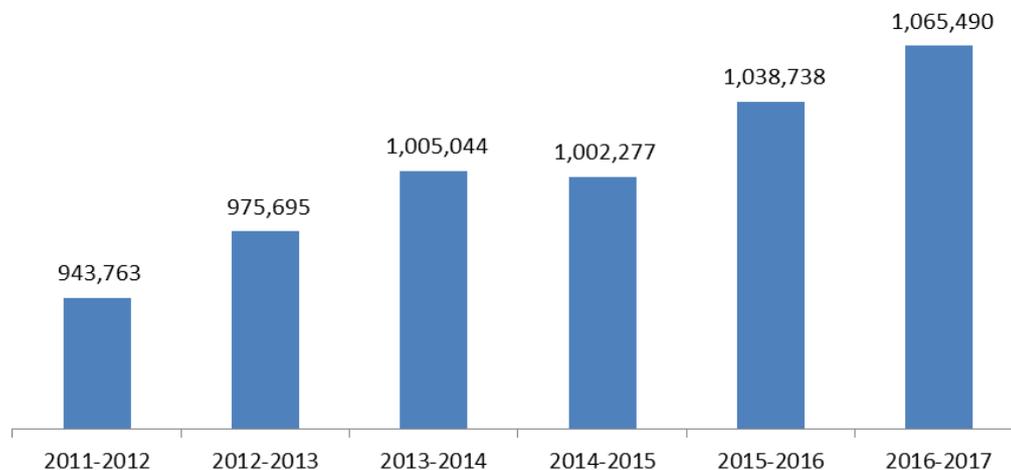
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Children are the future; that future will only be bright thanks to a solid education. In Lebanon, a country where figures are rare, the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) regularly publishes much-needed statistics on the Lebanese education sector; the report below draws on these published figures.

Number of Lebanese and Foreign Students (excluding Syrian refugees following the afternoon curriculum)

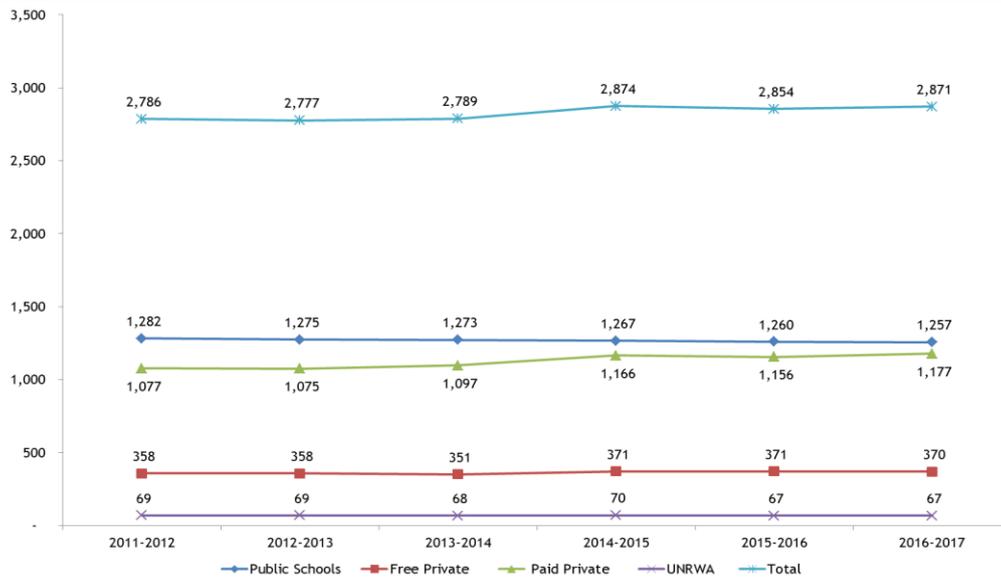


Source: CERD

The Majority of Schools in Lebanon are Private Schools

The breakdown of schools by sector shows that the lions' share is accounted for by private schools. Private schools (free and paid) represent 54% of the total number of schools in Lebanon. The number of private for-profit schools rose from 1,077 in the school year 2011-2012 to 1,177 schools in 2016-2017. As for private free schools, they saw their number increase from 358 to 370 over the same given period.

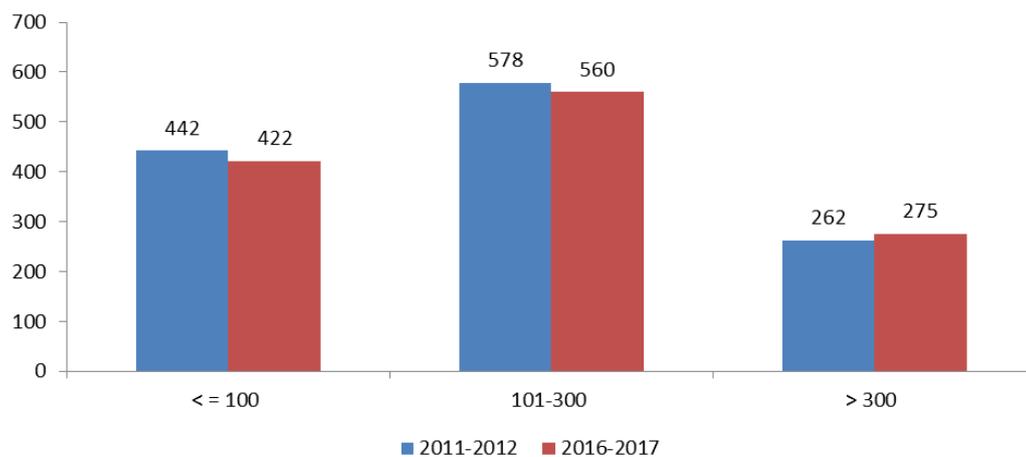
Breakdown in the Number of Schools in Lebanon



Source: CERD

Meanwhile, the number and composition of public schools has changed. The number of public schools, which totaled 1,257 in 2016-2017, has seen a steady decline every year since the school year 2011-2012 with an average of 5 schools shutting down each year. The breakdown of schools by size also reveals that the number of small and medium-sized public schools dropped between the school year 2011-2012 and 2016-2017 while the number of large schools increased over that period; According to the CERD, the number of public schools housing less than 100 students saw their number drop from 442 in 2011-2012 to 422 in 2016-2017 and the number of public schools housing between 101 and 300 students slid from 578 to 560 over the same period. Meanwhile, the number of schools with more than 300 students grew from 262 to 275.

Number of Public Schools by Size



Source: CERD

The private schools are the ones that provide the highest number of computers per 100 students. The ratio of computers per 100 students reached 4.58% in the year 2011-2012 at lucrative private schools and has gradually increased to reach 5.43% in 2016-2017. Meanwhile, the number of computers per 100 students declined from 3.93% in 2011-2012 to 3.43% in 2016-2017 at public schools. The gap in the readiness of schools to embrace technology is only one fact of the quality gap that exists between public and private schools in Lebanon.

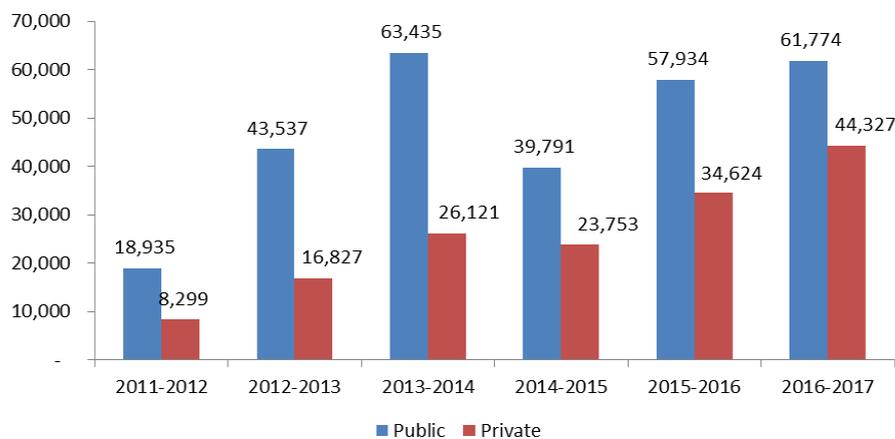
However, the CERD notes that the mere presence of computers in schools does not necessarily imply that they are being used in the learning process. For that reason, further studies are needed to establish a proper link between the presence of computers and the real integration of technology in the curriculum.

In today's world, technology should be an integral part of the education curriculum .We agree with the CERD's remark on further assessments needed to evaluate the readiness of schools to introduce students to technology; but we also define the integration of technology as a concept much larger than the presence of computers in schools but as a concept that extends to skills that are in high-demand today such as coding, programming, data mining etc.

Lebanese Schools are Housing an Increasing number of Syrian Students

The number of Syrian students enrolled in the Lebanese Educational program has been on a constant rise since 2011. The number of Syrian students now represents 7.4% of the total number of students enrolled in public schooling. In the school year 2014-2015, 83,675 Syrian students joined schools in the afternoon hours thanks to financing from international organizations; that number rose by 17.77% to reach 124,140 in the school year 2016-2017.

Number of Syrian Students in Public and Private Schools



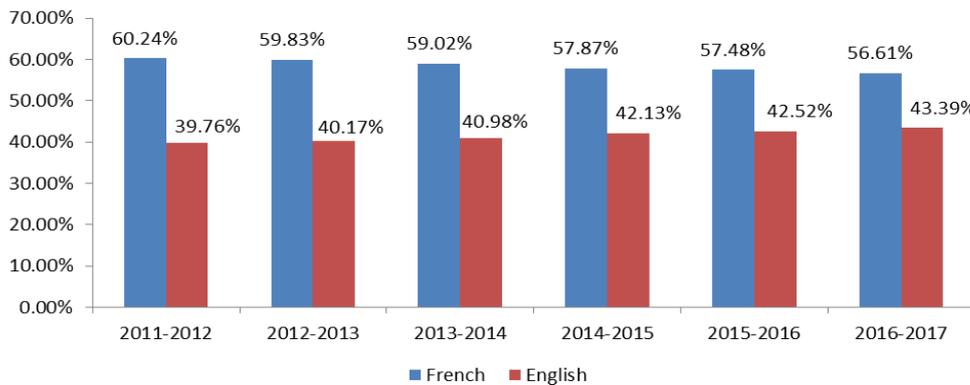
Source: CERD

The highest number of Syrian students is concentrated in Grade 1 with around 16,000 students in the school year 2016-2017 while the number of students starts to gradually decline as we go higher in the grades. According to the CERD, the students’ exit from the schooling system is either due to an exit towards technical and vocational training or towards employment. According to the CERD’s statistics, the students’ shift away from school in and around the middle section is also seen amongst Lebanese students at public schools which either step into employment or pursue technical and vocational training.

English has taken the Lead as Primary Language

An increasing number of students favored English as the primary language. According to the CERD, only 39.76% of Lebanese students enrolled in schools where English is the primary learning language in the school year 2011-2012. However, that ratio has steadily increased over the past five years to reach 43.39% during school year 2016-2017. Accordingly, the number of Lebanese students enrolled in schools where French is the primary language fell from 60.24% in 2011-2012 to 56.61% in 2016-2017. This preference for English may be due to the fact that the English language is the most renowned global business language.

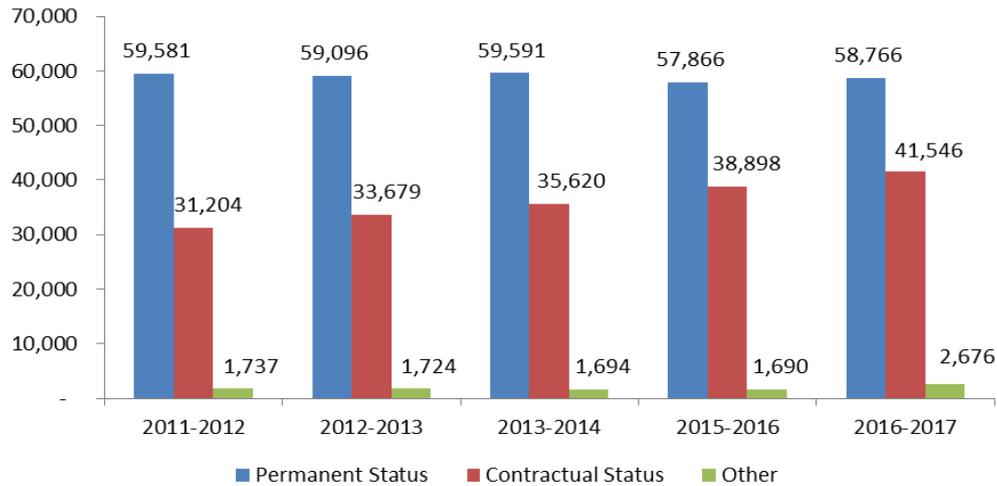
Breakdown of Lebanese Students by Primary Learning Language



Source: CERD

It is the public schooling system that houses the largest number of French speaking Lebanese students. According to the CERD, 61.5% of public school students have French as their primary foreign language while compared to only 54.6% in private schools. The CERD explains that this breakdown can be traced back to the history of the public school system in Lebanon which was highly influenced by the French education system; ties with the French cultural and educational system and the Lebanese one persisted even after Lebanon gained its independence.

Number of Teachers and Employees of the Administrative Body by status



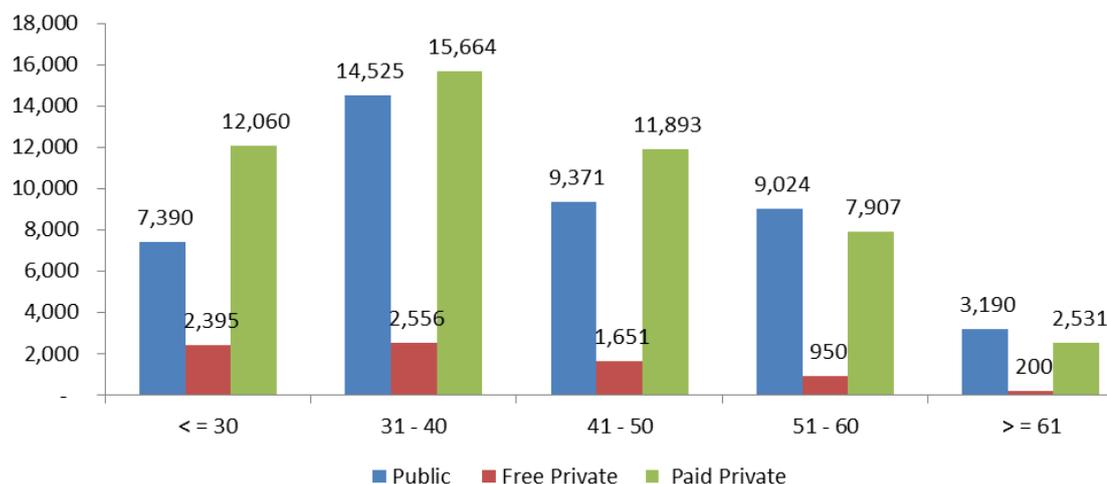
Source: CERD

The majority of teachers and members of the administrative body in the Lebanese public schools are permanent employees. The total number of teachers and administrators amounted to 102,988 in the school year 2016-2017, rising from 92,522 in the year 2011-2012. The increase over the period came about due to a 33% increase in the number of contractual employees to 41,546 while the number of permanent employees slightly slid by 1.37% to 58,766.

Retired permanent teachers were replaced by contractual teachers. The CERD explains the increase in the number of contractual teachers by the fact that teachers with a permanent employment status headed for retirement and the subsequent vacancies were filled by new teachers that were hired on a contractual basis. No new permanent employment contracts were signed due to a long halt in permanent employment in the public sector. The CERD states that the employment of contractual teachers can negatively impact the quality of education in the sense that training and habilitation can be compromised in those types of job contracts. However, 2,300 new high school teachers that passed the necessary tests are currently receiving training at the Education Faculty of the Lebanese University and that will help bolster the quality of education in Lebanon’s public schools.

Most of Lebanon’s teachers hold a university degree. 56% of Lebanon’s teachers hold a university degree while 21% carry only a high-school degree and 5% carry an educational or technical degree. In public schools, teachers with a university degree represent 58.7% of total teachers, holders of higher education and Phds reach 9.3% while 8.45% carry a degree from “Dar al Moulimin wal Moulimat” (a special institute providing specialized degrees in teaching). In private schools, teachers holding a university degree (excluding degrees in education) amounted to 56.4% while holders of a high school degree or its equivalent totaled 33.4%.

Younger teachers are more numerous in the private sector. The age group carrying the largest number of teachers across the public and private sectors is the 31 to 40 bracket. However, the below 30 bracket is higher in the private sector than in the public sector and the 51-60 bracket is larger in the public sector than in the private sector.



Teachers may need to be better spread out across the public and private sectors. According to the CERD, there is an average of 14 students per teacher during the school year 2016-2017. However, this number masks the discrepancies seen in the public and private sectors. In fact, the average number of students per teacher in private paid schools stood at 21.47 in 2016-2017 and at 14.9 in free private schools while it drops to 9.13 in public schools. This may indicate that there is an excess of teachers in public schools or that teachers need to be better dispersed across the board. However, further analysis is needed to evaluate the cost versus efficiency of teachers.

The quantitative analysis is an essential step in assessing Lebanon’s education sector but it is not enough. More data is needed to understand the quality of the education in Lebanon and to identify how we can avoid a mismatch between the students’ skillset and the skillset looked for on the job market. The rise of disruptive technology and innovation is already a happening and palpable phenomenon and it is now that the country’s education policymakers need to prepare our students for it.

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